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## Women in the Sanctuary Movement: A Case Study in Chicago

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WOMEN IN THE SANCTUARY MOVEMENT:

A CASE STUDY IN CHICAGO

by

Robin Lorentzen

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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## VITA

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Overview

This is a study of women's participation in the sanctuary movement,<sup>1</sup> based on ethnographic interviews with thirty activists in the Chicago area movement. Sanctuary is an emergent, religious-based political movement in which women predominate.<sup>2</sup> Its members engage in two types of activity: they care for Central American refugees seeking political asylum in the U.S. and Canada, and they protest U.S. policies which they believe create these displacements. These two types of activity give rise to two ideological orientations in the movement. The humanitarian approach treats caring as an end in itself, accepting the refugees as individuals, and their presence, at face value. The political approach treats caring as a form of social action which calls attention to U.S. policies perceived as "causing" the refugees. This division represents an important conceptual theme characterizing the movement across region, time, and gender. It is evident in the transformations in women's lives which bring them into the movement, in the patterned

conflict of their movement activities, and in how they perceive and link together the issues. The interplay of these two orientations is a source of conflict and change for the movement, and for women's activist careers.

The purpose of this study is to describe how women have constructed their roles and activities in sanctuary, and how they have produced the movement's organization. While women have historically played prominent roles in social movements,<sup>3</sup> these roles have been obscured in research on social movements.<sup>4</sup> Because so much about women's activities has been invisible, an important corrective for studying social movements is to begin with the question,<sup>5</sup> "where are the women?". This study answers that question by describing the activities and viewpoints of women in the sanctuary movement.

Sanctuary shares many features with other social movements, especially moral reform movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as the abolition, temperance, suffrage, and peace movements.<sup>6</sup> These have primarily been religious-based political movements in which white, middle-class women have played active, if not dominant roles. These movements have often emerged in the "free spaces"<sup>7</sup> of religious institutions, recruiting women through their religious involvement. While most have been democratic movements, participants have exhibited certain

8  
"parochialisms" of class, culture, race, and gender bias.

This study is based on in-depth interviews conducted between May and November, 1987. Interviews averaged about three hours in length (see Appendix A). Twenty interviews were at respondents' homes and three were at restaurants; these were mostly with lay women involved in caring for refugees in sanctuary at their churches and synagogues - the "workers". Other interviews were at respondents' jobs; three were at social justice agencies, two at universities, and two at churches. These were mostly with "women religious" - nuns and clergy women - leaders and organizers of the movement. Interviews with lay women were longer, and more focused on life histories and day-to-day experiences with the refugees. Interviews with women religious were briefer, less personal, focused on larger movement issues, and difficult to arrange. These differences created some unevenness in the data.

All respondents were contacted first by phone and told who had recommended them for an interview; no one refused. The project was described as a study of how women in social movements contribute to social change. I interviewed workers first, then leaders, using a technique of snowball sampling. Acquaintances recommended me along a city-wide network, at whose limits I made cold calls to rabbis, ministers, and chairpersons of social

responsibility committees.

The sample includes fifteen Catholic, twelve Protestant, and three Jewish women. Twenty-one are lay women, and nine are women religious - six nuns and three clergy women. Twenty-nine women are white, one is black. Their ages range from twenty-six to seventy-three, with an average age of forty-four. Seventeen of the women are married; five are single, six are nuns, one is divorced, and one is widowed. Seventeen women have children (see Table 1, Appendix B).

These women are all from middle-class backgrounds, ranging from lower- to upper-middle class. All attended college, and three lack undergraduate degrees. Fifteen have graduate degrees, six of which are professional degrees in areas such as social work, law, theology, and pharmacology. Fourteen are employed full-time; eleven, part-time; four do no paid work; and one is retired. Eight of the nine women religious work full-time; one, part-time. Six of the twenty-one lay women work full-time; ten, part-time; and five, not at all.

The Chicago movement includes a network of about fifteen churches and synagogues, or "sites". These make up five neighborhood coalitions, loosely allied with about six local anti-intervention agencies. I interviewed women from nine of these sites - five Protestant, two Catholic,



and two Jewish (see Table 2, Appendix B). I also interviewed a respondent from the Overground Railroad, a parallel but unrelated sanctuary operation whose headquarters are in the area (see Appendix C).

Because sanctuary issues are politically sensitive, my central concern was to respect participants' confidentiality. Therefore I did not tape the interviews and do not identify the sites and individuals I visited. Denominations appear merely as "church", "parish", and "synagogue". Except for well-known national figures, all persons, sanctuary sites, and supporting organizations are disguised.

Chapter I explains why the literature on social movements is generally undeveloped with regard to conceptualizing women's role in social change, and why there have been few studies of women in social movements until recently. This chapter compares the sanctuary movement to the woman-based moral reform movements of the last two centuries, explores the significance of "free social spaces" to women's activism in these movements, and examines the concept of sanctuary as a free space.

Chapter II describes the emergence of the sanctuary movement in the United States, and the government policies which have created and shaped it. Here I present the contrasting views of government officials and sanctuary

spokespersons, as well as women's views of the refugees' situation. I argue that women's views must be treated separately because they grow out of different experiences and knowledge. Chapter III describes women's perceptions of the ideological conflicts dividing the movement across region, time, and gender.

Chapters IV and V describe the structure and process of the sanctuary movement in Chicago. Chapter IV identifies the city-wide network of social action churches and synagogues which constitute the local movement, the special committees which are its backbone, and the women and men who sustain these groups. Chapter V describes the stages by which sanctuaries enter and leave the movement. I am especially interested in indicating this network's dynamic aspects. Therefore my description includes showing how particular congregations become sites, how they adapt to and develop the work of supporting an actual refugee family, and how they adjust to their departure - a natural history of a sanctuary.

Chapters VI through VIII focus on the women themselves. Chapter VI examines activist women's backgrounds - how they construct their biographies to show an early interest in helping people, and the special role they attribute to fathers in their life choices. This chapter shows how women construct their careers as

volunteers in social movement organizations, and how their religious and political activism shapes their identity.

Chapter VII describes different career trajectories in the movement - leadership, outreach, civil disobedience, travel to Central America, translating, and care-taking. It also looks at the impact of women's involvement on families, and the role of families in shaping women's participation. Last, it examines conflicts over expected sex roles and other cultural norms, the divisions of race and class, and the orientations with which women understand their participation.

Chapter VIII analyzes the political perspectives and ideologies of sanctuary women, and the links they make between sanctuary, feminism, and liberation theology. Chapter IX concludes with a discussion of how women's meanings for their activism shape the future of both the movement and their activist careers.

#### Review of Literature

While women have played a prominent role historically in social movements, that role has not been well understood by social scientists. Until quite recently, women were invisible in most social and historical accounts, except in relation to the private sphere of home and family. Stereotypic images of social

activists have leaned heavily on male models, suggesting that traits such as the pursuit of power, authoritarianism, narcissism, and self-control are relevant characteristics of revolutionaries.<sup>10</sup> Usually cast as passive or emotional, women have been ignored both as deviants and as political actors, their activism often attributed to their emotional attachment to men.<sup>11</sup> This assumes women are less deviant and more conventional than men, ignores women's deviant behavior which is not criminal, and fails to observe women's influence on changing norms and practices.<sup>12</sup>

These assumptions about gender have long been embedded in social science, and only recently recognized as such.<sup>13</sup> Simone de Beauvoir<sup>14</sup> and Betty Friedan<sup>15</sup> were among the first to challenge the functionalist assumption that women's place is in the home.<sup>16</sup> In the 1970's, in response to the growing women's movement, a sociology of "sex roles" developed to describe the social presence and participation of women in society.<sup>17</sup> Later called "sex and gender",<sup>18</sup> then "gender", these revisions were soon mainstreamed in all substantive areas of sociology, a trend that has been well-documented.<sup>19</sup>

Yet these contributions failed to transform the paradigmatic framework of sociology. The "additive model" - including gender as a variable to a basically

androcentric view of social reality - failed to explain the structure of gender stratification.<sup>20</sup> Feminist sociologists developed an altogether new conceptual framework, as the critique of androcentrism in social science turned to critiques of patriarchy,<sup>21</sup> then capitalist patriarchy.<sup>22</sup>

As a result of this "social movement represented by feminist sociologists,"<sup>23</sup> the sociology of women has begun to illuminate the world through the prism of women's experience.<sup>24</sup> Women have begun to emerge as actors in history, thanks to women's studies and feminist theories which ask questions grounded in women's situations and experience. Perhaps the first feminist question is, "where are the women?," and the answer to this question reveals previously uncharted areas of social experience.

In terms of understanding women's role in social movements, new theories emphasize the importance of women's subjective meanings and purposive collective action. They seek to understand the connections between women's roles in society, in social movements, and in larger spheres of social change. They have moved farther and farther away from deterministic and functional views of social behavior.

Some studies portray women in social movements historically and retrospectively. For example, Sheila

Rowbotham has examined women's role in resistance and revolutionary movements in modern history.<sup>25</sup> Charles Tilly has noted women's prominent role in urban food riots in early industrial Europe.<sup>26</sup> Manuel Castells has placed women's resistance at the level of "use-values" at the center of his theory of urban social change.<sup>27</sup>

Other studies have portrayed women in contemporary social movements. For example, Sara Evans has described how women's experience in the civil rights movement led to the emergence of the modern women's movement.<sup>28</sup> Jo Freeman has characterized the radical and reform branches which emerged in this movement - the small, structureless consciousness-raising groups and the high-powered, national women's rights organizations.<sup>29</sup> Kristin Luker has investigated women in the pro-life and pro-choice movements who, along with the medical establishment, have made up the abortion and anti-abortion movements.<sup>30</sup>

These studies suggest that in women's long history in social movements, they have rarely - and only recently - organized on behalf of themselves; and they have disagreed on many issues. They also indicate many occasions when women's experience - often frustration - in social movements has radicalized their views of gender arrangements. However, these studies have stopped short of articulating the conditions which give rise to

incipient feminism. This study contributes to that understanding by examining the circumstances in which "female revolt"<sup>31</sup> is part of women's activism in the sanctuary movement. It reveals striking differences between women religious and lay women in the structural conditions of their lives, their ideological orientations and activities in the movement, and where they place women in conceptions of human liberation.

This is a study of how women are making a social movement. Following the close details of their lives, it finds that women's activism is rooted in a network of sanctuary sites, "peace and justice" organizations, and a larger movement against foreign intervention in Central America. This network provides structure and meaning to these women's lives. In turn, out of shared experience and action, women construct the sanctuary movement along this network.

Women's personal experience and knowledge about the refugees and their circumstances contrast sharply with official ideology. Participating in sanctuary helps bring about "cognitive liberation" - new ways of thinking about social conditions and change.<sup>32</sup> Women's predominance in religious institutions enhances their cognitive liberation, as does the movement's identification with other movements: historical sanctuaries, "liberation

theology,"<sup>33</sup> and the Latin American base-community movement, and the movement against U.S. intervention in Central America. Women's activism helps integrate humanitarian, religious, and political values, which transform how they view social change - and for some, how they conceptualize women's part in it.

### Women, Free Space, and Social Change

The sanctuary movement is typical of many social movements which have emerged in the "free social spaces"<sup>34</sup> in which women have predominated. Sara Evans and Harry Boyte suggest that these are particular sorts of public places where people are able to acquire new self-respect, a deeper, more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civil virtue. Free spaces are "settings between private lives and large-scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence, and vision."<sup>35</sup> These are primarily voluntary associations with a relatively open and participatory character. Free spaces create openings for democratic action, and share certain common features: they are rooted in the community; they are autonomous; and they possess a "public or quasi-public character as participatory environments which nurture values associated with citizenship and a vision of the common good."<sup>36</sup>

The free spaces of religious institutions have long



given rise to social movements. Robert Bellah notes that the tradition of "congregation as community" is rooted in Judeo-Christian history. He claims that the church as a community of worship is an adaptation of the Jewish synagogue. Both Jews and Christians view their communities as existing in a covenant relationship with God. Worship reiterates the obligations of the community, including the biblical insistence on justice and righteousness, and establishes ethical standards which should operate in economic and political life as well as in the context of worship. In the American tradition, the church represents a caring community which values personal support, social activism, and religious individualism.

The connection between religious and political issues has often empowered democratic movements, such as the abolition, Catholic Worker, and civil rights movements. Evans and Boyte claim that the most radical challenges to conventional American politics have drawn their vocabulary and power from "core issues remembered from the past,"<sup>38</sup> and that the "biblically oriented interweaving of religious and political themes" has especially characterized "populist and democratic endeavors."<sup>39</sup>

This connection has also empowered social movements which are reactionary and backward-looking, such as the Ku

Klux Klan, American Nazi Party, and New Right movements of the 1980's. Evans and Boyte claim that "free spaces are never a pure phenomenon." Instead, they are complex, shifting, and dynamic - "partial in their freedom and democratic participation," marked by "parochialisms" of class, gender, race, and other biases of the groups which maintain them.<sup>40</sup> These parochialisms, which also characterize the sanctuary movement, are rooted in "broader environments that undermine (movements) and demand...very different sorts of values."<sup>41</sup>

Women have historically predominated in both the free spaces of religious institutions and the social movements they have inspired. Janet Chafetz and Anthony Dworkin note that women have often been strongly drawn to dissident religious movements, and have played important leadership roles in them. While these movements have varied widely, they have often given women a sense of spiritual equality with men, if not opportunities to participate more equally in the religious structure. Chafetz and Dworkin claim that "in their time and place, dissenting religious movements have often been the only mechanism available for women to voice their revolt."<sup>42</sup>

Women's predominance in religious institutions has helped them create community-based networks and enhanced their ability to make social movements. In Evans and

Boyte's view, these activities "have long strengthened women's sense of sisterhood and common purpose (and) developed essential political skills."<sup>43</sup> They claim that women's prominence in religious-based movements is linked to their lack of access to formal channels of power. Women have traditionally been charged with tending to community life in ways that simultaneously excluded such activities from conventional definitions of "public,"<sup>44</sup> barring women from most public affairs. After women began to vote, political parties did not include them as equals. Instead, "they redefined the sexual division of labor to encourage women to use their organization skills at the grassroots level."<sup>45</sup> Although women's vote now matches that of men, women have continued to predominate in grassroots, religious-based movements.

The sudden growth in these movements in the nineteenth century is linked to the shifting focus of civic involvement from community to government - from town meetings to national politics. While developments in technology, urbanization, and industrialization changed the face of American life, most Americans continued to identify with "their locales, their traditions, their heritages and cultures."<sup>46</sup>

Chafetz and Dworkin explain women's predominance in moral reform movements which emerged during this era.<sup>47</sup>

They claim that the dichotomization of women as good and evil and the characterization of middle-class women as bastions of morality gave rise to a number of social movements concerned with reforming the moral tone of national life. Women played a visible and active role in these movements, "often recruited through their religious involvements, especially Quakerism and Revivalism."<sup>48</sup> Chafetz and Dworkin also claim that, while deeply religious, these women revolted against religious orthodoxy and its male clergy, who worked to keep their activism confined to the private sphere of family. Women also revolted against the constricted opportunities available to urban, middle-class women, many of whom<sup>49</sup> sought to expand the boundaries of "women's sphere".

Abolition and temperance were two woman-based moral reform movements rooted in religion which later became intertwined with the suffrage movement. From the 1830's, the abolition movement was characterized by "substantial"<sup>50</sup> female involvement. Forebears of women in the sanctuary movement, these anti-slavery activists played an important role, "sometimes a dominant one, in the work of the underground railroad."<sup>51</sup> Women's exclusion from full participation in the abolition movement was the impetus for the emergence of the nineteenth-century women's rights movement.

The temperance movement began in the 1820's as an offshoot of evangelical and revivalist Protestantism.

"From its inception, women probably outnumbered men."<sup>52</sup>

Women's roles were narrowly restricted to concerns for their families until the 1850's, when the movement began pushing for prohibition legislation at the state level. At this point, women began to claim a more public role, and to engage in acts of militant vigilantism. They also began to link female suffrage to temperance, perceiving the vote as the most practical means of gaining temperance goals.<sup>53</sup>

According to Chafetz and Dworkin, men's return from the Civil War and their attempt to resume control of the temperance movement coincided with the emergence of the "Women's Crusade" of 1873-74, which marked the beginning of the almost total takeover of the movement by women.<sup>54</sup> The Women's Crusade ended with the formation of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) - the largest women's organization of its time - which led the movement until the Anti-Saloon League took over around 1900.

Chafetz and Dworkin note that after Frances Willard became president in 1879, the WCTU became a broad-based reform organization, supporting diverse issues which cut across gender, race, and class.<sup>55</sup> Earlier, the movement had seen alcohol abuse as the cause of poverty and social

ills. Under Willard, the WCTU defined social and economic problems as the cause of alcoholism. "Willard herself subscribed to Christian socialism, although most of her followers did not."<sup>56</sup> This parallels ideological differences between leaders and workers in the sanctuary movement.

While temperance has long been called a "woman's issue", "the husbands of these mostly middle-class women activists were not usually drunkards."<sup>57</sup> Heavy drinking was most associated with poor and immigrant men. This movement has been characterized as a class-based movement in which the older, Protestant middle class attempted to maintain its moral authority over newer immigrant groups.<sup>58</sup> It has also been characterized as a gender-based movement in which women expressed more amorphous fears about their vulnerability within families, without directly attacking men or challenging the family structure.<sup>59</sup> Most agree that the temperance movement provided women an avenue to act in the public sphere and in leadership roles when few other avenues existed.<sup>60</sup>

Another type of moral reform movement in which women have often predominated is the peace movement. While American women were little involved in peace efforts before World War I, by 1915, the Women's Peace Party supplied much of the leadership and performed most of the

"difficult, but unrecognized, behind-the-scenes organizational work."<sup>61</sup> Basically an urban, middle-class movement, women's peace efforts during World War I were intertwined with the suffrage and other reform movements of that time.

While the peace movement generally declined in membership and influence during the McCarthy years, women's involvement resurfaced in 1961 when five women active in the Society Against Nuclear Energy (SANE) became frustrated by male leaders' reluctance to deal with "mother's issues" - radioactively contaminated milk - and called for a Women's Strike for Peace. An estimated fifty thousand women attended the strike, at that time, the largest female peace action in U.S. history.<sup>62</sup>

The press defined these activists as "unsophisticated wives and mothers." The House Un-American Activities Committee, convinced that the movement was communist-inspired, collected forty-three volumes of material on it.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, sanctuary activists - predominantly nuns and housewives - have been the objects of government surveillance and secret files. Women in the peace movement were mostly white, middle-class, politically moderate, well-educated, and in their late 30's and 40's. They were active in local religious, school, and civic groups, and few worked outside the

home.<sup>64</sup> This closely parallels women in the sanctuary movement, especially lay women. Amy Swerdlow describes women in the peace movement's ideological approach as their right to influence on the basis of motherhood. In contrast, since the Vietnam era, women have made fewer claims linking pacifism and motherhood.<sup>65</sup>

These moral reform movements share many features.<sup>66</sup> Women in these movements have generally been motivated by deeply held commitments, often, if not usually grounded in religious beliefs. These movements have often served as outlets for energies that traditionally had few other avenues of expression. While women have usually been committed to reform issues on the basis of traditional ideas concerning their own roles, their experience in reform movements has often been radicalizing. Women's frustration over their inability to pursue moral reform more effectively has often spurred their revolt against gender stratification in both social movements and society.

#### Sanctuary as a Free Space

Sanctuary is a woman-based moral reform movement which has emerged in the free spaces of religious institutions. In addition, sanctuary is itself a socially constructed free space. Participants mobilize the resources of their families, communities, and religious



institutions to create free spaces within which to care for refugees; this is the humanitarian use of free space. Participants also protest the conditions they believe "cause" refugees, using these free spaces to shelter and legitimate their activism; this is the political use of free space. Free space is both a prerequisite and a product of the movement, and provides sanctuary for all its participants.

Participants legitimate and shape the sanctuary movement by claiming several religious precedents for harboring refugees, interpreting history from the standpoint of the movement.<sup>67</sup> These rhetorics of sanctuary involve ancient traditions such as the Old Testament tradition of refugee cities and altar sanctuary, and its Greek, Roman, and early Christian and Anglo-Saxon versions. More familiar rhetorics include sanctuary for fugitive slaves by means of the nineteenth-century American "underground railroad,"<sup>68</sup> and the sanctuary of the "confessing church" which harbored Jews during Europe's Nazi occupation.<sup>69</sup>

Many women in the study articulated these historical parallels. Several recognized similarities between refugees aided by the sanctuary movement and other groups. For example, one quoted a Vietnamese boat person who told a refugee in sanctuary, "I came by water, you came by

foot. We don't speak the same language, but together we'll help each other." Another quoted a board member of a small, poor Japanese-American church which endorsed sanctuary: "wouldn't it have been wonderful if they'd had sanctuary at the beginning of World War II for displaced Japanese-Americans?". Others saw connections between the sanctuary movement and other struggles for human rights. These historical metaphors claim legitimacy on the basis of these other struggles. For example, some compared sanctuary with civil rights, civil disobedience, and Nazi resistance movements. One compared the refugee detention centers along U.S. borders to "concentration camps".

Black and Jewish respondents made these connections in more personal terms. For example, a black woman stated that, "even though we were brought here against our will, there formed an underground railroad to help us." A Jewish woman claimed that, "we were in Egypt, oppressed in the land of bondage, and were let go, so maybe we have an understanding of (sanctuary)." All Jewish respondents named the Holocaust as motivating their sanctuary involvement. For example, one woman said, "Jews who survived the Holocaust were given sanctuary - because we have been the recipients, it compels us to do so."

Women perceived their predominance in the movement, and indicated an awareness of the importance of religious-

based free spaces to women's activism. For example, one remarked that church-goers are mostly women, which creates a network among them. Another said there was a natural connection between churches and women. Several indicated that women keep the churches going, claiming that "it's mostly women active in the day-to-day nuts and bolts" - that "women are doers" in the church.

In conclusion, this study of women in the sanctuary movement attempts to expand what we know about women in social movements. Reconstructing the movement from their point of view, it seeks to explain women's historical tendency to participate in political movements within the free spaces of religious institutions. Through women's eyes, the study examines the sanctuary movement, the transformations in the lives of women who enter it, and the patterned conflict they experience. It describes the connections women make between sanctuary and other issues, emphasizing how women's meanings shape both the movement and their activist careers.

This study provides empirical evidence that women play a significant role in the sanctuary movement. It develops two models for understanding women's activism - the humanitarian and political - and explores the hidden costs and contributions of each approach for the movement and for women's activist careers.

## ENDNOTES

1

For a history of the sanctuary movement, see Renny Golden & Michael McConnell, *Sanctuary: The New Underground Railroad*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986; Gary MacEoin, ed., *Sanctuary: A Resource Guide for Understanding and Participating in the Central American Refugees' Struggle*. San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985; Ignatius Bau, *This Ground Is Holy: Church Sanctuary and Central American Refugees*. New York: Paulist Press, 1985; and William K. Tabb, ed., *Churches In Struggle: Liberation Theology and Social Change in North America*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987.

2

Women predominate in the sanctuary movement at local churches and synagogues by about three to two, and in the Catholic Sanctuary by about ninety-eight percent.

3

Women's historical contributions to social movements have been rich and varied. Women have participated in separatist movements (pre-classical Amazons, Beguines of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, seventeenth-century Peruvian women of the puna, Belton, Texas Sanctified Sisters of the late nineteenth century, and radical and lesbian feminists of the late twentieth century); in religious communal movements during pre- (Gnostics) and post-reformation (Shakers, Perfectionists, Oneida, Nashoba); in communal (Owenites) and proletariat socialist movements (farm and labor); in revolutions (French, American, Russian, Chinese, Cuban, Nicaraguan); in human rights movements recent (civil rights, feminist, gay, disabled) and late (abolition, suffrage, temperance); and in modern peace, justice and ecology movements. The following provide overviews of women's historical participation in social movements: Ruby Rohrlich & Elaine Hoffman Baruch, *Women in Search of Utopia*. New York: Schocken Books, 1984; Carol R. Berkin & Clara M. Lovett, eds., *Women, War and Revolution*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980; Sheila Rowbotham, *Women, Resistance and Revolution: A History of Women and Revolution in the Modern World*. New York: Vintage Books, 1972; Janet Saltzman Chafetz & Anthony Gary Dworkin, *Female Revolt: Women's Movements in World and Historical Perspective*. New Jersey: Rowman & Allanheld, Publishers, 1986.

4

Recent feminist reconstructions of history indicate how little of women's past has been previously noted. For example, see Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden From History: Rediscovering Women in History From the 17th Century to the Present*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1973; and Renate Brindenthal & Claudia Koonz, eds., *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977. Feminist critiques of women's missing voice in science include Margrit Eichler, *The Double Standard: A Feminist Critique of Feminist Social Science*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980; and Marcia Millman & Rosabeth Moss Kanter, eds., *Another Voice: Feminist Perspectives on Social Life and Social Science*. New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975.

5

Cynthia Enloe raises this question in "Bananas, Bases, and Patriarchy." Pp. 7-23 in *Radical America*, vol. 19, no. 4.

6

These reform movements, and some details of women's roles in them, are provided by Chafetz & Dworkin in "Moral Reform Movements." Pp. 21-31 in *Female Revolt*; and by Sara M. Evans & Harry C. Boyte in *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986. Also see Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Hull House in the 1890's: A Community of Women Reformers." Pp. 658-77 in *Signs*. Vol. 10, no. 41, 1985; and Naomi Roenthal and others, "Social Movements and Network Analysis: A Case Study of Nineteenth-Century Women's Reform in New York State." Pp. 1022-54 in *American Journal of Sociologists*. Vol. 90, no. 5, 1985.

7

Evans & Boyte discuss this concept in *Free Spaces*.

8

Evans & Boyte, p. 19.

9

See Brindenthal & Koonz in *Becoming Visible*; and Elizabeth Sarah, "Toward A Reassessment of Feminist History." Pp. 519-24 in *Women's Studies International Forum*. 5:6, 1982.

10

See Marie Marmo Mullaney, "Women and the Theory of the Revolutionary Personality." Pp. 49-70 in *The Social Science Journal*. 221, 2, April, 1984.

11

See Marcia Millman, "She Did It All For Love: A Feminist View of the Sociology of Deviance." Pp. 251-79 in Millman & Kanter, *Another Voice*.

12

See Richard Cloward & Frances Fox Piven, "Hidden

Protest: The Channeling of Female Innovation and Resistance." Pp. 651-669 in Signs. Vol. 4, no. 4, 1979.

13

In the tradition of Aristotle and Rousseau, Talcott Parsons and Erik Erikson maintained that women were more suited to the domestic sphere. Parsons theorized that women's role in the sexual division of labor was "expressive," and men's, "instrumental" - an arrangement he deemed "socially functional"; see "Age and Sex in the Social Structure in the U.S." Essays in Social Theory. Glencoe, Il.: Free Press, 1954. Erikson argued that what women did in society was "inner," and what men did was "outer"; see Childhood And Society. New York: Norton Press, 1963.

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See The Second Sex. New York: Knopf Publishers, 1953.

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See The Feminine Mystique. New York: Norton Press, 1963.

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See Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, "Women in Sociological Analysis: New Scholarship Versus Old Paradigms." Pp. 485-98 in Soundings. 64, 4, winter, 1981.

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19

See Judith Stacey & Barry Thorne, "The Missing Revolution in Sociology." Pp. 301-16 in Social Problems. Vol. 32, no. 4, April, 1985; Cornelia Butler Flora, "From Sex Roles to Patriarchy: Recent Developments in the Sociology of Women - A Review Essay." Pp. 553-6 in The Sociological Quarterly. Vol. 23, autumn, 1982; and Kathryn B. Ward & Linda Grant, "The Feminist Critique and a Decade of Published Research in Sociological Journals." Pp. 139-57 in The Sociological Quarterly. Vol. 26, summer, 1985.

20

See Gould.

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For a critique of patriarchy, see Kate Millett, Sexual Politics. New York: Doubleday, 1971; Juliet Mitchell, Women's Estate. New York: Vintage Books, 1973; and Shulamith Firestone, The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution. New York: William Morrow, 1970.

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23

Flora, p. 556.

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25

Sheila Rowbotham, *Women, Resistance, and Revolution*.

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Charles Tilly, "Food Supply and Public Order in Modern Europe." Pp. 390-1 in *The Formation of Nation States in Western Europe*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975.

27

Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements*. London: Edward Arnold, 1983.

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Evans, *Personal Politics*.

29

Jo Freeman, "The Origins of the Women's Liberation Movement." Pp. 792-811 in *American Journal of Sociology*. 78, January, 1978.

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Kristin Luker, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*. University of California Press, 1984.

31

See Chafetz & Dworkin, *Female Revolt*.

32

See D. McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency: 1930 - 1970*. Illinois: University of Chicago Press 1982.

33

See Chapter VIII for a treatment of liberation theology.

34

Evans & Boyte, *Free Spaces*.

35

Evans & Boyte, p. 17 in *Free Spaces*.

36 Evans & Boyte, p. 20 in Free Spaces.

37 Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, & Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985.

38 Evans & Boyte, p. 16 in Free Spaces.

39 Evans & Boyte, p. 7 in Free Spaces.

40 Evans & Boyte, p. 19 in Free Spaces.

41 Evans & Boyte, p. 19 in Free Spaces.

42 Chafetz & Dworkin, p. 20 in *Female Revolt*.

43 Page 78 in Free Spaces.

44 Page 8 in Free Spaces.

45 Page 95 in Free Spaces.

46 Page 13 in Free Spaces.

47 Pages 21-31 in *Female Revolt*.

48 Page 21 in *Female Revolt*.

49 Page 21 in *Female Revolt*.

50 Page 21 in *Female Revolt*.

51 Page 23 in *Female Revolt*.

52 Page 23 in *Female Revolt*.

53 Page 24 in *Female Revolt*.

54 Page 24 in *Female Revolt*.

55 These broader issues addressed by the WCTU under Willard were: women's suffrage, safer working conditions, unemployment protection, prison reform, creation of kindergartens, change in women's clothing styles, punishment of prostitutes' clients, and practical education for poor women; pp. 25-6 in *Female Revolt*.

56 Page 26 in *Female Revolt*.



57  
Page 25 in Female Revolt.

58  
See Joseph R. Gusfield, Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1963.

59  
See Barbara Leslie Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity. Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1981.

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See Ruth Bordin, Women and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900. Pa.: Temple University Press, 1981.

61  
Page 27 in Female Revolt.

62  
Page 29 in Female Revolt.

63  
See Amy Swerdlow, "Ladies Day at the Capitol: Women Strike for Peace versus HUAC." Pp. 498-520 in Feminist Studies. 8, 3, 1982.

64  
Swerdlow, in "Ladies Day at the Capitol."

65  
One organization which carried on this tradition is Another Mother For Peace, a California-based group formed in 1967 to protest the Vietnam war. Most of its organizers and a majority of its members were middle-class, college-educated women. Its title, and motto - War is not healthy for children and other living things - reflect maternal values. At its peak in 1973, it had one hundred sixty-five thousand members; by 1984, it had less than twenty thousand; in Encyclopedia of Associations, 1984.

66  
Chafetz & Dworkin discuss these features; p. 31 in Female Revolt.

67  
See Bau; McEoin; and Golden & McConnell.

68  
See Charles L. Blockson, "The Underground Railroad." Pp. 3-39 in National Geographic. Vol. 166, no. 1, July, 1984; and Sheila D. Collins, "The New Underground Railroad." Pp. 1-7 in Monthly Review. June, Vol. 38, no. 1, 1986.

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See Shelley Baranowski, The Confessing Church: Conservative Elites and the Nazi State. New York: E. Mellen Publishers, 1986.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SANCTUARY MOVEMENT

#### Emergence of the Movement

Two religious men in Arizona originally conceived of the sanctuary movement and became its early leaders. Reverend John Fife of the Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson became involved when a professional "coyote" (refugee smuggler) abandoned a group of twenty-four Salvadorans on the desert in 1980; half died, and half were deported. Fife's church created the first free space for sanctuary when it started a weekly prayer vigil for refugees. This soon became a place for immigration lawyers and refugees to discuss their problems. The church publicly declared itself a sanctuary on March 24, 1982 - the second anniversary of the assassination of San Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero.<sup>1</sup>

Jim Corbett, a retired rancher and Quaker, became involved in 1981 when a Salvadoran hitchhiker whom a friend picked up near Nogales, Arizona was arrested. Corbett was struck by the complex immigration procedures concerning refugees, and began actively helping Central Americans apply for asylum. He and other Quakers in the

area were soon filling their homes with refugees. At first, the refugees were introduced during worship services, and members of the congregation volunteered to take them home. Later, they were transported away from the border, then from the border to the church, and finally from across the border, as "the decision to publicly declare sanctuary became inevitable."<sup>2</sup>

In 1981, the Tucson Ecumenical Council created a Task Force on Central America to respond to the growing needs of refugees. The agency began raising funds to bond refugees out of detention and support the asylum process, but this soon proved insufficient. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had begun enforcing alien and asylum laws with new vigor. Detainees were required to post bond of several thousand dollars, "a procedure generally waived by pre-Reagan administrations."<sup>3</sup>

As concern for the refugees grew, the sanctuary movement began to spread across the United States along a network of religious affiliates. By early 1983, there were forty-five sanctuary sites, six hundred "supporting" (non-site) congregations and religious organizations, and fifty local organizing committees involved in the movement. By late 1983, twenty-four more churches had declared themselves sanctuaries, making about seventy sites. By mid-1984, there were over one hundred fifty

sites, with thousands of individuals involved in the movement.<sup>4</sup> A respondent active in sanctuary since 1982 indicated that she began to sense that it was a national movement when there were about thirty or forty sanctuaries:

I got the sense that it could build. I began to see the movement as something people could put themselves into and see results.

Today sanctuary is an emergent,<sup>5</sup> national, interfaith movement.<sup>6</sup> The state of New Mexico,<sup>6</sup> twenty-seven cities, over four hundred churches and synagogues, about forty religious orders, sixteen universities, and one seminary<sup>7</sup> have been officially declared sanctuaries. The sanctuary network extends into thirty-four states. Most sites are in California - one hundred six - five times more sites than in any other state. Illinois follows with twenty-two sites, with Arizona, New York, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania close behind. Denominationally, sanctuary is highly ecumenical, its greatest support coming from the Society of Friends, Catholic, Unitarian, Presbyterian, Jewish, United Church of Christ, Lutheran, Methodist, and<sup>8</sup> Mennonite congregations.

Because of its sensitive nature, it is difficult to know how many people have participated in sanctuary. One estimate is seventy thousand,<sup>9</sup> including about fifty thousand women.<sup>10</sup> It is perhaps impossible to know how

many refugees have been aided by sanctuary - surely a very small percentage of their total population. Fife estimated in 1982 that his church alone had brought into the country and harbored some sixteen hundred Salvadorans, including over two hundred families.<sup>11</sup> One estimate is three thousand, including three hundred fifty families.<sup>12</sup> Another is only several hundred.<sup>13</sup>

The refugees in sanctuary are predominantly from El Salvador and Guatemala. A nun in the Chicago sanctuary movement claimed that this is because the repression is more pronounced there, and is growing in Honduras. She also claimed that there is a direct correlation between the number of refugees in the U.S. and the incidence of murder, torture, and kidnapping in these countries.

Sanctuary workers engage in both lawful and unlawful activities in relation to the refugees. It is unlawful to house and transport "undocumented aliens", but lawful to assist them in initiating application for refugee status once in the U.S. This process may take up to a few years, and usually affords refugees temporary legal status during which sanctuary assistance is lawful.

Sanctuary workers support the movement in diverse ways. They create caravans of drivers to accompany refugees from one site to another.<sup>14</sup> They participate in both underground and overground activities to shelter and

transport refugees. They support with care-giving, money, and other resources the sites where refugees receive sanctuary. They participate in outreach efforts and speak publicly about the refugees' situation. They attend local, city-wide, and national meetings. They travel to Central America and accompany refugees on repopulation efforts.<sup>15</sup> They participate in non-violent civil disobedience,<sup>16</sup> and support large national anti-intervention groups on Central American issues.

Sanctuary continues beyond the Northern border to Canada.<sup>17</sup> Until 1987, the Canadian government had a "blanket admission/non-deportation" policy permitting refugees to work and be eligible for social services in Canada while awaiting hearings. Restrictions now require refugees to wait in the U.S. until their hearing dates, resulting in a concentration of refugees at border areas where INS reserves the right to deport illegal immigrants even if they have a scheduled inquiry with Canadian officials.<sup>18</sup>

A respondent at the Overground Railroad - an operation unrelated but parallel to sanctuary that lawfully helps get refugees to Canada (see Appendix C) - confirmed that there is a backlog of refugees waiting for visas in northerly cities like Portland, Buffalo, and Seattle whom the INS will deport. She claimed that INS

agents confiscated the car of a nun and held her for five hours near Detroit:

They charged her with transporting illegal aliens. She said, "but he's documented." The official said, "oh, so he's a documented illegal alien."

The INS responded formally to sanctuary in 1984. In May, undercover agents posing as volunteers infiltrated Fife's church, compiling one hundred tapes of the group's activities to use in indictments.<sup>19</sup> In December, the INS prosecuted eleven church workers for violating INS laws by helping undocumented Salvadorans and Guatemalans enter and remain in the U.S. Eight of the defendants were convicted on twelve counts of harboring, transporting, and conspiring to transport illegal aliens, and were sentenced to five years' probation.<sup>20</sup> Three were acquitted.

Media coverage peaked in 1985 (see Table III, Appendix B), with the trial prompting the greatest interest in and growth of the sanctuary movement.<sup>21</sup> Almost a third of the respondents commented on its impact. Many had attended the trial, and some knew the defendants personally. A woman who attended the trial remarked that "the U.S. judge was clearly against these people." In some cases, the trial was the impetus for a church to go on record in support of the defendants and declare itself a sanctuary. For example, one woman stated that her church was "very defiant of the government" when they took

in the first refugees two weeks after the trial began.

### U.S. Policies and Sanctuary

U.S. policies toward Central America "cause" both the refugees and the sanctuary movement, and shape the terms of their alliance. In this process, refugees fleeing U.S.-backed terrorism in Central America enter the sanctuary movement in North America. Here, they become powerful witnesses against government claims and ideology, as well as objects of contention between INS officials and the sanctuary movement. The following describes this process from the viewpoints of government agents,<sup>22</sup> sanctuary spokespersons, and women in the movement.

U.S. foreign aid supports several Central American governments, including El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. According to sanctuary supporters, human rights organizations, and much of the American press, military and civilian police in these states threaten and murder large numbers of people.<sup>23</sup> For example, the U.S. government gives one and a half million dollars per day to the Salvadoran government, whose representatives have murdered an estimated one percent, and displaced by death threats another twenty percent,<sup>24</sup> of the population. To avoid "disappearing", refugees flee north, seeking asylum in the U.S. and Canada. Detention centers along U.S. borders hold hundreds of thousands of such refugees.



Approximately forty thousand are repatriated annually,<sup>25</sup> many of whom are murdered upon returning home.

For unpatriated refugees, two kinds of U.S. immigration policies play a sort of shell game with their status. For supposedly economic refugees, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (formally Simpson-Rodino Bill) offers "undocumented aliens" an opportunity for one year to apply for U.S. citizenship. To be eligible, refugees must document five years' continuous residence without greater than sixty days' leaves. Fear of being declared ineligible and returned home has kept the rate of applicants low.<sup>26</sup>

For supposedly political refugees, the Refugee Act of 1980 grants asylum regardless of U.S. relations with their governments, in accordance with United Nations protocol. However, the administration of this act discriminates against refugees from certain countries. The following data clearly indicate that the U.S. government grants asylum to those from countries it opposes, and denies it to those from countries it supports.

About thirty percent of applicants from the Soviet Union, Poland, Cuba, and Nicaragua receive amnesty, compared to about three percent of those from El Salvador and Guatemala.<sup>27</sup> During 1984, Salvadorans seeking asylum were turned down by a ratio of forty to one, compared to

seven to one for Nicaraguans, three to one for Ethiopians,<sup>28</sup> and two to one for Poles and Afghans. Between July 1985 and February 1986, Nicaraguans received a fourth of all political asylum grants. Iranians, Nicaraguans, and Poles accounted for seventy-six percent of all grants; Salvadorans, only two percent. Out of one hundred countries with refugees applying for political asylum to the U.S. during this period, El Salvador had the second highest number of denials. In contrast, forty-four grants were made on sixty-four applications of refugees from Afghanistan.<sup>29</sup>

Government officials claim that Salvadorans have always had a strong pattern of immigration to this country, which explains their higher rejection rate for political asylum. Elliott Abrams, former Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Human Affairs, claims that "it is logical to expect lower rates of approval for countries near us who have traditionally sent large numbers of economic migrants."<sup>30</sup> This statement indicates how government officials obscure both the distinction between economic and political refugees, and the refugees' circumstances.

In 1986, the Justice Department drew up new regulations making it easier for those fleeing communist countries to obtain political asylum in the U.S. This

ruling implies that those fleeing "totalitarian" countries have a "well-founded fear of persecution," an assumption reflected in the current Florida INS policy of not deporting Nicaraguans. Since three-fourths of all Nicaraguans enter the U.S. through Florida, this gives them the equivalent of extended voluntary departure status.<sup>31</sup>

Sanctuary spokespersons claim that there is no comparison between persecution in Nicaragua with that in Guatemala and El Salvador. In Guatemala, thirty-eight thousand persons have been disappeared and one hundred thousand killed since the 1954 U.S.-backed coup, compared to sixty-nine unsolved disappearances in Nicaragua since 1979.<sup>32</sup> Between October and November 1987, political violence rose sharply in Guatemala, and disappearance and kidnapping statistics paralleled those under past military regimes, while killings increased as well.<sup>33</sup> In El Salvador, sixty thousand persons have been killed since 1980, the majority by right-wing death squads and government security forces. No one in the Guatemalan or Salvadoran military has ever been prosecuted for these deaths. In Nicaragua, the relatively few cases of mistreatment have been followed in many cases by government investigations and trials against those accused of abuse.<sup>34</sup> Nicaragua alone has abolished the death

penalty.

The independent human rights organization, Americas Watch, compares the situations in these three countries: <sup>35</sup>

In Nicaragua, there is no systematic practice of forced disappearances, extrajudicial killings or torture - as has been the case with the "friendly" armed forces of El Salvador...Nor has the government practiced elimination of cultural ethnic groups, as the Administration frequently claims; indeed in this respect, as in most others, Nicaragua's record is by no means so bad as that of Guatemala, whose government the Administration consistently defends.

INS officials claim that most illegal refugees are in the U.S. for economic, not political reasons - seeking jobs rather than escaping death threats. Of the five hundred thousand Salvadorans currently seeking refuge in the U.S., the INS claims that three hundred fifty thousand were here prior to 1980, and are economic, not political refugees. <sup>36</sup>

However, a U.S. Bureau of Census study indicates that before 1980, only ninety-four thousand Salvadorans were in the U.S., about fifty-one thousand of whom were undocumented. <sup>37</sup> The incidence of displaced Central Americans increased sharply in 1979, and peaked in 1982. <sup>38</sup> Between 1978 and 1980, the apprehension of Salvadoran refugees in the U.S. increased eighty-nine percent, <sup>39</sup> reflecting this surge in displacements.

The INS argues that the sanctuary movement is promoting open borders, and that every nation has the

right to protect its borders. Sanctuary spokespersons respond that the right to human life is sacred and should be treated as such. They claim they are not for open borders, but for an end to U.S. policies in Central America designed to target civilian populations and create refugees. They claim sanctuary stands for making El Salvador and Guatemala themselves sanctuaries so that political refugees can return home.<sup>40</sup>

INS officials claim that the sanctuary movement is luring Central American refugees to the U.S. where they take jobs from citizens and burden the social service system.<sup>41</sup> A Chicago sanctuary woman refuted this claim with her own study. She contacted the twenty-two sanctuary cities in the U.S. and inquired if they had experienced any negative repercussions from sanctuary - had they been besieged by refugees or heavy demands on city resources? Eleven responded, all affirming that there had been "no discernable increase" in either the refugee population or demands.

Sanctuary spokespersons claim that the U.S. government is driving the refugees here by supporting covert wars in Central America. They further claim that the government is using the sanctuary movement and the refugees as a scapegoat for U.S. unemployment; that undocumented workers contribute more than they take, since

they pay social security taxes, yet receive no tax refund or social security benefits. They claim that undocumented workers have historically taken jobs that U.S. citizens don't want, and have thus been a source of cheap, uncomplaining labor, whose low wages have increased profits and lowered consumer prices. Last, they claim that the real causes of unemployment are the number of corporations which have left the U.S. for cheap labor markets in Central America, the Caribbean and Far East.<sup>42</sup>

Opponents of the movement claim that sanctuary workers are well-intentioned, naive persons led by political dissidents and critics of U.S. policy. An INS official claimed that the sanctuary movement is "a political protest movement, involving lawlessness which takes advantage of the humanitarian instincts of many well-intentioned people."<sup>43</sup> Elliott Abrams stated that "church members may be just trying to save lives, but the organizers are directing a campaign against U.S. policy in Central America."<sup>44</sup> A nationally syndicated columnist claimed that the sanctuary movement is "designed to make one group of people feel righteous while it allows another, the movement's leaders, to go about their highly political business."<sup>45</sup>

Chicago women deny both the claim that there are ideological differences between leaders and followers in

sanctuary, and the inference that followers are "dupes" carrying out the leaders' hidden agendas. For example, a nun who had traveled widely in Central America asserted that her previous experience was merely reaffirmed by early statements by Corbett and Fife: "my own experience and reading had already informed me...They simply reinforced it." Another woman whose experience contradicts official claims stated that "there is no difference in ideology between leaders and followers - people without other responsibilities tend to be active - people with time and money."

Although sanctuary is a political movement, evidence suggests that it is primarily a religious, not a political phenomenon. The sanctuary movement has emerged out of religious institutions, whose free spaces have historically supported social action. Religious people are taking part in sanctuary activities, motivated by politicized religious ideologies. According to one observer, contrary to government beliefs, "the proportion of secular humanists, agnostic liberals, and political radicals of the Old and New Left variety is quite low." <sup>46</sup>

Nonetheless, the government has acted toward the sanctuary movement based on its beliefs. In its normal course of existence, the sanctuary movement has operated under surveillance and harassment by U.S. government

agents. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and National Security Administration (NSA) have reportedly monitored the activities of opponents of the administration's Central American policies, including sanctuary members. An estimated twenty-three sanctuary break-ins had been reported by March 1987, and recent Congressional hearings on break-ins at sanctuaries and offices of organizations opposing U.S. policies in Central America confirm government agency involvement.<sup>47</sup><sup>48</sup>

Sanctuary women are aware of this surveillance and harassment of participants in the movement, and understandably expressed concern about being interviewed for this study by referring to the possibility that I was a government spy. Some women expressed their doubts in the words of their husbands - for example, "are you gonna let this woman tape the interview? How do you know she isn't a spy?" Others were more direct - one woman mused that, "the government would probably send somebody like you to infiltrate the movement in the North." Another assured me, "you certainly don't seem like the CIA type."

#### Women's Views of Sanctuary

Women have distinctive positions in the sanctuary movement, therefore distinctive views. For most women, government claims are contradicted by their own personal



knowledge and experience prior to their involvement in sanctuary. In everyday life, they have been exposed to realities which contrast sharply with these claims. Over time, this experience becomes a base from which to examine old ideologies and forge new definitions.

Several women described meeting Central American refugees in their communities, listening to their stories, and piecing together their own views. Some made this connection through their children's schools. For example, one woman approached the mother of her son's schoolmate and asked if her Salvadoran husband - who had started a refugee center - would speak to the social responsibility group at her church. She was surprised to learn that he had been "killed on the streets of Chicago" - by a Honduran who got to know him well, then shot him; was put in jail, released on bond, and skipped the country. His widow believed "the CIA did the job."

Another woman - a teacher - invited a Chilean boy's father to speak to her class. At the time of Allende's overthrow, he had been a teacher, and was suspected, imprisoned, and tortured. She remarked, "this is how I began to piece together what's going on."

Other women reported making this connection at their churches, synagogues, prayer groups, and libraries, and through reading and conversation. All commented on how

they know the truth about the refugees - who speaks it, and who is legitimate. Their knowledge is rooted in personal experience with the refugees, and in the experience of those they trust. For example, one woman asked herself, "why would peasants come here and say these things if they weren't true?". Another met a missionary with "first-hand experience" who told her, "I was down there. I know what the Reagan administration says is a lie." Another said, "I listened to the people I respect."

Many sanctuary women have lived or traveled extensively in Central America, experiencing the contrasts between them first-hand. Many indicated that their personal knowledge strikingly contradicted government claims about these countries, and they often described their new knowledge as coming as a great surprise. For example, a nun, age sixty-two, went to Guatemala through her order in 1967. She said,

we were traveling in a state of seige. People were disappearing and being held for no reason...These were my first exposures. It was a shock.

She first learned of death squads in a village where an abandoned truck remained in the town square for weeks. She said that someone had been shot to death in it by the death squad - the "mano blanco," or white hand - and his truck left there as a warning to others. She claimed that in Guatemala, landowners privately hire the army to kill

those who complain about working conditions.

In 1985, she went to Nicaragua with a university group. She viewed the bomb damage where the CIA had mined a harbor in 1984, and toured a shrimp-freezing plant which exported primarily to Canada, where she learned that "the rest of the world does business as usual with Nicaragua." She visited a refugee camp half-filled with Salvadorans fleeing the civil war in their own country, remarking that people there were very busy trying to better their lives. The camp was a sort of grassroots democracy.

She indicated that she was acutely aware of the differences between Guatemala and Nicaragua, and that her experience in these countries contrasted sharply with government claims:

Both are terribly poor, but the atmosphere is totally different. In one the government is against, in the other, for the people. In Nicaragua, people aren't afraid of the soldiers and government. In Guatemala, people felt safe only in the parishes. They didn't trust the government...People always acted guarded, always afraid to be stopped by the police. In Nicaragua, people were very free, said anything to anyone. They weren't guarded - I saw a lot of casual interaction on the streets between the military and the police...There was a lot of hope among the people - much faith. It was evident in their activities - they were improving things, with very few resources.

Another respondent - a minister, age twenty-six - visited El Salvador and Nicaragua in 1985 while a seminary student. Crossing their borders twice, she described vividly experiencing new realities which contradicted government claims:

In Nicaragua there's lots of soldiers and guns but I felt very safe. We never had any trouble. But in El Salvador, the guns are pointed at you. That's how I felt...(At) night, by about 7:15, the streets are very deserted...we could hear gunshots at night. No one's out past seven. Cars, past eight. Taxis, past nine. And these aren't even official curfews...Things go on at night - people get killed, and bodies get dumped. We drove by a car accident where the driver was shot in the head...It was very scary...In a cafe, I learned not to sit with my back to the door - nobody does, in case somebody starts shooting, or if a bomb goes off, you can save yourself. The fear is so evident in everyday life. People don't speak on the streets or buses...The war's a way of life. You can never escape the war in Nicaragua - there's nothing to buy - but you can be in Managua and feel affected by the war but not be a part of it...it's mostly on the front, where the contras are. In El Salvador, the whole country's a war zone. In some ways I hated El Salvador...We went back to Nicaragua, and said, "thank God! We're back in freedom now!" We felt giddy, happy, overjoyed to be in Nicaragua.

In conclusion, U.S. foreign aid and immigration policies have created both the refugees and the sanctuary movement. The debate between government officials and sanctuary spokespersons reveals the contours of their contrasting perspectives. Women's views of the refugees' situation grow out of their personal experience and knowledge, contrast sharply with official ideology, and provide the "cognitive liberation" that underpins their involvement in the movement.

## ENDNOTES

1

Ignatius Bau describes the early history of the sanctuary movement in *This Ground Is Holy: Church Sanctuary and Central American Refugees*. New York: Paulist Press, 1985.

2

Bau, p. 11 in *This Ground Is Holy*.

3

See Lois Armstrong, "Trouble: busted by federal agents, a Tucson pastor keeps the sanctuary lights aflame for fleeing Salvadorans." P. 57 in *People Weekly*, March 25, 1985.

4

Bau, p. 12 in *This Ground Is Holy*.

5

For a history of the sanctuary movement's emergence, see "Sanctuary." Pp. 951-2 in *The Christian Century*. October 17, 1984; Sheila D. Collins, "The New Underground Railroad." Pp. 39-41 in *Monthly Review*. May 1986; "What Is Sanctuary?" Pp. 5-14 in *The Humanist*. March/April 1986; and "Sanctuary." Pp. 22-4 in *The New Yorker*. June 30, 1986.

6

See "First Sanctuary State." P. 408 in *The Christian Century*. April 23, 1986; and "Sanctuary: New Mexico's Action Blasted." P. 13 in *Neustro*. May 1986.

7

Pages 45-51 in *Basta!*: National Newsletter of the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America. December 1987.

8

Page 36 in *Basta!*. December 1986.

9

Bau, p. 12 in *This Ground Is Holy*.

10

This study finds that women generally predominate in the movement by about three to two.

11

In "A Haven for Salvadorans." P. 32 in *Newsweek*. Vol. 99, April 5, 1982; and "Presbyterians Honor Tucson Congregation." P. 8 in *Arizona Daily Star*. June 3, 1984.

12

In "An Underground Railroad Set Them Free." In *Providence Journal*. April 15, 1984.

13

See "Sanctuary: Churches' Way to Protest." P. 45 in U.S. News and World Report. Vol. 97, September 24, 1984; "Why Illegal Aliens Get Sanctuary." P. F-3 in San Francisco Chronicle. April 11, 1984; and "When Churches Smuggle Aliens." P. 14 in U.S. News and World Report. Vol. 98, January 28, 1985.

14

See Meg Denison, "A Sanctuary Caravan." Pp. 7-9 in Lutheran Women. November 1985.

15

See "U.S. Citizens Accompany Displaced Salvadorans Returning Home." Pp. 8-10 in Witness For Peace Newsletter. Vol. 4, no. 1, February/March 1987.

16

Participants attend both legal and illegal rallies and demonstrations, taking part in such actions as sit-ins, lie-ins, pray-ins, and die-ins.

17

In 1986, one hundred seventy-three Central Americans "rode" the Overground Railroad to Canada. See "Refugees find sanctuary in Canada: Overground Railroad helps Central Americans get around U.S. law." Pp. 33-4 in Christian Science Monitor. December 30, 1986; and "Where Welcome Waits: Jubilee's Night Ride to Canada." Pp. 69-70 in Commonweal. February 1986.

18

Page 51 in Basta!. March 1987.

19

See Lois Armstrong, P. 57 in People Weekly. March 25, 1985.

20

These charges carried maximum sentences of five years' imprisonment, and the convicted defendants risked resentencing if they violated their parole conditions by continuing to help undocumented aliens. Before the sentences were passed, the international human rights organization, Amnesty International, offered to adopt the defendants as prisoners of conscience if they were sentenced to prison terms. See p. 206, Amnesty International Report 1987: The Americas.

21

Prior to 1984, the media reported very little on the sanctuary movement; however, the arrests and Tucson trial set off a journalistic explosion on the issue. The following represent a broad sampling of coverage which the movement received from the print media: "Immigration: Crackdown on the Sanctuaries." P. 47 in Time. January 28, 1985; "Bringing Sanctuary to Trial: A Tucson case provides a major test of church against state." P. 38 in Time. October 28, 1985; "A Defeat for Sanctuary: Church

activists convicted of smuggling illegal aliens." P. 82 in Time. May 12, 1986; "Churches Violate Federal Law to Shelter Illegal Aliens." Pp. 52-3 in Christianity Today. March 16, 1984; "Border church plays role in refugee drama." Pp. 1, 23 in National Catholic Reporter. August 1, 1986; "Sanctuary trial sentences could stir more actions." Pp. 1, 6 in National Catholic Reporter. July 18, 1986; "Bishops' silence over sanctuary cries out." P. 28 in National Catholic Reporter. August 1, 1986; "L.A. archdiocese to open offices for immigrant amnesty applications." P. 2 in National Catholic Reporter. October 31, 1986; "Sanctuary Movement - Public Debate." Pp. 12-18 in Nuestro. September 1985; "The Sanctuary Movement on Trial." Pp. 81-3 in America. August 24, 1985; "Bad Day At Tucson." P. 39 in America. May 17, 1986; "Sanctuary." Pp. 951-2 in The Christian Century. October 17, 1984; "Sanctuary Conviction." P. 240 in The Christian Century. March 6, 1985; "Free Exercise of Religion in Phoenix." Pp. 727-8 in The Christian Century. August 14, 1985; "The Sanctuary Decision: A Threat to Religious Liberty?". Pp. 52-3 in The Christian Century. June 13, 1986; "Reverberations From the Sanctuary Trial: No routine smugglers." Pp. 522-3 in Commonweal. October 1986; "Operation Sojourner: Informers in the Sanctuary Movement." Pp. 40-3 in The Nation. July 20-7, 1985; "INS On Trial." P. 68 in The Nation. January 25, 1986; "Trouble: Busted by Federal Agents, A Tucson Pastor Keeps the Sanctuary Light Aflame for Fleeing Salvadorans." Pp. 53-5 in People Weekly. March 25, 1985; "Assault on Sanctuary: A church rallies to protect a Salvadoran whistleblower." Pp. 20-3 in The Progressive. August 1985; "Who's On First: Snoops in the Pews." Pp. 24-6 in The Progressive. August 1985; and "Church activists are on the march." Pp. 16-18 in U.S. News and World Report. April 21, 1986.

22

The "official" position for the movement is drawn from a number of sources - primarily the press and publications of human rights organizations and anti-intervention agencies.

23

This situation has been reported by the following: Phillip Berryman, Inside Central America. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985; Joan Didion, Salvador. New York: Washington Press, 1983; In Contempt of Congress: The Reagan record of deceit and illegality on Central America. (pamphlet) Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, D.C., 1985; John Stockwell, "Secret Wars of the CIA: Vietnam to Nicaragua." (lecture) United Church of Rogers Park, Chicago, Il., May 17, 1987; "A Guide To The U.S. Presence

in Central America." American Friends Service Committee. (pamphlet) 1983; Raymond Bonner, "Are we getting the whole story from Central America?". Pp. 12-15 in The Nation. December 8, 1984; "Report Says U.S. Harassed Central American Leaders." P. 2 in Christian Science Monitor. May 11, 1987; "Guatemalan Armed Forces Carry Out Counter-Insurgent Operation." P. 1 in El Dia. (Mexico City) April 12, 1987; "Guatemala Abuses Alleged." P. 2 in Los Angeles Times. May 11, 1987; "El Salvador: Central America's Forgotten War." Pp. 60-2, 64-6, 68, 70, 72 in Mother Jones. July/August 1986; and "(Salvadoran) Union Leader Killed." P. 10 in Washington Post. May 12, 1987.

24

See Phillip Berryman, Inside Central America; and "Sanctuary Movement - Public Debate;" P. 18 in Nuestro. September 1985.

25

See "U.S. Won't Let Salvadoran Illegals Stay." P. 7 in Christian Science Monitor. May 18, 1987; "Amnesty Call for Human Rights Investigations in Guatemala." P. 3 in Amnesty International. winter 1985; "Amnesty International's Current Concerns in El Salvador." Amnesty International. (pamphlet) June 1985; "El Salvador: Human Rights Activists Abducted." P. 6 in Amnesty International. summer 1986; and "Salvadorans Cite Fears On Return." P. 8 in New York Times. April 26, 1987.

26

Six months after the implementation of the Reform Act, eight hundred thousand undocumented refugees have officially registered with the INS, who had projected three million applicants by that time; see p. 3 in Basta!. December 1987.

27

See p. 25 in Basta!. June 1986.

28

See p. 16 in Nuestro. September 1985.

29

See p. 25 in Basta!. June 1986.

30

Page 14 in Nuestro. September 1985.

31

Extended voluntary departure status allows refugees to stay in the U.S. indefinitely, and to leave voluntarily; see p. 25 in Basta!. June 1986.

32

See p. 25 in Basta!. June 1986.

33

See Guatemala: News in Brief. No. 19, America's Watch Committee (pamphlet).



34

See p. 25 in Basta!. June 1986.

35

See p. 3 in Americas Watch, Report On Human Rights in Nicaragua. (pamphlet) 1985; for a further comparison of Central American countries' records on human rights, see Cynthia Brown, ed., chapter 4 in With Friends Like These. 1985.

36

See Alan C. Nelson, Commission, Immigration and Naturalization Bureau, "The Sanctuary Movement: Humanitarian Action, Political Opposition or Lawlessness?". Pp. 482-5 in Vital Speeches of the Day. Vol. LII, no. 16, June 1, 1986.

37

See R. Peterson, Central American Refugee Flows: 1978 to 1983. U.S. Bureau of Census, January 11, 1984.

38

See Gary MacEoin, chapter 1 in Sanctuary.

39

See p. 23 in Basta!. June 1986.

40

See p. 23 in Basta!. June 1986.

41

See Nelson, in "The Sanctuary Movement: Humanitarian Action, Political Opposition or Lawlessness?".

42

See p. 23 in Basta!. June 1986.

43

See Nelson, in "The Sanctuary Movement: Humanitarian Action, Political Opposition, or Lawlessness?".

44

Page 14 in Nuestro. September 1985.

45

Georgie Anne Geyer, p. 18 in Nuestro. September 1985.

46

Page 70 in Christianity Today. February 7, 1986.

47

See "FBI surveillance of Policy Critics Alleged." P. A34 in Washington Post. February 13, 1987; "INS on Trial." Pp. 68 in The Nation. January 25, 1986; and "Sanctuary Groups Implicated in FBI Files." Pp. 8-9 in Basta!. March 1988.

48

See p. 31 in Basta!. March 1987.

## CHAPTER III

### IDEOLOGICAL SPLITS

As noted, the sanctuary movement is characterized by two contrasting orientations. Those with a humanitarian orientation emphasize giving shelter and assistance to refugees seeking asylum in North America. Those with a political orientation emphasize protesting U.S. policies which they believe create the refugee displacements. These orientations vary across region, time, and gender, and have significance for both the sanctuary movement and women's activist careers.

First, these orientations appear to have regional significance. Tucson and Chicago - sites of the first two sanctuaries - have always been important centers for the movement. The two local movements differ by orientation as well as distance from the Mexican border. Tucson activists have tended toward the humanitarian, emphasizing local refugee care and opposing a national movement and identification with a political ideology. Chicago activists have tended toward the political, emphasizing a national organization and alliance with the larger anti-intervention movement. In Tucson, which is closer to the

great flow of refugees and the immensity of their problems, caretaking has developed as more of an end in itself. In Chicago, where "good" refugees are carefully selected for their moving stories and desire to speak out, caretaking has developed more as a means for making a political movement.

A division has emerged between the Chicago and Tucson branches of the movement based on these differences. Respondents discussed the character of these ideological differences between participants and regions in terms of localism and caretaking versus nationalism and activism. Early in the movement, Chicago women - particularly the women religious - tended to idealize Tucson leaders Corbett and Fife, viewing them as "charismatic," and "gurus." Later, they perceived and rejected the men's stand against a national movement. Respondents expressed a sense of disappointment and deception about this. For example, one woman said of Corbett, "it was very difficult to see him fall from his pedestal." Another said of Fife, "it's like being deceived by somebody you really trust."

This conflict between the Tucson and Chicago sanctuary movements - "the big split" - apparently began in 1983 with differences between the "Fife/Corbett group" and some women religious and anti-intervention agency

women in the early Chicago movement. One respondent claimed that the split involved an incident where "Chicago" returned a Guatemalan couple on a bus to Tucson because they lacked "good" stories. Another claimed that Fife had begged her to try to heal the rift, which she felt was "probably hopeless." Another noted that the Fife/Corbett group was not represented at the 1987 national closed-door meeting in Chicago.<sup>1</sup>

While respondents perceived this regional division differently, they generally agreed that issues are different near the Mexican border. Sanctuary operations in Tucson are riskier - they entail more contact with undocumented refugees, and require greater autonomy, secrecy, and reliance on the free spaces of religious institutions. Women claimed that "Tucson" wanted "a loose-knit movement - not an organization at all"; that in Tucson the issue was "states' rights versus government interference"; and that the Tucson movement was "solely religious," the Chicago movement, "also political." One woman compared the legal risks of caring for undocumented refugees for those involved in making a movement on their behalf. She claimed that in Tucson, sanctuary workers would more likely be "hassled" by the government for "harboring and transporting," while in Chicago, the charge would more likely be "conspiracy" - two or more people

conspiring to break the law.

The issue of "good" refugees illustrates this regional difference in the movement. While the Tucson movement emphasizes giving sanctuary to all refugees in need, the Chicago movement emphasizes giving it to those with "good" stories - i.e., personal experiences of torture and repression by agents of Central American governments. Respondents described good refugees as "good speakers with good stories." They are "articulate," "very political," and "understand immediately...that sanctuary work isn't just charity but changing American public opinion and government policy." Good refugees "can help...stop the war and change U.S. policies." They are "a different caliber of people...politically oriented," which "appeals to liberal people in the community." In contrast, other refugees lack good stories and political outlooks, or are "just interested in getting by."<sup>2</sup>

Despite respondents' perceptions of these ideological differences, there is disagreement on the extent to which there are actual differences in the Tucson and Chicago movements. Some observers claim that sanctuary workers in both areas have the same goals - to help political refugees from Central America to safety and to protest U.S. policies in the region. They also point out that both groups take the same legal risks in

achieving their goals.<sup>3</sup> Others perceive this division as part of a government strategy to "divide and conquer" - to separate political activist from "good shepherd". Rennie Golden, a national sanctuary leader and author,<sup>4</sup> claims that such a government strategy is aided "by discrediting one side of a different tendency, or the leaders from a side, so that witch hunts will appear to be deserved." She suggests that if the sanctuary movement accepts the distinction between activists of "religious" orientations and those of "secular" or "intentional" motivation, "it will have done the work of the oppressor."<sup>5</sup>

These two orientations, however, do appear to have characterized the sanctuary movement at different times. In the natural history of the movement's development, the political seems to have become more its end; the humanitarian, its means. While the initial harboring of refugees was perhaps an expressly humanitarian act, it may over time have become an intentionally political act in response to government and media attention. For example, one respondent noted that "initially...people...just wanted to help those refugees here...After awhile, they began bringing refugees in clandestinely."

An important point regarding this growing politicization is that sanctuary is a religious arm of the peace movement, and closely interlinked with the broader

movement for anti-intervention in Central America. All sanctuary sites in this study had supported previous social action, and most respondents had been previously active on other social issues. Most women had taken part in civil disobedience, and most belonged to large national "peace and justice" organizations. Several respondents expressed growing levels of commitment to action and involvement in the organizational survival of the movement, indicating the importance of the larger anti-intervention movement to their activism. For example, they made claims such as, "I didn't do civil disobedience until I joined (national anti-intervention agency)," "when I joined (national anti-intervention agency), I signed a pledge to do what I can," and "I've been more politically oriented...because I'm a member of (national Guatemalan support organization)." These growing interlinkages between religious and secular organizations account in part for the political direction the movement is taking.

Gender also compounds these regional and temporal patterns in orientation. While early sanctuary leaders were Tucson men who stressed local refugee care, more recent leaders have been Chicago women who stress building a national movement. As the movement has become more political over time, the gap between Tucson male leaders and Chicago female leaders has widened, and broad patterns

have emerged linking men with the humanitarian and women with the political approach. Respondents' rhetorics describing conflicts with men over national and local issues reveal their awareness of women's growing status in the movement, and their growing self-consciousness as women. They also reveal how women socially construct the movement around these differences, portraying women as a rising class which is getting somewhere, and casting the men as obstacles in their path.

Respondents' views of male leaders contrasted sharply with their views of female leaders. While a few women described Fife as a "flamboyant mover-shaker type," "well-liked," and "a very friendly guy," others described him as "a glamour boy - very smooth," "paternalistic," and "cocky." Corbett fared worse. Respondents described him as "a megalomaniac," "arrogant" and "patriarchal," with "the social analysis of a five-year old." They claimed that he was a "macho Texas rancher," "local wheel," and "lone coyote type;" a "gruff old willowed rancher who ordered his wife around" - "not collegiate (sic) at all."

In contrast, respondents viewed women leaders as "powerful" individuals who have something to say about the movement. These leaders emerge as important models for other women's participation. For example, one woman remarked that when she first got involved, she realized,



"gee, it's not a male bastion." Another stated that Renny Golden was "a guide to us all" - "intellectually and spiritually gifted." Another was impressed that Darlene Nicgorski, a nun and defendant in the Arizona trial, had a "good story" herself - she had been forced to seek sanctuary when her life was threatened in Guatemala.

Women's dissatisfaction with male leaders reflects their frustration over male domination and the marginalization of women's role in the movement. The media has further fueled women's frustration by stressing the leadership role of white male clerics and by portraying the movement in terms of "Anglo male heroism."<sup>7</sup> Women have responded by redefining the movement in terms of their own participation. For example, one respondent described Nicgorski's "brilliant critique" of Corbett, and of the biblical account of the roots of sanctuary:

She's tired of hearing him call himself the founder of sanctuary. He claims that Moses is the biblical founder. Darlene argues that it's the midwives who birthed and saved him.

Respondents shared their perceptions of the Tucson movement and the trial. They indicated that women had done the work and men got the credit, yet women were also arrested and indicted. As one woman put it, women "got a short shrift." Another stated that "the gender gap occurred right there," between the public image of the movement and women's actual role in it. Others criticized

the trial for its androcentrism. One noted that the judge deferred to the men - he "would never call Darlene Nicgorski 'sister'...(b)ut priests were always 'father'." Another claimed that "the attorneys themselves were patriarchal - into very male-identified systems."

Respondents' criticisms of male leaders' humanitarian approach and their domination in the Tucson movement are ways of making sense of these same issues in their own locale. Whether to bring people into the movement on a minimal basis or to press a program and lose members is an important part of the "Chicago/Midwest" group's struggle. Several women discussed this local conflict, indicating their own tendency toward the political approach. For example, one remarked that

(a) lot of people thought it was just charity...We've always had to educate people - bring people along - that this is foreign policy work.

Another claimed that, while some saw sanctuary in a "very patronizing, philanthropic way" of housing, clothing, and feeding refugees - "very safe tenets of Christianity" - the Chicago movement came together "precisely to criticize policies" - "to be a political, public witness."

However, a few respondents expressed disapproval over the political direction the local movement is taking. They focused their objections on women at a local anti-intervention agency which helps coordinate the local

movement. One criticized the agency for emphasizing the national rather than local movement, for its concern with "good" refugees, and for the importance it placed on political analysis. Another claimed that the agency ignored and belittled the religious basis of the movement, improperly combined faith and political resistance, and had relinquished the leadership role among local sanctuary sites. One respondent perceived that agency women "felt sanctuary as a concept of having refugees in your church" was "very stupid." She claimed that "they were sitting in this office downtown telling (her) local sanctuary was worthless," and that their commitment to the movement "came off obnoxious - that political stuff." Another stated that "there wasn't this coming together of faith and politics...faith and resistance" with the agency women; that some agency women "have...that anti-religious stance," "acting out...in not entirely mature ways."

However, another respondent commended the agency women for their combination of faith, feminism, and politics, and linked her own political orientation to associating with them. She claimed that the agency women have "faith, but not church-bound faith":

(Agency women) are "good strong feminists - not just regarding women's experience in the white middle class, but they have good race, class, and sex analyses and understand imperialism."

The pattern associating women with the political and

men with the humanitarian approach also appears locally. This pattern is important because it contradicts stereotypes linking women to caring and men to power. The thrust of the sanctuary movement is criticizing U.S. policies toward Latin America and empowering its perceived victims who seek asylum in North America. Men and women may be culturally predisposed to contradict these stereotypes in the context of the movement in two ways.

First, women may be more likely than men to experience American culture as oppressive, and to identify their own situation with that of the refugees, particularly refugee women, many of whom have been raped and beaten during their exodus.<sup>8</sup> Identifying with the oppressed may enhance women's sense of empathy and partnership with the refugees. A Catholic woman illustrated this point in relating a conversation with a Guatemalan husband and wife - Quiche Indians - in sanctuary at her parish:

I was telling Paulo and Felicite that I feel just like a Latina. Paulo says, "but you don't look like a Latina." I said, "in my heart and head, I'm oppressed." Felicite nods.

She observed the refugee woman's deference to her husband. When Paulo was present, Felicite would speak to her only indirectly, through her husband in their Indian language, although all three spoke Spanish as a second language.

A second possibility, as Jean Baker-Miller

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suggests, is that women empower others more comfortably than themselves, in contrast to men, who are more culturally oriented toward taking power. Several women at local sanctuary sites spoke of wanting partnership with the refugees, and accused the men of paternalism - wanting to merely support them. For example, a respondent at a mixed-sex site - where both men and women participate - described this conflict, which focused on the issue of the sanctuary budget. She complained that before the social responsibility committee meetings, the men would have already made the decisions:

Jim wouldn't tell the refugees that we have a budget. Roy and Jim thought I was being too rough on the refugees. I thought we needed to let the refugees in on our budget. Roy and Jim wanted to just give them money...I wanted a list of their needs, but Jim would just give the family money, out of his pocket or our budget. Eva and I favored making the refugees aware of budgets, and Jim and Roy favored paternalistic care. My position was that the family needs a budget.

A woman at a second mixed-sex site described a similar conflict, identifying a woman, along with the church minister, as having a "paternalistic," "humanitarian" style of refugee care. She claimed that Central and North Americans need to forge a partnership instead of North Americans being "paternalistic and condescending":

Edith and Mitch's position is paternalistic - they just want to pick up the tab. Others disagree. We give the refugees a stipend, subsidized rent, and medical care...It's partnership vs. paternalism. We

all have rights and responsibilities. Edith and Mitch are humanitarian and kind, but politically backward.

A woman described the same pattern at a third mixed-sex site, which has two clergy women and a lesbian community in the congregation, and where "women basically set the tone." While no one took the paternalistic approach, she identified the woman-based group with the partnership approach:

There was a real difference of opinion - should we help find jobs for refugees, or should we support them so they can do missionary work - speaking engagements. It was never really resolved, although we had the sense to include them in the dialogue.

This ideological difference also appeared across two groups of Catholic women at mixed- and same-sex sites. The former - primarily married homemakers - tended toward the humanitarian approach, emphasizing refugee care and assimilation. The latter - primarily nuns - tended toward the political approach, emphasizing empowering the refugees in partnership. Distinctive patterns and conflict emerge from each group's orientation.

Catholic women at the mixed-sex site tended to relate to the refugees in humanitarian, paternalistic terms. They indicated that they cared about the refugees as individuals moreso than about their plight as members of an oppressed social group. For example, one respondent described her husband's orientation toward some Guatemalan refugees in sanctuary at their parish; he wanted to help,

but not get politically involved:

Their comrades would send us (national Guatemalan support organization newsletter), and (husband) asked them to stop. He just didn't trust anyone, and just wanted to help these particular people.

Respondents at this site expressed their dissatisfaction over the refugees' lack of assimilation into American culture. For example, one woman indicated that the community was upset because the refugees hadn't learned more English, which "annoyed people in the community, who were not happy with them." She claimed that "if they were taking classes, people would see they're making progress. They're into Spanish soap operas - the kids watch them too." The refugee family wanted to name their baby born on the anniversary of Oscar Romero's assassination "Oscar." However, their caretakers told them, "no, people in the U.S. wouldn't like it, and would make fun of it" because the name is associated with "puppets, hotdogs, and penises."

Respondents at this site were also upset at the refugee family's prodigious birth rate - two women produced five babies in two years - and at their apparent failure or unwillingness to use birth control and breastfeed their babies. For example, one woman stated, "and now, Dora is expecting her fifth child! It just aggravated the heck out of us!" Another woman who had agreed to be the godmother of one baby said "no" when

asked to become the godmother of another:

The grandma told Paulo, "how could she refuse? All a godmother has to do is give advice?" I told my husband, "if they'd followed my advice, they'd never have had the baby!"

In contrast, respondents in the Chicago Catholic Sanctuary - which is about ninety-eight percent women, and predominantly nuns - were more politically oriented toward the refugees. Women religious stressed partnership and mutuality with the refugees, viewing them in terms of shared goals within larger political spheres. For example, one woman claimed that unlike other sanctuaries,

our caring for and working with refugees was a means for us - the end for us was ending U.S. intervention. We didn't begin by talking about...helping these poor folks...(but) with the moral obligation of facing off with the government...We didn't see this as charity, but as mutual commitment with the family.

Women religious indicated that they viewed the refugees as equals in a common political struggle, and that they were open to learning from them. For example, one woman claimed that she had learned from the refugees in ways she "never could from a textbook." Another claimed that the group had "learned a great deal that's countercultural" about themselves. Another described her friendship with Anna, a refugee woman, in egalitarian terms:

I take my friends over to her apartment...We talk a lot about the project - analyze the meetings together...We talk about all different subjects, just like I would with another female friend...She loves to



give me advice - she's very much the extrovert.

These politically oriented caretakers indicated that they experienced conflict not over the refugees' level of assimilation to American culture, but over their own level of commitment to the refugees' cause. For example, one woman complained that Anna's drive to end the war was "overwhelming." Anna couldn't understand why the group wasn't spending every minute working to end the war:

She wants to know why we can't get ten thousand people out in the street. We think we do well to get five hundred.

Another woman stated that

Anna and her family can be very difficult...she thinks North Americans are all stupid, wealthy, and indifferent.

These conflicts belie the women religious' belief in equality and partnership with the refugees, forcing them to acknowledge the disparities between them. One woman expressed these differences in this way:

Our realities are so different. I have rights in this country...but Anna has no rights in this country, or in El Salvador. I don't know how that feels. I've always benefitted from capitalism. She has not. I'm not saying that this shouldn't change, but I've never gone without. This is her reality.

In conclusion, the sanctuary movement is characterized by deep ideological divisions across region, time, and gender. Tucson men emerged as early leaders in the movement, and tended to favor a more localistic and

humanitarian approach. This has conflicted with the approach of more recent female leaders, who are associated with the Chicago movement and who have tended to favor a more nationalistic and political orientation.

This gender pattern also appears locally at several sites: many women described men as favoring a paternalistic style of relating to the refugees, while describing themselves as favoring partnership with the refugees. This difference also appeared among two groups of Catholic women. Those at a mixed-sex site - lay-women, primarily married homemakers - tended to favor charity and assimilation, while those at a same-sex site - predominantly nuns - tended to favor comradeship and empowerment.

These patterns contradict cultural prescriptions linking women to caring and men to power. However, men and women's respective roles in the movement and in society help explain these contradictions. Women do most of the hands-on work with the refugees, and may tend to identify with the oppressed. Women's preferred leadership styles in organizations also explains their orientation toward shared power and empowerment.<sup>11</sup> Differences between women religious and lay women may be explained in the contrasting arrangements of their lives, which help shape their ideological orientations.<sup>12</sup> These arguments

will be pursued further in later chapters.

## ENDNOTES

1

This meeting was for the purpose of setting a national agenda for the movement and establishing an ad hoc committee to work on issues of concern to North and Central Americans; the section on "leadership" in chapter seven describes the conflicts which ensued at the meeting.

2

See the section on the "post-refugee phase" of sanctuary site involvement in chapter five for more details about both "good" and "bad" refugees.

3

See Clay Ramsey, "More on the Sanctuary Movement." Pp. 39-41 in Monthly Review. September 1986.

4

Renny Golden co-authored an important book about sanctuary with Michael McConnell - Sanctuary: The New Underground Movement - and has played a prominent role in both the national and local movements since they emerged.

5

Page 105 in "Sanctuary: Choosing Sides." Pp. 97-110 in Socialist Review. No. 90, vol. 6, November/December 1986.

6

A popular woman's magazine named a woman sanctuary leader a "woman of the year;" see Rusty Brown, "Sister Darlene Nicgorski: For giving refugees the sanctuary we ourselves..." Pp. 54, 56, 90-2 in Ms.. January 1987.

7

Page 10 in Basta!. February 1986.

8

See Jane Juffer, "Abuse at the Border: Women face a perilous crossing." Pp. 14-19 in The Progressive. April 1988.

9

Jean Baker Miller, Toward A New Psychology of Women. Boston: Beacon Press, 1976; and "Women and Power." Pp. 3-6 in Social Policy. 51, 3, 1983.

10

See the section on "caretaking" in chapter VII for a fuller description of how the two orientations manifested themselves in these two groups; and chapter eight for a treatment of the ideological differences between them regarding women's place in social change.

11

Chapter VII - particularly the section on "leadership" - explores gender patterns and conflicts in the movement in greater detail.

12

Chapter VIII compares and analyzes ideological differences between women religious and lay women.

## CHAPTER IV

### SANCTUARY IN CHICAGO

#### The Local Network

While Chicago is not officially a sanctuary city, its leaders informally support it. Before his death in December 1987, Mayor Harold Washington declared that no city officials including police would assist agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in enforcing policies regarding undocumented refugees in Chicago. Reverend Jesse Jackson and Operation Push have also supported the sanctuary movement in Chicago.

The sanctuary movement formally emerged in Chicago in 1982 when members of a local church declared it a sanctuary - the second in the nation. By 1987, sanctuary had been declared at about fifteen churches and synagogues of different denominations. Divided evenly between the city and its suburbs, these sites are loosely linked by six neighborhood and religious coalitions (see Table III, Appendix B) - the Northside, Southside, Westside, Northshore, Jewish, and Catholic Sanctuaries.<sup>1</sup> Out of the interaction of sanctuary sites, coalitions, social justice agencies, and support organizations which make up the

local movement, a city-wide network has emerged.

In 1986, participants created a new city-wide "umbrella group" - the Intercity Sanctuary Alliance (ISA) - which meets every two or three months. Its steering committee, made up of a representative from each constituent network, meets every few weeks. One respondent reported that until people decided to organize to discuss common projects they could work on, the movement was "very sporadic city-wide." She claimed that the committee includes people with "broader vision of how to do outreach work in the community."

Two Chicago suburbs - both locations of sanctuary sites - have undergone the process to become official sanctuary cities. <sup>2</sup> In one suburb, members at local sites began articulating a proposal in 1986. While the Council of Churches massively supported it, after public debate, the Community Board rejected it on the recommendation of the Community Relations Committee. Supporters have continued picketing outside the local library and post office and pressing for the proposal's passage. The second suburb officially became a sanctuary city in February 1988, after six months' intensive outreach efforts by members at local sites. Although the community mayor opposed it, the city council passed the proposal sixteen to two.

Several local and national social justice agencies have played critical roles in bringing the sanctuary movement to Chicago and sustaining it. The sanctuary movement is part of a larger movement opposed to U.S. policies in Central America, and these agencies help create linkages between religious and secular groups within the larger movement. One local agency has been a coordinating center for the national sanctuary movement since 1982. It publishes a journal on sanctuary and Central American issues, as well as manuals on how to become a site, modeled after Chicago's first sanctuary. The agency has helped coordinate some underground activities, such as placing refugee families at churches and synagogues. One respondent claimed that the agency is not the only one which does so, "but they do it so well" - she'd be "suspicious of any sanctuary group not willing to work through (agency)."

Another local agency was a catalyst in the formation of the Chicago Catholic Sanctuary in 1986. Respondents described how women religious at this agency enlisted about one hundred local women and hundreds more at about forty religious orders nationwide to defy church authority by supporting the Catholic sanctuary. The agency also helped organize a three-day conference at a local Catholic university in 1987 for the purpose of creating an ad hoc



committee and agenda for the national movement.

A third national agency helps coordinate some of the "actions" which many sanctuary members take part in. These are group acts of nonviolent civil disobedience at public demonstrations. Twenty-four respondents said they have gone to demonstrations, and eight claimed they had been arrested. Almost all respondents indicated that they belong to the national agency, which shares staff members with other local social justice agencies involved in sanctuary.

The local sanctuary network links together diverse coalitions and denominations across the metropolitan area. When the relatives of a Guatemalan family arrived at a Catholic site, members of a nearby Protestant site whose refugees had moved on helped support and house the extended family. When the main wage earner became ill and unable to work, a Jewish synagogue across town began helping support the family. It provided food, clothing and money for six months, then declared itself a sanctuary and began preparing for the arrival of its own family.

This pattern of church members supporting sanctuary elsewhere before declaring it at their own churches and synagogues is typical, especially for Catholics. Before the Catholic Sanctuary existed, six of the fifteen Catholics in the study first participated at other

denominational sites. Several respondents stated that they would often attend their own church mass, then would go on Sunday afternoons to Protestant sanctuary sites - "the only ones willing to go out on a limb."

Respondents indicated that small, homogeneous Protestant churches of around one hundred families are the most successful in declaring sanctuary. It is apparently easier to reach consensus in "small communities with a tradition of social action." Small-sized congregations appear to be "ideal for these issues". For example, all nine Protestant sanctuary sites in the Chicago area have congregations of about this size.

The large size, heterogeneity, and conservatism of most Catholic parishes tends to hinder their being declared sanctuaries. For example, a respondent active at a Protestant site who attends a "traditional" Catholic church reported that the person who led the movement to ban handguns in her community and the person who led the opposition both belonged to her parish. She claimed that most of its twenty-five hundred members "are just not open to Central American issues, the nuclear arms race, so many things that require a world view."

However, two Catholic sanctuary groups in the Chicago area have overcome these obstacles. One, a small "church within a church," was able to unofficially become

a sanctuary due partly to its small size and autonomy within a larger parish. According to respondents, the smaller church has its own budget and priest, and is totally lay-run. About fifteen of one hundred twenty families belong to both, "straddl(ing) the fence" with the "big parish," a congregation of about twenty-five hundred members.

Chicago Catholic churches face a more critical obstacle in openly declaring sanctuary - the position of the archdiocese on the issue. Cardinal Bernadin supports existing legislation. His position is that parishes may discreetly assist undocumented refugees, but not publicize or politicize their situation. When the Chicago Catholic Sanctuary declared itself in December 1986, the Archbishop issued this statement:

The plight of refugees, particularly those from Central America, is a great concern of the Church. Earlier this year, the bishops of Illinois asked every Catholic parish and institution in the state to make their resources available to refugees regardless of their legal status. Both our parishes and Catholic Charities provide basic human needs for countless numbers of refugees in the archdiocese. Such assistance to refugees is different from the political movement known as "public sanctuary." While I share the concern of those who espouse public sanctuary, I have not supported this particular strategy...Instead, together with the United States Catholic Conference, I have insisted that we use legal means at our disposal to change public policy in this regard. Specifically, I ask that the efforts of our people be directed toward a policy which would grant extended voluntary departure status to such refugees.<sup>3</sup>

One respondent speculated that the Archbishop

"probably has more refugees in his archdiocese than he has any clue to." She summarized his position on sanctuary:

He favors local, humanitarian responses to refugees but not a national, political movement...he won't support sanctuary.

Official disapproval, and the group's inability to use church property, spurred about a hundred local women across the city - primarily nuns - to form the Chicago Catholic Sanctuary, the first one public and independent of a parish. One respondent confirmed that

(t)he Chicago Catholic Sanctuary...was...helped by the Cardinal saying it's illegal and forbidden - galvanized by the asininity of the hierarchy.

Another commented on the Archbishop's position, indicating the spirit of defiance in which the Chicago Catholic Sanctuary was formed:

Our point is that people have to know about...the Central American war, and the U.S. role. He said he doesn't have time to meet with us. The idea of the nuns who began the Chicago Catholic Sanctuary is, we don't need his approval.

Synagogues tend to face obstacles similar to parishes in becoming sanctuaries - large size, heterogeneity, and conservatism. Some Jewish respondents indicated that synagogues aren't often sanctuaries "because the concern isn't for Jews - it's not a Jewish cause." However, unlike the Catholic hierarchy, the national hierarchy among Jewish organizations - the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) and the Central

Confederation of American Rabbis (CCAR) - supports the national sanctuary movement. Four synagogues in the Chicago area have overcome these obstacles and declared themselves sanctuaries.

Small Protestant churches may face other kinds of obstacles in becoming sanctuaries. For example, one respondent reported that sanctuary was defeated at her church because the congregation feared that the church would suffer damage to its image and then lose its financial support for being a historical landmark. Furthermore, church officials reportedly claimed that taking a stand on political issues would go against denominational philosophy. However, a church of the same denomination in a nearby, less affluent neighborhood used the same philosophy to justify openness to sanctuary. A respondent at this site gave a contrasting interpretation of church doctrine:

...the great covenant of the (denominational) church is to live in peace, find truth and love, and help one another. Beyond that, there's no religious dogma. (Denomination) is beyond Christianity. It encompasses all faiths, prophets and saviors...there are no crucifixes (at the church) - instead, murals of Confucius, Buddha, Camus, and Tubman.

A Protestant church in an Hispanic neighborhood faced another kind of obstacle in becoming a sanctuary. Sixty percent of its congregation were undocumented refugees. According to one respondent, this greatly

influenced its decision not to publicly declare itself a sanctuary.

A congregation's decision to declare sanctuary is often accompanied by disagreement, and at times the loss of more conservative members. For example, one respondent reported that when the rabbi at her synagogue made the initial announcement in the bulletin, two members of the temple quit:

The first said...this was not a Jewish issue and shouldn't be a high priority. He's a lawyer. The second man - also a lawyer - was really upset...He brought a whole law case book on immigration. He was opposed to taking any kind of illegal action...He accused these people of just wanting a better life...He said, "this is not a Jewish issue. Let someone else do it - what do they mean to us? Why are we doing it?"

However, a congregation's failure to declare sanctuary may also be accompanied by the loss of its more social action-oriented members. For example, about half the group of twenty who originally worked on bringing sanctuary to a vote at one church left when it was defeated. According to one respondent, they left "because of the attitude of the congregation - not wanting to know about it - moreso than because of the vote."

When sanctuaries are declared, they often attract dissatisfied members from non-active churches and synagogues. For example, one respondent confirmed that when sanctuary was declared at her church, several

"movement people" transferred from the above church to her "little, poor church." Another reported that "several dynamic, justice-minded folks" have joined her church - the only "progressive" church in her area - and that "the ecumenical community is pleased" that her church exists.

Losing more conservative members allows social action churches and synagogues to strengthen and homogenize their ranks. For example, one respondent claimed that her church had been "broken open to these issues" ever since the pastor went to Selma, Alabama in the 1960's to participate in the civil rights movement. As a result,

(h)alf the congregation left, and the folks left behind became the core of the folks who branched into the women's movement, the civil rights movement, sanctuary, and the gay rights movement.

In sum, the Chicago area sanctuary movement is made up of a network of diverse and interconnecting neighborhood and religious groups which share many goals and activities. The movement receives official support from a variety of city and suburban governments, social justice agencies, and religious institutions. Small Protestant churches are the most likely sites to become sanctuaries. Parishes and synagogues tend to face obstacles of large size, heterogeneity, and conservatism. However, four local synagogues have overcome these obstacles, and two Catholic sanctuaries have surmounted

the additional problem of church disapproval - one with quiet discretion, the other, public defiance. Congregations both gain and lose members over the decision to declare sanctuary, which homogenizes their ranks and reaffirms their commitment to social action.

### Special Churches and Synagogues

All nine sanctuary sites in the study have a long history of social action regarding other social causes. These are special churches and synagogues dedicated to a wide range of social justice issues. Over time, members have created traditions which use institutional "free space" to support causes often unpopular in their communities. These institutions provide members with an arena in which to collectively express social concerns and take social action, often incurring legal and social risks on behalf of individual members. Some examples of these special sites follow.

A small Protestant church became Chicago's second sanctuary in 1983. In the 1960's, its pastor had reportedly involved the congregation in open housing and other issues when he went to Selma to take part in the civil rights movement. The church housed the community's first women's liberation group, and created an alternative school which "effected long-term change in the community schools." Its daycare center was the first in the



community, which reportedly strongly opposed it - they "had to fight to be allowed to offer it." In the early 1970's, the church offered an LSD rescue service using vitamin therapy, at a time when community hospitals helped prosecute those seeking emergency treatment. Besides being a sanctuary, the church currently has a daycare center and homeless shelter, houses a "gay church," and is a "nuclear-free zone."

Another small Protestant church - a sanctuary site since 1985 - opened its parish hall in the 1960's to university students for political meetings not allowed on their campus. It also opened a "multi-faceted community center" with programs in job counseling, tutoring, adult literacy and English as a second language, staffed by "students, neighborhood, and church people." Its congregation includes an "intentional community" which buys old buildings in the neighborhood, repairs and moves into them. The church became a "nuclear-free zone" in 1985, the same year it became a sanctuary. It held a fundraiser for Mayor Harold Washington, and sponsored a study task force on South Africa. It currently offers six-week classes on sanctuary, nuclear war, arms control, and homosexuality, and is in the process of becoming an "affirming church for gays and lesbians."

Despite greater obstacles in becoming sanctuaries,

synagogues and Catholic parishes share this profile with social action churches. A reform synagogue - a sanctuary since 1987 - is known as the "Free Synagogue," based on the principle of "the rabbi's freedom of the pulpit." Respondents described the old founding rabbi as "an unusual man" who went to Selma during the civil rights movement, and the new rabbi as "also very socially active." Early issues at the Free Synagogue were gun control, open housing, homeless shelters, and an interfaith housing coalition. Jewish issues are Israel and Soviet Jewry, and the Shalom Project "on the nuclear and peace issue."

The "church within a church" - a small social action parish within a large traditional one - unofficially became a sanctuary in 1985. A separate church since 1972, its earlier issues were "poverty, justice, war, and soup kitchens." According to respondents, the congregation has included "a lot of old civil rights liberals from the 50's," as well as "divorced Catholics, ex-priests and ex-nuns." One woman claimed that "it's one place where ex-Catholics can go." Another noted its informality: "they let the kids take their shoes off and run around the gym," where the congregation holds its services and meetings.

Sanctuary churches and synagogues are organizationally distinct from their more traditional

counterparts. Whether intentionally or not, they tend to be structured like base-community churches of Latin America. A nun who has traveled widely in that region claimed that the term "base community" first emerged in Brazil in the 1960's, and refers to a "real grassroots, self-help movement by indigenous people which transforms their whole perspective of their situation." A respondent described this model at the "church within a church":

It's patterned like the base communities of Central America - families know each other, help and do things together. Lay persons take turns at services.

A divorced mother of four who had experienced difficulties maintaining housing in the community illustrated how the "church within a church" had helped her family:

For awhile, we moved a lot...but we always stayed at (church). I'd moved my kids into (community) because the schools were good. But we were barely scraping by, and had to move a lot. One day, the priest asked somebody, "why do the (family) have to move so often?" When he heard the answer, the church helped my family buy a house and get furniture. They raised four thousand dollars...so we wouldn't have to keep moving.

The base-community concept is more characteristic of but not unique to Catholic sites. For example, the rabbi's "freedom of the pulpit" at the Free Synagogue is somewhat similar. A clergy woman described how a visiting Panamanian bishop who had studied the writings of Paulo Freire introduced the concept at a Protestant church in 1977, after which it became the established format:

The Sunday morning format is that we've pulled up the pews in the sanctuary and put them in a circle. We have a sermon, usually by (other clergy woman) and I, then we re-group and talk about the sermon - argue or disagree. One Sunday a month, somebody else preaches...sometimes, very personal responses are made to the sermon - this allows the community to know one another. We pray in a circle before and after the sermon..."Designated enablers" is what (other woman) and I are called, not leaders.

The chance to address social issues is a significant factor in women's attraction to social action churches and synagogues - respondents characterized such opportunities as "a plus," "certainly appealing," and "the right match." One woman stated that she left her traditional parish because there was no discussion of social issues - "there was no challenge there - nobody wanted to be controversial." A minister's wife remarked that she'd always "had to live a double life" because of her "uncommon beliefs and dedications," until her husband was assigned to a social action church. Here, for the first time in her life, her "public and personal persona were integrated," and all the "political activism" she and her husband did was "affirmed, understood, and celebrated."

For some, the opportunity for social action is a more significant factor than denomination. For example, one respondent claimed that her "denominational loyalty" was to "whatever church is doing social action":

Faith without action is not faith to me...If we ever moved somewhere else and the most active church were Roman Catholic, I'd go there. Denomination means

nothing. I'd go to a synagogue, although that would be difficult because I'd need to learn a lot about Judaism.

In sum, sanctuary sites tend to be special churches and synagogues traditionally committed to social causes and collective action. Many sites resemble base-community churches of Latin America in their informal format and communal orientation. The opportunity to address social issues and participate in social action is a significant factor in women's attraction to them.

#### Special Committees, Women and Men

In most cases, only a handful of members of special churches and synagogues actually participates in social action. The socially concerned few join "social action," "social responsibility," or "peace and justice" committees, which function generally outside of the interest or awareness of the majority in the congregation. Respondents indicated that "it's usually just a committee of hands-and-feet folks who do all the social concerns" - "somewhat of a fringe group" in the congregation.

Most important, the membership of these committees is predominantly women. Except for the Chicago Catholic Sanctuary - which is about ninety-eight percent women, mostly nuns - women outnumber men by about three to two in all sanctuary groups in the study. Women also predominate at local social justice agencies involved with sanctuary.

In the Overground Railroad, women also predominate in sanctuary operations at about two hundred host churches which make up its national network.

Men in the movement are few, yet play a critical role in its success. Their positional authority in church hierarchies is a significant factor in whether rules will be bent and institutional free space will be used for social action. Respondents noted clergy men overlooking irregularities on many occasions. As one put it, the pastor "just kind of closed his eyes" to the fact that the refugees were "illegals." Another commented that

...there are fronts which pastors put up - what their congregations want - then they endorse other issues privately, and are proud of it.

While many respondents indicated that they believed women were "the most important element" in the movement, some stressed the "vital role of ministers" in formally declaring sanctuary, whereas "women may be influential before and after." Some suggested that women need the push from men to speak up or act. One woman claimed that

(i)nitially, it was more the men who were sparks...they could be considered the prophetic, telling us, "take the leap of faith and do it." But they've needed us to do the work.

Respondents disagreed as to whether or not the few men in the movement are "special". A few felt they are not. One claimed that the men may be more "compassionate and sensitive than the norm, but then so are the women."

Another believed that if the men are special,

it's because they allow women to control the agenda...As a white person, the question is not, "am I racist?", but "how much?" For men, I think it's "how sexist am I?"

Many others described the men as "definitely exceptional" - "a different kind of men." For example, one man was singularly praised as a "good, good man," "a doer," "relentless," "patient and tolerant," and a "good speaker." He and a minister were called "a good combination." Respondents described sanctuary men as "loving, sensitive, and caring," frequently employed in care-giving roles as teachers, therapists, and social workers. One woman characterized the men as "professionals," and claimed that her church doesn't "get a lot of beer-guzzling, TV-watching men."

As members of an historically oppressive group, men in the movement may struggle with the conditioned urge to dominate. A clergy woman described two men involved in sanctuary at her church as "atypical", suggesting a gap between sanctuary work and prescribed male behavior:

In one man, I don't see any desire for fame, to be a star. The other man is working harder than any other human being I know at equality issues across the board.

Other respondents shared their perceptions of men's untenable position in a care-oriented religious movement. Like women, men may take on new identities in the

movement. However, these changes may conflict with prescribed male values and behavior. One woman described this conflict, suggesting that religious conversions enable men to more easily violate these norms:

Men...have to go through a transformation. Their models have been to become people with power over others...(They) have to shake off a false identity in order to surrender themselves to caring. Most of the men have had some sort of conversion experience - that's not particularly encouraged in men.

Another woman discussed men's and women's roles in the movement, indicating her view of a spiritual division of labor which helps reconcile role incongruities for both:

Anyone on a spiritual journey has to confront the feminine in themselves...Domination and control are not part of the life of the spirit. The main thing that keeps us working together is prayer - being deeply in touch with the inner self. For a woman, that puts her in touch with a certain strength - what's masculine in her - that fuses with her ability to care. For a man, that puts him in touch with a different strength - their source of loving and caring, which is their feminine side.

Some Catholic respondents discussed the link between position in the church hierarchy and social action, indicating differences for women and men religious. One woman claimed that

...nuns have always been locked out of the power structure of the church, and their very powerlessness has made their lives revolve around...having a clear vision of what the world needs instead of going up the hierarchical ladder of the church.

Another woman explained how women religious in the sanctuary movement "have much less to lose" than men in



the church. The four men in the Catholic sanctuary belong to religious orders; they are not diocesan, so are a little more protected. While diocesan priests could "quickly be out of a job," "order men" have more in common with nuns:

We share common elements in our religious life - vows, community living, a collegiate model. [just what is this?] Consensual decision-making, away from hierarchical structure, greater shared responsibility.

In sum, only small special bodies of congregations actually participate in sanctuary. Women predominate on these committees, as they do in all sanctuary groups in the study. Although few in number, men play a critical role due to their positional authority in church hierarchies, and women's reliance on them as "sparks" to initiate action. Most respondents viewed sanctuary men as "special" - ironically, the same men they accused of dominating the movement.

### The Overground Railroad

Reba Place in Evanston, Illinois is headquarters for the national Overground Railroad (OR), founded in 1983 by its minister (see Appendix C). With Jubilee Partners (JP) of Georgia, OR facilitates the legal movement of refugees out of INS detention centers in Texas to Canada, where they have applied for asylum. Refugees stay at OR's two hundred or so host churches across the country, where some

do public speaking while waiting to enter Canada. Although not part of national or local sanctuary networks, OR and the church which houses it share many similarities with the sanctuary movement.

Reba Place - a small Protestant congregation with a history of social action and a base-community format - was founded in 1957 as a joint association of Mennonite and Church of The Brethren churches. Out of an anabaptist tradition, Reba Place became involved over the years in social issues such as the Vietnam war and civil rights. Half its congregation of three hundred lives communally, exchanging paychecks for allowances based on individual needs. Four elders do oversight work, and several people preach on Sundays in a base-community format. According to one respondent, "it's anti-hierarchical, from the ground up...something we do, not something we're told."

Ideologically and operationally distinct, OR parallels many of sanctuary's activities. While the sanctuary movement works both legally and illegally with refugees, OR works primarily with INS-detained refugees unable to remain underground, thus its necessarily overground, legalistic approach. The local office does national coordinating; OR is better known in Texas, where it works directly with detained refugees. While the two sanctuary operations engage in similar activities, their

public images and the risks they take contrast sharply, due mostly to the legal sphere within which OR necessarily operates. OR participants don't publicize their work or openly break the law, and favor a more humanitarian, less confrontational orientation to sanctuary, as one noted:

...differences are in the balance between serving needs and confronting injustices. The sanctuary movement uses more direct, dramatic confrontation of political roots. OR has less dramatic, even optional church involvement with the political aspect. OR's real thrust is saving lives, preventing deportations, and offering a new chance at life.

The issue of "good" refugees clearly distinguishes the two operations. OR refugees need not have good stories nor purely political reasons for seeking asylum. They must genuinely fear returning home and must never have participated in political violence;<sup>4</sup> however, they need not be "articulate", nor "have good political understandings of events." For this reason, some sanctuary participants tend to dismiss OR activities. For example, one respondent doesn't consider OR a part of the sanctuary movement because "they don't criticize the government, they work very openly, and only on relocation to Canada."

In conclusion, the sanctuary movement is sustained by a network of sites, coalitions, agencies and organizations which provide support in the face of condemnation by the government. Protestant churches

become sanctuaries more easily than do parishes and synagogues, which tend to be larger, more heterogeneous and conservative; parishes face the additional obstacle of church disapproval. Congregations lose and gain members by supporting sanctuary, homogenizing their ranks and reaffirming their commitment to social action.

Sanctuary churches and synagogues tend to have a base-community format and a long history of social action. These features are very attractive to women, who predominate on social responsibility committees as they do in all sanctuary groups in the study. Men play critical roles in the movement because of their authority in the church and women's reliance on them to initiate action. Women tend to view men in the movement as "special" - as anomalies in a care-based religious movement.

The Overground Railroad is distinctive from the Chicago sanctuary movement. While both engage in the same kinds of activities, OR works primarily overground through the legal system to help INS-detained refugees in Texas receive amnesty in Canada. OR participants take a more humanitarian, less confrontational approach, and the refugees they assist need not have "good" stories nor be politically articulate. For these reasons, participants in the local movement fail to identify with OR.

## ENDNOTES

1

These sites' and coalitions' names and those of all other institutions, organizations, agencies and persons in the study have been changed.

2

Sanctuary cities give official support to the sanctuary movement by officially speaking out on issues regarding government policies in Central America and the refugees, and by refusing to assist INS officials in locating or prosecuting undocumented refugees. There are about twenty-two sanctuary cities in the U.S.

3

See "Area Catholics establish 'sanctuary' for refugees; Salvadoran woman, three children given safe haven: Cardinal Bernadin warns of illegality of movement." In The Chicago Catholic. Vol. 95, No. 48, December 5, 1986.

4

The Overground Railroad shares this policy with Amnesty International, a world-based human rights organization investigating the abuses of repressive governments.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SANCTUARY PROCESS

#### Stages of Involvement

Individuals and organizations undergo several stages of involvement in the sanctuary movement. While the next chapter examines these developments in women's personal lives, this chapter focuses on institutional change, and how small woman-based groups transform religious organizations into a social movement. It maps this process from a natural history perspective, emphasizing the turning points and changes in institutional involvement which coincide with the arrival, stay and departure of refugees in sanctuary. It locates the dynamics of change in "law-abiding citizens" learning to translate their personal response to the refugees' situation into collective illegal action. It concludes by comparing this process at local two Catholic sanctuaries.

At the time this study was made, two of the nine sites in the sample were in the process of successfully becoming sanctuaries; five established sites had between their first and fourth set of refugees in sanctuary; and two sites had moved on to other forms of support. No site

had ceased participating in the movement, although some participants had experienced "burnout".

In the "pre-refugee stage", members of the congregation first learn about the sanctuary movement and initiate the process of becoming a site. Social action committee members<sup>2</sup> discuss the issues among themselves, hold meetings with the congregation, and make proposals to declare sanctuary. After a vote, committee members' activities shift as they begin the task of marshalling resources for the refugees' care. They do this primarily by tapping into informal local networks and soliciting goods and services - an example of much of the "hidden work"<sup>3</sup> women perform as volunteers in communities.

In the "refugee stage", members of the congregation formally receive the refugees and hear their stories in moving ceremonies which inspire and fuel subsequent involvement. Social action committee members then begin the most demanding work of all - providing for the refugees' total needs. At first, they "monitor" the refugees' safety and adjustment "around the clock." Allocating the work among themselves helps ease the strain, and in time procedures become somewhat institutionalized, as sets of refugees arrive and leave.

In the "post-refugee stage", the last refugees leave and committee members move on to other activities,

such as outreach, demonstrating, travel to Central America, and supporting refugees in other sanctuaries. Institutional involvement is generally enduring, although some individuals "burn out" or otherwise move on. Institutional support and a large committed body in the congregation generally ensure continued involvement after the last refugees leave, although the case for Catholic sanctuaries is different.

Because the Catholic church is officially opposed to the sanctuary movement and forbids the use of parish property for its purpose, Catholic sanctuaries undergo a somewhat different process. While the two Catholic sites in the study generally had the same experience as the other seven in most regards, they also had to contend with the church's official disapproval. Out of contrasting circumstances, for different purposes, and by alternate routes, the two groups of participants - women religious and lay women - overcame this obstacle by violating the church's line of resistance in highly dissimilar ways.

#### Pre-Refugee Stage

In the first stage of involvement, members of the congregation are initiated to the movement, go through the process of formally declaring their church or synagogue a site, and begin preparing for the refugees' arrival. Introduction to sanctuary occurs in a variety of ways, and



affects the character and duration of subsequent institutional involvement. Generally, the more openly sanctuary is introduced to members of the congregation and the more institutional support it receives, the more widespread, committed, and enduring is participation.

At Chicago's first sanctuary - second in the nation - members of the congregation were gradually introduced to the movement through witnesses' firsthand accounts of conditions in Central America, the refugees' plight, and the newly declared sanctuary church in Tucson. An ordained minister in the congregation reportedly returned from Central America and stated at a church council meeting that there was "some really bad stuff going on," and that "there's a church in Tucson taking in refugees with bullet holes in them who are fleeing El Salvador." At subsequent meetings, members learned "more and more." Eventually John Fife visited the church - a local social justice agency had reportedly recommended it as a prospective site. Respondents found Fife a credible witness - "not a fire-and-brimstone minister," but a "quiet," "well-balanced man" with "a sense of humor" who "spoke gently about (his) experiences."

In other cases, members of the congregation became interested in sanctuary because denominational leaders of national organizations endorsed it or were associated with

national sanctuary figures. A clergy woman explained that her denomination is "all in favor of sanctuary at the national level...it's the grassroots level that's not there." Respondents at a synagogue indicated that knowing about a Tucson rabbi who was "friends with Corbett and Fife" and "big" in two national Jewish organizations which endorse sanctuary made the difference between members of the social action committee "talk(ing) about it" and "decid(ing) to look into sanctuary."

In some cases, members of the congregation were introduced to sanctuary through the efforts of energetic, committed individuals among them - catalysts who facilitated the decision to declare sanctuary. The "good, good man" previously cited was reportedly central in the drive to make his community a sanctuary city, and "instrumental" in "introducing the...issue...and forming a small sanctuary committee" at his church. Similarly, a woman uninvolved with the social action committee at her synagogue connected with it precisely when its interest in sanctuary was waning. The committee chairwoman described her as an "irritant" who "d(ug) things out and present(ed) them and want(ed) to know why" the committee hadn't "done things yet." She noted the critical difference this woman made in the sanctuary process at her synagogue:

The whole thing would have died at that point...if she hadn't come on board...I put it all in her hands and

she's carried the ball...she's gotten things done.

The catalyst claimed to be "very dissatisfied" and "about to resign" because the synagogue wasn't "doing jack shit" about sanctuary. She "saw other churches getting active, but not (synagogue)," and was "searching around literally for some reason to stay." She attended a meeting of the social action committee and confronted its members:

I said, "what are you guys doing about sanctuary?" "Well, we've been trying to move in some direction and haven't gotten off the ground." I heard constipation...From that moment on I don't think they had a chance.

Although the committee brought the resolution to the board within six months, she reportedly told them, "that's not enough. Why don't we just make (suburb) a sanctuary city?" She led the successful effort in making both her synagogue and her community official sanctuaries.

In most cases, members of the congregation were introduced to sanctuary by the example of other local sites. Attending another site's declaration ceremony is "a real impetus" for many to get involved. Respondents indicated that sanctuary participants - along with those at social justice agencies - often solicit official endorsement and material support from other churches and synagogues. Acting as catalysts and role models, they also encourage new sanctuary declarations. Respondents described how those at other sites and agencies often

"sell" the idea of sanctuary. For example, one woman reported that

(sanctuary church) and (agency) came out and spoke with us...and said how great it'd be for the third anniversary of Oscar Romero's assassination for there to be a new sanctuary site opening.

similarly, a respondent whose church supported sanctuary at another site reported that agency members came to her church and said,

You endorsed (sanctuary church), and we need more sanctuaries to open, to bring the situation in Central America to the attention of the media and the American people - to affect foreign policy.

At a new sanctuary, agency members not only "helped with the nuts and bolts of the family once they arrived," they also answered lingering questions and helped define the group's orientation. When an attorney asked, "why can't we just care for a family and not do the public things?," agency spokespersons reportedly provided this rationale:

(T)he family is actually safer this way. This publicity may protect them from government harassment. Also, we're making a public statement, to help raise U.S. consciousness. The family is putting itself at risk for this. The truth has to be told.

In the case of a small Protestant church located within a cluster of theological seminaries near a large university, members of the congregation reportedly learned about and initiated their own involvement in sanctuary, independent of national figures, special catalysts, agencies, or other sites. Its congregation includes about

thirty seminarians and ministers, and enjoys widespread participation on social issues. Over half the congregation is involved in "home and class study groups," which provide education for the wider membership. A clergy woman indicated that the congregation was "definitely aware of what was happening in Central America," which she attributed to "a good size core of people in the church and community...committed to sanctuary." She denied that social justice agents suggested that the church get involved; instead, committed church members brought the issue "to the attention of the whole congregation."

Once sanctuary is introduced, the process of becoming a site may occur over a period of months or years, during which time members of the social action committee set up a task force to learn about and discuss the issues. Respondents indicated how they "do their homework" at this point in order to decide "the best thing to do." They talk to lawyers, "study the issues," and consider all the "ramifications...legal, moral, energy, everything." They must "figure out how to feed, house, and support a refugee family," so that they have "all the information" when it "comes time to present" their proposal to declare sanctuary to the congregation.

When members of the congregation finally vote on the

committee's proposal, they sometimes initially acquiesce to sanctuary in limited ways only. For example, one respondent described her synagogue's early, tentative involvement:

We passed a proposal that we wouldn't have site sanctuary but would support any refugees fearing for their lives...We would accept site sanctuary only with board approval on a case-by-case basis.

Similarly, another described her church's limited commitment to sanctuary in the beginning:

The congregation was not enthusiastic, but did grant a policy of sanctuary for four months as part of refugee stop-over only - an overground railroad.

While there is often disagreement among members of the congregation over the decision to declare sanctuary, those opposed often end up participating. For example, one woman characterized the "four against" at her church as

...primarily folks who didn't think we had the energy to do it - they weren't opposed philosophically, ideologically, or politically. They were just worried about being tired. But all four helped eventually.

Another woman confirmed that "even those who'd been opposed" were "the first to volunteer." Another concurred, and described a woman at her synagogue who was "very cautious and w(ould) never commit herself," who "eventually agreed" and "t(ook) it up as her cause."

However, opposition may be more serious. For example, at one site, committee members considered housing

the refugees in the church basement where they would share a bathroom with children in the nursery school. Some parents objected, fearing that the refugees would pollute<sup>4</sup> their children by passing on parasites. Discussion ended when a doctor said he was "more concerned about some right-wing nut throwing a bomb into the basement." A clergy woman indicated that in the end, the nursery school lost two families and gained four over the decision to declare sanctuary.

Participants at Chicago's first sanctuary faced other kinds of problems in this early phase. Sanctuary was not yet institutionalized, and there were no other sites to serve as role models. More important, becoming a site early on was a more risky, tentative process due to the uncertainty of government response. Like other deviants engaged in illegal activities who must learn the technique<sup>5</sup> firsthand, early participants had little idea of what to expect. They were uncertain of whether and how to get involved, and of the consequences. The "big question" was that they'd be "breaking a federal law that's a felony."

One respondent, then chairwoman of the social action committee, recalled that her role in this process was "perfect" - she was "meant to be there then." Her narrative of how "law-abiding citizens" are brought to break the law indicates how having a middle-class

background provides participants a sense of protection from legal reprisals:

I'm a middle-class homemaker selling vitamins. I wouldn't even litter. I'm a law-abiding citizen - yet I wrote the letter to Attorney General French...(saying) we're going to declare ourselves a sanctuary. I was scared but I didn't believe that jail would happen. We joked about that - me, a staunch member of (community), two kids, dogs, hauled off to jail in a peach suit. I wasn't radical, a communist, subversive - no matter how the government tried to portray sanctuary, I wasn't it...My dentist called the night when it was on the ten o'clock news (to say) "I'll bring you a cake with a file in it."

A turning point came when members of the congregation met the refugees, heard their stories, and "had to decide." They had to "listen to what people were saying and weigh it against what the government said." This illustrates how the refugees' presence forces people to choose between being "law-abiding" and their personal knowledge of and response to the refugees' situation. A young Salvadoran catechist's testimony to the congregation had a profound impact on this respondent because she did not fit her image of a terrorist:

I'll never forget her. She was a little tiny thing...(she) very quietly, respectfully told us, "we were helping the poor through the church to build homes and establish farms but the government called us subversive." We thought, "wait a minute, how could anybody call her a subversive?" Any jerk could see she wasn't a communist looking to overthrow the government. She was a young girl, maybe twenty-one, acting on her faith.

She indicated that the refugees' presence appealed to instinct, not facts, to help members "know...the truth":



(She) wasn't angry. She didn't even talk about injustices. It was her presence. Humans know when people are telling the truth or lying. We know. Now what do we do?

The next step was a congregational meeting to discuss the issue. They "began with Bible study," then asked a lay minister and "the lawyers" in the congregation to "instruct" them as to what their "faith" and "the law...required them to do." They "were frightened." At the deciding moment, two special catalysts - "conservative" matriarchs in the congregation - spoke of a "higher law" and of doing "the right thing," helping to rationalize law-breaking to the group. One said,

I don't see that we have any choice - clearly these people are being persecuted. The U.S. is clearly in violation of international law. We have a higher law that we must obey.

The other, "not a boat rocker, chair of the Sunday School for a hundred years," lifted the group's collective courage by telling them,

I'm really scared to do this, and...I don't know yet how I'll vote, but I feel it's the right thing to do."

"Immediately, others stood up and supported them." As the chairwoman put it, "there were these love messages that were so beautiful."

The final consenting vote by the congregation is another turning point for members of the social action committee, who now shift their attention from whether to how to become a sanctuary. For example, at the above site,

seventy voted in favor, two abstained, and none were opposed. The chairwoman reported that afterwards, they "knew what (they) had to do - a lot of work" in preparation for the refugees' arrival.

Preparing for the refugees' arrival usually necessitates reassessing an institution's commitments and reallocating its resources. There are hard decisions, and in some cases, hard feelings - for example, by those who feared that the refugees sharing a bathroom with the nursery children would pollute them. In other cases, conflicts were more agreeably resolved. At one church, for example, the co-directors of the women's center were reportedly "very concerned" at first that the publicity of sanctuary "would hurt the privacy of lesbians." Later, they conceded that since the church had "given them sanctuary," they "wouldn't stand in the way of giving it to others." At another church, the committee needed the permission of "the junior high folks" to use two floors of lockerroom being used as a clubhouse for the refugees' apartment. Not only did the young people consent, they reportedly "even helped get it ready."

Members of the social action committee must perform a great deal of work preparing for the refugees' arrival at this point, such as fund-raising, cleaning and painting apartments, and soliciting furniture, food, linen,

clothing, and cookware. At the same time, they often have difficulty enlisting help from members of the congregation; turnout at educational events is reportedly quite low. For example, one respondent complained that they'd had "less than enthusiastic response" at her synagogue. Only one person - a doctor who gave a hundred dollars - responded to the rabbi's appeal. To make matters worse, committee members often have little time in which to prepare for the refugees. Often traveling in adverse circumstances, their arrival is difficult to anticipate, which may create a strain on the committee.

In the rhetoric of crisis management and demonstrating her considerable skill at it, one respondent indicated the "bombshells", "hysterics", and "flukes" which accompanied final preparations at her synagogue. She listed the myriad of tasks which committee members - predominantly women - must perform in this phase, often under duress. Her narrative reveals on a very small scale how sanctuary is literally produced by volunteers at churches and synagogues across the country. It also illustrates the character of much of the "hidden work" which middle-class women perform as volunteers in their communities:

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Juan called and...dropped a bombshell - that the woman and two kids were blocked behind the border and couldn't get across, but that there was a family in Kansas who needed help. The...family consisted of

seven people, arriving in ten days. We had eight hundred dollars. I promptly had hysterics - called everyone I knew to raise money - put desperate notices in the (synagogue) bulletin...It was one fluke after another...I started a telephone campaign for others to call others for contributions. I called everyone who owed me one. It was a time to collect on favors...We finally got to a point where we had enough (furniture and clothing), and I asked for money. There were two weeks of hell - five or six hours on the phone every day trying to raise money. I neglected my work for two weeks...Everything that could go wrong went wrong.

Once these preparations are under way, the group enters the most demanding phase of sanctuary - meeting the refugees, hearing and responding to their stories, and beginning the work of caring for them.

### Refugee Stage

In this stage, the congregation formally receives the refugees and members of the social action committee begin caring for them. Initially, committee members "monitor" their safety "around the clock" and organize and do the work of seeing to their total needs. At first things are hectic, and there is widespread participation. Over time, procedures become routinized and somewhat institutionalized, and sets of refugees enter and leave sanctuary. Committee members support them until their resources are depleted, then move on to other activities, usually refugeeless outreach.

Committee members initially locate refugees for sanctuary through the efforts of social justice agents, religious leaders, and members of the congregation. For

example, participants at one site reportedly "never knew the behind-the-scenes stuff - (agency) arranged it." At another site, a Spanish-speaking immigration lawyer on the social action committee with "tremendous connections in the Spanish-speaking community" located the refugees.

The arrival of the refugees is usually accompanied by much fanfare and publicity, with processions of cars traveling to meet them and public speak-outs along the way. Refugees then frequently "give witness" at formal declaration ceremonies where they meet members of the congregation and relate moving details of their imprisonment and torture by government agents at home. For example, the official Catholic Sanctuary held its declaration ceremony at a local parish in December 1986 - the sixth anniversary of the deaths of four American Catholic missionaries raped and murdered allegedly by right-wing Salvadoran forces. Respondents who attended the ceremony found it "very powerful" and "moving;" they indicated that "the church was packed." After a liturgy on the missionaries' deaths, a refugee reportedly involved with Oscar Romero's work who "had to leave" told a "powerful story." Some respondents noted that "she cried in the middle of it."

First contact with the refugees is often a high-charged, impelling experience for newcomers to sanctuary,

unleashing energy which fuels their subsequent involvement in and commitment to the movement. Meeting the refugees and hearing their stories represents a cathartic high point for many - a moment of collective exaltation<sup>7</sup> which produces dedication to the tasks ahead. For example, a Catholic respondent at a Protestant site openly wept as she described her first contact with the refugees - the point when she became personally involved:

When the family came, there were many church people there...The family had handkerchiefs over their faces, even the babies...Cameras were there, so the babies couldn't take off the kerchiefs. The littlest...drank a bottle under the kerchief...I just got in the reception line and introduced myself...The next day, I asked how to say, "I'm the church secretary and if you need anything, please call me."

Similarly moved by the refugees' bandanna masks and compelled by their stories, another Catholic respondent reported that she was "very distressed" by what they said. This "eye opener" created an immediate shift in her perspective:

It was very disturbing to see people with bandannas on their faces...They talked about what was happening in El Salvador - what the government was doing to the people and why they had to leave. It was a real eye opener. They were pleading with us to please do something. They really had me then - putting those refugees in front of me...All of a sudden, I felt responsible for our government's actions.

Many others also indicated that they were initially deeply impressed with the refugees' stories, which played a critical role in mobilizing them into action.

Respondents' versions of some of these "good stories" follow. They reveal what participants typically learn about the refugees, and illustrate how women shape and make sense of the stories in their own terms:

Rafael is forty-seven, a Quiche Indian. He grew up in the highlands of Guatemala. He started working on coffee plantations when he was eleven. He can remember planes flying overhead spraying pesticides. Many children died from this. He became active with the church as a lay-catechist, and this was the beginning of his political activism. The people he was working with were disappeared, so he left ahead of his family and came to Mexico. He's very gentle, lacking any bitterness. He's an exceptional person.

The father fled Guatemala. He worked with an electrical engineering program and the government looked at anybody like that who worked with the peasantry as a threat. The priests warned him that he was on a hit list...After he fled, the army came to his house and threatened his family.

He was a middle-class person - very young, emotionally immature. The army was after him to join. We took him to a doctor - she said, "he's like a little flower" - a delicate, sensitive person. I'm sure his mother knew he couldn't survive in the army, and he fled (El Salvador). He's definitely here illegally - scared, harassed, threatened.

Juan's family belonged to a Christian-based community. His father was a small farmer (who tried to) help peasants get their own land and be self-sufficient. (The father) and his brother were involved. The (Salvadoran) government repressed any kind of sharing or cooperative. Juan's uncle was murdered. Juan's brother was chased and caught by the military. He'd been hung on a tree with his heart cut out. Juan found him, and felt he'd be next...He was eighteen.

Rudy was twenty; a middle-class kid. I can't remember why he was being sought by the (Salvadoran) army. They came to kill him - he wasn't there, so they killed his mother and left her there in the house for him to find. He felt if he'd been there, he'd have been killed, and it was his fault that she died. He

was very emotionally disturbed, and felt deep guilt.

Anna was arrested in El Salvador and (daughter) was with her at the time...she was handcuffed to Anna when she was tortured and abused in prison...For awhile (daughter) had nightmares. The guards would clap their hands when they were beating people so others wouldn't hear. After that, whenever (daughter) heard clapping, she'd get very frightened...Anna escaped off the back of a truck with (daughter), who was seven or eight. They were with other prisoners on the back of a moving truck. She said they were being transported somewhere. She asked herself, "is there nothing I...as her mother can do to save this child?" So she took a moment when the guard was distracted...and pushed (daughter) and herself off the truck. They were unconscious when they fell...already physically in very bad shape...She was a catechist, working with Romero. She knew the four martyred nuns...They were very much at risk.

Many respondents indicated that they had failed to anticipate the extent of the refugees' problems. As one respondent put it, her "problems were nothing compared to theirs." Others were particularly troubled by the refugees' level of fear and the debilitated state in which they arrived. One woman remarked,

(the refugees) were afraid they'd see tanks coming down the street the first night, and every night after. That's when we realized their level of fear.

Some women religious in the Catholic Sanctuary indicated that they had difficulty with the fact that a refugee woman in their care was a "sexually active" single parent. A nun described these and other problems which the group faced in "phase two", when the refugees arrived:

Now we have these three children...What are we going to do with (them)? We now have a woman who's sexually active, has emotional and psychological needs, is



heavily traumatized, is a single parent. Their medical needs are tremendous.

After the refugees' arrival, members of the social action committee spend a great deal of time and energy initially caring for them and establishing the procedures of sanctuary. At first, they oversee the refugees' safety and adjustment "around the clock" in a three- or four-week process called "monitoring". One respondent explained that this "constant company" was needed because "the family speaks no English and they're in culture shock." However, others indicated that monitoring was necessary because they or the refugees feared being 'harassed" by "INS and FBI agents" - "whoever." For example, a respondent at Chicago's second sanctuary described the early security system at her church:

In the early days, we had signs posted everywhere about what to do if INS or FBI came. (Minister husband) was first, (woman clergy) second, me third.

While there were some "crank calls", no respondent indicated any harassment by government agents at any site. At Chicago's second site, members of the congregation reportedly "had a real good relationship with the local police." Committee members "went to them and told them" about the refugees in sanctuary. The police allegedly responded, "it's not a local issue, it's a federal issue" - "hey, we're not going to bother you." One respondent indicated how the committee relied on the tacit tolerance

of the local police to provide a measure of security to their early, potentially risky operations:

It got easier once we knew we weren't in imminent danger. We got threatening calls from people who said they'd blow up the church. Crank calls left on the answering machine. We did alot of media things because we wanted everyone to know. We were early. We got a lot of hostile stuff. That's another reason we told the police.

This is another example of unofficial support within a system which officially condemns the sanctuary movement. Like other instances where clergy, judges, and police "look the other way," this implicit support of authorities indicates that "officials" are differently involved in the social world of the refugees than most people realize.

In addition to monitoring, at this point committee members also begin to organize and perform the work of caring for the refugees. Easing the work by allocating tasks among themselves, they arrange for the refugees' total care - housing, education, employment, legal aid, health and dental care, speaking engagements, social outings, and translating. At first, "all" tend to do "everything", as one respondent indicated:

We brought food in and someone to eat with him for two weeks. There was a grocery store down the street and we taught him to shop. We divided the task force into areas - living space, contacts for speaking, legal stuff, physical care, like medical and dental. I was involved in all of it...We all did everything. We all had a zillion meetings and were busy with everything.

In time, procedures become somewhat routinized and

institutionalized. For example, one respondent indicated that "at first, participation was widespread," "later, there was more specialization," and "now, a formal committee does the work." Another reported that since receiving its second family, her group had "instituted a committee" which meets weekly for "a prayer vigil and business meeting." Another respondent - a clergy woman who worked very closely "in the early days...overseeing people" - indicated that she "cut back" after they "got settled." She claimed that she was more involved with the first family than the second because when sanctuary was "brand new" it was more important that "the pastor...know what's going on." This indicates that her role in the church supported the gradual routinization of procedures.

Usually a step in a larger process of seeking amnesty, the refugees typically stay in one sanctuary for six months to a year, then move on to other sites, regions, and activities. These constant turnovers provide committee members a chance to rest, renew resources, and select their next activities. However, these changes may also disrupt their newly inspired attachment to the refugees. For example, a respondent at one site claimed that the group didn't realize that a refugee would be there temporarily, and "cried and cried" together the day he left. They "talked about experiencing grace" and "felt

the spirit was present," which illustrates the religious rhetoric and orientation of many participants.

After the first refugees leave, most sanctuaries take in others, and some continue to support refugees after they leave. For example, one respondent indicated that for several months her group continued to support a refugee who "chose to drop out of the limelight":

We found him an apartment and subsidized the rent for awhile. We found him a job and set him up with furniture, sheets, as well as well as we could. He had a job downtown in the loop in a restaurant.

Similar to the women religious who struggled with the "sexually active" single parent in their care, her group struggled with a refugee's personal choices:

He was twenty. He got married to a forty-two year old North American woman. We were very worried about it...that he was being used, that she was a very needy person to be doing this. They moved to California where her family is and got married. Or so they said.

Her description of the next two refugees in sanctuary illustrates that even those with "good" stories aren't necessarily "good" refugees. Juan - whose uncle was allegedly murdered and brother, "chased and caught by the military" and "hung on a tree with his heart cut out" - turned out to be an exemplary refugee - a "joy":

He made contacts with Salvadorans all over the city. His room was always filled with Salvadorans, eating, watching TV, talking. He was a really expansive person - a joy. He decided he could no longer stay at the church...(that) he'd done what he could, and went to New Mexico to work with Salvadoran refugees at a settlement camp...He was here almost a year.

In contrast, Rudy - whose mother the army allegedly "killed...and left...in the house for him to find" - was "emotionally disturbed," "unhappy" and "damaged":

He was very introspective - a big strong person but very fragile. I took him to a counseling session with a Lutheran pastor who spoke Spanish - he went a couple of times but said he didn't want to go back. He became very withdrawn. When Juan had all his friends over, Rudy would come to our house and just sit. He sulked a lot. He did speaking engagements for awhile but dropped out...We didn't know how to help, what to do...In January, Rudy said he wanted to go to Tucson and then back to El Salvador and get his two sisters out - he felt they were in danger. We said, "fine." We bought a one-way air ticket to Tucson, and gave him a bunch of money. We had a communion service for him in his room and drove him to the airport with a coat over his head. We put him on a plane.

What happened next illustrates the broad range in middle-class women's abilities to influence the outcome of legal processes, activate networks of support, and raise large sums of money fast. It is also another example of how officials tacitly comply with the movement; in this case, those who otherwise formally prosecute refugees informally helped support those in sanctuary:

We were real nervous about him hanging around in Tucson. We got a call in the middle of the night...he'd been arrested for driving without a license...someone in the Tucson sanctuary had lent him a car and he didn't know how to drive. Bail was seven thousand dollars. It was the local police. We called a sanctuary lawyer in Tucson and...they negotiated him out in twenty-four hours. We got a loan from two or three people in the congregation and wired it down there. He was out. We filed for a change of venue to get the trial here. The lawyer got him to start asylum papers. I did all the legal stuff. Our lawyers worked together - we got them to say he was a resident of Chicago and got him back here. The judge

ruled that the bond was too high and reduced it by twenty-five hundred dollars. We got him back here, and contacted a lawyer to begin the asylum process. They wanted documentation for everything. We got together a lot of sanctuary information we had on the issues and put that with his papers. The lawyer said, "when the case is called in two weeks to seven years, if he shows up, you'll get the five thousand back." We said, "it's so unsure you'll get asylum status, we feel you should just take off." He was happy to get away - he's still in the Chicago area. We made several attempts to stay in touch, and he didn't return it...He never really clicked in the movement - he was too unhappy - too damaged.

These accounts indicate the considerable work which committee members do in constructing a life for the refugees, and reveal how the refugees' problems complicate their adjustment in sanctuary; both exhaust participants. For example, after supporting a family of four for a year, one respondent exclaimed, "I don't think we can afford to take on another refugee."

### Post-refugee Stage

When the last refugees leave and the committee's resources are depleted, most participants move on to the post-refugee stage - supporting the movement without refugees. As noted, two of the nine sites in the study were no longer sanctuaries, although both continued to support sanctuary through other activities. Both were small Protestant churches which had been sanctuaries for about two years. A respondent at one "non-site" sanctuary reported that when the last refugees left, committee members "decided to put their energies into getting new

sites." Current activities were "more into systems change than direct services" - "educating other churches rather than being a site." Some members also "did a lot of demonstrations with (agency)," and others were involved in the process of making their community a sanctuary city.

Committee members at the other "non-site" sanctuary also moved on to other forms of support when the last refugees left. Several were Catholic, and some became involved in the Catholic Sanctuary when it emerged. Some began supporting the refugees' extended family in the informal Catholic sanctuary at a nearby parish. Others turned toward educational outreach, demonstrations, and travel to Central America.

While all nine sites continued their institutional involvement at some level, two respondents indicated that they had experienced "burnout" or otherwise moved on. For a woman who had integrated her family life intimately with the day-to-day life of the refugees, sanctuary work became an all-encompassing, exhausting experience - "so intense," she claimed, that it was "something you can only do once":

The involvement was so intense - you can't do it again. I'll know other refugees again, and I'll always give what I can, but I know I'll never do this again...If anyone knew what they were getting into at the beginning...they'd never do it. I wouldn't. I'd gladly go to the basement, get snowsuits, mittens, whatever they need when the clothes drive comes around, and give that way. "Here, need more? Back to the basement!" Because that way of giving is a whole lot easier.

After over two years of close sharing with the refugees, she indicated that her family had to "pull back" when its personal boundaries were overrun by the arrival of the refugees' extended family. Pressure mounted until the family went into therapy to determine what was "caus(ing) this stress" on the "family system." An outburst by her son about the refugees' intrusive presence seemed to speak for the family, helping to address their problems. While this respondent withdrew from her previously intense involvement, she indicated that she and her family were still quite involved with the refugees. She claimed that

...we give what we can, and the kids are still over a lot, but we've had to establish boundaries and rules to protect our family life.

Another respondent reporting burnout had been the chairwoman of the social action committee years earlier when her church became Chicago's first sanctuary. She clearly situated her sanctuary involvement in the past with her claim that "it was a very significant time...looking back." She was "not active now," although still supported sanctuary financially. In the rhetoric of stress management - which she taught - she explained why "you can't sustain that level of activity," and named several self-help maxims which helped to "balance" her life and justify her withdrawal from the movement:

At the end of the year...I felt at peace about it - no matter what, everything would be all right...You



control those things that are within your control, and let go of what you can't. It's a much healthier way to live. It doesn't mean you ignore Central America. You keep working for change, but keep it in perspective. Otherwise it's too frustrating...I have to do the best I can. Bloom where you're planted. I gave up "type A" behavior for Lent. There's some things you can't control...I'm much happier with that...I teach that - wellness as an attitude...My life's very balanced right now. I'm grateful of the experience of sanctuary. It's been a growing experience for me and for the church.

As long as committee members continue to participate in other activities after the last refugees leave, cases of participant burnout seem to not seriously affect the continued involvement of "nonsite" sanctuaries, nor the overall level of support for the local movement. Strong support by a large number of committed individuals in the congregation seems to increase the likelihood of continued institutional involvement after the refugees leave. Although still in the refugee stage, the university church is a good example of a site likely to sustain its involvement over time. As noted, this site is located within a cluster of theological seminaries, its congregation includes about thirty seminarians and ministers, and over half of its members are involved in educational activities. A clergy woman at this site felt certain that "sanctuary w(ould) continue strongly" because the group had continued to be active "between families." In addition, "a good core of people in the church and community" are "committed" to sanctuary - some, "very

involved" in the national sanctuary movement.

In conclusion, religious institutions generally undergo three stages of involvement in the sanctuary movement which revolve around planning for, supporting, and recovering from the refugees' stay. Strong support and many committed individuals in the congregation increase the likelihood of continued institutional involvement when the last refugees leave. How groups learn about and go about constructing sanctuary also affects the character and duration of subsequent institutional involvement, as the two Catholic sanctuaries in the study indicate.

#### Catholic Sanctuaries

As noted, the process for Catholic sanctuaries is complicated by the fact that the upper hierarchy of the Catholic church does not officially support sanctuary nor allow parishes to be used as such. Two Catholic sanctuaries have emerged in the Chicago area without official support, out of contrasting circumstances, by different groups of actors, and by alternative routes.

At the "official" Catholic Sanctuary, a group of about a hundred women religious from about forty religious orders citywide formally declared itself a sanctuary as "a means of facing off with the government." At the informal one, married homemakers volunteering at a local parish

created an impromptu sanctuary to help a homeless refugee family "get their feet on the ground." For the women religious, social action was intentional and politically oriented; for the lay women, it was a situational and humanitarian response to a concrete situation. While each group faced its own set of problems, they resolved one problem the same way. Since neither could use parish property, both rented apartments for the refugees. As a nun explained,

Our cardinal had said we couldn't use Catholic property. We don't own convents anymore, so it was a problem of finding places where refugees could live.

In other ways, the two Catholic sanctuaries and their participants contrasted sharply.

At the small "church within a church," sanctuary was spontaneous and unplanned. A member of the social action committee received a call from a priest and special catalyst at a parish in an Hispanic community, asking the committee to take in and care for a homeless refugee family. The committee had worked with the priest before - "education, demonstrations, and so forth." The priest made a strong challenge - he reportedly asked, "are you just a bunch of talk or what?... (A) family...needs a place to stay." As one respondent explained, "we've kind of always respected him, and sent money to him for peripheral projects, not questioning his need."

Responding to an emergency, the committee lacked time to obtain official approval. The member contacted by the priest called a meeting at her house on "Good Friday night" to discuss the matter. One member - a single man with a large apartment - offered to house the refugees for three months. The group agreed, and the priest brought the refugees over the same night. Unlike the formal, well-attended declaration ceremony of the official Catholic Sanctuary described earlier, one respondent indicated the simple, informal reception where the refugees were "introduced to the community" that night:

We met them. (Priest) interpreted. There were four in the family, and the room was filled - ten or fifteen people - the social action committee and pastoral team. The next day, he brought them back - he said, "here are your new friends."

A respondent's narrative of how the group went about soliciting clothes for the refugees the next day illustrates the informal local networks by which middle-class volunteers customarily mobilize resources in their communities. It also reveals how caretakers imposed their religious folkways on the refugees:

The kids had no clothes - they'd been at a refugee camp in Mexico...We ran around to people's houses with kids that age, and asked for clothes. We'd say, "Maria needs an Easter dress, and shoes and socks." It's a real easy community to do that in.

Presenting the refugees' arrival to the congregation after the fact, committee members employed a secret

strategy which they called "the wedge" - a way to withhold the refugees' true legal status from members of the congregation and board, who were told that the refugees "were in the process of application for documented status." "Actually," the refugee father "had been denied and was appealing. His wife and two kids had no legal status...but the congregation didn't know that." One respondent explained the rationale for this untruth:

Our congregation is a mix of very wealthy people to lower class. Politically we range from extremely conservative Reagan supporters to those who got up and cried at the microphone the night Reagan was elected...We knew they'd never buy it.

Believing that the refugees were about to become documented, members of the congregation and board agreed to support the family financially to help them "get their feet on the ground." They never "got the full scoop" about the refugees' actual legal status. As one respondent confided, "people on the social action committee are the only ones who knew, and...still are." Another elaborated on how "the wedge in the helped get the refugees into "the community" until they "became real" to members of the congregation:

When people asked about their legality, I'd say, "that's not for us to say - (refugee) is known to the immigration department - it's a very technical type of law. We can't determine the legality of these people - it's arguable in court"...Three or four of us...decided this is how we'd always answer the question...We kind of got together and figured, this is the wedge in the door...and it seemed to work very

well...People gradually found out as the refugees became real to them...People became relaxed with them around.

In contrast, the formation of the official Catholic sanctuary was intentional and extremely well-organized. As noted, about one hundred women religious from about forty religious orders citywide created a "public" sanctuary in open defiance of government and church policy toward Central America and the refugees. One respondent described how they had their "first thoughts" about a Catholic sanctuary when they began realizing that "a lot of women" among their "constituents" were "really concerned about Central America." Many women religious "had lived there or had friends live there," and had been personally exposed to the refugees' circumstances, and to concepts such as "base community" and "liberation theology". Many had "worked in poor areas in Chicago," where they had seen "the same linking issues."

In April 1986, the group had a "very small one-day conference" in which they did "some social analyses of global economics." A national sanctuary leader had just returned from El Salvador and reportedly "made a pitch for women of El Salvador." Others wanted to "talk about sanctuary as a concrete way of facing off with the government." The group met again in May and decided to declare itself a sanctuary. The refugees arrived six

months later, by which time the group had amassed thousands of dollars, a year's supply of canned goods, and furniture for two apartments.

In contrast to the discreet informal sanctuary created in response to an emergency, women religious created a public sanctuary specifically "as a means of facing off with the government." A respondent gave two reasons for this, indicating the group's political and educational orientation to sanctuary: it was "concrete and risky," therefore "exacted something" from them; and it was "a way...to truly learn from Central Americans."

In summary, in one case, women religious from several religious orders citywide declared the official Catholic Sanctuary in open defiance of church and government authorities. Undaunted by their inability to use church property, they relied on their own considerable resources - their extensive backgrounds traveling and living in Central America and firsthand knowledge of the issues; their access to a wide network of religious orders, professional organizations and social justice agencies; and their experience and talent at organizing and fund-raising.

In the other case, social action committee members at a local parish - primarily married homemakers - responded informally to a refugee family's homelessness

without seeking official approval, creating an informal sanctuary using a secret strategy called "the wedge". Like the women religious, the lay women relied on their own considerable resources outside the church - in this case, their access to informal, woman-based networks through which they customarily solicit money, goods, and services as volunteers in their community.

In terms of their ends and means, the two Catholic sanctuaries compare as follows. For the women religious, sanctuary was an intentional, political gesture; for the lay women, it was situational and humanitarian. One group openly violated the official church position on sanctuary; the other discreetly skirted it. One group relied on professional associations and networks in place of church property; the other relied on informal local networks and their roles as volunteers in the community. One group publicized the refugees' situation, taking a stand on refugee empowerment and collective resistance; the other group understated the refugees' presence, emphasizing private care-taking and refugee assimilation. The women religious, who were already familiar with and active on the issues, continued with other forms of support. The lay women, who understood the issues less directly and in simpler terms, gradually withdrew their participation after helping the refugees "get on their feet."



The two Catholic sanctuaries are good examples of contrasting kinds of orientation and social action inherent in the sanctuary movement - the political vs. humanitarian approach, and activism vs. caretaking. They also indicate the directions in which sanctuary groups may respond if confronted by more direct official disapproval, an important consideration given their illegal activities. One direction indicates more publicity to the refugees' situation and more openly denouncing official policy; the other direction indicates manipulating officials' understanding of individual refugees' situations and continuing discreet refugee care. Seven sites in the study fall between these two, exhibiting a greater balance of discretion and defiance, accommodation and resistance, and caretaking and social action.

## ENDNOTES

1

Armand J. Mauss uses the natural history approach delineate five stages of social movements; in Social Problems as Social Movements. 1975.

2

Social action committees - also called "social responsibility" or "peace and justice" committees - are small groups in the congregation concerned with institutional involvement in social issues and action; see Chapter IV, "Special Committees, Women and Men".

3

See Arlene K. Daniels' discussion on the "hidden work" of women volunteers and its significance for their communities in "The Hidden Work of Constructing Class and Community: Women Volunteer Leaders in Social Philanthropy." Pp. 220-35 in Families and Work. Naomi Gerstel & Harriet Engel Gross, editors, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987.

4

Mary Douglas describes the culturally universal fear of social pollution in Natural Symbols: Exporations in Cosmology. New York: Pantheon Books, 1982.

5

See Howard Becker, "Becoming a Marijuana User." Pp. 41-53 in Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance. New York: The Free Press, 1963.

6

See Arlene Daniels in "The Hidden Work of Constructing Class and Community."

7

Collective excitation refers to collective feeling, defined as participation of many subjects in the same feeling, which may include a strong sense of "We-feeling;" p. 119 in Henry Pratt Fairchild, Dictionary of Sociology. New Jersey: Helix Books, 1984.

8

See Appendices D and E for detailed accounts of the "good" stories of two refugees whom I observed speaking at outreach events at churches in the Chicago area. They represent contrasting examples of refugees fleeing torture and imprisonment in their countries - one, indigenous - a family of Quiche Indians from the "fincas" of Guatemala; the other, "a ladino" - a middle-class Salvadoran economics professor.

## CHAPTER VI

### TRANSFORMATIONS IN WOMEN'S LIVES

Respondents described undergoing several critical stages of development prior to their involvement in the sanctuary movement. In this chapter, I examine these stages from a "moral careers" perspective, an approach developed by sociologists Everett Hughes,<sup>1</sup> Erving Goffman,<sup>2</sup> Howard Becker and Blanche Geer,<sup>3</sup> and by theologian James Fowler.<sup>4</sup> This approach focuses on turning points and changes in respondents' identity over time in terms of their movement through institutional statuses. It emphasizes respondents' "motive reports"<sup>5</sup> - explanations for their changing perspectives and behavior articulated retrospectively during interviews. It also emphasizes their "vocabularies of motive" and "situated actions"<sup>6</sup> - the rhetoric they used to explain how they developed shared understandings and mobilized collective actions.

Respondents described three general areas of their lives which influenced their entry into the movement, referred to here as the humanitarian - i.e., their early awareness of social inequality and subsequent caring and

volunteerism; the religious - i.e., the history of their faith development and institutional affiliation; and the political - i.e., the onset of their politicized beliefs and social action. This chapter focuses on how respondents constructed their careers as volunteers in a social movement organization, and how their religious and political activism shaped their identity.

Respondents generally constructed their biographies to show an early interest in helping people. Many indicated that they had become aware of social inequality and developed a desire for social change at a young age. Most recalled early eye-opening experiences regarding others' oppression, and subsequent strong feelings about their sense of connection and responsibility. Many described developing the urge to "do something" about human suffering - to take some kind of social action. Many noted that they had been influenced by charity-minded, socially active fathers. Most indicated that they had begun channeling caring into volunteer work by early adulthood. Most claimed that they had done a great deal of volunteer work; many became "professional" volunteers, which led to paid work for some.

Sanctuary is a religious-based movement, and respondents reported that they had entered the movement along one of four religious paths: some found faith they

had previously lost; others found faith they had previously lacked; some maintained faith and changed affiliation; and others never changed faith or affiliation. While many respondents remained at traditional churches and synagogues, most lay women left because important social issues were not being addressed. However, they later returned to a "special" church or synagogue active on social issues, frequently where they subsequently became involved in sanctuary. Jewish women indicated that they had never left the synagogue, and described their ties as more ethnic than religious. Women religious - nuns, devout Catholics, and clergy women - also never left the traditional church. Despite their dissatisfactions, they made a smooth transition to activism within it.

Finally, respondents indicated that they were greatly affected by political events of the 1960's. All referred to that era in explaining their activism. All had been previously active on other issues, although many spoke of suspending their activism to attend to family matters of childrearing and divorce. Sanctuary women have been generally active as a group. For example, twenty-three respondents reported that they had attended demonstrations, and eight reported being arrested. Most indicated that they were currently members of national

anti-intervention groups opposed to U.S. policies in Central America.

Respondents constructed their biographies to indicate that prior developments in social awareness, religious affiliation, and political activism predisposed them to take social action once a concrete situation appeared. Many described these turning points as "conversion" experiences which helped redefine their social and political reality and launch their activist careers. For some, this occurred with their initiation to the sanctuary movement, particularly to the refugees' compelling stories. Grounded in personal knowledge and experience, these transformations led to shifts in respondents' identity, and to their subsequent involvement in the sanctuary movement.

Many respondents described being mobilized into activism by politicized religious concepts as members of socially active churches and synagogues. Catholic and Protestant women tended to talk about liberation theology, and their role in creating a "new covenant" and a "kingdom on earth". Jewish women pointed out the historical parallel to the exodus of Jews out of Egypt, and the importance within Judaism of the traditions of "righteous giving" and "saving lives". These religious and ethical vocabularies indicate how participants legitimate and

shape the movement by claiming historical and Biblical precedents for harboring refugees.

Most respondents discussed their sanctuary activism in primarily religious terms. Many indicated that they felt "compelled" by their faith to act, describing their participation as acts of faith rather than personal caring or political acts. This illustrates how participants use religious rhetoric to appropriate institutional free space for collective action - a strategy which has long afforded woman-based movements historical identification with and protection by religious institutions.

#### Humanitarian Component

As noted, respondents in this study constitute a fairly homogeneous group - they are primarily white, well-educated women from lower to upper middle-class backgrounds.<sup>8</sup> They generally constructed their pasts to indicate an early concern for others. Most indicated that their own lives had been relatively free of hardship, yet they recounted being exposed to social inequalities at a young age, and subsequently developing a sense of social awareness and a desire for social change. Most recalled early, eye-opening experiences in childhood and young adulthood which made them aware of contrasts in how others lived, although they may not have understood why. For example, a thirty-four year old nun remembered her early

awareness of poor children in Puerto Rico, where she lived until age four:

I remember seeing poor, poor...kids in church - that was my first recognition of the injustices of the world...I thought it was terrible...I just thought their mothers hadn't washed and dressed them.

similarly, a forty-one year old Protestant woman described her early impressions of the "marginalized" in her small Midwestern home town, and of townfolks' "common knowledge" about them:

I always had a curiosity about native Americans. There was a statue in town of one, but no living Indians - just plaques marking where they'd been killed. Some Seventh Day Adventists have a place up on the hill, and we called them "bean eaters" because they didn't eat meat. There was a Green Giant plant nearby that drew migrants. "Don't talk to them, don't have anything to do with them" was the common knowledge in town. One winter, a woman turned on the gas stove for heat, and seven died. Every time I walked by that house, I wondered why did they have to turn on the gas for heat? But I recall no discussion - they were so marginalized.

A clergy woman, age fifty-one, recalled her early awareness of social barriers between herself and migrant workers at her family's orchard as her "first real up-against-it." Learning later that she was part Indian helped her accept that she was different:

I was raised in (rural county). There were migrant workers picking cherries - my family owned a cherry orchard. My first real up-against-it was (when) my sister and I went to a Saturday night movie and sat in the back with some cherry pickers we knew. Somebody told my mother, who went livid, crazy mad. I was about eleven. I knew the craziness of that - I don't know why...When I was fourteen, my father in a drunkenness let on that I had a native American great



grandmother. It was, "no wonder" for me - I'd always carried bugs outside, sat and watched the clouds. I didn't immediately align myself with native Americans, but it reinforced that who I am is okay.

A thirty-eight year old Catholic woman whose immigrant family had escaped from Chicago's stock yards to the suburbs recalled how her parents' prejudice helped create her awareness of poverty and bigotry:

My parents were Irish immigrants who grew up in the Back of the Yards. Pork was their lives. I see now that they were very prejudiced people. For entertainment my father would drive us to poor neighborhoods and point out poor black people and say, "look at who you are and who they are." Now I see he was trying to reassure himself that his generation had taken a step. We lived in the suburbs. (did you sense his prejudice as a child?) Yes - he was a typical sarcastic Irish type - he'd tell jokes about blacks. I didn't think he was any different than anyone else's father. It was a standard thing that everybody's parents were prejudiced.

Respondents generally indicated that over time, they began breaking out of the narrowness of their own backgrounds and considering human suffering from different perspectives. They described developing a strong sense of compassion for and identification with the oppressed, gradually becoming aware of pervasive structured inequality and their place in it. For example, a thirty-three year old Protestant woman described her early awareness of and identification with "underdogs", and her uncomfortable knowledge of the presence of "outgroups":

I always felt compassion for underdogs. In high school, I felt very uncomfortable knowing there were ingroups and outgroups. I was usually ingroup, which

made me more uncomfortable. I don't know why...It was partly a religious thing, and partly my family.

A forty-two year old Protestant woman reiterated the theme of compassion for and identification with "underdogs" and the "marginalized". She identified with the "left out" despite her parents' messages about them, crossing race, class, and ideological lines which she sensed were "wrong", "unfair", and "baloney":

I've always felt for underdogs. (why?) I don't know. When my mother would say, "don't drink at that fountain because niggers used it," I knew something was wrong...My father was a landlord, and I always felt sorry for the tenants...I was living in a nice ranch house and was always aware of disparities between how people lived...I remember as a little child always thinking about the person left out - the marginalized...I always noticed the left out. My father...felt those at the low end deserved it and could do something if they tried...I was real affected by the civil rights movement but too young to participate in high school. I remember my father bringing home documents proving Martin Luther King, Jr. was a communist - showing him sitting with communists. I remember thinking that it was baloney. I just knew that black people needed a chance - that people had been unfair to black people. I remember not caring that much if King was with communists. I remember the McCarthy era - watching it on television. But I've just never been afraid of communism. I'm more afraid of capitalism.

A thirty-four year old Catholic woman described the important "eye-openers" during her adolescence in a "changing neighborhood", which led to her awareness of prejudice, and to her growing sense of the gap between others and those like herself:

I grew up on the West side (of Chicago) in a changing neighborhood...I went to a Catholic school. The nuns

were making efforts to reduce black-white conflicts - they had an exchange program for kids to talk. It was a real eye-opener for me...Many kids I went to school with were very prejudiced...In high school I worked with a group who tutored Puerto Rican kids...It was an eye-opener about education in the public schools. We just knew these kids weren't getting a good education.

A clergy woman, age thirty-one, described how childhood reading and traveling and tutoring in the inner-city exposed her to others' oppression. Although raised in the south, she believed her parents had avoided instilling "Southern prejudices" in her:

In some ways through books I was exposed to others' oppression. I tutored in the inner city in ninth grade...I knew from both reading and traveling...that not everyone had the same standard of living. I knew there was poverty in the cities - I'd at least been through inner cities. I knew about racism as a child, by reading books about black children and by how few blacks were in my schools...Both parents had black servants - not necessarily full-time, but I knew the stories of those people. I was raised to think that they were equal but that the social situation was not equal. I was brought up in a way not to share the Southern prejudices. I think my parents certainly had an influence not to bring us up with Southern values. The tutoring experience was important.

Out of these early exposures to and identification with the "marginalized", respondents indicated that they tended to develop strong, lasting impressions and feelings of connection and responsibility which became meaningfully intertwined later on. For example, a Catholic woman, age twenty-eight, linked together several unrelated "formative experiences" in her childhood in which she sensed a connection with the oppressed, then described how they

suddenly came together in a powerful "conversion" experience in early adulthood. Her narrative generally illustrates respondents' early eagerness to "do something" about social inequality, as well as their difficulties surmounting the insularity of their middle-class lives:

When I was growing up...I used to go downtown with my dad on the train. Looking at the back porches, I'd be fascinated. I knew how the poor were living was connected to how we were living, but I couldn't put it together...In my childhood...we watched TV a lot. One program...was a documentary of life in China. There was a long shot of a Chinese woman in a factory putting heads on Barbie dolls. I was nine. I was fascinated. I knew deep inside that was sick, and I didn't need to play with Barbie dolls if it meant that woman had to live that way. I cried. The program wasn't about inequality - I connected affluent society and my Barbie dolls with oppression of people in the third world. My dad tried to comfort me - he said, "that lady has a job, you should be happy." I didn't believe it...I had one other experience as a teenager. I worked in a restaurant (where) most of the (employees) were illegal aliens...It was the first time I'd ever been in contact with the poor. I almost couldn't believe the things they told me - and they weren't trying to raise my consciousness - like having thirteen brothers and sisters at home...they lived packed into little apartments together. They worked two full-time jobs and sent home the little money they made. I felt invaded with guilt. I wanted to take them home for dinner. I did once - I took this guy home for Thanksgiving. It amazed me that they wouldn't be eating turkey on Thanksgiving. My mom was nice, but my dad said later they smelled. That whole experience of getting to know these Mexicans (pause) I was guilt-ridden about going off to college. I thought, okay, I'll go to college, but I'll study law or something and come back and help these people.

In college, her "social consciousness evaporated" until she studied abroad in Ireland and "accidentally" toured war-torn Belfast, the site of her "conversion":

I wasn't shocked by it - it was like someone had torn off a curtain. It was exposed...the bare bones of oppression. I felt like kissing the ground there. I felt more at home there than here. I felt real...I met my real self and the real world. I had an overwhelming sense of peace in this violent place. It was a powerful experience. My conversion.

prior to this, she had been hiking alone through "profoundly beautiful" countryside, "having mystical experiences" which "prepared" her for "the Belfast experience." Having run out of money, she took "the cheaper way" back through Belfast. Boarding a ferry with a troop of British soldiers represented her first exposure to the "real" world of "armed conflict":

I'd never seen army men like that. It was a shock. I was fascinated. I sat close, and started up a conversation...I asked, "what's it like to be a soldier? What are you doing?" Armed conflict became real for me. The world was becoming real.

Upon docking, she accepted a ride into Belfast on a truck with the soldiers, during which her sense of the immediacy of armed conflict became "penetrating":

Listening to their conversation...the immediacy of my contact with armed conflict was growing...These guys could be my friends and brothers. I felt pain for them and for those they'd injure.

In Belfast, the train station was closed; there was a curfew, and no trains. A stranger took her to the police station where she stayed half the night, then went home with a police woman who "gave a mini-tour" of "where bombs went off and people fled." She claimed that that is when the feeling of her "conversion" hit her.

Like this respondent, most others indicated that they had enjoyed relatively comfortable middle-class lives, and that their initial awareness of oppression had come from outside. They happened to witness unrelated instances of suffering, then later began connecting them together. As a thirty-four year old Catholic woman noted,

(o)nce you become aware of oppression in one part of the world, you can make connections in your own backyard. You start seeing it all over. You just become a more critical person.

For some respondents, however, awareness of oppression began at home as members of historically persecuted groups. For example, a black Protestant woman, age seventy-three, talked about her personal experience with racism during her childhood in the South, and about her early knowledge that it was "us and them":

(M)y early awareness of what the government was doing was related to blacks. I had to sit in the back of the bus and go to separate schools all my life. This didn't change until I was married with children. We were always in a position to be anti-government, and we were always labeled communist. I was never taken in by the government. Even if I never paid attention to international affairs, I was aware of what went on at home. I was never able to put my foot in the city parks of New Orleans while I lived there. My father was a government employee and mail collector so he registered to vote in uniform and they never stopped him. But my mother, they did...We had to pay a poll tax...That was the kind of thing they met, so we were aware it was "us and them."

Similarly, Jewish respondents recalled painful awakenings as children to the persecution of Jews as the atrocities of Nazi Germany increasingly became felt in

their own assimilated lives. One woman, age forty-eight, related how she first learned of this persecution at age four and subsequently lost her belief in God because she could not reconcile the immensity of human suffering with the notion of God. However, she described continuing to develop a strong sense of compassion and protectiveness for "underdogs" and "the defenseless":

At some point - I was four...It was 1944. I remember this meeting at my parents' house on how to smuggle this family of relatives out (of Hungary)...I remember overhearing...the fact that the parents were caught and killed at the border. The seven children escaped. Arrangements were being made to smuggle them into the U.S. Later, I learned that the children were also caught and killed...All of a sudden I realized...that no matter what I'd been told about God, it wasn't true. He did not take good care of us. I just decided if there was a God that he was a mockery of everything religion makes of God. At that point I became an atheist...I cried myself to sleep...for a fairly long time...I was always very protective of anyone who was defenseless or an underdog. I was always bringing home stray animals.

Another woman, age fifty-five, recounted how she first learned of the persecution of Jews. The connections which she made between her own assimilated, upper middle-class upbringing and the plight of Jews in Europe repulsed her. She rejected both the prize and price for her "kittenization", becoming a "rebel" and "maverick". She claimed that this early experience - including being exposed to refugees with "tough stories" - set up her "own complex," creating "a certain conflict" in her life which subsequently became the mainspring for her tendency to

"give a great deal" to social causes, and for her "incredibly intense career" as a volunteer:

...my mother and her mother's goal was...to be more American than the Americans. They were somewhat anti-semitic...I was raised in a home with a Christmas tree...my mother wanted desperately to assimilate, and my grandmother, the matriarch of the world, told me, "if you're going to get married, it wouldn't hurt to marry someone with money." When Hitler invaded, my mother said, "oh oh, Jews are being killed - we must take the tree down and make a statement."...(how'd this affect you?) I became a rebel...It was an alienating experience, but my maverick experience came from my mother's absolute need to assimilate...I started learning early that there was something else I wanted, but I didn't know what...There was a large cedar closet where we kept a family album...I'd go over the pictures...ask about them. I became aware of the fact of some of them being killed. (how did you know?) My father's relatives were arriving and telling stories. About five or ten came over under my dad's auspices...These refugees were very exciting to me...Dad would bring these people home for dinner. I was fascinated...hero-worshipping these people who'd survived these things. They told some tough stories...Some...horror stories were coming through...The ethical issues were real powerful for me...The war didn't physically affect me because we were a bountiful family...But I'd keep going back to that closet and looking at our relatives I imagined dead. I was still a Jewish-American princess and the recipient of tremendous bounty...I was aware that I was being kittenized. That set up my own complex. At what point do I want to be nothing but?...This also set up a certain conflict. That's why I give a great deal to causes I believe in.

In addition to early exposure to inequality and identification with the oppressed, many respondents also mentioned the importance of their fathers' social activism to the development of their own compassion and activism. Fathers were frequently cast as role models for charitable acts. Although other family members were also important,



only one respondent specifically mentioned the influence of her mother's activism on her. This pattern contradicts studies documenting middle-<sup>9</sup> and upper-class women's traditional involvement in charitable work,<sup>10</sup> and the likely assumption that respondents were influenced by socially active mothers. Respondents retrospectively identified with their fathers' activism, not their mothers' - perhaps because of the unconventional, political, or illegal nature of sanctuary work, or because fathers represented more interesting figures, or had more resources with which to be charitable. For example, a Jewish woman, age forty-eight, claimed that her father - a doctor - "had a great social conscience and was always giving money and time to charity and things." Similarly, a Protestant woman, age forty-two, described her father as "very involved in the community...big-hearted but conservative...a role model." She recalled that

...he spoke to the community a lot - I remember him saying, "when people come together in a community, we must give something back." So I was very active in high school and community social service clubs.

A thirty-three year old Protestant woman described identifying politically with a father who helped develop her "sense of compassion":

My dad's a person of few words but he's also aligned more with laborers than management, even though he moved from a blue- to white-collar job...as a role model, he was a common man. He'd joke about being a peon. It helped develop a sense of compassion for me.

A thirty-four year old Catholic woman described a father who introduced the family to new people and ideas:

My father was a great influence on me - always very open to people. He worked for the post office with a lot of blacks, and many were friends whom he'd bring home for dinner. Also, he had a second job - he was a barber in a black barber shop.

A seventy-three year old black Protestant woman recalled that her parents were "always involved together" in social activism, noting that she is "just like this":

Father was a charter member of the N.A.A.C.P...He was a pharmacist for fifty years...but couldn't become a member of the (State) Pharmacological Society until the end of his life. My parents were quite active in school and church. Mother had been a teacher til she married and had six kids. (She) was at meetings every night. I realize now I'm just like this.

Respondents generally indicated that out of early exposures to inequality and the influence of socially active fathers, most had begun by early adulthood to channel their compassion and desire to "do something" about human suffering into volunteer work. The compassion which respondents expressed for others and the importance they placed on "doing something" seems to exceed the typical care patterns of their culture. Certain feminist scholars suggest that women are socialized to feel personally responsible for others,<sup>11</sup> which predisposes them to characteristically feminine care patterns and to a personal ethics based on caring.<sup>12</sup> In this view, women tend to approach moral problems

by placing themselves as nearly as possible to concrete situations and assuming personal responsibility for the choices to be made. They define themselves in terms of caring and work their way through moral problems from the position of one caring. This position...activates a complex structure of memories, feelings, and capacities...(and) requires a process of concretization rather than one of abstraction. An ethic built on caring is...characteristically feminine...(It) arises... out of (women's) experience, just as the traditional logical approach to ethical problems arises more...from masculine experience (Noddings, p. 8).

studies in the sociology of emotion confirm women's cultural predisposition to do the emotional work of caring and relationship management. <sup>13</sup> These theories help explain respondents' underlying orientation toward caring, and their strong empathetic feelings toward others' pain. For example, a forty-two year old Protestant woman described herself as a "very soft-hearted person" whom "things affect...very strongly":

I have a hard time separating fantasy from reality. When I see things on TV (pause) I do cry at commercials for long distance telephone. My emotions are right to the surface. My empathy is strong. This has to do with my feelings for the marginalized. And I feel all pain. I get involved on the el when I see a mother abusing a child. I want to rescue the child.

Respondents tended to identify the pain of others with their own pain. For example, a thirty-three year old Protestant woman linked her mother's death with her own depth of feeling for others:

Losing a parent had a lot to do with...becoming aware of other people's pain. I had a deep compassion for other people's pain, but I didn't know where it came from. I think my mom's death deepened that.

As noted, many respondents described channeling these strong feelings for others into volunteer work in early adulthood. They tended to become socially active because it was personally meaningful, not because they were expected to do so. A forty year old Catholic woman found the world of service in high school activities:

When I was sixteen, in high school we had service clubs. We went to 19th and Loomis and worked in a settlement house on Saturday mornings. The people were Puerto Rican, black, white. I decided then that I wanted to learn Spanish and teach Hispanics.

A forty-eight year old Jewish woman took up volunteer work on her own:

When I was about nineteen, I decided I was so self-centered - I only worried about myself - and I should do something. So I went every other Saturday and volunteered doing occupational therapy at ( hospital).

A thirty-three year old Protestant woman embarked on a volunteer career in high school, "directing" her "social consciousness and compassion toward social services." She knew then that this would become her professional work:

In high school and college I always seemed to direct my social consciousness toward social service...going to old folks homes...In college I did volunteer work at (school) with a hard-of-hearing class. Most of my compassion was directed toward social services. My special education work is a result of this. I knew I would go into special education in high school. I saw a program on (state school) in high school and I knew that's what I wanted to do. I went and visited a classroom. When I got to college, that's why I did the volunteer work, to get some experience.

For many respondents, this orientation to volunteer work persisted into the present. For example, a fifty-

five year old Jewish woman described this transition:

At (university), I volunteered at hospitals...I was a wonderful athlete and it made sense for me to help kids with cerebral palsy. Even today (husband) and I are host once a year to social workers from all over the world - I've done this for twenty-five years.

Some respondents described how volunteer work took on the character of a career, especially for those not working outside the home. They tended to see volunteering as a substitute for paid work when their children were young and they were more closely tied to home and community. For example, a forty-two year old Protestant woman indicated that she treated her volunteer work "like a full-time job" when her children were young:

When I chaired the outreach committee, I treated it like a full-time job. I wasn't working then. I was ready for a career but wanted to be home with the kids, (who) were one and four.

Many respondents who continue their unpaid careers must rely on husbands working, as a thirty-eight year old Catholic woman indicated:

(Husband) getting the job changed the whole family system. I didn't have to make the money - this was a deciding factor in getting active. I thought, why work now? My kids were one and three years old. I was a workaholic - a career and a sense of importance through work were important to me. Without the need to make money, I could examine this need.

A forty-eight year old Jewish woman with a long social service career attributed her orientation toward volunteering to her religion, community networking, and not needing to work:

When my kids started school I got involved in the PTA...At first I did community service, and from there have blossomed into other things. I've been fortunate in that I don't have to work and I have tremendous energy. You can only complain so long and then you have to do something. My background - being a Jew, aware of humanity and problems - and the fact that I don't work may be part of it. When you get through with this world you want to know you've left a mark here...I'm a very positive person - I like people - I'm an active person. It's intriguing to do social action and to see things change. I like committee work best. I organize all the soup kitchen work for the synagogue. I've always been very involved in the homeless coalition...And if a woman doesn't work there's lots of opportunities to do volunteer work...One thing leads to another.

For some respondents, volunteer work was eventually transformed into a paid position, usually after they had demonstrated their capabilities as volunteers over a period of time. A fifty-one year old clergy woman compared the merits of volunteering with doing paid work:

I was asked to become administrative assistant - a position the church never had. My reservations were, one, I didn't need the money. My faith was grounded here in the 60's. I was willing to do it for nothing. But the staff/parish committee said, "if we're to take the women's movement seriously, we must acknowledge women's need to be paid." Two, as a volunteer, I could pick and choose what I'd do. "Nobody's gonna tell me what to do" - that was my illusion.

A fifty-five year old Jewish woman who claimed that she held a "Ph.D. in volunteering" indicated that it led to her first paid work:

I've had such an incredibly intense career in volunteering...until I decided it wasn't enough, and...created a gifted program...at (school). I didn't get paid for the first two years until I applied for a grant...This was my first formal work.

A forty year old Catholic woman indicated that her volunteer work in the sanctuary movement became a form of apprenticeship that "entitled" her to get work:

Sanctuary is not a paying job. I'm not entitling myself to be recognized and rewarded for my work. A professor...with a consulting firm realized my experience with refugees...and offered me the assistantship in Guatemala. So this has enabled me to get work.

As middle-class women, respondents may be culturally predisposed to volunteer work; however, they are also inclined toward middle-class standards of personal cleanliness which may cause them to experience culture shock in the course of caring for the oppressed. How they resolve this conflict may influence the course of their future activism and the nature of their contact with the refugees in sanctuary. Overcoming culturally-induced feelings of revulsion due to others' hygiene habits may make the difference between traditional volunteer work and more direct "hands-on" social action. For example, a forty-eight year old Jewish woman described feeling repulsed by the poor at a soup kitchen:

I'm not so sure I want to get involved in a hands-on way. I'm more interested in getting involved in an institutional way. At the soup kitchen, I do everything - planning, cooking, clean-up - and I'm somewhat compulsive about cleaning anyway. But I don't want to talk to (the poor). They're so crazy. They run the gamut. It's so pathetic. The first time I (helped out), I couldn't eat for hours. (It was) their clothes, how they eat, how they talk, how they smell, all of these things.

A forty-three year old Catholic woman indicated that her sense of empathy helped her overcome this repulsion:

In the sanctuary movement, there are a lot of shocks and offenses - circumstances of the third world. Empathy with the oppressed helps overcome these.

In sum, respondents constructed their biographies to show an early interest in helping people. Although generally from middle-class backgrounds, they described early "eye-opening" experiences which made them aware of social inequalities. Over time, they made connections between unrelated instances of poverty and suffering, and developed a strong sense of compassion for, identification with, and responsibility to the oppressed. For most, this exposure came from outside of their own lives; for some, it came from personal experience as members of historically persecuted groups. Many respondents attributed a special role to their fathers in their life choices, describing the influence of charity-minded, socially active fathers on their own activism. They indicated that these early experiences instilled a deep sense of caring and a desire to "do something" about social issues, which eventually led many to careers as professional volunteers, and some, to paid work in helping professions. Respondents' class and cultural predisposition to do volunteer work may be compromised by their cultural tastes and standards of cleanliness.



culture shock over the hygiene habits of the poor seems to affect the nature and course of some respondents' activism.

### Religious Component

Although the sanctuary movement overlaps with a larger political movement opposed to U.S. intervention in Central America, it is nonetheless a decidedly religious movement. Based on an historical concept, founded and led by religious figures, the movement has been endorsed and sustained by religious institutions and their membership. Most important, all respondents indicated that they entered the movement through their affiliation with churches or synagogues. All entered from a faith perspective, although they described arriving via different paths of development.

Theologian James Fowler helps place faith development within a sociological perspective.<sup>14</sup> He indicates that faith is "interactive and social,"<sup>15</sup> requiring "community, language, ritual, and nurture." He locates the "dynamics of faith" in "the ways we go about making and maintaining meaning in life," emphasizing its ongoing construction throughout the life cycle. He calls faith "a coat against...nakedness"<sup>16</sup> - a notion comparable to that of the socially constructed "self" which shields the vulnerable inner being in a dangerous

social world. Like the self,

(f)aitth helps us form a dependable "life space," an ultimate environment...faith undergirds us when our life space is punctured and collapses, when the felt reality of our ultimate environment proves to be less than ultimate (Fowler, p. xii).

This study is concerned with respondents' faith development in terms of how they retrospectively situated their changing religious beliefs and affiliation along socially constructed paths culminating in their entry in the sanctuary movement. As noted, respondents described entering the movement via one of four religious paths: some lost faith which they later reclaimed; some developed faith they previously lacked; some maintained faith while changing affiliation; and some never lost, lacked, or changed faith or affiliation. Many left traditional religious institutions early on because they were not addressing social issues, then came back later to "special" ones where they could participate in social action. Others never left traditional institutions, making smooth transitions to activism within them.

Religious affiliation differentiated respondents' faith paths: Protestant and Catholic lay women were more likely to have left the traditional church early on. Others - nuns, devout Catholics, clergy women, and Jewish women - were less likely to have left; they sustained their affiliation despite their criticism and alienation.

Jewish women were not particularly religious - they described cultural and ethnic ties to synagogues.

Four respondents spoke of losing faith which they later reclaimed. All left the traditional church early on because they felt its avoidance of social issues made it "meaningless" and "hypocritical". All became socially active outside the church, generally abandoning organized religion as a barrier to social change. All rekindled their faith and affiliation later, prior to becoming involved in the sanctuary movement. For example, a forty-two year old Protestant woman recounted how she left the traditional church as soon as she got to college because she found it irrelevant to life, returning only when she "had to" - when her minister husband was appointed to his first church:

As soon as I got to college I stopped going (to church)...When Kennedy was shot, we went to a (denomination) Church memorial service and I took (husband). We went back another time and they wouldn't let (husband) take communion. I was so angry and embarrassed...We were married...and went...to the seminary. When we graduated he was appointed to a church, but I don't think we went to church once in three years, until we had to. (why had you left the church?) It was totally meaningless - steeped in old culture. It had nothing to say about life.

A thirty year old self-described "generic Protestant" recalled that her early career as a fundamentalist "navel gazer" was a "real alienating" experience which she got "good at faking." Frustrated

over trying to make her faith "concrete" by addressing social issues within the group's "house church", she eventually withdrew:

In high school I got involved with (youth organization)...It was all fundamentalist theology. That was the first time I had studied the Bible. I got good at faking it - using my experience but their language...I came to call it "navel gazing". I had a lot of trouble at that point - these were my best friends...(They'd) say, "do you believe or not?...Why these other issues?" (what other issues?) The book of James...says you need to make your faith concrete in actions in the world...You have...to make it real.

She "either quit or was kicked out," and took a degree in religious studies "as a sort of reaction against house church." However, this was "not altogether satisfying" since she "lacked a community of people." Next she entered a theological seminary, but upon learning that the school supported investments in South Africa, she was "so offended" that she left both the seminary and church:

This was the catalyst for my leaving. It was also (fundamentalist group), house churches, etcetera. I said, "I'm never going into a church again!" I was sick to death.

A thirty-eight year old Catholic woman described the sense of stability and comfort the church provided during her early years coping with parental alcoholism and death. Under the tutelage of school nuns, she began her career as a volunteer caring for the oppressed - a pattern she sustained long after personal anger over a "life-threatening illness" caused her to see the church as "a

lot of nonsense":

My parents were both alcoholic...so (Catholic) school was...a stabilizing thing in my life. My dad had his first heart attack at thirty-seven and was sick five years before he died (when) I was fifteen. So I always had a base of comparison with others' problems. In the Catholic church they always stress our responsibility to the poor. We'd have food and clothes drives at Christmas...In seventh grade I was sent to deliver the goods...in a black and Puerto Rican neighborhood. I saw how desolate it was...In high school we got talks about, "you have a responsibility to the poor - you can make a difference"...my dad died, my brother was in the army, and I could drive...A nun recognized that I had a lot of freedom...and decided she'd channel my energies into some positive form...She had me stay after school every day...(She) would just have me do errands with her...It was a real positive influence on me - going to different places, seeing different sections of the city...I was struck by the poverty of it all...and the Christian response, that God loves these people too.

After a cancer operation in her second year of college, she felt "very different from everyone else." Out of a "natural rebellion" due to her young age combined with "wondering why God gave (her) this illness," she withdrew from both theological studies and the church.

A forty-one year old Protestant woman described a fundamentalist upbringing in which she "went along with the program" because it was expected. In college, she became aware of "race issues," which "brought forward a whole different reality." She began to see the traditional church as "a real barrier" to social change. As a summer intern in the inner city, exposure to "being poor and black" turned her "off to organized religion,"

which she came to feel was "contributing to people's oppression":

I was a star helper as a child - Sunday school, choir, church helper...We were expected to buy it hook, line and sinker. There was no environment in which to discuss, "do we believe in God?"...I never was exposed to issues of peace, justice, that kind of stuff...I went off to (denomination) college...We had to take...Basic Bible. I'd been taught that the bible was the word written by God - literally - that to play around with it is to play with fire. At Christmas I'd tell my mom, "what you think is crazy - we can trace this stuff to four different sources." She'd say, "here we send you to this (denomination) college, and you come home and say the bible was written by men, not God." I didn't talk much to my mom about it, but I took some courses. The guy who taught Religion and Society had us look at race issues - he'd say that Sunday at church is the most segregated day of the week...I became very critical of the traditional church because I saw how very hypocritical it was. I saw you could be a good person without going to church - that there were other ways to work with the poor - advocate for the poor and create a better system. I didn't see at all how traditional religion would facilitate this - I saw it as a real barrier...I spent one whole summer in the inner city (interning) at a church that had an all black congregation with a white old minister...we got critical of him...I decided this approach was contributing to people's oppression rather than helping.

Two respondents described developing faith they previously lacked. Both indicated that their early religious experience was devoid of personal meaning; later, both became "captivated" by a faith fraught with "mystery" and symbolism. Brought up Catholic, a twenty-eight year old woman claimed that her "consciousness had grown past it." In college, exposure to contemporary religious thought "softened" her bitterness toward the

church and interested her in the idea of women's communities. Reading a novel about nuns led her to recognize that "there was something more" - that she could see "not through things, but beyond them." She discovered that "there was somebody or something on the other side" pulling her beyond - that she wasn't "abandoned in this universe without meaning." She discovered that her previous experiences of compassion for the oppressed "just connected inside":

In my last semester of college I took a course on feminism and religion...because I was interested in feminism, not spirituality...It softened me - I was very bitter toward the Catholic church. (why?) My family was a good, church-going family, but we had serious troubles, and the church seemed unconcerned. I was very aware of the Vietnam War and other vital things, but they weren't talking about these in church...I was having some genuine insights into meaningless church life, but not enough insights to know not to throw the baby out with the bath water...From the course, I became interested in the idea of women's community. That summer I picked up a novel...about a group of nuns...still with a chip on my shoulder - I wanted to see how it was that the patriarchal church was oppressing them and making them serve out its own ends...Ten pages into the book I realized there was something more...When I read that this woman could see beyond things and feel a loving pull, that was my experience all my life. It was the first time I deeply realized...that I wasn't alone...I recognized my own calling through this...I discovered all these social experiences were completely intertwined on their own.

A thirty-three year old Protestant woman also indicated her early alienation from the traditional church - in this case, a small-town congregation of farmers who "took the mysticism out of religion." In college, all her

friends were Catholic, and she found it "much more fun to go to Newman Center" than to a Protestant church by herself. She reiterated the sense of "mystery and ritual" of her new faith - "something very distant but known" which she found "captivating". When she decided that it was "time to stop being a closet Catholic," and formally joined the church. She described how her new faith brought her back to a "very literal interpretation of the gospel," with an added politicized dimension:

This is where I value my early religious fundamental upbringing - what I'm getting back to is a very literal interpretation of the gospel...Christ was very clear about what we're called to do as part of a family of believers. That's what a lot of people in church are saying. He said a lot of things about politics and government.

Three respondents described exploring other denominations while never losing their religious faith. All reported examining their religious beliefs by attending different churches, but none reported leaving "the" church. All tended to identify their parents with the church, and to make conscious choices between their parents' and other denominations before ultimately choosing one compatible with their parents'.

A fifty-three year old Protestant wife of a minister - born in China to fundamentalist missionary parents - described "breaking away" in young adulthood from her parents' "theological conservatism" and her "very



closed and restrictive upbringing." She claimed that this transition "wasn't really a rejection of the church, but a fresh look at faith," which had "always been an important part" of her life:

In my own formation, breaking away from this very closed and restrictive upbringing and going to a secular university was a real growth. A late bloomer, I had very much adhered, unquestioningly, to my parents' religious background until then. That break...was a sense of my really taking my life into my own hands and making a decision...Their religious platitudes were unrelated to reality. I'd begun to taste who God was in new ways...I guess it hasn't been a rejection and a jumping off into nothingness, but evolving to alternatives.

A twenty-seven year old Protestant woman also described changing her affiliation without losing her faith or leaving the church. She claimed that she "grew up in" and "never broke with the church," although she just "joined (it) this year." Church was "very important" to her mother, who was "so excited" that her daughter had formally joined it:

I grew up in a white suburb but went to the church downtown. It was my mother, wanting us to know everyone wasn't white, with green lawns. She coordinated a center downtown that ran shelters for the homeless and soup kitchens. I remember...thinking, why can't we just go to the neighborhood church like everyone else?

She "went rarely to church during college." She began going to Quaker meetings because they were "more active," but "didn't know what to do" with the lack of structure. She remarked that she had "moved to the left of both

parents," but has "had their support so there's been no break with either (her) parents or the church."

A twenty-six year old clergy woman described her "double life" in childhood, living in a poor neighborhood and attending an elite religious school. Her father taught her nondiscrimination; her mother, to be of a better class. This set up her early sense of "doing class analysis," and helped foster her hatred for elitism and desire to stand up for others. Torn between the "unhealthy path" in her neighborhood and her "prissy and proper" role at school, she "broke away" from the school at about the same time that she decided to become a minister:

My parents wanted the best...for me. I went to a private Christian school. Starting in seventh grade, I started not liking it. I analyzed it many years later. My parents couldn't afford to send me to this school, so my mom drove the schoolbus and we lived in a relatively poor neighborhood. These kids were real rich...I'd felt since seventh grade that I had this double life. I lived in a poor neighborhood and went to this rich school. We'd go out with neighborhood kids and smoke and drink - then at school, I had to be prissy and proper. If I'd stayed at school, I'd have gotten into cocaine - I'd have seen the rich kids weren't what they were cracked up to be. I began noticing differences around seventh grade. I made a clear intention to break away from the neighborhood group...I felt the path I was on wasn't healthy. Older kids were being arrested, getting pregnant. So I (broke away)...Then I had arguments with my mother (because) I wanted to leave the private school. I felt I was leading two lives. I reached a point where I just hated it...Looking back, I was doing class analysis...I saw these rich kids stood for things I didn't want to be a part of - they had black maids...I felt my mom wanted me to go there to be of a different class than her...I had a big fight...I said I wouldn't go back...She was afraid I'd become scum of the earth,

but I didn't...I stayed in church from ninth grade on - I never really left it.

Many other respondents indicated that they neither lost, lacked, nor changed faith, nor left traditional religious institutions. Despite their criticism and frustration, they described making smooth transitions to activism within them. This pattern tended to characterize nuns, devout Catholics, clergy women, and Jewish women.

Nuns tended to have entered the convent as young women without a break in faith or affiliation. A thirty-four year old nun entered the convent "too young" - "right after college at age twenty-three." Although she was always critical of the church, she never left it:

I never really considered myself not a Roman Catholic. I felt the leaders were misguided...I don't know what constitutes staying. I never did the required things, but never considered myself a fallen away Catholic...I feel there's something salvageable in the church.

A thirty-four year old devoutly Catholic woman<sup>18</sup> also described never leaving the church. She "always felt (she) had to look for what (she) wanted," and the church's institutional limitations never deterred her. While she may not have followed all its rules, she indicated that she considered herself "as much a Catholic" as "American, middle-class, and white." The Catholic Worker and Latin American base-community movements had provided her with "good models" for "living (her) faith through action." She "didn't reject anyone along the way - parents, family,

church" - indicating her smooth transition to activism within the church:

The church introduced me to social issues early on. The content of the Scriptures is full of the need for action...I didn't expect a priest to give me the answer. I assume he has his limitations and interests but I don't have to follow these. I think the church is just like any other...institution. And I've worked with an educational system and not felt satisfied, but I still wanted to be a teacher...But the church is part of my past and culture.

A thirty-one year old clergy woman described a similarly smooth transition in faith and affiliation. As a child, she often made-believe that she was a minister; she was impressed with a woman choir director, and "fascinated" by nuns. In college, the acting chaplain was a woman. She took her first bible course, and at the end of junior year decided to enter the ministry. She worked in the college chapel her last year, and "the next year went to theological seminary," the life-long thread of her faith unbroken.

As noted, while Jewish respondents were not particularly religious, they indicated that they never broke their affiliation with synagogues. Their cultural and ethnic identity, which was rooted in their membership in an historically oppressed group, tended to transcend their religious faith, and was not easily lost. For example, a forty-eight year old woman, an atheist since age six, described "hating" to go to synagogue as a child.

Although her assimilated family never celebrated Jewish holidays, she never left the synagogue:

I hated (synagogue because) it was cliquish. I felt it wasn't practicing what it preached. My parents were very very assimilated. We had a Christmas tree, and colored Easter eggs...We were trying to deny being Jewish, like everyone else. (did you ever leave the synagogue?) No. Jews can't really leave...if they do, they're still Jews, whether they have synagogue ties or not.

Similarly, a fifty-five year old Jewish woman claimed being "totally bored" by her religious training. She recalled no particular religious values, but sensed the importance of fairness; specifically, she wondered why Jews were being persecuted. Although she said that it seemed like "watered-down Sunday school," she never left.

Jewish respondents indicated that their ethnic identity and religious orientation predisposed them to charitable giving. They explained that Jews have been historically required to provide for their own by creating long-standing traditions of "righteous giving." While this tradition may predispose them to religious activism, one respondent indicated that it may also limit their concern to Jewish causes, an obstacle which participants at traditional synagogues face:

The concept is "Tzedakah" - willingness to take care of others - one of the most primary mandates in Jewish culture. We give Tzedakah for everything. It started out as justice or righteousness, then became a type of charity. It means "righteous giving." The "Mitzvah" is the blessing to give. In the country, the Jewish community lived in "shtetl" - ghettos. No Jews were

allowed to use the services of the larger community. The Jewish people by definition were forced to use their own services for others in the same community who were less fortunate - self-contained charitable organizations to take care of their own. No Jewish child is allowed to grow up without the notion of Tzedakah. The Jews who see justice only in terms of Jewish issues will only give their Tzedakah toward Jewish hospitals and institutions, because they by definition still have a ghetto mentality.

Two Catholic respondents indicated that they had maintained their affiliation with the traditional church in spite of another kind of obstacle - sexism. A thirty-four year old nun claimed that although she had "observed sexism from the fourth grade on" and "thought confession was sinful," she had never left the church:

What the priests got by with - the hypocrisy! I quit going to confession because I thought it was sinful - we were emotionally abused. One priest has now been shown to be a pedophile - another, an embezzler...I'd lie for anything to get out of going...(did you ever leave the church?) No. At that point I felt I could fight forever. Now I find I'm at odds with so many institutions. I can't fight them all. I have to be reconciled somewhere because it becomes too violent - too much energy has to go into the fight.

A forty year old Catholic woman indicated the lengthy time it took her to "shake the church" - and the "child's position" it instills in women - yet she never left it:

It took me a long time to shake the church, (which) is the ultimate colonizer, especially for women...It took me a long time to think for myself because of the church. The parallel with the church and the female role is that they both tell us, "someone will take care of you, tell you the rules, and you'll be in this child's position." The thing about sanctuary is, it's nice to be in an effective position.

Whether they claimed their faith was lost, found,

changed or constant, respondents indicated that their religious experience generally melded with their humanitarian sense of compassion for and identification with the oppressed, contributing to a moral readiness to take social action once a concrete situation presented itself. For example, a thirty-eight year old Catholic woman described how her religious upbringing prompted an early sense of "social consciousness." She claimed that the link between faith and "concrete action" "came early, but not how to do it." Learning about the Holocaust, she decided that if she were ever in a position where she knew people were being oppressed, then she would act, because not doing so made her complicit:

I had a Catholic background. I was impressed as a child by the nuns' emphasis on helping the poor. Bringing pennies to put in the box (was) the beginning of my sense of social consciousness. The main thing about being religious is to alleviate suffering. Religiosity means concrete action. That link came early, but not how to do it. I was always looking for a way to act...From 1973 to 1975 I lived in Germany. I'd no previous idea of the Holocaust. I grew up in a small all-white community. I'd never heard of it before - never knew it had happened. I went to the American library in Germany and read Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. I kept wondering about all the Germans over fifty I saw - wondering, what were you doing? Did you know? I asked some people...I sensed they put a real distance between themselves and the Holocaust. They said they didn't know...The conclusion I reached from my Germany experience is that if I were ever in a position where I know something like this is happening, then I'll act. Because if I don't, it makes me responsible. But I never felt I had a knowledge base about anything. When I was a student in the 1960's...I was totally inactive. I didn't know how to decide what was right.

A forty-two year old Protestant woman - "not a Bible-thumper" - also indicated how her religious training predisposed her to take social action. She claimed that "our government is very wrong" regarding its policies toward Central America and the refugees, and that as a citizen and member of the church, she "must take a stand." Already convinced that "you either believe in truth or justice or you don't," she found sanctuary a "no-win situation" which she "had to support":

I have certain feelings and beliefs regarding how God fits into the world, and how I fit. I don't know that I have a strong religious faith. I'm more inclusive - that's why I feel comfortable at (church). I see God moving through events and people's lives. Faith is alive - I see it through people. I really feel our government is very wrong - I don't feel angry about that, I'm aware of it. As a citizen of the U.S., I must take a stand - I have the right to conscientiously object. As a member of the church, we had to take a stand. It was a no-win situation. We had to support sanctuary. Otherwise, why are we together?...That's what makes the sanctuary so special in our church.

In sum, respondents described entering the sanctuary movement via one of four religious paths. Whether they developed lost faith, found new faith, changed faith, or always maintained faith, all indicated that they became involved in the movement from a faith perspective, and through religious affiliations. Lay Protestant and Catholic women tended to have left the traditional church early on because it failed to address social issues, then to have returned to socially active



ones later. Nuns, devout Catholics, clergy women, and Jewish women tended to have stayed at traditional churches and synagogues despite their perceived shortcomings, making smooth transitions to activism within them.

These religious paths represent the ways which respondents constructed the stages of their lives to retrospectively explain their entry into a religious-based social movement. Their narratives constitute motive reports by which they justified their changing religious beliefs and situated past affiliations within a developmental framework. Their rhetoric indicates how they have constructed activist careers based on caring, and how their religious development has shaped their identities.

#### Political Component

As noted, all respondents indicated that they were active on other issues prior to their involvement in the sanctuary movement. Whether of age or coming of age in the 1960's, all indicated that they were significantly affected by social and political events of that era. The civil rights, anti-war, and women's movements, the political assassinations, Vietnam, Nixon, and Watergate played a meaningful role in building the subsequent awareness and activism of many women. Recent studies on the continuing commitment of the "sixties generation" to social issues help explain this pattern, as do

respondents' ages - eighty percent are between thirty and sixty years old. Their narratives reveal how events of the 1960's intersected and shaped their lives. For example, a thirty-four year old Catholic woman recalled the sixties in terms of race riots, the overthrow of Allende, and high school boys dying in Vietnam. She saw "the same questions come up" through reading and travel, and began developing her own view early on:

I was twelve in 1968, the year of race riots...boys in high school were dying in Vietnam...Later on I realized that our own government's hands were not so clean. (how did you know this?) Living through the sixties was part of it...And the experience of Watergate, and the overthrow of Allende in Chile when I was seventeen...I wanted to go see for myself...I had...political interest...that came from reading more than any other source.

Another thirty-four year old Catholic woman described her early exposure to such "eye openers" as "Vietnam, Richard Nixon, and Watergate," indicating how her parents and teachers influenced her understanding that "people are being lied to":

My parents were very anti-Mayor Daley, so it wasn't so difficult to make the jump between Chicago and the national government. So obviously people are being lied to. In high school my American history teacher brought in draft resisters for current events...In college...I was involved with a community breakfast program for the poor - the group was also anti-Cambodian bombing. It was my first contact with progressive people. I was very influenced by a sociology teacher who taught social movements.

An ex-nun, age forty-four, married with six children, described the 1960's activism of her religious community,

which exposed her to social justice issues:

The religious community I was a part of was very much involved in the 1960's...The order was very much into educating women to be part of society...In the sixties, when Martin Luther King, Jr. marched from Selma to Montgomery, a (order) nun walked with him. So that was very much a philosophy I was getting at that period.

A Protestant woman, age forty-two, self-described "real child of the sixties," related how exposure to social justice issues in college helped her break out of her middle-class background. She continued her activism as a young mother:

I was very interested in Vietnam and civil rights issues...I went to (university) and it was very with it socially and politically...I took government and history courses (and)...a course on black power. A black woman in my dorm was in the class too. It was so helpful, coming out of a white middle-class suburb. My friends and I were...all politically aware. I continued to expose myself to justice issues. I was very concerned about the Vietnam War...Later, when I had babies, I kept active. I'd take them in the stroller to the grape and lettuce boycott at (grocery store). I wasn't angry - I had no axe to grind. But I felt people needed to be aware of injustices.

Another forty-two year old Protestant woman described the kinds of activities she and her seminarian husband engaged in during the 1960's as "what white people did then":

When (husband) and I were in the seminary, we were active on anti-Vietnam issues...We both worked in community centers in black parts of towns...I worked on grape and lettuce and infant formula boycotts. I got interested in the women's movement in 1970.

For some younger respondents, political awareness came early. For example, a twenty-seven year old

protestant woman described growing up "thinking that college was a time for activism":

My brother - six years older - would come home from college and talk about the grape boycotts. There was a feeling for my family that it was important to be active in politics and care about politics.

Some respondents indicated that they began learning professional demonstrating and civil disobedience skills as young adults by taking part in community actions. For example, a thirty year old Protestant woman described participating in her first demonstration at age fourteen. Her best friend's father was an activist minister practicing Saul Alinsky's organizing techniques in the community:

...my first demonstration...was a sit-in at the police station of about...forty people, white and Hispanic. We took over the police station. Nothing happened - the cops already knew the minister - we were the church across the street. They didn't react...I was really impressed with that kind of empowerment.

She indicated that her friend's father was an "important early role model" for her subsequent awareness and activism:

He had McGovern posters all over the house. He'd go around saying, "Nixon is a crook!", pace the house, rant and rave. I came from an apolitical but Republican family, and all this was totally alien to me. I was fascinated that someone could call our president a crook.

A clergy woman, age thirty-one, also described learning professional demonstrating techniques at an early age. She "wasn't radical" in college in the 1970's because

"there was little activism at that time." However, during seminary school she took off two years to work for a large national housing rights agency which exposed her to "direct action tactics." She had been to "tons of demonstrations" by the time she left the agency, which she claimed taught her "how to appreciate activism":

Working two years for (agency), I was well-primed. To work for them was important...(Agency) exposed me to how people in the U.S. lived in different kinds of areas, and I was exposed to the idea of direct action tactics. It was the first time I participated in any kind of direct action. (what kinds?) Not civil disobedience. (Agency) gets away with a lot of things - their intent is not to be arrested. We always had a specific demand. When we blocked an intersection...on a freezing day with thirty parents - mostly black women - to get a school crossing guard, we'd refuse to leave until we got the word from City Hall that we'd get it. And it worked. A more dramatic thing was when HUD had a conference...one year and Coretta Scott King was a speaker...but no (agency) people were invited. It was HUD people in suits - they didn't intend to include grassroots organizations. About two hundred (agency) people went up on the stage to present their demands to HUD. It got attention. They wanted some kind of participation in the process. We'd invade the offices of public service agents to make demands - like utility battles. We'd take over offices and show up at hearings. In a number of cases, we'd have a public demonstration, then march to a boarded-up house, open it up, and help a family squat. These were people who lived in the projects and wanted a decent place to live. These were abandoned houses on the tax rolls of the city. (were you arrested?) No. In New York City, all kinds of exciting stuff began after I left.

A twenty-eight year old Catholic woman recalled how her early activism grew out of a religious conversion at age twenty-two which inspired her to "do something" about "nuclear issues and world peace." On a "retreat, looking

for answers," she met two women about to embark on a "two-year pilgrimage to Jerusalem for peace":

Something in me welled up - I said, "I wanta do that!" I finished college, went back home and made some money working for a couple months...Then I joined the group. On Good Friday of 1982 we started walking...outside of a trident nuclear submarine base...and walked across the U.S. That took seven and a half months...We flew across the ocean...(and) began walking...(We) walked through the occupied West Bank to Jerusalem...We finished Christmas day, 1983...We held a prayer service on the fields where shepherds heard angels singing at the birth of Christ. We prayed for peace, danced, sang, cried.

On the march, she described beginning to learn how to manage political activism within a religious framework, a skill essential to her later sanctuary involvement. For example, members of the group called themselves "pilgrims", not "marchers", and "conversations would get political or religious" depending on "what kind of people" they were talking to. It was the "theology of peace-making," and apparently well-received:

It was a serious religious quest...acting out on faith about a God of peace, not war. We were aware of political implications, but that wasn't our agenda. But we talked about Reagan's policies and everything. We informed ourselves as much as possible about the...technology of war...We were saying, "God defends and sustains us through love, and we can't create instruments of war and expect it to work"...This was 1982 - more people were beginning to ask questions about the arms race...It was timely. Pastors were looking for a way to bring questions before congregations.

For some older respondents, coming to political awareness and activism tended to occur more slowly, out of

many experiences and across decades of their lives. For example, a fifty-nine year old Catholic woman remarked that "it wasn't like a lightning bolt." She described an influential priest who guided her toward working at an interracial center, where she began to change. By the time she arrived at a sanctuary church, "it was like a chicken coming home to roost":

It was a slow process...I was a new bride, not satisfied, unsettled. Something was missing. I went to a priest - a good friend of mine...He opened doors for me...I'm different because of my experience with (him). He sent me to (interracial center). I went to a black person's house and he had house plants. This is how stupid I was - I said to myself, "oh, black people have plants too." I didn't know any black people. I came to (center) like the great white mother and said, "(priest) sent me, what can I do?" They'd just had lunch and were washing dishes - someone threw a towel at me! I started out at the bottom of the heap and learned...Little by little I began to change...My Central American involvement began then - my social consciousness. (how did you come by this?) Through (center). That priest was the head of the Catholic labor movement in Chicago in the early 1950's. It opened more doors for me. I began learning...more and more.

Similarly, a nun, age sixty-two, described her slowness at "coming to political awareness," beginning with her anger at "the bomb" which prompted her activism in the 1950's. She became involved in the civil rights movement in the 1960's, and the peace movement in the 1970's, "dabbling" with reading and doing "a lot of picketing":

I'm so slow at coming to life, but I was so mad about the bomb. In the early 50's I saw some army films on

atomic power...it was the Atoms For Peace program...a big cover for keeping the weapons. I began writing senators. In the 60's...I wrote letters to editors about civil rights issues, and got a lot of hate mail...It said things like, "'we shall overcome' is a communist phrase"...I was gradually getting a political awareness of the nuclear issue...In 1975, (anti-hunger agency) began. I joined (anti-nuclear agency) and helped with the first symposium of (physicians' anti-nuclear agency). I went to its meetings for the first few years...and to Springfield to lobby. I did a lot of picketing in Chicago.

Many respondents recalled periodically suspending their activist careers as they attended to other features of their lives - particularly childrearing. All eventually returned to social action. A thirty year old Protestant woman described this pattern at her church:

...all the women activists had babies at the same time one year. They and their husbands took a sabbatical. Some came back. One didn't, one did, and a third came back halfway. They'll participate if the meeting is held at their house. These families were real active.

Others indicated that they had suspended their activism while going through a divorce. For example, a Jewish woman, age fifty-five, described her involvement in local politics in the 1960's - "civic stuff" - and her more "global" perspective in the 1980's. Between these decades, she took a hiatus from activism during her divorce. She was "not involved in Vietnam" because of the strain of the divorce on her family:

I was politically active in (community) politics...My first husband was very good about civic stuff so we'd push doorbells together in the sixties...I was not involved in Vietnam - it was the only place where I literally took a back seat. My marriage was breaking



up and I was psychically drained. I got divorced during Vietnam. I was torn up. The kids were in great pain and so was I...In 1965 I was very aware of integration issues. By 1975 I was aware of a broader political world...Toward the 1980's, I became more aware of the global picture.

Another Jewish woman, age forty-eight, described limiting her activism because of her young children and because she was "going through a horrendous divorce":

After my first son was born, I got involved in the civil rights movement...Also I got involved in pro-abortion - I'd pass out pamphlets door-to-door...(did you march?) Never. I felt because I had two babies at home, I couldn't leave. That's why I'm willing to do the things I do now - (no one is) dependent on me.

In sum, respondents indicated that they had been significantly influenced by political events of the 1960's. All used that era as a referent for their own activism, and all claimed that they had been active on prior issues. Some respondents described learning professional demonstrating techniques as young women taking part in community actions. Others described coming to political awareness and activism more slowly, in mid-life. Many indicated that they had periodically suspended their activism while attending to family matters related to childrearing and divorce.

Respondents also indicated that their prior political awareness and activism were important precedents to their sanctuary involvement. Their narratives reveal how they have situated their past political views and

behavior within the framework of a socially constructed career leading to their participation in the sanctuary movement. Many had already begun learning the important skill of managing political activism within a religious framework. Experiencing the integration of religious and political values and finding a socially active church or synagogue were generally the last steps respondents described taking before their initiation to the sanctuary movement.

#### The Integration of Faith and Activism

As noted, many respondents indicated that they had had "conversion" experiences prior to their sanctuary involvement which helped integrate religious and political values. For two young clergy women, this occurred during college and led them to the ministry. One, age thirty-one, described how her experiences in college and working for a national housing rights agency, taught her that "standing up for justice" can be a "faithful activity":

I was primed by my experience in college - a religion teacher...talked about there being a need for...radical voices that move us forward...prophetic voices. Also in college, reading Paulo Friere...linked for me the scriptures with standing with the oppressed...The (agency) experience I saw as a faithful activity. The (agency) people knew...that was my basic commitment...(But) there was something missing - God was not central enough for me at (agency). I felt called to the church. I spent time in seminary trying to integrate the practical experiences in (agency) and the academic and theological experiences in seminary.

The other, age twenty-six, similarly described how her college experience helped "focus" her faith. "It wasn't like lightning struck" - she indicated how she went from being "not that kind of person" who would protest to realizing that "politics isn't all that bad." Because she was "standing up for the oppressed," her "confidence just grew" until she decided to enter the ministry:

My first (two) years of college were real eye openers. I was learning sociology and economics - this helped me focus my faith. (It) taught me that everything can all come together. I did a program called, "Must We Choose Sides?". When I look back to my conversion point...I look back to the study of that book...That's where everything made sense to me...it all congealed for me...it broadened my faith...but it was also more focused on liberation, hope, justice and peace. It wasn't like lightning struck. My first year, (friend) kept bugging me to go to protests. I said, "I don't protest - I'm not that kind of person." (what kind?) Deviant, radical, extreme...That book really showed me that politics isn't all that bad - being faithful means you have to deal with politics, because if you don't, you're on the side of the oppressor. I didn't get involved right away. By the end of the year, I hadn't gone to any protests. The second year, I was asking myself, "if I really believe these things, then why aren't I getting involved?" My third year I began getting involved...I first learned about kinds of oppression, then began putting them together. (how?) I attribute it to the people around me. I gained confidence because I was standing up for (the) oppressed. My confidence just grew - I really felt what I was doing was right. I felt my faith was leading me there. At this time, I decided to become a minister.

For some older respondents, the integration of faith and activism came later, at mid-life. A Jewish woman, age fifty-five, described how a series of recent awakenings led to her activism: she became involved

writing Holocaust stories for a speakers' bureau; she wrote a book on "agent orange" and discovered no mainline press would publish it; she became "passionately" aware that the Central American story wasn't being told. The parallel between these experiences and her sense of the "violation" of her early religious beliefs compelled her to take social action:

Three years ago...(I) started to work for (Holocaust foundation). In three months I learned more about refugees than I ever learned at home. I wrote speeches for women on the speakers' bureau. I'd put their experiences in speech form. I looked upon these survivors as extraordinary beings...It was a combination of things - hearing John Stockwell, Reagan lies, and lies in the press about agent orange. I began the agent orange book in 81...The EPA, VA, and every government official is involved in the conspiracy...The media has totally suppressed the data implicating the war contractors...So you're still talking about "lady naive," because I didn't know they had the power to buy off the press...I'm a "johnny-come-lately" to true cynicism...I finally lost the last vestiges of the idea that America was a good place. It was my agent orange book. I got every underground newspaper in town and started reading pieces here and there. I became passionately aware that the Central American story was not being told. Here was another story of people's lives being violated. The word "violated" comes up in my vocabulary a lot these days. The people living innocently in Times Beach were violated. The people living innocently in a Nicaraguan village are violated. That early "milk-and-honey nirvana" doesn't exist anymore and that pisses me off. It's just not right.

Similarly, a fifty-one year old clergy woman described her recent awakening during a trip to Central America which introduced her to a new sense of empowerment and activism. Transformed by the "courage and spirit" of

people in struggle, she returned "knowing" she was "different now," and began infusing her environment with this new sense:

Going to El Salvador, I realized I didn't have the answers...Seeing this country's policies, including the church's, and how they affect Central America, grounded me - it affected my gut. It opened me up to the possibilities of something else being right - other solutions. I had a sense of my "we-ness" getting much larger...It includes all these folks I never knew existed...These people...are far more than I ever imagined. The power of that - we're not alone. The passion of these people - how life is lived...Grace, passion - something is calling them forth when they have nothing to lose. This is what I want. That force which calls us to life - to full being - where can I find that?...I was sick and utterly terrified, but afraid to come home to business as usual in the U.S...It was a wonderful feeling to be there, but...I was afraid all the time. Yet I saw how courage and spirit cuts through even the fear of death. It heightened everything. I gave a sermon on it when I got back, giving witness to what I'd seen. Coming back, knowing, "you are different now"...Everything is different..."Gentle" is a term that's become very meaningful to me - gentleness is very present in the face of terror and horror. It's a new learning experience.

#### Finding A Special Church or Synagogue

Prior to their initiation to sanctuary, most respondents indicated that they had found a special church or synagogue where they were able to integrate religious and political values. These special places often launched their activist careers. For example, a Protestant woman, age fifty-one, who left the traditional church early on described "discovering" a social action church, which began her "social consciousness" and "established the

course" of her "development":

...discover(ing) this church in 1962...began my social consciousness...The pastor invited me to an open housing march...That struck home and hearth...When I left the church, it was out of apathy - part of getting out of the home. I went back when the kids were old enough for Sunday school. I was fortunate to come here - my involvement here absolutely established the course of my development, and who I am has affected...this church.

An ex-nun, age forty-four, described joining a special church partly because it was making a political statement about U.S. involvement in Central America:

What made me join this parish...was a priest who went down and lived with guerrillas in El Salvador. (Parish's) community was doing a lot of educational things - demonstrating - in the early 1980's. Just on a political basis of being very involved with our government doing this again - another Vietnam thing - getting involved again in some place we shouldn't be involved - and being part of a group where...they were making a real political statement about that - that's what made me get involved there.

Some respondents indicated that finding a special church or synagogue occurred after a prolonged period of alienation from religious institutions and the onset of a secular activist career, and helped some integrate unresolved faith issues with activism. For example, a thirty-eight year old Catholic woman left the traditional church early on and became politically active in the 1960's, seeking "God somewhere among these activities." She married a man with "no religion" in a "bare-bones" church service to please their families. Later, attending church for lack of "anything else to do," her husband

decided to become Catholic, and they became drawn to a social action church:

My husband was taught that religion was for the psychologically weak. He was...just back from Vietnam. I told him, "it's a good thing I didn't know you before because I was out protesting Vietnam." (how did you get active?) It was a hotbed of activity at (college)...It was a good experience...I went to all the marches, wore a black arm band - anti-Vietnam and civil rights marches. I was dating black people. I didn't go to Washington to march but I contributed money...I told myself, I think I'll find my God somewhere among these activities because these are such terrible injustices...So I'm marrying somebody who doesn't have any religion...Culturally it was real important to have a marriage in the church because my whole extended family would have been offended...(how did you feel about the church then?) I felt it was a hollow institution and I was fulfilling my minimum duties so I could have a happy wedding day...It was more of a cultural thing...Then we never did anything after that - never went to church, never had any discussions about God...(Later) we went to a cathedral because we didn't have anything else to do...(Husband) came home one day and said, "I want to be Catholic." I was appalled and shocked. I really didn't want him to do this - I wasn't supportive at all...We moved to (community) and that's when we came to (church) through a friend who was a member...What drew me the most was hearing people's stories about how their lives had been changed...the way people could take their faith...and experience it every day.

Similarly, a Protestant woman, age forty-one, described how she left the traditional church, became politically active in the 1960's, married, then returned to a special church where she could integrate faith with social action. During the "Kent State, Jackson State year," she had concluded that "the system is the oppressor" and "cashed in" the desire to be "part of any church." After marrying, she and her husband decided to

"check out" a "progressive" church where she could "explore" her "faith" again; they "kind of stumbled into it," and "just kept coming back":

(D)uring the height of civil rights, Vietnam, the women's movement, (there were) lots of opportunities to get involved. I was never a leader, but I did participate...big marches and demonstrations in Chicago I went to...After Kent State, we boycotted the whole spring semester and graduated without going to classes...Regarding the church and religion...I didn't need it in my life. I felt organized religion was part of the problem, not a solution. None of my peers were involved...It never occurred to me to relook at organized religion - I still felt it was a waste of time...(Husband) and I met in 1978 and married in 1980...at a friend's house in a nonreligious ceremony...It was a seven-minute wedding with a big party...A friend suggested we check out (church). I felt I'd missed community...(Friend) suggested (church) was a pretty progressive place - a good place. One Sunday we just decided to go...The minister knocked our socks off...We just kept coming back. It was 1981. Reagan had just been elected. We needed to stand up and make a statement about it. I liked that. It was a small congregation...I felt I could say, "I'm really struggling with this stuff" - we could talk about it. They see faith as an ongoing struggle. It seemed like a good place. At first, we thought we'd just go on Sunday, not get involved...We've been at (church) for over six years.

In sum, for some respondents, their membership in socially active churches and synagogues helped them resolve and integrate religious and political issues from their pasts, as well as launch their activist careers. For many, it seems to be a way to continue the activism that engaged them in the 1960s.

#### Initiation to Sanctuary

Some respondents indicated that the integration of



faith and social action occurred with their introduction to the sanctuary movement. Initiation to sanctuary represents a powerful learning experience in which many are converted to new perspectives. For example, a clergy woman, age twenty-six, claimed that sanctuary is what "percolated all these things together":

I see this is how God works in my life - I've been led - there have been these little flickers or sparks that led me, but I don't necessarily know what's going on. But I have faith that someday it'll be clear what's going on.

A Jewish woman, age forty-eight, described becoming immediately involved upon merely hearing about the sanctuary movement. Even before meeting the refugees or listening to their stories, she stepped forward and offered her services:

I first heard of sanctuary in October of 1986. At the Friday night service, the rabbi talked about it. It struck some kind of chord in me. I asked afterwards, "what can I do?" He said, "come to the next social action meeting." At the meeting, I said, "if you need someone to do the legwork, I can speak Spanish. If someone must take the rap, I can." I felt it would be better to be me because I'm committed...and have no children at home.

For some respondents, involvement took place in stages. For example, a Protestant woman, age forty-four, indicated her initial resistance to sanctuary before becoming converted. She first learned about the sanctuary movement when a local anti-intervention agency contacted her church and asked for a letter endorsing the first

sanctuary in Tucson. When the church was next asked to declare itself a sanctuary, her first reaction was, "absolutely not":

In 82, I was chairing the property and finance committee (when) a woman from (agency) came to a...meeting and told us about a Tucson church...declaring sanctuary...and asked us for a letter of endorsement...I thought, well sure, let's. The next question was, "how about (church) doing this?" At the same meeting! I thought, what's she talking about, sanctuary? I thought, sanctuary is a safe place for endangered species...I said, "where would we put these people?" Initially, my response was...legally, what are we getting into?...I got in touch with my personal fear - will I get fired from my job? Will I sit in prison? (Husband) and I were talking about children - how would they figure in? Then I realized that...I was nervous about...a sense of security as society defines it - respectability. I got scared by the whole thing. Here I was in a leadership position. I thought of the big rich church on \_\_\_\_\_ Street - I thought, let them do it. I wanted the whole thing to go away...I wanted to go along with it, but in my core, I was hoping it wouldn't happen. I didn't want to take that responsibility.

She described being converted by the decision-making process, and by the politicized religious interpretation of sanctuary. She came to feel "called" by an "old tradition." Once the vote was taken, she "jumped in":

What happened was, the minister reflected on biblical tradition and the faith perspective. (like what?) Old Testament stuff - Israelites' cities of sanctuary, and old English law, and tracing it here to the old underground slave railroad, which I really connected to from my community work. I realized, this is an old tradition with roots - I was seeing it in historical context. I began to see myself as one of God's people, and (church) as being called. How can we turn away folks needing help? At the same time, I learned more about what was going on in Central America - the persecution of catechysts, who were doing the same thing as people at (church). And I learned about INS

laws - our deporting people back to an uncertain future. And I learned that the 1980 amnesty law allows for these people to be here. I was moved by the experience of decision-making - the biblical reflection and discussion of our government's role. I felt, I can't sit in the middle anymore. I felt, how can we not do this? The vote was taken. We had two weeks to prepare before the family arrived. At that point, I jumped in. Once I made the decision, I felt so alive.

A Catholic woman, age thirty-three, recalled her introduction to sanctuary at a mass for the "martyrs of El Salvador." She described how the refugees' stories and covered faces "bl(ew) everything" she believed in:

In 1985...there was a mass for Oscar Romero at (parish). Some refugees from (church) spoke there. I'd been vaguely aware of and generally becoming disturbed about American policy...I wondered, what the hell is going on?...What the refugees had to say really bothered me. Here we were in America and someone had to...cover their face. That blows everything I believed in about living in...a free and democratic society. I thought, why are they in danger here? I was really upset and moved by what they said...I was saying, "I feel really helpless - I need to be with other people who are doing something, because I can't make an impact on my own"...(Husband) was saying, "we've got to get an affinity group"...That was the first time I remember being personally confronted with the idea of sanctuary...when it took on some flesh for me...Something was different about about sanctuary - it was these refugees standing in front of me telling me my government's foreign policy made them refugees, and that they're not even safe here. That was too much.

While she was "nervous" because of her "upbringing about communism," she joined a prayer group that was going to "do something," at which point "it finally all started to make sense":

Next, (sister-in-law) asked us to be part of (prayer group). We said, "yeah, we want to do that." That was what I was looking for - a group of concerned people who are going to do something. And I felt I needed a source of information...They were also a group interested in liberation theology - that was a big attraction - a Christian orientation... It's...having a paradigm to attach to what's kind of been fermenting all along.

### Integrating Values

Respondents' motive reports explaining their sanctuary involvement reveal how they have integrated humanitarian, religious, and political values in their lives. When asked how they believed these accounted for their activism, all indicated that they were at least somewhat motivated by humanitarian concerns. As a Catholic woman, age forty, put it,

(w)hen you look at people's personal motives for doing sanctuary work and ask what's in it for them, there's no question of a humanitarian focus.

Two Jewish respondents, both age forty-eight, saw their sanctuary involvement in predominantly humanitarian terms, indicating low levels of religious and political orientation. One remarked that

(i)t's more humanitarian than religious - I don't think I have a belief in one being. I believe in the values the religion teaches and the roots and having a place to go, but I don't think there's one guy up there. I'm not a real religious person. And I may be getting nicer as I get older. I'm more tolerant. (in a humanitarian sense?) Yes. And I think this issue is political, but I don't know how to express it.

The other - a self-described atheist since childhood -

indicated her "totally" humanitarian, somewhat existentialist orientation, although she claimed that being Jewish made her "keep trying":

It's totally humanitarian. I have almost as much contempt for politics as I do for religion. I feel political man sinks to a lowest common denominator. I think both institutions end up serving their own ends. If religiously I'm an atheist, then politically I'm an anarchist. So long as we must have government, it should be socialist, but I don't want any part of it...I don't believe in the better nature of man. (does your humanitarianism conflict with this pessimism?) Not really - I think we're like Sisyphus - we push the stone up and it rolls back down. The Jewish part of me says, "but you've got to keep trying." (why?) Because we've survived against such enormous odds.

Most respondents indicated that they had experienced a transformation in the relative importance of these values over time. Early on in their lives, humanitarian and religious values were more important. Later, political values became more important, usually after they had found a way of integrating them through activism. For example, a Catholic woman, age thirty-four, described herself as "more spiritual in high school" and "more political - actually anti-church - in college." Once she "made the connection between the political and spiritual," she "went back to it." A thirty-eight year old Catholic woman similarly described connecting early religious conviction with political activism:

This began more as a deep-rooted religious and moral conviction about people. I didn't know much - I was politically naive. It was a gradual awareness. The

nuns were always talking about helping people, and alleviating suffering. Once I found a way of expressing my convictions, then I felt compelled. Once I saw the route. Just talking and not doing has never appealed to me.

A Catholic woman, age fifty-nine, described this pattern in terms of "evolving" to a higher stage of "growth":

My orientation was mostly spiritual...when I was young...I did evolve, but it was spiritual at first...Later, it was humanitarian, now more political. (why?) Just growth - reading, listening, and learning.

Respondents generally indicated that their political awareness developed with the help of intimate relationships, small groups, and personal learning experiences. For example, a Protestant woman, age thirty-three, described how "change came through relationships with friends":

Politically I was pretty naive. I was afraid of getting involved. I didn't really know what was going on. I wasn't buying my dad's line of, "America, love it or leave it," but I was starting to wonder if what we were doing was right. I still had the idea that people involved in protest were deviant. For awhile, my whole idea about protest was controlled by the media...Change came through relationships with friends...I'll have some things percolating inside, and may process them individually - then some kind of relationship brings me to a group or transformation. That's what happened regarding this political transformation. (Husband) and some other people really helped me transform some of my earlier religious and humanitarian ideas into a political framework. I don't necessarily believe (husband) is "the" person - if not him, it would have been somebody else. I was ripe. The time was ripe.

They also generally indicated that once they became politically aware, they felt "compelled to do something."

A Protestant woman, age thirty, described the responsibility which came with "having your eyes opened":

(A)s long as people are comfortable...they'll keep their eyes closed...(T)here's a lot of people who don't want...to make political decisions. I was one of those people. Having your eyes opened doesn't make my life any easier - I'm compelled to do something. The scales fall away and you can never put (them) back on. I think people like not asking too many questions. They can let somebody else carry on the business of government - because it's work to become politically informed and active. A lot of people feel comfortable trusting government officials to have hired good people to do good work. Therefore that alleviates responsibility on my part to do anything.

While acknowledging the role of political activism in bringing about change, respondents generally tended to express their newly integrated political/religious values in primarily religious terms. Their style of discourse was strongly oriented toward religious justifications and rhetoric. For example, a Catholic woman, age twenty-eight, described her "essentially" religious viewpoint:

The world is one, and we can't be authentically religious without a sense of political significance. But my basic orientation was and is, more and more, spiritual. An essential part of my faith is concern for the poor. My faith would be empty without it...It's my faith and religious convictions that keep bringing me back to political and social arenas.

Similarly, a Protestant woman, age fifty-five, described how once these values became "intertwined", her activism became a "faith-based enterprise":

I can remember in Guatemala, saying to a friend that I long for the day when my politics and religion come together better...I find my faith to be stronger - at one point it was meaningless routines, and now it's

become a very meaningful discipline. (how did this occur?) My experience in Guatemala, my friends, and my reading. My politics and faith are very intertwined - I don't separate them out...So for me, sanctuary is a very...faith-based enterprise.

Only one respondent indicated that her activism had preceded her religious development. A Catholic woman, age forty-three, had been a student during the tumultuous 1960's in France, and was already politically active when she found a social action church. Her involvement in sanctuary brought her "back" to the church, fulfilling her "religious quest" and adding the religious component she sought. However, her development was similar to other respondents' in that she used personal connections and interaction to move in the direction she chose:

I was involved in the peace movement in the U.S. After my early motherhood, I wanted more involvement outside my family. I began leaning to the left. I wanted to meet people concerned with world issues - peace...When I was in the peace movement, I met some (church) people...I grew into this church because of this congregation's emphasis on faith and responsibility toward self and society - on commitment. I'm considering joining it...The sanctuary movement is how I came back to the church.

She noted the spuriousness of boundaries between these values, adding that "it depends on where and when in their lives people enter the movement":

There's no boundary between the humanitarian and political and spiritual - these are highly interchangeable values. For me, the sanctuary movement made me more spiritually involved. I was already politically oriented. For others, the opposite.



In contrast, all other respondents indicated coming into the movement with a particular religious viewpoint, and maintaining that orientation as it was transformed and politicized through their activism. They situated the political dimension last. Many minimized its importance, strongly emphasizing the religious basis of their activism. For example, a clergy woman, age twenty-six, remarked,

I really don't like politics. I'm involved only because of my faith. (why is that?) My faith compels me to stand against injustice, and for justice.

Similarly, a nun, age fifty-three, claimed that although there were many groups active for "good humanitarian and political reasons," this wasn't "enough" for her because it didn't "enliven (her) spirit."

Although most respondents belonged to politically-oriented local and national anti-intervention organizations, they still expressed a strong preference for religious-based involvement. For example, a Protestant woman, age forty-one, remarked, "I'm not opposing political solidarity groups, but for me personally, I want to keep my faith perspective on this." Similarly, a clergy woman, age twenty-six, claimed that while she hoped for "more interlinkages with broader anti-intervention groups," her own activism was "very much faith-based."

While the sanctuary movement and anti-intervention groups to which they belong overlap in means and ends, maintaining their distinction affords respondents a sense of historical identification with and protection by religious institutions. A nun, age sixty-two, confirmed the importance of this distinction:

You could change the sanctuary movement's name to "solidarity committee" and you'd pretty accurately describe it. But it'd be very foolish to (do so) because that would reduce us to another Central America solidarity committee. Because our whole identity and sense of protection comes out of our religious roots...It's a religious movement we're into.

A Protestant woman, age seventy-three, commented on the reluctance of many congregations to be "political", which partly explains respondents' preferred identification as religious, not political activists:

Many church people won't get involved because it's political. But it's not partisan politics - it's the will of the people to act.

In conclusion, respondents described arriving in the sanctuary movement through shifts and changes in their development which they constructed in three areas of their lives - humanitarian caring and charity, religious faith and affiliation, and political awareness and action. Many indicated that they had experienced these transformations as "conversions" which propelled them into activism. For many, these changes had occurred prior to their sanctuary

involvement in the free spaces of special churches and synagogues, although some were reconverted with their initiation to sanctuary. For most, sanctuary involvement helped draw together respondents' unresolved issues of caring, religious faith, and social action, launching or relaunching their activist careers.

Respondents generally described their orientations in the movement as decidedly religious-based; while acknowledging its importance, many repudiated the political dimension. This is partly because identifying with a religious-based social movement helps provide them a sense of identification with and protection by religious institutions, and helps them overcome the stigma of being "political". However, it is also because most respondents' orientations are not political in a traditional sense. Their view is neither partisan nor national, but grassroots and global. Their intent is both to mobilize communities toward social awareness and responsibility, and to affect large-scale change in the balance of power between nations - a perspective which the "new age" maxim, "think globally, act locally,"<sup>20</sup> describes well.

## ENDNOTES

1

Everett C. Hughes discusses the socially constructed career in "The Study of Occupations." Pp. 283-97 in *The Sociological Eye: Selected Papers*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, Inc., 1971. Also see Jean-Michel Chapoulie, "Everett C. Hughes and the Development of Fieldwork in Sociology." Pp. 259-298 in *Urban Life*. Vol. 15, Nos. 3 & 4, January 1987.

2

Erving Goffman discusses the career of the mental patient in *Asylums*. New York: Anchor Books, 1961.

3

Howard S. Becker and Blanche Geer discuss the career of medical students in "The Fate of Idealism in Medical School." Pp. 50-6 in *American Sociological Review*. 23, 1958.

4

See James W. Fowler's study of the stages of "faith development" in *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981.

5

Arlie Russell Hochschild discusses "motive reports" in "The Sociology of Feeling and Emotions: Selected Possibilities." Pp. 280-307 in Millman & Kanter.

6

C. Wright Mills discusses these concepts in "Situating Actions and Vocabularies of Motive." Pp. 904-13 in *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 5, December 1940. Mills claims that sociologists must "approach linguistic behavior, not by referring to private states in individuals, but by observing its social function of coordinating diverse actions...(L)anguage is...an indicator of future actions" (p. 393). These "imputations and avowals of motives" are sociologically important because "differing reasons men (sic) give for their actions are not themselves without reasons" (p. 394).

7

This refers to changes over time in respondents' professed religious beliefs and in their affiliation with churches and synagogues.

8

See Chapter I for a more detailed description of respondents' backgrounds; also see Appendix A: Methods.

9

See Arlene K. Daniels' study of middle-class volunteers in "The Hidden Work of Constructing Class and Community: Women Volunteer Leaders in Social Philanthropy." in Gerstel & Gross.

10

See Susan A. Ostrander's study of upper-class volunteers in Women of the Upper Class. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984.

11

See Carol Gilligan, In A Different Voice: psychological Theories and Women's Development. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.

12

See Nel Noddings, Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

13

See Arlie Russell Hochschild, The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

14

In Stages of Faith.

15

Page xiii in Stages of Faith.

16

Page xii in Stages of Faith.

17

See Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1959.

18

I classified this respondent as a "devout Catholic" because of her life-long involvement with the church; she was single, had traveled widely in Central America through religious organizations, and spent six months of the year working in refugee camps in Honduras. She was closely involved in the formation of the Catholic sanctuary group, and had more in common with nuns than with lay women.

19

See Tod Gitlin, The Sixties. Bantam Books, 1987.

20 Economist Hazel Henderson coined this phrase; see Harvey Wasserman & Marc Barasch, "Interview: Hazel Henderson." Pp. 30-5, 88-95 in New Age Journal. March, 1984.

## CHAPTER VII

### PATTERNS AND CONFLICT IN SANCTUARY

#### Introduction

Women take part in diverse activities in the sanctuary movement, such as leadership, outreach, civil disobedience, travel to Central America, translating, and caretaking. Because the movement is predominantly made up of white, middle-class North American women mobilized on behalf of third world, oppressed people of color, conflicts surrounding issues of gender, class, culture, and race inevitably emerge. There is conflict between North American men and women over leadership and decision-making, models of refugee care, and the perceived loss of women's resources by their families; between North and Central American women over the importance of gender parity in the movement; between North and Central Americans over North Americans' attachment to certain cultural values; and between Guatemalan and Salvadoran<sup>1</sup> refugees over differences of class, culture and race.

These conflicts are quite prominent in movement activities and begin to take on recognizable patterns. Women's awareness of these issues tends to indicate their

orientation: the humanitarian-oriented generally ignore them, while the politically oriented emphasize and seek meaningful linkages between them. Some sort of analysis where women identify how those like themselves are part of the problem tends to be a prerequisite for developing political awareness. To the extent that women perceive these interlinking issues, and their own role in perpetuating conflicts in the movement, their viewpoint and sphere of challenge is broadened. To the extent that they are unaware of these issues, they tend to perpetuate their own class and cultural hegemony. Women's level of awareness represents costs and contributions to the movement, and to their activist careers.

This chapter analyzes women's role in several sanctuary activities - leadership, outreach, civil disobedience, travel to Central America, translating, and caretaking - and considers the mutual adjustments between women's activism and their families. It examines patterns of conflict surrounding issues of gender, class, culture and race in these areas, emphasizing how women's awareness of these issues is related to their effectiveness in the movement, and as agents of social change.

Examining sanctuary as a type of movement organization makes women's role in its activities more clear. Sanctuary is an alternative, collectivist

organization characterized by "value-rational authority", belief in values for their own sake, and actions which mobilize convictions. Joyce Rothschild-Whitt's model for collective democratic organizations<sup>3</sup> helps explain women's role in this type of movement, and Pauline Bart's study of a feminist abortion collective considers women's role in an illegal organization.<sup>4</sup>

Rothschild-Whitt notes several features which distinguish "alternative institutions" from bureaucratic organizations, considered here in four general areas. First, authority resides in groups, not individuals. The aim is organization without hierarchy or domination, and egalitarianism through low levels of stratification. Teamwork, role rotation, and demystifying specialized knowledge minimize task differentiation. This emphasis on equality characterizes sanctuary in part because women predominate in the movement, and are increasingly conscious of their growing power. Respondents insisted on democratic procedures and openness partly because these arrangements included them in decision-making. Their rhetoric disdaining secrecy and unshared power often cast men as obstacles to women's power, and cast women as increasing their power by resisting male domination.

Second, collectivist organizations rely on personal and moral appeals as a primary means of social control.



Membership is homogeneous, constraining efforts to broaden the movement's base. This also describes sanctuary, an ethical, religious-based movement whose participants share the same race, class and culture. Respondents indicated that this enhanced agreement on issues, yet often constrained efforts to recruit across these lines and to include the refugees in decision-making.

Third, relationships in collectivist organizations are based on wholistic, affective values. Recruitment is based on friendship, personality attributes, and social-political values; incentives to participate may have little to do with advancement or material gain. This particularly describes sanctuary because of women's predominance in the movement, which is literally produced through women's informal networks and personal relationships. Many are professional volunteers accustomed to low status and no pay. Their reward is related to caring, a value instilled during their early development. The very concept of sanctuary is based on caring, an affect historically attributed to women.

Fourth, collectivist organizations seek to minimize rule use by conducting operations in an ad hoc manner. In this area, sanctuary women differ greatly. Respondents strongly protested discretionary decision-making because they viewed it as a male prerogative which excluded them.

Many adamantly defended the importance of rules. For example, some insisted that "the refugees need a budget," accusing the men of "paternalism" when they violated rules by arbitrarily giving the refugees money from their pockets or the group's budget. Others insisted on following rules in order to prevent men from dominating meetings and excluding women from decision-making.

The Rothschild-Whitt model also helps explain certain constraints noted by respondents. For example, democracy takes time; women often complained about time spent attending meetings, allocating tasks, and making group decisions, especially during the early stages of creating a site. Another is that familial relationships compound group conflicts, which consensual decision-making and informal interactions make difficult to absorb. Another is the presence of nondemocratic individuals. As Whitt-Rothschild notes, some in movement organizations are not well-suited for participatory democracy:

The major institutions of our society...combine to reinforce ways of thinking that are congruent with capitalist-bureaucratic life and incompatible with collectivist orientations...the difficulty...results from a culture disjuncture (p. 521-2).

Respondents clearly identified some men as unsuited for democratic participation, and patriarchy as the "cultural disjuncture" causing men's handicap; they located the solution "in the democratic method itself" (p. 522).

Last, environmental conditions are a constraint. Respondents indicated that the illegality of their activities produced considerable tension, which affected how they carried out movement goals.

Pauline Bart notes that all of the organizations which Whitt-Rothschild studied as the basis for her model were legal. Bart's study of a feminist abortion collective<sup>5</sup> examines features which the sanctuary movement shares with other illegal organizations: in general, law officers informally support and comply with the movement; recruiting based on women's personal networks enhances participants' security; illegal activities and salience of an external enemy heighten group commitment, cohesiveness, and efficiency; and solving concrete problems compounded by the law gives participants great satisfaction, which helps sustain organization.

Besides understanding women's role in a movement organization, it is helpful to understand how their status as predominantly white, middle-class women affects their role in movement activities. These women are often able to use their status as a resource. For example, as "conventional" Americans, they are relatively secure from police harassment and protected somewhat from government reprisals. More than one woman claimed that she was the "perfect person" to be followed "by the CIA or whoever":

I'm completely open. I hide nothing. I have nothing to lose. If anything happened, my neighbors would rally to my defense.

Women's backgrounds help protect and empower them, yet also isolate them from those on whose behalf they are mobilized and those whom they wish to recruit - the working-class and people of color. A respondent emphasized the difficulty of overcoming this barrier, unwittingly perpetuating a stereotype about "little people":

We've got to connect with the working class and people of color...Basically we're not trusted - we're a white middle-class movement. (I)f the movement is going to grow, it lies there...I liked the farm communities - I'm really interested in these little people.

Sanctuary women's class-conscious approach may determine whether they work "for" or "with" the refugees - an important distinction between humanitarian and political orientations. To avoid patronizing them, women must give up their own cultural models of organizing and become receptive to learning from the refugees. A nun in the Catholic Sanctuary expressed this dilemma in terms of "white women's way of doing things" versus "developing a community of resistance":

We're a group of white, middle-class, highly educated women. We keep saying, "if we could just send two hundred nuns to Nicaragua we could clean it up." We're so highly organized...But the hardest thing...was the ongoing breaking down of our own cultural models of organizing...But we've made a commitment to learn from the (refugees) and work with them. The temptation is to think that we know how to do it better. It helped in getting started but was a hindrance in working with the refugees.

As a clergy woman concurred, becoming receptive to new ways of organizing took place slowly and with some resistance even for women religious, who are generally the most politically aware among respondents. She said,

(t)he refugees...say (they) want more say. Ideas that have come out of places like (refugee organization) have seemed to me unworkable or unwise...so it's hard for me to support them. I've moved somewhat from this - I don't necessarily know what works. I have more and more respect for ideas which come from the affected community and less need to say, "yeah, but." Before, it felt condescending. Now, I don't know what in the hell to do. They know best. I have tremendous respect for their political astuteness.

This respondent discussed her growing awareness of the refugees' contrasting approach to making a movement, and her recognition of its legitimacy. Illustrating how she was "constantly caught being white, condescendingly middle-class," she recalled an experience in which the refugees had enlarged her awareness of social and political spheres beyond her own view:

I was in El Salvador for a conference. I said how impressed I was with their global political analysis. The translator looked pained. The answer came - "only North Americans can afford to be so naive. We have to be more astute...to stay out of your way."

Despite her somewhat self-effacing analysis, she stressed her importance as a bridge between those like herself and the refugees and their cause. Acknowledging her role's shortcomings - the "manipulation" and "condescension" of being a "white middle-class woman" - she viewed it as a resource to be tapped:

The only power...I have is as a white middle-class woman. So I want to address these issues from that position...I've got an entry into the church...(T)here is a power in the church to be tapped...a white middle-class to be channeled...Basically, my identification is a white middle-class woman. But my affinity is with...the oppressed...I want to claim my right to this position.

In sum, these women's status as predominantly white and middle-class both protects and empowers them, and isolates them from those they most need to reach. How they resolve this problem influences whether they work with or for the refugees. Women's awareness of the relativity of their own perspectives and their openness to other ways of organizing are important criteria for developing a political understanding - a shift difficult even for women religious to make. Women's success in all movement activities may depend on exploiting the resources of their middle-class position while overcoming its limiting perspective.

### Leadership

Understanding women's leadership style in any movement organization requires making "the invisible visible."<sup>6</sup> Studies of grassroots woman-based movements<sup>7</sup> show leadership to be a collective, dynamic process in which consistent efforts are made to flatten decision-making and status hierarchies.<sup>8</sup> Although power and authority tend to be somewhat limited in all oppositional

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movements, women often act in ways that are not commonly perceived as leadership - they tend to have great responsibility but little authority, and are often "invisible administrators."<sup>10</sup> Another theory is that women are socialized to prefer empowering others.<sup>11</sup> In this view, women avoid traditional uses of power, associating it with domination and control.

These theories help explain sanctuary women's professed aversion to unshared power and their orientation toward "group care" and "shared power." For example, one respondent emphasized the difficulty of having "parameters in this kind of work," stating that her group was "very conscious" of "caring for itself." Others emphasized the desirability of "co-chairs", "democratically shared power and authority," and "intentionally shared decisions and work." A clergy woman claimed that "power" was a "dirty word" to her; rather than "power over others," she preferred to think of it as "on behalf of or with," "being one of" and as "power to empower others." She identified shared power as "women's way" - a "collaborative thing," "permissible because of the position they're placed in."

While respondents expressed a general preference for shared power and democratic decision-making, some opposed the expression of a wide range of political opinions, perhaps linking "all points of view" with the status quo.

whether perceived as a male or female trait, they tended to attribute this "undemocratic tendency" toward hearing all points of view to sex differences. For example, one woman complained that her group's new male chair was "ultra-democratic", whereas she believed that sharing decision-making with "uninformed people" was basically "undemocratic." Another woman called the position that "we must hear all points of view" "a particularly female phenomenon" which she had difficulty with; she was "not willing to allow right-wing viewpoints" - she figured "they c(an) read the paper."

Studies of grassroots movements generally concur that "women are organizers; men are leaders."<sup>12</sup> Men tend to be spokespersons while women do the less visible work of organizing, the importance of which is often minimized and disregarded.<sup>13</sup> In mixed-sex organizations, women are consistently unlikely to be seen as leaders, even by other women and by self-described feminists.<sup>14</sup> In same-sex organizations, women may express interests different from and at times conflicting with those of men, whose presence may affect their goals and activities.<sup>15</sup>

The gap which women traditionally experience between the work they do in movements and their visibility in leadership is apparent in sanctuary. Although respondents were aware and disapproved of this, they indicated that



their woman-based groups supported it. For example, one woman complained that the rotating chairship in her group was a "facade" because she did everything; she figured that "if eighty percent of the members are women, then women should be leaders." Yet her group chose a male chair. Similarly, a nun complained that the Catholic Sanctuary - about ninety-eight percent women - had changed its name from "The Women's Sanctuary Project" because of the presence of one priest who did "virtually no work." Again, other women both suggested and approved the change. The priest reportedly offered to be called "sister", which this respondent found "patronizing" and "gross".

Even in a strongly woman-based group such as the Catholic Sanctuary, which includes over a hundred women and about four men, self-described feminists may not necessarily adopt a feminist agenda. They may still relegate gender issues to a subcommittee due to the presence of traditional women, as one nun indicated:

I like the men and can work with them, but we never take up the feminist agenda. (does the men's presence deter this?) No, I don't think so. A lot of women are there because it's a feminist project, but there are a lot of traditional women there also. If we introduced feminism, it'd be a horse of a different color. I think there could probably be a subgroup to deal with it.

Respondents reported many conflicts with men in the movement, due to their contrasting approach to power and leadership, and to their way of expressing their struggle

with power by blaming the men. They frequently described men's attempts to dominate them, control the agenda, and assume leadership. Ironically, these were the same men many believed were "special". Many women experienced difficulty "speaking up," and some expressed guilt over their own use of power. As noted in other organizations, women are generally "at their best in a group," and often afraid of "saying something wrong." <sup>16</sup> For example, a woman whose group was "organized along traditional gender roles," called one man "a self-appointed chairperson who gets on everyone's nerves." Yet no one confronted him:

No one tells him off because they're too polite. He cuts people off when they're speaking, doesn't listen.

A paid staff member at a neighborhood coalition complained that she had a "real male role" in which she lacked "enough partners":

I'm more comfortable with a group, figuring things out together. Now, I'm expected to make all the decisions, do all the organizing...I'm closer to the women...I feel more like we're working together.

A clergy woman recalled conflicts with a man in her group, echoing women's historical lament - they do the work while men make decisions and get the credit. She had "helped" him organize some workshops, doing the "mailing, calling, the shitwork of getting it ready." She asked for his help, but "he kept his hands off and didn't help at all." Then, during a cross-country caravan, "he just

started making decisions," after she had "done all the work." She was "mad", but "didn't confront him." A man and woman in the group gave her different interpretations: a man told her, "that's the way he is"; a woman said, "you should confront him. He's done this to a lot of people and needs to be confronted."

Another respondent described similar conflicts over issues of leadership and decision-making in her group; women perceived and resented men's domination, while men denied it. She related how a newcomer to the social action committee acted as a catalyst to confront the men and make others aware that the situation was "undemocratic":

Jim defers to Roy's ideas versus Geselle's and mine. A woman recently joined the group and picked up on the lack of democracy at the meetings. A struggle broke out. Her first impressions were how undemocratic the meetings are. Jim has a way of dealing with women as less important. Women's comments didn't get picked up on, and she got very upset. Before then, Jim would call on people. Now we use orderly ways. We decided to rotate leadership at each meeting but it lasted only three meetings, then went back to Roy. The same thing occurred over the (refugee) family. When (refugee's) mom and two sisters arrived from a sanctuary in (state), the mom locked herself in the bedroom and wouldn't come out. Roy and Jim decided somehow that these three could join the family of five at (church). Again, it was undemocratic.

She indicated that Roy was "worried that outsiders" would "take control." He "never allocated very well," was "very protective of the committee" and "worried about being undermined." The newcomer saw "openness" as an important

issue, began "taking the reins very quickly," and "pushed" this respondent to "speak up." The men resisted. Jim called the catalyst a "possible infiltrator"; Roy was "kind of shaken at the idea" that the group was "undemocratic."

While many respondents noted conflicts with men, not all did at all sites. For example, a woman married with children and a home business claimed that her group was "not male-dominated at all," and that "women of the congregation ha(d) confronted the minister over the years, told him to shut up and sit down." From her perspective, the group had "grown beyond women needing to fight for leadership"; she felt that she did not need to "fight for rights anywhere," in her "family, business, or church."

A psychological theory of women's development suggests that they have these conflicts with men because they have been socialized to accept a morality of responsibility for others which takes precedence over asserting their own rights or even including themselves within their circle of care. <sup>17</sup> In this view, women have difficulty enjoying power or "speaking up" because of their conditioning to be self-sacrificing.

However, a sociological theory is more explanatory. One theme which appears repeatedly in respondents' narratives is the democracy/secretcy issue. As noted,

women tended to emphasize shared power, openness and democratic relations - even though some actually denounced sharing power with the "uninformed" and those with "right wing viewpoints." They tended to associate unshared power with men's power which excluded them, and shared power with their right to be included. They had learned that democracy includes women; secrecy excludes them. Their vocabularies of motive suggest that this issue is linked to their growing consciousness as women, and to their increasing dominance in the movement. As noted, this issue also appeared in the early Tucson movement. As women increasingly understood that they did the work while men took the credit, they galvanized around the issue of the men's patriarchal tendencies, their rhetoric portraying men as "straw men" in their struggles over power. Respondents often expressed somewhat essentialist notions of sex differences in the rhetoric of a self-righteous "rising class" which is getting somewhere.

One respondent's struggle with power and control illustrates both sociological and psychological theories. Her vocabulary of motives traces the difficult course of her upward mobility from a "child's role" to that of an "entitled" woman in the movement. Yet she expressed the "reasons" for this transformation in the rhetoric of a morality of responsibility toward others:

Because I was going out debating, people said, "great". I began to take myself seriously. It's harder to take the child's role. When I taught all those years, I never saw myself as being independent, because I never saw myself - only as part of relationships. I still struggle with that. I'm learning how to have (control) and not abuse it. The sanctuary gives us a feeling of power, but women aren't entitling themselves to it. Our self-esteem improves with our involvement, but it doesn't follow that we become empowered - instead, we identify with the oppressed.

As a woman, she identified with the refugees as an oppressed group and as an assimilating, rising class, indicating difficulties surrounding her own ascent and empowerment:

At first I felt like a Latina battered woman - like it's my fault, I shouldn't do it. You're fighting power as it's used, so why identify with it? I'm now getting the sense that people should be paid for their services...I have a scariness about becoming what we do - becoming like a white male, like a colonizer. Yet the refugees are very capable of imitating immigrant patterns of self-help - they don't have trouble empowering themselves.

In a self-described "mourning model now," she recalled the painful process of "going through the grieving stages of becoming a person," using "familistic language" to trace her ascent in family, church and community:

I'm angry and sad that I was so self-effacing, had so little esteem or control. My kids were mindless responsibilities. I had no idea how to enable them. I'm still angry at myself as well as patriarchal institutions. I'm bargaining now - how much power should I have? What should my role be?. Can I deal with having control? What guilt, what punishment will come to me? I look at it through the church model, in terms of good and bad women. Does not doing as much for my family make me a bad person?

The democracy/secretcy issue and women's growing awareness of their predominance in the movement converged dramatically at a three-day, closed-door national sanctuary meeting organized by some Chicago nuns in 1987. Its purpose was to forge new alliances between North and Central Americans. However, tremendous tension built up, culminating in a bitter confrontation on the last day, as five attending nuns reported. Their narratives convey the rhetoric of women as a rising class - in this case, women religious struggling to create a national organizing committee in which women have "gender parity." Witnesses described how women finally "spoke up," going toe-to-toe with the refugees in a tense, angry bargaining session over women's place in the movement, which they both lost and won. Their reports reveal sharp disparities in how North and Central American women prioritized issues and conceptualized women's place in the movement.

From the start, "attitudes were different." Central Americans reportedly came with an agenda: they wanted North Americans to do more "accompaniment",<sup>19</sup> support labor movements and women's co-ops, and generally develop "a greater risk campaign" in confronting the U.S. government. One nun remarked that North Americans came "to find out who we are and what we can do together"; however, some had another agenda. By mid-conference,

North American women began complaining that men were dominating the meeting. One respondent calculated that men spoke thirteen times more often in a small discussion group. Others complained about sexist Biblical language. Someone said "under their breath" that they wanted all men to leave; "nobody left." Finally, women "spoke up" - about a dozen went together to the microphone and formally complained about the lack of gender parity on committees, producing a deep cleavage between North and Central American women for the rest of the conference.

Respondents indicated that North American women felt dominated by men - at the meeting and "all along" in the movement - because women had done the work while men were spokespersons. When women had "had it," they collectively spoke up, proposing half Central and North Americans and half men and women on the national steering committee. But Central American women reportedly said, "no, we won't do it, no gender parity" - "the only thing that counts is el pueblo"; "we don't care how many women and men - we can work together"; "whoever has resources should be the basis of participation"; and, "we're not into this - this is your struggle." Their hostility was "enormous," and sixty to seventy-five percent of the audience "booed."

The issue was gender versus ethnic equality. North American woman wanted equal representation on the national



council. Respondents stated that the economic autonomy of North American women made feminism a "very symbolic" issue - that the refugees' response was a "real put-down." They found it "frustrating" and "disappointing" to have a "very painful issue" "trivialized." One respondent claimed that she told the Central American women, "we don't want to help restructure a system where women don't have parity."

Central Americans were concerned with parity between themselves and North Americans. According to respondents, they had experienced North Americans as "racist." They didn't see feminism as "part of their survival," and felt it was being "shoved down their throats." Guatemalans, primarily poor Indians, were concerned about parity with Salvadorans, usually more middle-class and "ladino-ized", or Europeanized. As one respondent explained:

Salvadorans are twenty-five hundred times more assertive culturally than Guatemalans. They're organizers from the womb. Guatemalans retain a lot of passive, gentle Indian characteristics.

Respondents' awareness of Central American women's position on gender parity indicates connections they made between related issues of race, sex, class, and culture. For example, one distinguished women's equality from "more basic" issues of survival:

I think when you're fighting for your life, engaged in life/death situations in a revolution, gender differences break down...They'd look at (our) demands as a lot of of white middle-class foolishness.

Another believed that patriarchy may not seem "as oppressive" in the context of the "larger global struggle." She indicated a central difference between North and Central American women in terms of their relation to the church:

For them, the movers are the priests who started the base community movement and were killed. Their preoccupation is not to fight the church but to make the revolution, and the church is making it happen.

Another respondent compared the problem with Black women's mistrust of white women's collusion in oppression. She added that while Central American women found men's behavior "troublesome", this didn't necessarily translate into feminism and making decisions on a gender basis - a position which she called, "liberal sexism."

In the end, no consensus on gender parity was reached. "Not one North American got up and challenged" the Central American women. As respondents explained, they didn't want to divert attention from other issues - "it'd have been suicidal" and would only have "escalated" if they had "taken on the issue then." That "nobody wanted to deviate from the issues at hand" demonstrates North American women's fundamental lack of power. In the sense that important issues and hard feelings were left unresolved, their struggle was lost. In another sense North American women won - in the end the group "had to" accept gender parity on the national committee because

they lacked a male quorum, and because North and Central American women together so outnumbered men.

In summary, women's leadership role in sanctuary is more clearly understood in terms of movement organization: sanctuary is an alternative, collectivist organization characterized by value-rational authority, religious-ethical concerns, and affective, familial relationships. Besides being illegal, it resembles the Whitt-Rothschild model for alternative institutions in all areas but one, i.e., rules. Respondents strongly protested discretionary uses of power, frequently demanding democratic relations and rule-following. They insisted not because they were wholly committed to these principles, but because they associated secrecy and unshared power with men's exclusive use of power, and openness and democracy with the inclusion of women in decision-making. This preference has a long tradition; "democracy" has predominated in the rhetoric of middle-class women organized on behalf of others, if not themselves, since liberal feminism first emerged in the seventeenth century.

Like women in other middle-class movements, sanctuary women derive enormous power, protection, and resources from their status in privileged racial and class groups. Yet they are extremely class-conscious and -deprecatory - for example, respondents' concern that their backgrounds

isolate them from reaching prospective recruits and keep them from "standing with" the refugees. They prefer shared power and collaborative decision-making, and experience conflicts with men over these issues; yet they support men's leadership and have difficulty confronting them. They describe their growing frustration and consciousness as women in the rhetoric of a rising class which is getting somewhere in the family, church, community, and movement, and cast movement men as obstacles in their path.

This profile of women's relationship to leadership and power was most evident in the confrontation between North and Central American women at a conference in Chicago. This fight revealed how women's leadership concerns raise issues of class, culture, gender and race, and how women's awareness of these issues and their interlinkages is connected to their understanding of larger political issues. It revealed how the movement restrains women's leadership, and how women's leadership helps enhance or resolve conflict over these issues. Last, it revealed the great gap between North and Central American women's conception of women's role in the movement, and of women as agents of social change.

#### Outreach

Women take part in two kinds of outreach activity in

the sanctuary movement: formal speaking, i.e., the public work of debate, accompanying the refugees to speak, and speaking on their behalf; and informal persuasion, i.e., the private work of educating others in the context of everyday life. Some participate in the former; all participate in the latter. Women's outreach activities rely heavily on their access to informal social networks, and closely resemble other "hidden work"<sup>21</sup> which they perform as volunteers in their communities. Using their access to formal and informal settings to persuade others on behalf of the refugees, they tend to "see (their) role as a bridge" between the refugees' cause and "good local church people" who, if they knew what was going on and how to help, "would do so."

Women's outreach activities take place in a culture relatively open to grassroots collaborative networking. A French-born respondent compared American culture's conduciveness to emergent community-based movements with the more theoretical, top-down approach of the French left, which she called "very macho" and "incredibly cynical" about "seeking support and community." They "start at the top without the input of little people and women and other groups...unintentionally keeping people out." Her claim that "little people in the U.S." are able to work together toward "political goals regardless of

political fences" raises and brings together the issues of democracy/secretcy and women as a rising class. Clearly including women among the "little people" shut out by unshared power, she perceived the openness of American culture as a window of opportunity for their ascent.

Respondents indicated that in doing "the public work," the important issue was "the war in El Salvador and Guatemala." Rather than "offer a harsh critique," the goal was to "talk about suffering and how to stop it." They described a pedagogy of educating the public which - instead of arguing "dogma" and "sterile theoretical issues" - "personalized" the refugees' stories and conveyed their viewpoint and meanings to the audience. For example, one woman described the goal of working on refugees' subjective accounts:

That was the goal - to personalize the story - "it's happened to this person, because of your apathy and government's policy, this person has suffered this."

In discussing the work of getting refugees' stories to the public, respondents described important political acts in which the refugees' testimony became a new source of knowledge. For example, one woman recalled an outreach effort in which her group accompanied the refugees to speak to a community of farmers:

At first (they) asked questions about the role of communism in the refugees' fleeing El Salvador and Guatemala. They didn't know the difference between any Central American countries...they thought that

these were communist-backed countries. We said, "wait til our speakers get their story out." After(wards)...they were amazed at the parallels in the refugees' situation and their own lives - their relation to the land, and the forces of agribusiness...They said, "we've got the story straight - we understand now"...The refugees got a standing ovation when they were done - the people were really with the speakers.

Respondents made the refugees visible in the same ways in which feminists make women visible, by "giving their voices a platform". As one woman put it, "we have to speak with them." However, another expressed concern that the public responded primarily to the sensationalism of the refugees' stories, and that making the refugees "show all their scars and tell all these terrible things that have happened to them" is "exploitative."

Some respondents indicated that they planned to continue outreach work even in the absense of the refugees. One noted that while people "do more resistance" because they've been "touched" by the refugees' stories, many had been "outraged" during the Vietnam War when no refugees were present. Another remarked that if the refugees in her group received amnesty, that was "not going to stop (them)."

All respondents described using opportunities in everyday life to persuade others informally about the movement's issues. For example, one woman stated that,

I don't assume I can tell by looking at someone whether or not I can talk to them about sanctuary. I

don't believe in writing people off.

Another described how, in the cloak of being a "nice person," she "gently bring(s) people along" on the issues, revealing her methodology and its attendant issues:

My tactic is rather devious - I attempt to relate to people as just a regular human being...so maybe they can understand why I do the things I do. It's manipulative, but it's a strategy that seems to work.

Another described her plan to educate "very informally" some women friends by "opening their eyes" to the refugees' situation. Her narrative illustrates the importance of intimate relationships to solidarity work,<sup>22</sup> and her somewhat biased view of gender:

I have these friends who are very apolitical and uninvolved...I want to...open their eyes...through conversation...My women friends are very humanitarian - very connected to people. If moved by someone else's...story, they'd be more apt to write a letter or make a vote. They're easier to influence than their husbands. It's the relationship - if I were to go to them and say, "here's the scoop," they'd believe me. The men would be much more skeptical - they'd say, "what's your source?" The women would believe me because they know me.

Another recalled "gently" exposing her "skeptical", "patriotic" family to the refugees' situation. Although only a few were open to it, some "very conservative people...at least...came and saw some refugees." They asked "a lot of questions," but weren't "sympathetic" because of some things the refugees said:

"(i)f your country didn't keep sending arms and money, this wouldn't happen." They didn't want to hear this.



As noted, sanctuary women have access to a wide range of middle-class settings, and they use these opportunities to reach those who may be unaware of the issues. For example, one respondent, illustrating how "conversations get started," described how a dinner party became a "forum" for educating others:

We were invited to a symphony orchestra dinner...There were sixteen people. The host...introduced me to people as the woman whose picture was in the paper who was "arrested tangling with the police." People were shocked. I said, "but let me explain!" There are forums that arise out of getting arrested.

Many respondents expressed great modesty about their contribution to the movement, but indicated the importance of "planting a seed" for others. For example, a woman highly placed in a large medical organization described how she exposed her co-workers to the refugees' cause, enduring their curiosity and labeling until the seed took root. Her belief that "we shouldn't write people off" represents another convergence of democracy with feminism:

The day we (made) the sanctuary decision, I was on TV. The support staff at the office all saw me. One said, "I saw someone on TV giving an illegal alien a loaf of bread who looked just like you". They think I'm crazy. But this woman recently told me she saw a program about El Salvador, and said, "I feel really sorry for these people." Another guy accidentally checked out the film, "El Norte" and said, I never realized that's what was going on." (do you feel you affected them?) Yes. They saw me come back from El Salvador - I talked about that, and about the refugees at (church). Not pushing it but sort of putting it out there. I wear a weaving from Guatemala over a black turtleneck in winter, and people ask me, "where did you get this?" And I tell them. I'm like this - and I don't

write people off. I may never be a leader, but I'm always going to be planting these little seeds. Even if I never know what happens to these seeds. I have faith that people's hearts can be turned from hard to soft, and their ears opened.

In summary, women take part in two kinds of outreach activity - the formal work of getting the refugees' stories to the public, which some do, and the informal work of persuading others of the refugees' cause in situations of everyday life, which all do. Women see themselves as a bridge between those like themselves and the refugees' cause, and operate in a culture relatively open to such networking. In formal outreach, women work subjectively on the refugees' accounts; take part in important political acts which create new kinds of knowledge; and make the refugees visible by giving them a voice and platform - an approach which sanctuary shares with feminism. In informal outreach, women "plant seeds" to educate others about the refugees' cause in a wide range of everyday settings, exhibiting great modesty and patience as they wait for these seeds to take root.

### Civil Disobedience

23

An examination of women's civil disobedience in the sanctuary movement can help lead to an understanding of women's part in protest movements in general. This is important because until quite recently, stereotypic images of social activists have relied almost exclusively on male

models of revolutionaries.<sup>24</sup> Women have invariably been cast as passive or emotional, their activism often attributed to their attachment to activist men.<sup>25</sup> Ignored both as deviants and as political actors, they have been assumed less deviant and more conventional than men. This ignores women's protest behavior which is not criminal,<sup>26</sup> and fails to record their influence on changing norms.

Sanctuary women's civil disobedience both challenges these myths and suggests new ways of perceiving women's activism and deviance. Most women take part in planned "actions" which create public forums and sometimes include civil disobedience - "CD" - and arrest. Women at actions engage passersby in conversations in streets, courts, and jails to persuade them about the refugees' cause. Actions range from handfuls at local demonstrations to thousands at mass rallies. Like outreach, CD is an educating activity; however, because it may take place in illegal contexts, the risk of arrest is present. Taking part in any unlicensed action exposes women to this risk. Respondents clearly viewed getting arrested as a desirable, intentional act. Most reported trying to be arrested and failing, and only one was unwittingly arrested.

Respondents reportedly took part in diverse actions: small pickets at local libraries and post offices,

walkathons and rallies, sit-ins and die-ins at the INS office, and mass marches in Washington, D.C. Other political actions were taken in conjunction with the annual military parade downtown, and a cruise-fundraiser for a visiting "contra" leader. A mass march on a suburban military base was preceded by a licensed rally at a nearby park. Aside from the most common - "protesting without a license" - other illegal acts were lying down in front of tanks at military parades, digging graves and planting crosses at a military base and in front of the White House, and "jumping the fence" at a military base. Respondents reported no actions more intrusive or violent than these; no one was hurt.

Women's middle-class backgrounds are both an asset and a liability to CD. On one hand, women are generally protected from police violence and legal reprisals; on the other, in most cases where they try to be arrested, they have notable difficulty being so. This represents another case where officials look the other way, informally condoning - and denying - women's deviant actions.

The purpose of CD is outreach. Respondents often described their main activity as talking to hecklers on the sidelines. One woman distinguished sanctuary activists from other kinds by their "concerned" style:

Sometimes you go to these rallies and there are people who must have been beaten by their parents - these

people were angry. But in the case of the sanctuary movement, it's...concerned people.

Another described her strategy for selling the issues to passersby as a way of "being on their side":

People say, "We don't need more refugees here." I say, "that's my point!" Then I explain why they're here, and agree that we have to change that.

Many respondents indicated that they "try to talk" to "lots of people along the way"; they "don't write people off." As a nun put it,

(t)here are a lot of women of the streets in jail. One asked us, "what did you do?" I said, "we put our bodies in the wrong place." She said, "so did I."

Some sanctuary women refrain from CD, for a variety of reasons. For example, a college professor indicated that CD could interfere with her career, claiming that "it's hard to keep a job and go to jail." Other women expressed personal fears about being deviant in public and about being part of an activist group. An older woman said that she "can't go to the armory to protest," and had "never gone out and marched on the street"; another, that she was afraid of demonstrations and didn't like "what happens in a crowd." Women who avoided CD often implied that they believed that they were more valuable working "behind the scenes," i.e., engaged in women's "normal" political actions. For example, one said, "I'm not being immodest, but taking care of the refugees is what I do well"; another claimed that she was "very much a behind

the scenes person" and enjoyed "pulling strings."

Most sanctuary women go to demonstrations, even if they do not get arrested. As noted, twenty-four respondents claimed that they had participated in demonstrations, and eight, that they had been arrested. All had been similarly active on prior issues, which some continued while in the sanctuary movement. This was especially true of women religious. For example, a nun commented on religious communities' history of activism, linking nuns' extensive activism with having "done CD, had trials, and gone to jail" over other issues - "foreign policy and the nuclear issue." Similarly, two clergy women indicated that they had done a great deal of CD. One felt "cheated" during seminary if she wasn't "in a demonstration at least once a week"; the other had been to "tons of demonstrations" by the time she left seminary.

Most women are initiated to CD by active friends and family members who invite them to demonstrations. Again, the personal dimension of their involvement is important. For example, one respondent reportedly attended her first action with her husband and brothers, at her brothers' invitation. Many others are initiated to CD through local "affinity groups." These are small, local prayer and support groups which often teach passive resistance techniques, help coordinate actions, arrange

carpools, and raise bail for those arrested. One woman remarked that she and her husband would probably not be arrested together "because somebody'd have to bail you out - a nice thing about being in an affinity group."

Women are often deeply moved by their first demonstration, which represents a significant turning point in their activist careers. This experience helps create a well of energy which fuels their subsequent involvement. For example, one respondent vividly recalled her first demonstration, attended with her husband and in-laws. She wore no bra "for the first time"; a heckler called her "flat-chested" and "commie pinko," and she was "pissed." This "really st(ood) out" as an important turning point in her activist career:

My first demonstration was actually a walkathon but had all the flavor of a demonstration because we were chanting. We all walked together. We began downtown and walked all over the North side. That was the first time I'd participated in an action. (what did you chant?) People with megaphones would ask, "what do you want?" The group would yell, "peace!" They'd yell, "when do you want it?" We'd yell, "now!" In English and Spanish. Before the Republican headquarters, we chanted, "Ronald Reagan, he's no good! Send him back to Hollywood!" And, "stop the bombing, stop the war! U.S. out of El Salvador!" I got called a communist for the first time in my life. I wasn't wearing a bra that day and he made a remark about how small my breasts are. (laughs) Don't get me wrong, I was pissed.

Most respondents reporting arrest indicated that they had been arrested a couple of times. One woman described two arrests, both in conjunction with anti-

intervention groups. The first was in her senator's office, where she was "dragged and dumped by the police"; the second was at Christmas at a fashionable downtown mall. Another woman describing two arrests indicated the religious character of her activism, and how she assessed different actions:

We blocked the street before the state department. We sang and prayed...When we got to jail there were thirty women in a cell. There was a sense of solidarity...At the (army base) demo, (six of us) buried a coffin in front...and planted crosses. If we'd been arrested it'd have made more sense to me...than jumping the fence of or spray-painting.

Women usually avoid arrest easily at demonstrations. Their actions are generally nonviolent; the rallies they attend, usually licensed. When women are arrested, it is clearly an intentional choice and political act, as one respondent illustrated:

(have you been arrested?) Not yet. (Husband) and I have been talking about...what would move us to make that decision. So I think we're getting closer because of the contra aid vote. If it passes...we'd both allow ourselves to be arrested. Or if any of these yahoos yet pardoned.

Some women prefer to avoid arrest by participating only in peaceful, licensed actions and by abstaining from confrontational ones. An older respondent said that she fasted and stood outside the post office, but "can't protest". "Not being a very aggressive person," she found it "very difficult" to "pass out literature to hostile people." She belonged to no affinity or anti-intervention



groups, although she believed "these people are wonderful"; instead, she did "supportive things." She had gone to three "prayer vigils" at the Federal Building where "they sing, break bread, (and) give speeches." However, when the group was asked to leave and some sat down, she left - "that's how brave" she was.

Many respondents cited instances when they could have been arrested but were not. Many indicated that they had prepared to be arrested, often having made a difficult decision to be so, and elaborate plans for legal support. For example, one woman who had never been arrested said that "it took a lot of guts to do CD," but when she "finally" did it, the police would not arrest her:

It was a demonstration downtown at the post office. We wore tags with names of the dead in Central America. We poured ketsup on ourselves...We had flowers which we tried to give the police, but they wouldn't take them. Finally, they asked us to leave or be dragged out.

Nevertheless, the decision to be arrested represents a big turning point in commitment, as a clergy woman making this "big decision" indicated:

I listened to this tape of my mother's voice...in my head - "this'll be on your record!" But I went ahead and did CD and didn't get arrested.

Since she planned to work in El Salvador one day, she no longer wanted to be arrested. The day she was leaving for Costa Rica, she attended a demonstration and watched a friend "being arrested and dragged away," deciding then to

avoid arrest. This indicates that CD and travel to Central America - two important movement activities - have conflicting requirements and goals.

Many sanctuary women find it "very difficult" to get arrested - even at unlicensed actions - which reveals the wide latitude given them by police - another case of officials looking the other way. One respondent expressed her disbelief at how far her group was able to go without arrest at a kneel-in at the INS office downtown:

We went in at closing, draped the INS desk like an altar and had communion services. I was committed to staying til I got arrested, but they wouldn't arrest anybody that day. We had speakers a communion bread from all over the world to symbolize the peoples of the world, consecrating the INS desk as an altar with candles. I couldn't believe they let us do this stuff.

Re-enacting an exchange between demonstrators and security guards at another action at the INS office, another confirmed how unlikely arrest is for women:

We circled the Federal Building, chanting against the contras...then had a sit-down candlelit vigil at the INS office - fifty to sixty people. We were intimidated by the huge space of the lobby. A guard said, "you can't light candles in here." He said, "I'm afraid you can't have this here - you don't have a permit. Why not get a permit and come back tomorrow?" The group just kept singing. At that point some of the group went outside to avoid arrest. About thirty of us stayed in a circle sit-in. About eight to ten police arrived with wheelchairs - they put the people who resisted in them and pushed them outside. We were last - the officer said, "stay close to me and you'll be okay", so we knew we were being arrested. But when we went outside, everyone was let go.

An older nun's experience on Armed Forces Day also reveals

the reluctance of police to arrest women. Her group was locked up and about to be released:

A man with real long hair forgot his driver's license. The commander said, "you can all go except this one man." I said, "I don't have mine either." They were going to overlook this - a patronizing thing. As a result they put all of us in for about five hours.

only one respondent - an older clergy woman - recalled being "unintentionally" arrested:

We were at (downtown mall) last December, singing alternative Christmas songs. I wasn't one of those lying on the floor doing novenas - I thought I was merely being escorted out by the police.

Sanctuary women have many fears about CD, including police brutality. Respondents cited many instances where they had witnessed police violence. One woman remarked that the police are "always rough at the annual military parade." Another had seen a friend "roughed up," and avoided doing CD at some demonstrations "because the police seemed so rough." An older nun recalled her treatment by plainclothesmen at a military parade:

We went out in front of these tanks...(T)hey were pretty rough - pulled us over. They pulled...this young man...by the hair - they were really rough on the men. (Nun) and I...put our hands in front of the tanks and these plainclothesmen were very rough - they ripped us away and said, "you little bitch."

Other women have less hostile exchanges with police, using nonviolent passive resistance more successfully, as one respondent indicated:

The police weren't rough. We were thirty-five bodies piled against a door. They just dragged us away.

Women take comfort in their numbers, and use the group's solidarity to shield them from unpleasant exchanges with police. For example, one respondent indicated that she took her children to a demonstration in part to keep the police from being so rough:

We weren't doing anything violent - I thought, what an experience for the kids to see. And I thought it may keep the police from being so rough.

To be arrested is a serious consequence which sanctuary women do not view lightly. The process of deciding to be arrested raises fears and concerns about their standing in the community, about physical pain and being "roughed up," and about future consequences at work. For example, one respondent feared pain and ridicule:

It's a tough decision - it's not the illegality, but being roughed up - the fear of pain...and...scorn.

Another was afraid of the police and of getting a record, and aware that "children bring in other considerations":

I'm very afraid of being arrested. My dad instilled in me a very healthy fear of authority figures...And knowing peaceful protest can turn into violent acts. Violent response by police is very scary to me. And it's scary to have a record. Will I lose a job because of this? And if we had children, we probably couldn't afford to get arrested.

Not all women share these concerns. For example, one respondent claimed that she was never afraid at demonstrations, and found them "really energizing":

I love to go to demonstrations with my husband - they're fun! (We) have the best sex afterwards!

Not all women who are arrested go to trial. A nun who was arrested out of town with six hundred others received a ticket for "protesting without a permit" - a felony. She used a "little strategy" of refusing to pay the fine and sending a donation for the homeless instead:

You get arrested and they give you a ticket...I wasn't going to pay the fine...I wrote them a letter explaining...that the government was guilty, not I...(and) sent them a check for twenty-five dollars - the minimum court fee - for Mitch Snyder, who's doing a lot for the homeless...Within two weeks they sent my check and said they were dismissing my case.

Another nun got a judge and state's attorney who supported the group's constitutional right to commit CD. These instances of support from judges and prosecutors represent further cases of officials looking the other way, informally supporting what they formally condemn:

We happened to get a very just judge - he gave a wonderful statement to the state prosecutor, that the court should not be taking up these cases - and to us, that we were within our constitutional rights to do this, and the court cannot take a position but that we represent a growing number of people and that he hoped these arrests wouldn't deter us from our work. The state's attorney (said) afterward, "I'm really supportive of your efforts" - she had really worked to get them to drop the case. For another arrest on Armed Forces Day - again, the judge - a black man - was really just. The prosecutor and police really wanted to get us. The judge had seen this group before - he knew we wanted to be our own spokespeople, so he was going to drop the case. The prosecutor raised (a) ruckus.

At another trial, she received a lecture from the judge:

The judge said, "you could have hurt people by having the police force put in so much manpower - there are murderers and robbers going free!"

An older nun who was arrested more often than any others - seven times in three years - discussed some of the highlights of her arrests. She was concerned about arrests coming too closely together because of a new policy in which two or more offenses may be tried together. She seemed to be at a different stage of commitment, one which may divide many nuns from the others. She indicated that she no longer feared arrest, and had overcome some of her fears about being deviant:

It used to bother me when we were plastering stickers all over the Federal Building, after all those years as a teacher lecturing against graffiti. But what the U.S. is doing to Nicaragua really goes against my stomach too...The support group said they'd pay the fine but I'm not going to pay it - after all, look at what the CIA does.

Sometimes the sheer volume of arrests makes prosecution difficult, as a nun indicated:

I was locked up with six hundred others in Washington, and they kept us on a bus, all handcuffed. If you have small hands, though, you can get them off.

Overall, repercussions for women's CD are relatively light. One respondent said that she had wanted a hearing but paid a fine with no trial so that she could leave the country. Some were disappointed at the lack of personal risk CD entailed for people like themselves, indicating their recognition of - and contempt for - their own class privilege. One respondent made this complaint:

It was very staged - it was more of a performance. We sang and they gave warnings and arrested us for not

dispersing. They held us a couple of hours and released us on I-bonds. It was like a game for a wealthy person to take this out and get national press for the issue. The second time...we could pay a fifty-dollar fine or stay in jail for three days. I paid the fine. Again, a wealthy person's way of making a statement and not following through.

Another respondent expressed doubt about the effectiveness of demonstrating in the 1980's, and about the motives of those who did so:

Are we doing it to vent frustration, or to help get people to see things differently? Are demonstrations effective in 1987? I used to go to all of them and now I don't have any answers to what works.

Recognizing that her involvement in sanctuary was itself a form of CD was a turning point:

It wasn't until we had a workshop on civil disobedience that I realized, wait a minute, all my sanctuary work is civil disobedience.

In summary, sanctuary women's CD contradicts long-held beliefs about women's deviant protest and reveals new ways of viewing the relationship between women and social action. Women's CD largely involves talking to people about the issues. Closely related to women's informal networks, it relies on many of the same informal strategies to persuade others that women use in outreach activities. Demonstrating is a major activity in which most women take part; some succeed at being arrested. Although they view arrest as an intentional act, their background as white, middle-class women often prevents it because officials repeatedly ignore and deny their deviant

acts. While some women prefer to avoid arrest, others - especially women religious - particularly seek it. While getting arrested may be difficult, the decision to do so indicates a new level of commitment. Repercussions for women's arrest are generally light, which often disappoints them. Only a few go to trial or pay fines, with many officials looking the other way. However, as one respondent noted, sanctuary participation is itself a form of CD in which all who are involved take part.

#### Travel to Central America

Seventeen respondents reported that they had traveled to Central America - primarily El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Most went as part of an effort to "turn the railroad around," an allusion to slaves' passage North in the nineteenth-century underground railroad. This involves two kinds of activities: "personal witness" - observing conditions in these countries and reporting them in outreach efforts at home; and "accompaniment and repopulation" - going with refugees displaced by warfare back to their villages to repopulate them. While overlapping somewhat, these two kinds of participation represent developmental stages in women's activist careers, marked by increasing levels of travel, risk, and commitment. Lay women tend to predominate as witnesses in the first stage, women



religious, as guides in the second. Women face two kinds of difficulties on these missions - high levels of personal fear and risk, and a variety of conflicts surrounding issues of sex, class, race, culture, and ideology. Respondents' narratives reveal how they coped with fear, and to what extent they defined, linked together and resolved conflict.

### Witness, Accompaniment and Repopulation

A woman who had traveled to Nicaragua with her minister husband and teenage son provided a typical case of a mission of personal witness involving low levels of risk and brief local sharing. The family "did a lot of soaking up of what's going on"; the purpose was to come back and "have an influence because (they)'ve been there." Before the trip, they gave a twelve-week class on Nicaragua to the Sunday school "so they'd understand." When they returned, they gave talks and slide shows in the church and community. While "nobody became an activist," the class and talks were apparently well-received. The family planned its own trip, staying "only on the West coast, not near contra fights." They went to churches and met with the Minister of Culture - "a very famous liberation theologian." They also met with

...community people, rural people, trade unions, family co-ops, school co-ops, (and two) ecumenical humanitarian agenc(ies) run by churches.

At home, they shared their experience with over a thousand people at thirty or forty speaking engagements for four months until "things kind of petered out."

On another personal mission, a young minister who had traveled with a friend to El Salvador recalled facing unexpected fear and risk when she almost caused an "international skirmish." She developed a "sick role" to allay her fear and absolve her sense of responsibility:

The fear was so pervasive, I didn't want to leave the apartment. I'd wanted to go out, see the base communities, meet pastors. But I was too afraid. On Sunday we went to a church that has three ministers in exile. A woman was going to take us to a liberated zone the next day. When she saw me, she said, "I don't know if I want to take an American there. I'd be putting them in danger." If the guerrillas were to kill me, there'd be an international squirmish. She said, "if she goes, we can't spend the night." As it turned out, I got deathly ill and couldn't go.

In a case of personal witness and accompaniment and repopulation, a woman traveling to El Salvador with her church group faced a situation of danger which she did not seem to fear. She went largely because her minister - a special catalyst - told her, "you ought to go down there." The group met human rights groups, including the "mothers of the disappeared," visited refugee camps, spoke with refugees whose leaders were "disappeared." They also visited a village to which some refugees were attempting to return. It had been bombed out by the army, and was the site of ongoing warfare. On arriving, her group of

mostly women was approached by three warring groups within twenty minutes - the army, civil defense, and guerrillas. Forced to choose sides, and at some personal risk, they chose the guerrillas:

All wanted to know who we were and why we wanted to visit this village. Civil defense and the army said that guerrillas had put landmines on the road. The guerrillas said, "no we haven't. Go on up." So we did. (any landmines?) No. There was a lot of evidence of bombing - about ten had died. A church was totally gutted out.

Traveling to Guatemala the next year, this respondent expressed surprise at what she had come to - visiting war-torn, dangerous countries - environments she never imagined herself visiting. This realization represented a turning point in her awareness and activism:

I never thought I'd be going to El Salvador - a place of civil war - wanting to be in these environments.

A woman traveling to Nicaragua with a national peace and justice organization on a fact-finding mission described a new stage in commitment and risk. Members of her group faced immediate danger when they were allegedly fired on, kidnapped, and taken to Costa Rica for two days by some "contras". Her narrative reveals what an "excellent job" the organization did preparing them for "what to expect and how to respond." It also reveals how the group handled these dangers, and why their mission required more training:

We were kidnapped on a boat trip...Eden Pastora gave

orders - he put out a statement that we were wolves in sheeps' clothing and he'd ordered his men to shoot. (Organization) is more risky. I knew we were going into a war zone. The second morning we were fired upon and taken to Costa Rica and held one and a half days...For many of us experiencing gunfire for the first time, we heard the first shot and hit the deck.

The young minister overcome by sickness and fear on an earlier trip demonstrated a much greater level of commitment and risk the next time she traveled to El Salvador. Rather than getting sick over causing one, this time she went to officially investigate an "international skirmish" between a group of "disappeared" North Americans and the Salvadoran army and government. A local anti-intervention agency and a church "commissioned" her as their "delegate", which she said explained a "big part" of her "lessened fear." At a "closing worship," the group "laid hands" on her and sang and prayed, which she sensed imparted power and protection on the trip:

They laid hands on me and sang, "Be not afraid, I go before you always - come follow me and I will give you peace." That was very powerful...I felt real protected by it. They said, "you go to El Salvador as our representative, to stand with the people, protecting them from the army"...It was an honor to be their representative - they were really standing behind what I was doing. I was their delegate.

The group sent four telegrams announcing her arrival. With two nuns and two priests, her mission was to investigate the kidnapping and deportation to Guatemala of twenty-four North Americans who had attempted to accompany a group of refugees back to their village. This action

had reportedly angered the Salvadoran government, which had its own repopulation agenda for the village:

The North Americans were separated from the Salvadorans and helicoptered to a military garrison and kept one day, then deported to Guatemala. Once deported, there was tons of media attention, but no one knew what would happen to them. There was the fear they'd been gunned down. It took the whole week to learn the reason for their deportations.

The army allegedly wanted to repopulate the area with its own people. The North Americans who had accompanied the villagers "jumped the gun and pissed the government off." This respondent reconstructed the situation from the viewpoint of "the people":

The army is insisting on protecting the villagers, and the people know that's who's killing their numbers.

The group met with the Archbishop, who reportedly called the head of Salvadoran military forces and arranged permission for their passage to the village. This illustrates the close connection between the upper church hierarchy and the government and military, the tension and controversy surrounding North Americans' presence and involvement, and how they must be specially handled. She indicated her growing sense of legitimacy and sanction at this stage, frustrated somewhat by the patriarchal church:

We met three hours with the Archbishop the first day. He called General Blandone, the head of the whole armed forces, to get permission. Otherwise, we couldn't go. We were getting stopped all the time - about twelve times. Once the North Americans got deported, they really cracked down. We arrived three days (later). We got permission. The permit left my

name off, and two nuns just asked the secretary to add it. It had "fathers" in capitals, "sisters" in small, and my name was a p.s. over to one side.

In sum, women help turn the railroad around by traveling to Central America and engaging in two kinds of activities - personal witness and accompaniment and repopulation - which represent overlapping levels of danger, commitment, and training. At the low end, participants travel with church groups to observe conditions, usually in safe areas, and share the experience locally; like tourists' memories, it may fade. At the high end, participants take on more dangerous missions, sharing some of the risks the refugees face while enjoying special consideration as North Americans.

These levels represent stages in the development of women's activist careers, in which they face greater danger, travel, and commitment, and take more risks more knowingly. Their mission is more "on behalf of" than personal, and they often receive support from groups at home, which gives them confidence on their mission. However, their development also depends on how they face diverse cultural conflicts and link together related issues.

### Culture Conflict

North American women traveling in Central America experience a great deal of culture conflict, particularly

around the issue of gender. Because their self-assessments clash strongly with how Latin culture views women, they are acutely aware of sexism. For example, a young clergy woman recalled walking down the street in Costa Rica and hearing, "hello baby, let me take you home with me." She went to the movies twice with men she "thought were friends" who made passes at her; these were seminarians, which "really pissed (her) off."

They also experience a great deal of culture conflict with Latin American women. For example, a nun who had visited El Salvador and Nicaragua described several conflicts her group had with local women. Her narrative of how North American nuns and Nicaraguan "revolutionary" women "almost got into a fight over feminism" demonstrates the gap between North and Central American women. Their contrasting views on birth control and washing machines reflect how differently they see the issues, and their role in schemes of change. Nicaraguan women's "hostile reaction" placed the nuns in the "imperialist position," a novel and difficult position for them. Similar to the confrontation over gender parity in Chicago, the two groups struggled over issues of sexism and imperialism. The nuns' questions reveal their extreme gender consciousness. For example, one asked, "what's your reality outside of being a mother?":

Their answer was, "our reality is related to motherhood - you can't separate us from our role of being a mother."

This respondent explained that,

the Nicaraguan woman saw the "essence of her liberation as integral to the institution of motherhood and the rebuilding of a new Nicaragua. They're saying, "we support motherhood," and that liberation will occur historically. They think they're leading the men into a state of raised consciousness. These were very young women. As the result of the revolution, the youth are formulating their own position.

Another question was, "do you see birth control as a means of liberation?":

There was this hostile reaction, as if we'd taken the imperialist position. And a half of their population was lost in the war.

A nun suggested that they use washing machines - the group had observed that "all the clothes-washing was done by hand, and took days":

Their response was, "you're such an imperialist - don't you realize all the parts are made in the U.S.?" There was no appreciation - there was hostility.

While this respondent had "no strong impression about feminism" in El Salvador, she noted that women were highly active in various organizations struggling to end the war there, and contrasted their predominance in these organizations with the male-based government and military:

The women students headed the organizations, and risked their lives to come and speak to us. They appeared the most dedicated and directive in confronting the Duarte regime. By and large it is the women who do the work and were the most committed.



A young minister described deep culture conflicts which emerged among twelve seminarians - half men and women - on a visit to Central America. What began as differences between four or five Latin men and "Anglo women" in Mexico developed into a split between the "fantasy group" and "reality group" in Nicaragua as the group attempted to adapt to life in a war-torn country. Early on, issues of birth control and bilingualism became flash points in the conflict. This respondent's narrative reveals how Anglo women's gender consciousness insensitized them somewhat to Latin women's issues, and how they made conflicts revolve around issues with men:

It started in Mexico with some arguments over birth control. We'd gone to a base community and were asking priests why they insisted on not encouraging birth control in an area where so many babies die because of poverty.

The priest's position was, "we can't advocate it"; the position of the group leader - a Latin male - was,

(w)e can't just take North American culture and throw it at these people. You women can't take your culture and be insensitive to their traditions.

"There was a big argument." This respondent felt that

...he had no right to say that because he is a man. The women were talking about quality of life. He's not against birth control, but argue(d) that way. It was a typical male Latin American argument.

Bilingualism was the other "big gender issue." None of the women spoke Spanish, and depended on men to translate, which heightened the tension between them.

Women's position made them feel "powerless." This contrasts with their role in the sanctuary movement, where few men are bilingual and women predominate as translators. This respondent indicated bilingualism's importance to the movement and to women:

The men needed to be more sensitive. We were dependent on them to translate. I felt how powerless I was without language skills.

Women also complained about the men's insensitivity to poverty, and their "paternalism and over-protectiveness" toward women. This respondent's narrative reveals how women claimed for themselves the emotional work of identifying with the poor. It also reveals a feminist theory, method, and example of emotional logic:

Each day when we'd debrief what we learned, the women bitched that the men talked intellectually, and the women talked emotionally. They'd say, "'it really hurt me to go to that city dump". As I look back, I see this as a true criticism of the men.

Confronted, the men denied their insensitivity. Women spoke up again when they "tried to go off and walk by themselves" and one man "tagged along to protect them":

We felt he was being paternalistic. We would have been fine by ourselves. (was he confronted?) Yes. He didn't take it very well. He just didn't think we should go off by ourselves. He kept calling us, "gals", and we'd say, "we're women."

The group "kind of patched things up" until it arrived in Nicaragua, when conflicts over gender shifted to an ideological split surrounding "reality versus

romance," cutting across and diminishing gender issues. The "reality group" wanted to adapt to and learn from prevailing conditions of war; the "fantasy group" wanted to buffer itself from these conditions by moving into a hotel. The fantasy group was put off by cockroaches, overcrowding, lack of running water, and concern that they weren't getting their "five basic food groups." They focused their concern on the health of a pregnant woman in the group, who played down her condition, brought her own food, and allied with the reality group. Conditions in Managua became an important test of North Americans' level of commitment and threshold for cultural discomfort. This experience separated true believers from others based on the desire to either escape or transcend cultural conflicts, and reveals a new level of commitment:

We stayed at a youth hostel of the Sandanista movement in Managua. It was a nice house. One woman was pregnant. She'd brought dried milk and cheese from Mexico for calcium. She was taking care of herself. The first day, three women said, "we just can't live in conditions like these - there's roaches, overcrowding, not enough water - we need our five basic food groups." Just bullshit. We had meat once or twice a week, and tables of food, eggs, people cooking for us. What started as a gender split became an ideological split surrounding reality versus romance. You romanticize "blessed are the poor, blessed are the hungry," but you get there and it's fucking hard to be poor and hungry and listen to stories of killing. The fantasy group wanted to move into a hotel on the second day. The guide said, "you can eat tonight in a restaurant."

The narrator recalled undergoing a sort of conversion

experience out of these conflicts, arriving at a new position and perspective. She was witnessing firsthand the carnage of a war reputedly caused by her government's policies. At the same time she was learning to identify the fantasy group as "ugly Americans" whose insensitivity, intolerance, and wastefulness repulsed her. Unable to shield herself from and avoid identifying with them, she at least managed her sick role on this trip:

I was sick to my stomach - I didn't eat. It was the tension - hearing about how our government is financing this war. A church minister's wife had been raped, and him killed, by the contras. You hear all these things - how difficult everything is - and our guide...is apologizing to us because we're not getting our vegetables and sleep. He's apologizing - and I was a part of it, whether I wanted to be or not. That night we had a...meeting and I tried to explain why I was upset. So then this little fantasy group says, "we can do without but we have to think of (pregnant woman)." She says, "hey, I'm alright." I was saying, "I really don't wanta move into a hotel. I think we're being rude." The big thing was, when we got home from the restaurant, the cook had laid out our whole meal on the table - they hadn't told the cook. It was so rude and typical and American to do that.

The turning point came when a man in the group suggested that this was "God's purpose" for her to be there, helping her to reinterpret the situation:

I tried to talk to (man). I wept. I said, "I'm a part of this. I came here to learn about Nicaragua. I'm not learning about Nicaragua." He said, "you're learning about North Americans. Maybe that's God's purpose for your being here, to learn about your own culture. You're learning about Americans." That was a turning point in the week for me. I spent a lot of time off to myself thinking about what I was learning.

The group's most estranged moment came at a dinner

at a posh Western hotel, where a broken air conditioner spoiled the fantasy group's prospects for denial and escape. This was the "starting point" where the group began "congealing into two separate camps":

It was an interesting experience for the fantasy people to be somewhere, and not get what they wanted. Half of us wanted to live in a hostel, and half in in hotel. Then a rich woman had a big buffet dinner for the group at (hotel). The air conditioning broke...that day so it was a funny thing.

The split became pronounced in Costa Rica, with no attempt to mend it. The reality group "disassociated" itself from the fantasy group, who went shopping. Regarding lessons on American culture learned on the trip, this respondent remarked,

(t)he whole trip was very painful...Learning about how Americans act - being a part of a group that didn't gell - it was a real learning experience.

In sum, the success of women's careers as sanctuary activists traveling in Central America depends on how they come to terms with diverse cultural conflicts; their development, on how they define these conflicts, link related issues, and see their connection to them. Women religious seem to experience more gender-related conflicts; lay women, more culture shock. Women's narratives reveal stages of awareness and activism - turning points which separate "reality" from "romance" participants, and ugly Americans from true believers.

## Translating

Sanctuary women play a special role as translators in informal caretaking and formal outreach activities. More women than men in the movement speak Spanish, and those who speak Spanish are closest to the refugees. Some women learn Spanish from the refugees as an adaptation to caring for them, as one translator indicated:

I knew the most Spanish, so I've been the translator. I learned my Spanish there - I don't read or write it, I just speak it.

Women's greater bilingualism is linked to their role as facilitators in the movement. Like free time, bilingualism is a resource which shapes the nature and scope of their involvement, as another translator noted:

Roy was more or less the head of the sanctuary committee, but during my year of intense involvement, I did much of the work. Roy has a day job, whereas I'm free in the day, have a car, and speak Spanish.

Bilingualism enhances women's tendency to interact informally and to develop close, familial bonds with the refugees. In contrast, men's lack of bilingualism accentuates their more formal, "task-oriented" approach. One translator observed that "presence and friendship" are very important in working with the refugees:

My way of doing sanctuary work is very different from the men's - I'll go over to the refugees' home just to be there, to be part of their family. They tease me, that I'm their oldest daughter. The men are very task-oriented. They won't do for no reason. One fellow relates to them as a doctor, but he doesn't just wander into their house to chat. Bob goes over

to plan and organize. It's partly because I speak Spanish, and am around all day.

Women are also important in formal outreach activities, where they predominate as translators when the refugees tell their stories to the public. Translating raises important issues surrounding giving the refugees a voice, and conveying their point of view. Some respondents indicated that they believed that women interpret more perceptively than men - especially for women refugees. For example, one woman sensed that male interpreters "don't get into the feeling level of what's being said." Another concurred, although she also believed that part of the problem was audiences' greater attention to white males:

The way men interpret really bothers me. Something gets lost of a woman refugees' story. I've seen men sit there crossing their arms, looking up at the ceiling or sideways at a refugee woman while she was speaking, then interpret like, "she said this, but I don't necessarily agree." At the same time, I think people just respond more to male speakers. So the refugee woman's experience gets lost when people hear it come out of a white male - they focus on him.

Political orientation is an important determinant in who translates for the refugees in public. Translators are screened for their understanding of the issues as well as their fluency. Translating is a political issue, and unscreened translators may sabotage the purpose of outreach by failing to convey the refugees' meaning, as one woman illustrated:

We had a speaking engagement at a hospital...(that) provided a woman translator. The refugee said later it was a lousy job - they weren't in the same political bag. The refugee suspected it, but couldn't follow the English. Finally a man in the audience stood up and complained.

A respondent's comment that "the refugees are very particular about who translates for them" suggests that some have a voice in the matter. At another site, a paid staff member said that she and a volunteer consulted the group and selected all interpreters for all occasions. She described how they "assess" translators' skills, channeling those with "social skills" toward informal caretaking activities and those with "good critiques" toward outreach:

We assess people's skills and ask them for what we need. Some people have social skills (and) are good at picnics, with kids, or translating. I try to channel those without good critiques toward these activities. I'm responsible to the refugees.

Respondents generally indicated the importance of their informal networks in selecting translators. Karen Sacks' study of women's leadership in a hospital union drive <sup>29</sup> makes this sort of invisible networking which women do more visible. While official "spokespersons" were usually men, Sacks found that certain women were "key actors in network formation and consciousness shaping" as "centerwomen" mobilizing already existing "network centers" (p. 79). Sacks rejects the idea that men have formal authority while women exercise power informally



behind the scenes - a view which imputes less power to women. Instead, she found that it was the interaction of "speakers" and "centers" in "the process of creating collective goals and strategies" which "made things happen" (p. 80).

Sanctuary relies heavily on women's network centers to make things happen. The movement is literally produced in small informal groups in which women predominate. Translating represents an important link between the movement and women's networks. Generally speaking, not only do women do the translating, important decisions concerning translating are made by women's groups. Sanctuary depends on bilingual women to communicate the refugees' stories, and on their informal networks to "assess" and "channel" translators. It depends on women to direct those in the same "political bag" as the refugees toward outreach events, and those with other "social skills" toward informal gatherings. Women's functions surrounding translating are critical to the movement's success.

### Caretaking

There are two models of caretaking in the sanctuary movement based on humanitarian and political orientations. In the humanitarian approach, caretaking is an end in itself, often an immediate, heartfelt response to concrete

situations; neither intent nor content is political. The goal is to support the refugees physically and to help them adapt to their circumstances by assimilating into American culture. Caretakers may be paternalistic and condescending, identifying personally with the refugees out of pity and sentimentalism. They tend to misinterpret important cultural differences which arise, and exacerbate conflicts by imposing their own biases.

In contrast, the political approach sees caretaking as a means to create public awareness and to change U.S. policies perceived as affecting the refugees' situation. Activities center on outreach and organizing events, as opposed to refugees' care and assimilation. This approach is characterized by partnership with and empowerment of the refugees; the goal, their safe return home. Politically-oriented caretakers indicate more awareness of refugees' autonomy, independence, and culture. While they tend to perceive important cultural differences more clearly, they too may worsen relations by imposing their own biases.

These two orientations represent the poles of a continuum along which most respondents' caretaking is situated. Caretaking styles at the two Catholic sanctuaries closely approximate these "ideal types", and are examined and compared here. The experience of the two

groups - married lay homemakers volunteering at a local parish, and women religious organized through professional associations across the city - demonstrates important clustered differences in women's activism. These groups differ in how they care for the refugees, use free space on their behalf, understand and resolve conflicts, conceive of and link together issues, and view their own roles in changing the refugees' situation.

### The Humanitarian Approach

While caretakers at the informal Catholic sanctuary provide an example of an entire group's humanitarian orientation, several individuals at other sites also displayed this approach. For instance, a fifty-nine year old Catholic secretary at a Protestant church became personally involved with some Salvadoran refugees when the church became a sanctuary. Deeply moved by their circumstances and touched by their perceived humility and childlike qualities, she soon overcame her fear of legal reprisals through daily contact with the refugees and began inviting them to her home. She described the onset of her career of caring for the refugees, and how they won her family over as well:

The first time I brought them to my house, I didn't do it nobly. I was scared. I didn't want to go to jail...It was that there seemed to be a higher thing - the humbleness of these people. They could have been my own children...My...sons had told me, "don't get involved, you could go to jail." But you see, I saw

these people every day...It started to rain as we pulled up. (Son) ran out and carried both babies into the house. So I say...it's a matter of being with them.

Inviting the refugees to her home during Christmas holidays, she strongly sensed class differences between them, which seemed to deepen her feelings for them:

I invited them...to see the tree. It was also that I felt how fortunate I was to have this nice house. We had a tree, a fire...a ham...in the oven. I was accutely aware of our differences. My home, where I live, the freedom I have...the physical niceties.

At Easter, she took the refugees to a church where a Salvadoran priest gave mass. They were "thrilled" to meet him, but she had to "pull them away" because she had prepared a special breakfast for them. At home, she organized an egg hunt for the children which "went over like a lead balloon"; the "kids didn't know what to do." While she viewed these get-togethers as a "treat" for the refugees, she noted the irony - the "double-edged sword" - that these occasions only reminded them of their own "poverty and circumstances."

As Arlie Hochschild notes, "even before behavior occurs, people perform emotional work on their feelings." <sup>31</sup> This respondent wept repeatedly as she described get-togethers with the refugees. She was deeply moved by their eagerness to communicate, religiosity, respectfulness, generosity and hospitality. Her rhetoric is that of a "sentient actor" selecting an emotional

vocabulary based on "feeling rules" defining what she should feel in these circumstances. The emotional work of viewing herself as the refugees' social better helped mobilize her commitment and actions on their behalf. That the refugees prayed for her family made her weep openly:

My three sons and daughter were here. We opened the table and sat around it and prayed. [weeps] (Refugee) said, "esta familia" - our family - she prayed for us. [weeps more] I played a tape in Spanish - "The Insurrection" - and we played it over and over.

When the refugees invited her to dinner at their apartment, she was deeply touched by their ability to rise above their "grim circumstances" and extend their hospitality. The inclusion of a lemon slice in her water glass so crystalized her sense of the refugees' humility that she wept to describe it:

...they invited me to dinner. She'd made loads of tamales. They had one room with a small kitchen. I thought we'd eat in shifts, but they carried that little table out to the main room. It was beautifully set for four. They gave me the best they had...I asked for a glass of water, and (refugee) brought it out with a little slice of lemon in it. [weeps] They were so respectful - they shared every small thing they had...They had a very tiny fan, and it was directed at me. I was treated as beautifully as I could be in these grim circumstances.

To conclude, this respondent's approach to caretaking was humanitarian, the basis of contact with the refugees, personal and companionable. The "highlights" for her were their frequent visits to her home for "coffee, music, (and) company." Her vocabulary of motives

reveals how these experiences inspired strong feelings of pity and condescension toward the refugees which mobilized her commitment and action on their behalf. Notably devoid of political meaning, her relations with the refugees seemed to assure her of her own good heart and secure circumstances.

At the informal Catholic sanctuary, a group of three women who became personally involved with the refugees demonstrated a similar humanitarian style of caretaking. Two were on the social action committee, the other, "just a very concerned person in the congregation." As noted, this group had introduced sanctuary secretly on an emergency basis in response to a refugee family's housing crisis. Lacking time to secure official approval, they had employed the "wedge" to keep sanctuary privatized within the church - an important reason for the informal, nonpolitical character of sanctuary at this site.

Another reason was two of the caretakers' lack of political orientation. While one did outreach work, the other two did most of the caretaking, and had more informal, personalized relations with the refugees. One woman translated for the refugees at outreach events at local churches, and was active in public debates and pickets in the community's drive to become a sanctuary city. Married with children, she worked and attended

graduate school part-time. This respondent, referred to earlier as going through "the grieving stages of becoming a person," linked the larger issues surrounding the refugees' situation with those related to her own struggle as a member of a rising class. Her growing identification with the refugees' position helped mobilize her commitment and action toward their ascent and assimilation. She related particularly to the refugee women in terms of her struggle as a middle-class woman coming to power in her family, church and community. Her rhetoric reveals a liberal feminist viewpoint:

Felicite and I have had several discussions about entitlement...When I talk to (her) about women's liberation, she seems to understand.

The two primary caretakers at this site were full-time homemakers, married with children, once but no longer engaged in public activism. They were professional volunteers, well-connected to local resources through informal network centers in their church and community. Their relations with the refugees were based largely on mobilizing these resources, and strongly oriented toward their material care and assimilation. Although they seemed to understand the larger issues, their involvement generally lacked political intent and content.

Conflict between refugees and caretakers generally centered on two issues, reflecting their contrasting

cultural practices and expectations: the arrival of the refugees' extended family of about ten from Los Angeles; and five pregnancies in two years by two refugee women who would neither breastfeed nor use birth control. Interaction was centered primarily on the caretakers' involvement with the refugee children, the childbirths, and a house-cleaning business which they created for the refugee women. The main goal of sanctuary at this site was the refugees' assimilation and adaptation to American culture. Although the refugees themselves eventually succeeded toward this end, their caretakers ultimately became disappointed, exhausted, and burnt out.

An important point is that the refugees at this site were Quiche Indians from Guatemala; only the father, a lay-catechyst, spoke Spanish. Compared to the Europeanized, working-class Salvadoran refugees at the official Catholic Sanctuary, these indigeneous people were from the start more disadvantaged by and vulnerable to North American culture, as one caretaker noted:

When the first Guatemalan refugees came, we didn't realize they wouldn't speak Spanish. They had long skirts, braids. They were Indians. We were really insensitive that way.

Another also conveyed her sense of the refugees' vulnerability to North American culture:

(W)e brought them enormous Easter baskets. The kids eyes were huge. Little Felicite seemed so tiny and diminutive - she didn't speak Spanish. I was very



worried for her, stuck in a community where no one speaks her Guatemalan language.

The woman not on the social action committee became the most personally involved with the refugees, especially the children. As one respondent notes, she was "just a very interested person" who "jumped right in":

Jennifer...took care of education, getting them into schools, getting them pool passes, clothes, toys, to doctors for shots - getting them acclimated. She also took care of Felicite - both Paulo and Felicite had parasitic infections that needed to be taken care of.

She had "kids at her house every day" and the family "for supper all the time," frequently taking them out to dinner at Mexican restaurants. However, her caretaking sometimes took the form of imposing her own culture's customs and expectations on the refugees, which they usually resisted:

Jennifer tried to lay down curfews and ground the kids. They just quietly laughed, because (her husband) was silent about this, and in Central America, silence means disagreement.

Her "sense of limits" was confronted when the extended family arrived and began contributing to the refugees' growing birthrate. As another caretaker remarked,

She said, "while they're here, they shouldn't have kids." She thought they should use birth control or get an abortion.

The refugees' prodigious birthrate was also the source of other conflicts. Caretakers became deeply troubled by what they perceived as the refugees' indifference toward and ineffective use of birth control.

When the first refugee got pregnant "very quickly," "everyone was upset." The family wanted to name the baby after Oscar Romero, martyr of El Salvador, but caretakers persuaded them that "Oscar" was a culturally distasteful name, so they gave the baby an Anglo name, perhaps after a caretaker's husband.

Another conflict surrounded the arrival of the extended family from Los Angeles over a period of several months, which eventually depleted caretakers' resources and patience. Their arrival, and the erosion of good will, took place in stages. First, the mother-in-law and two sons came to attend a childbirth. The sons remained with the refugees, enrolling in school with their children:

They all came into this little apartment - now eight. The landlord had a stroke. We explained that they were just visiting until the baby arrived.

Some months later, the mother-in-law wanted the baby of another son baptized here, and the "comadre" caregiver as its godmother. She flew to Chicago with her husband, son, daughter-in-law, and the baby for the baptism, held at the comadre's home. A respondent's narrative reveals how the refugees exercised power through familial values and language, which caretakers responded to. "Grandma" drew power from her position in a matriarchal family, and relied on the universality of the

family to convey and secure her wishes. It was unclear why the baptism was not held at the church - whether it was a function of "the wedge", playing down the refugees' growing numbers and needs, or of another kind of separation conceived and imposed by caretakers, as one's vocabulary of motives suggests:

The grandma wanted Jennifer to be the godmother because she was the comadre for that family, and whatever grandma wants, grandma gets. So they flew in for the baptism. The community doesn't just baptize anyone. There was much discussion about it. Finally it was decided it'd be at Jennifer's house, with the priest attending, because they really weren't part of the community.

Months later, caretakers learned that the extended family had experienced a frightening INS raid on their Los Angeles apartment building and were en route to Chicago to join the refugees in the "land of milk and honey." Their emergency arrival demanded that caretakers rapidly mobilize enormous resources to accommodate them. The committee was handicapped by time constraints and the secrecy of sanctuary at their church, which limited shared decision-making and created stress and conflict among committee members, as one respondent indicated:

So we as a committee had to make a real fast decision. We met after mass Sunday and said, "are we or aren't we?"...We just decided - we made a phone call to the board that we'd support them - if not from within the (church) community, then from outside. We'd made a commitment to them, and we were going to stay behind them. This caused some problems with the committee. Some weren't at mass that day and had no input. It was getting to be wearing on the committee. The

family wasn't a pet project of everybody. This caused some tension...People began getting upset...They began muttering about how big the family was...Jennifer couldn't handle it anymore, and said that others had to get involved. She said, "my commitment is to these children."

Caretakers also had to face the newly arrived refugees' high level of fear and acknowledge the terror they had experienced in Guatemala. As one respondent noted, these "seven new people...were terrified." Another described the refugees' strategy for avoiding detection at a U.S. airport, and their lasting fright once they arrived. She also related their "good story":

It turned out, they didn't come that Sunday. They came to the airport and thought they saw INS officials, and went back home. They regrouped and came out in two batches three weeks later. Which gave us a little breathing space to find a place for them. But when they arrived, they ended up all staying at that little apartment. And in terror. They couldn't quite see that (community) would be different...(Had they undergone the same massacre as Paulo and Felicite?) No. Juan had been a teenager of fifteen or sixteen. A politician arrived in his village, accompanied by troops, to see the commune. The soldiers wanted to play soccer with the kids, and when the kids won, the soldiers began killing the kids. Juan escaped alone into the jungle, and came back and brought several others out. He went to Compeche, Mexico where he met Dora. (He) had gotten Dora and his children up to Los Angeles on his own.

Caretakers also faced the problem of quickly finding housing for the refugees' growing family. With "much screaming," they found an apartment. However, they had to reconstitute the refugees' extended family into a more American-style family unit for the new landlords - an

example of the kind of cultural repackaging caretakers frequently performed to ease the refugees' adaptation and assimilation. These Quiche Indians may have been puzzled over a "standard lease that says children up to age two can sleep in their parents' room"; however, caretakers seemed to overlook this cultural oddity:

With Dora came her cousin, Maria, who was...sixteen. We had to figure out how to present this to the landlords without their realizing they were illegal. (how did you do this?) Maria wasn't on the lease at all...We just included Juan, Dora and their two children. We never told them that Dora was pregnant.

Dora's pregnancy posed another kind of problem for caretakers. With little time to provide for the birth, they faced enormous red tape because of her undocumented status and medically unattended, thus "high risk", pregnancy, as one respondent indicated:

She arrived pregnant. We thought, "oh oh, nobody even told us this." She didn't know how far pregnant she was...Nobody knew. She'd had minimal care - had seen a doctor a couple of times...We started hysterically trying to figure out where she'd give birth...I called a woman in the community who speaks Spanish and is a nurse...(S)he made some calls. Everywhere we took her, she was either too high a risk or not in their region...I asked a friend..."what would happen if we just showed up (at hospital)?" She said, "we've turned in illegals before."

Time ran out, and the birth took place at the refugees' apartment, attended by the extended family, caretakers, and a midwife in the community, whom a caretaker asked to help:

The day after we'd gone through all this, taking her

from clinic to clinic, Julia called me about eight thirty that night. "She's having contractions." I told her to tell her to relax, take a hot bath, and if there's any liquor in the house, to give her a drink. A half hour later, she called back - "they're closer together." All my kids were born at home. I said, "remember that Spanish-speaking midwife you know? Call her. See how far along she is." So I went over there. I brought everything I could find in the house that could be used for a birth. I got there - the whole fifteen in the family were there. (Midwife) had just arrived and examined her before taking her coat off. She was eight and a half centimeters. She said, "we're not going anywhere." This was nine fifteen, and the baby was born at ten o'clock. It was an easy delivery.

For caretakers and refugees, this was perhaps their closest, least conflicted moment together. As one respondent indicated, the universality of women's experience of childbirth seems to have helped them at least briefly overcome their cultural differences. Caretakers related somewhat romantically and sentimentally to this experience:

There were very interesting cultural things going on. In the room was the midwife, Julia, myself, and grandma. Grandma is my age, looks sixty, and is charismatic. She was praying outloud. I spoke no Spanish I could communicate. Grandma spoke her Guatemalan language. When we were trying to get Dora to push, there was this sensation in the room. I felt in touch with women since the beginning of time. Delivering a baby. I said that to Julia, who translated it to grandma, who smiled and said she'd just experienced the same thing. (what was the sensation?) It was like I lost track of time, place. I felt this flow of womanness going across centuries of time. It was the strength of women doing what all women can do. It's a bond all women share. They don't need to talk about it - they just experience it.

Yet other conflicts surrounded the birth.

caretakers were disturbed by what they perceived as inadequate mother-infant bonding by the refugees. Their certainty about the correctness of their own cultural practices is notable:

She had the baby. In our culture, we immediately present the baby to the mother. That didn't occur. At the end, she asked Juan to hold her arms and help her push. Grandma wasn't pleased - I could see from her face - it was like an Anglo custom. But he left as soon as the baby was born and the placenta was being delivered. Grandma held the baby, then took it out and presented it to the family. It was wrapped in somebody's shirt, very swaddled. I'd brought baby blankets and everything, but grandma chose a black silk shirt lying there. So it must have been a good twenty or thirty minutes (while grandma presented the baby). I was very concerned about getting the baby to bond and breastfeed right away. Finally I got mad, picked up the baby and brought it to the mother, who finally took it. Julia explained later how they lose so many babies, perhaps they don't emphasize early bonding.

Caretakers were also upset that the refugee women seemed disinterested in breastfeeding and preferred formula. This issue was important in their community since a local restaurant had been petitioned out of business in a protest against its parent company's formula products. Caretakers seemed genuinely unaware of the relativity of their own cultural proclivities surrounding these body rituals. <sup>33</sup> A respondent recalled how these "cultural differences made a big problem":

Then there was the breastfeeding. Felicite had breastfed (baby) for three months and quit. We were disgusted...It was the prestige of...formula - (it's) Western to them. Dora simply wouldn't breastfeed. We found out she'd only breastfed her first child, and it

hurt so much she wouldn't do it again. She got formula from the (program). Felicite had (baby), her third child, in February, nursed for three months, stopped, and got pregnant almost immediately, and had (baby) in March of 87. We tried to be real understanding about cultural things. We explained to them, "if nothing else, breastfeeding is a natural form of birth control." But they don't believe in breastfeeding for the first three days - they think the cholostrom isn't good. With all its immunities!

Another sphere of conflict involved the house-cleaning business which caretakers created for the refugee women. A respondent explained how the group applied an old American ethic about immigrants working their way up:

Our idea was, some members of the community wanted to help, but not just hand them money. We decided this was a better way.

Relating how the refugee women got started, she indicated how their economic independence was achieved through their successful assimilation into Western-style housekeeping practices. Invoking a scene from the film, "El Norte,"<sup>34</sup> in which immigrant women enter the labor force illegally through undocumented domestic work, she recalled the refugees' initiation - and resistance - to the ritual of American housework. At first caretakers accompanied the refugee women "to show them how" to do it:

It was just Felicite to start with. It was very difficult - her concept of cleaning house isn't the American way. They do not see things. If they vacuum, and move the furniture, they don't move it back. You can tell them to do something, but they don't realize they have to do it every week. Not just once. Now they're much better. Floors, dusting, windows...(Then) Maria began. We kept forgetting she's a teenager. She'd come up and say, "finished?"



And I'd say, "what about the bathrooms?" And she'd get this look on her face, like any other teenager would get.

Commenting on the lack of chauvinism on the part of the refugee men, this respondent was apparently unaware of her own cultural chauvinism:

Dora took over housecleaning when Felicite had her baby. The men don't seem to have the same macho thing that I think of Mexicans as having. Because the men will come and clean. When Felicite was near the end of her pregnancy, Paulo would come with her and clean.

Holidays represented another arena of conflict over the refugees' assimilation. There was considerable disagreement on the social action committee as to whether or not Western-style Christmas gifts were appropriate for the refugees. Some were of the opinion that they should get them "really nice, needed gifts" such as "clothes, watches, billfolds, as opposed to toilet water." Others felt the children should receive "an Atari game and ice skates," since they had "no yard or place to play in." One caretaker describing the argument made her own position clear:

(s)ome people were furious at our imposing Western values. We said, "let's help them fit in a little bit."

In the end, caretakers created a traditional, middle-class, American-style Christmas for the refugees, which entailed surprising the children with equally allotted "piles and piles of stuff." Beyond the

committee's initial argument, caretakers seemed generally unconcerned about the cultural intrusiveness of assimilating the refugee children into these North American folkways. Instead, they seemed to think that the children were not appreciative enough:

One night Jennifer came over, and we lined up all through the house all their gifts and started wrapping. On Christmas eve, we brought (the refugees) over to Jennifer's house for the evening. We had their apartment keys, and took all the gifts over to surprise them. The children just went berserk...It was important to us that each child got as much as the others. The kids were saying, "why did I get this game, when I wanted that game?" Jennifer told me she just wanted to wring their necks, then remembered our kids say the same things.

Eventually, caretakers were unable to maintain housing for the refugees' growing family, and the Los Angeles branch moved to another sanctuary site nearby. Exhausted, the committee continued to work toward the refugees' assimilation by planning to sell them an apartment building:

Dora will have the baby in November and their lease can't be renewed because of too many people. We...are trying to buy a two-flat building...which (church) bought and is putting on the market. We'll either sell it to the Guatemalans or rent it to them with the option to buy. (can they stay?) We don't know. We just go from day to day.

While somewhat aware of the unfeasibility of this plan, caretakers generally blamed the housing problem on the refugees' failure to maintain a more American-sized family:

But (the refugees) may have created the problems - just by the size of their family they may have to leave. I have to laugh at the idea of (community) becoming a sanctuary city - what immigrant family can afford the fucking rent?

However, the refugees had their own agenda. On their own, they rented a large apartment building with an option to buy, in part so that they could bring other family members from Guatemala. One respondent indicated that the refugees had been able to save a great deal of money with several adults working in the family. They explained to her that they always intended to have a large family, and since they believed that they couldn't return safely to Guatemala anytime soon, they had felt all along that the U.S. was the best place to have their children.

Caretakers' narratives reveal deep cultural divisions between themselves and the refugees. They also reveal how they often exacerbated these conflicts by being insensitive to the refugees' culture and by imposing their own. They indicate caretakers' underlying belief in the desirability of the refugees' assimilation, and the consequences of this approach for themselves and the refugees. Caretakers created a sanctuary that would support the refugees until they were able to "get on their feet." Their concern for the refugees was as individuals, not members of an oppressed group. They made few connections between the refugees' circumstances and larger

political issues. While the refugees seemed passive and vulnerable to their cultural repackaging, they often succeeded in resisting inroads on their identity. In the end, the refugees took their assimilation into their own hands, surpassing even caretakers' expectations for them.

One respondent indicated that the woman on the committee who did outreach work was a special catalyst who helped absorb much of the committee members' frustration. Her "cultural understanding" had helped them to "continue and...re-energize":

One thing that's really enabled us to continue working with the family is Julia's presence - her cultural understanding - like Dora's pregnancy, and losing the apartment. She's been marvelous at letting everyone vent their frustration, then explaining our reactions cross-culturally. She said that most groups that deal with immigrants...only last about six months before the cultural differences get so large that they can't bridge the gulf anymore.

While it may generally be true that groups working with immigrants burn out rather quickly, commitment was maintained at other sites partly through participants' continued activism in other areas. These other sites generally had strong institutional and congregational support for sanctuary, which the informal Catholic sanctuary lacked. The two caretakers most involved with the refugees at this site were otherwise inactive. However, it is notable that they continued interacting with the refugees after helping them get on their feet,

and after they and their resources were exhausted. For example, after more than two years of intense involvement with the refugees, one caretaker's family entered therapy together in an effort to reestablish their sense of boundaries; yet they still enjoyed friendly, frequent visits with the refugees. However, they more or less dropped the concept of sanctuary. This experience contrasts sharply with that of women religious at the official Catholic Sanctuary, who took in refugees as an act of defiance against the church and government. Active long before sanctuary, they planned to continue refugeeless outreach even before those in their care left.

#### Political Approach

As noted, the political approach to caretaking is characterized by partnership and empowerment. Content and intent are political; the end is changing public awareness and U.S. policies and sending the refugees home. While politically-oriented caretakers show more concern for the refugees' culture, autonomy, and independence than their humanitarian counterparts, they experience conflicts over other kinds of issues.

At the official Catholic Sanctuary, cultural conflict revolved around contrasting expectations. The refugees expected long-term commitment, material support, and frequent, informal contact. Caretakers generally

expected the refugees to be independent, viewed them as a project, and had difficulty with their sexual activeness and gendered family life. The refugee family included a Salvadoran woman, Anna, and her three children, her husband reportedly in San Salvador, politically "on the other side of the fence." Caretakers included a group of primarily women religious, all employed full-time, active on prior issues, well-traveled in Central America, and aware of the issues. Anna and the women religious were united in their commitment to the same political goals, which helped them to transcend their contrasting salient statuses as "nun" and "refugee." For instance, one respondent claimed that

Anna doesn't have a lot of regard for nuns. She tells us, "I don't think of you as nuns, but as guerrillas."

In contrast to caretakers at the informal Catholic sanctuary, who tended to be full-time homemakers and to spend much personal time with the refugees, for the women religious, looking after the refugees was not an extension of their daily lives. They were extremely busy with work, meetings, CD, and travel. Rather than nurture the refugees' dependency, they expected them to be adaptive and self-reliant, as one respondent indicated:

In our family, the children speak some English, and Anna knows some English, so they can adapt more easily to a group of people extremely busy with full-time jobs...It's helpful to have a family that's extremely independent.

A respondent who moved in next door to the refugees and was more personally involved with them indicated her sensitivity to their need for privacy:

I try to limit it - I don't drop in every day. I don't eat with the family all the time - I won't be there forever. I try to respect their privacy.

Women in this group had a great deal of experience working in social service organizations, and possessed many professional skills. In contrast to homemakers at the informal sanctuary, for these women, caretaking was more specialized and less bound to women's traditional caring. For example, a respondent with a graduate degree in special education was tutoring a refugee child who was diagnosed as "E.M.H."

At this site, conflict emerged over caretakers' and refugees' cultural expectations of one another. Caretakers' social customs of distance and formality contrasted sharply with refugees' customs of familiarity and intimacy. As a respondent indicated, Anna complained that she felt as if she were merely a "project":

Anna's complaint was, "I never see you." And I spent more time with her than with my own mother. But her cultural experience is, people drop in and out of the house all day long in El Salvador. And here, privacy is a value, and it'd never occur to us to walk in anytime and throw ourselves on the couch. And she felt she was just a project to us, and not a real person. We felt we were friends. But because...there's always a modicum of distance in North American culture, she perceived us as business associates.

The refugees in fact were part of a project, whose context was a city-wide network of women religious who rarely interacted outside of formal meetings. This was another importance difference between the two groups of caretakers, as one respondent indicated:

It's a real weakness of the project in having people live far apart in the city. Anna's feelings are justified. We're not a group that sees one another every week...they live far away from each other and they only meet for meetings, and it does take on a little bit of an institutional tone.

While claiming that "the family has received a lot of attention," she conceded that the refugees may not have perceived "sending the children to camp" as "attention."

Conflict also emerged over sharp contrasts in caretakers' and refugees' lifestyles. The former were primarily celibate nuns; the latter, a single-parent family whose supportive functions were badly damaged. Married homemakers at the other Catholic site, whose lifestyle contrasted sharply with that of women religious, may have responded the same way when Anna took a "live-in lover" - a cultural breach not so different from bottle-feeding, formula, and lack of bonding. While women religious had built their lives around an institution promoting women's reliance on men, they were surprised and offended by Anna's behavior - as if she were somehow consorting with the enemy - as one respondent indicated:

Anna wasn't here very long before Ernesto showed



up...She needs that guy. It took a long while for me to realize that she's spent her whole life in a culture where men are terribly important...(S)he feels safer with a man in the house...(S)he relies on him for moral support, and to show her how to balance the budget. He's more knowledgeable, and she wants him around. Whereas the women she's working with - nuns - say, "who needs him?"

This betrayal on Anna's part made the women religious feel secondary in her life - perhaps like a project. This caused a great deal of tension which some projected on Anna, as another respondent indicated:

I don't know how comfortable the nuns feel...she doesn't reciprocate - she doesn't have people over. Her lover has moved in. I'll go over, and she'll be in the bedroom with her lover, and it's uncomfortable. I really don't care, but I feel it's a source of tension for her.

Other conflicts emerged over the refugee children's sex role socialization. A struggle developed over whether the refugee's son should become "the man" in a traditional Central American family, or learn his place in a modern American one, as women religious would have it:

Anna's son doesn't have to help with housework or babysitting. His sister, a year younger, has to. He can discipline the youngest, and Anna defers to him as the man in the family. The nuns are tuned into this - they have no appreciation of this. I always make him do the same things as the girls...(such as?) He wanted to sit in the front seat, and me to sit in the back seat! I told him, "I'm sitting in the front seat!"

Women religious differed significantly in orientation and lifestyle from their married, homemaking counterparts. Their refugees also contrasted sharply: one was a politically sophisticated, Westernized, working-

class single-parent family from El Salvador; the other, a family of indigenous farmers from the fincas of Guatemala. However, the two groups of caretakers experienced similar conflicts with the refugees over different kinds of issues. Tensions over Anna's parenting style and sex life posed the same kinds of problems for women religious as the Guatemalan women's refusal to breastfeed, use birth control, and "bond" did for married homemakers. In both cases, these cultural differences were exacerbated by caretakers' own cultural biases, which affected the outcome of sanctuary.

Women religious tended to perceive the refugees' problems as an obstacle to the kind of partnership and solidarity they had envisioned sharing with them. In the end, they came to see the refugees' equality as spurious, their dependency, inevitable. They arrived differently than their homemaker counterparts at the same dilemma of how to make the refugees self-sufficient, although they seemed more aware of how American culture had "corrupted" their children. One respondent summarized these problems:

There are so many things I never thought of when I entered this - she's the victim of rape and torture...From the beginning, I presumed mental health, understanding, appreciation. We're somehow responsible for them...we can't simply dump them. But we've got to get them to be able to sustain themselves down the road - learn a trade or something. How to stand in solidarity with someone who's been institutionally victimized, without being manipulated? (how so?) As a result of Anna's suffering, the only

power she's learned is manipulation and dependency. How to wean her from that? As we attempt to, I see more dependency in the process. (how so?) She thinks our culture has corrupted her kids - they never want to go back. I'd expect it, but it's difficult to watch.

Another described "the biggest solution", which included acknowledging the fundamental inequality between North Americans and refugees:

...to be a resource to her without patronizing her (and) making her dependent - to be with her rather than above her. And tell her she's being unfair or condescending. To be honest is the first sign of mutuality. In reality, we'll never be equal.

The gulf between caretakers' and refugees' expectations, exacerbated by personality conflicts, ultimately outlasted their ability to continue working cooperatively together, as one respondent indicated:

I feel my expectations of her are too high, and hers are too high for me. Her presumption is that we would fund her for the duration of the war. It's unrealistic. The group's expectation was open communication. She expects us to have a communal sensibility, (but)...(s)he has very little to do with other Salvadorans - she's not a team person. She's very difficult to work with because she likes to call the shots.

As for the future, some women religious had begun talking to Anna about leaving sanctuary; this raised other issues, as another respondent indicated:

At least she knows we were never intending to support her for life. At first we said we'd make a one-year commitment, but she claims we never said this...Down deep she believes we can get all the money necessary. She doesn't have realistic expectations of what fund-raising takes.

Another described how "lately it's been very difficult":

We had to tell Anna that we're running out of money. We may have misled her - we raised so much money initially. Anna is no longer technically in sanctuary because she's applied for political asylum and a work permit...Once she has a job, she'll be basically independent.

Discussing what they would do next, one respondent remarked that she didn't believe that "this group can afford to take on another refugee."

In summary, although the two groups of caretakers and refugees contrasted sharply in many ways, they experienced similar cultural divisions over different kinds of issues. While women religious seemed more sensitive to these differences, their formal manners and style of organizing and their celibate, communal lifestyle predisposed them to impose their own biases on the refugees in ways similar to those imposed by married homemakers. In the end, both groups - their patience and resources exhausted - faced the problem of making the refugees independent. Both sets of refugees took the initiative; they applied for amnesty and jobs, and made plans to further assimilate into American culture. The difference was that humanitarian caretakers retired from activism after helping the refugees get on their feet, while the more politically-oriented women religious continued with other kinds of sanctuary activism.

Women's role in caretaking is important to the

movement in two ways: women provide most of the care, and their style of caretaking affects the outcome of sanctuary. While most respondents indicated a caretaking style somewhere between the humanitarian and political, two groups of Catholic caretakers provide examples of their extremes. Their experiences illustrate how each approach affects the quality, duration, and consequences of sanctuary for both the movement and refugees. Although the two groups contrasted sharply in personal lifestyle and orientation to caring, they experienced similar conflicts over different issues, with similar consequences. Lay women had difficulty transcending cultural notions about reproductive issues; women religious, notions about gender. In the end, problems and solutions were the same, although women religious continued their activism on the issues, while lay women tended to withdraw. Their experiences illustrate how each approach affects the outcome of sanctuary, and may be instructive for the movement's success and longevity.

#### Support and Conflict in the Family

Women's involvement in the sanctuary movement both shapes and is shaped by their families. Respondents' narratives reveal families' approval and cooperation as well as resistance and resentment regarding their involvement outside the home. Their accounts illustrate

the mutual effects between women's activism and middle-class family life. They suggest how families restrain women's activism, and how women's activism makes families change. They also indicate that women's familial and therapeutic view of the refugees may help them overcome many differences, yet it also expresses the refugees' fundamental dependency.

Myra Ferree's study of how working-class families assess women's paid work as either a cost or contribution to the family <sup>35</sup> helps explain the dynamic between middle-class women's volunteer work and how their families assess their activism and their place at home. Ferree notes that both working-class and middle-class families generally view women's work as a sacrifice or a satisfaction depending on whether or not it includes a shift in the division of labor at home. Any change in who does the work at home represents a cost to the family. The more value women's work has to their families, the more successfully they can negotiate family members' approval for their working, and sometimes, their willingness to do more work at home.

Whereas working-class women tend to view families as a source of support, middle-class women more often view them "as a restriction on their individuality and independence" (Ferree, p. 67). At the same time, middle-

class women's work outside the home is more often seen as unnecessary due to their husbands' higher incomes. If families can afford for women not to work, then they tend to view women's work "not as a contribution...but a cost that (they) bear, more or less willingly" (p. 70). Women who have less economic need to work also have less leverage to justify their working, and to negotiate changes in who does the work at home to accommodate it.

While women's volunteer work has traditionally bestowed social status on middle- and upper-class families,<sup>36</sup> it has not led to a shift in who does the work at home. Furthermore, these families' "commitment to egalitarian principles is a relatively weak predictor of actual household behavior" (Ferree, p. 64). Whether women work inside or outside the home, as volunteers or for pay, with or without their families' approval, generally speaking, other family members tend to resist doing more work at home. As Ferree points out, no women "have either unqualified support or opposition" from their families for their involvement outside the home (p. 76). The value of women's paid employment is always calculated as a sacrifice or a satisfaction by and for their families.

This section examines and compares families' orientation toward women's activism - its perceived costs and contributions - in two areas: values which families

place on women's activism, and families' recognized loss of women's caretaking at home. Next it explores conflicts women experience between leadership and childrearing, and how childrearing shapes women's conception of their future activism. Last, it considers women's view of the refugees from a family/therapy perspective, and its consequences for the refugees and the movement.

Half of respondents indicated that their families disapproved of their involvement in the sanctuary movement, their reactions including shame, frustration, and disappointment. Because of its political nature, sanctuary activism may lose women the support of friends and family. One respondent claimed that one woman lost a good friend over her involvement; "now, the friend shuns her as a communist." Other women's families disapproved of or altogether denied their involvement in a political movement. For example, one respondent claimed that her "husband's family thinks their son wouldn't be involved" in sanctuary if it weren't for her. Another claimed that her in-laws were silently opposed to her sanctuary work; "they're a blank wall, no questions." Another described her family's denial, judgment, and disappointment:

Dad saw some old friends of mine and told them I was a social worker. I said, "Dad, I'm not a social worker. I work with Central American refugees." My older brother thought I was crazy. He'd just graduated from college and was looking for a job.



Women deal with their families' disapproval in a variety of ways. Most simply don't tell their families about their activism. Several respondents remarked that secrecy was "characteristic of women in the movement - they don't tell their parents." Others described using their activism to get back at their families for their perceived religious and political conservatism. For example, one woman recalled inviting her disapproving family to a baptism for a refugee's baby, indicating her pleasure in introducing them to an elderly activist nun:

They thought (nun) was just the sweetest person in the world. I told them about her social activism and arrests. It was an eye opener for them - they couldn't believe it. They don't respect our opinions, but they respected her.

Others made class judgments against disapproving families. For example, one woman called her father an "Archie Bunker Democrat." Another called her in-laws "working-class" and "apolitical", analyzing them in the middle-class rhetoric of "repression" and being "in touch with" feelings:

My activities put (husband) in touch with his anger at his parents - how repressed they are. Seeing me in his position to them let him verbalize it.

While many families seemed to negatively value women's activism, more disapproved because they perceived the loss of women's caretaking at home. Women's parents and in-laws were more apt to be judgmental; their husbands and children, resentful of their absence from home. For

example, one respondent remarked,

(s)ometimes I see women in sanctuary who are totally absorbed in the movement. Everyone's family is mad at them for taking time away from the family.

Another claimed that this was "the case of every woman in sanctuary" she knew. In the rhetoric of liberal feminism, she complained that

(w)omen are used to meeting everyone's needs but ours. It's a morality of responsibility, not rights.

She described her family's anger over her activism and her frustration at their dependency. That she justified her rights in terms of making her family more accountable illustrates the sense of guilt which middle-class women often feel over their involvement outside the home:

One day I came home from (picketing at) the post office and the family was mad because dinner wasn't ready. They reflect (husband's) view. My daughter says, "you only have time for refugees"...But I want to make them more accountable for themselves - not do things for them that they can do for themselves.

One respondent described the all-encompassing, home-based character of her sanctuary involvement, indicating its disruptive impact on her household:

My sanctuary work entailed making contacts, phonework, giving people rides, and bringing people to my home by day. Things would get pretty hectic at my house.

A close friend's comment on her situation illustrates how women's caretaking of refugees and families may merge, obliterating boundaries and arousing familial confusion and resentment over others' claims on women's caretaking:

Eva had a hard time separating herself and her family from (the refugees) - keeping the big picture. She was doing everything - having them at her house every day, doing their laundry. She got so bad, her husband got edgy and her kids complained.

The implicit assumption that "keeping the big picture" includes separating one's self and family from the refugees sharply distinguishes North Americans' from Central Americans' orientation in the movement.

In some cases, women's husbands posed a problem for their activism. Some husbands held opposing political views, which strained their relationships. For example, a respondent whose husband worked for the American Bar Association asked his advice regarding the refugees:

He said, "tell them to go back." (seriously?) In a funny, sarcastic way.

Another respondent claimed that her activism caused "tremendous strains" with her husband:

He's not active. He thinks there's more to the picture than I'm aware of - like the administration must be right. He's not sure of my position. He was a marine - primary control is the way to do it, like in Vietnam. He sees himself as a colonizer, and my position as untenable.

Some husbands were threatened by wives' decision to travel outside the country and take personal risks. For example, a clergy woman compared her husband's unfavorable response to her trips to El Salvador and Mexico:

(He) was very much more upset about El Salvador. He was snotty and uncommunicative. I thought, okay, it's come - the straw that breaks the camel's back. It's that...Mexico isn't as dangerous (as) El Salvador is.

There's this gut kind of thing of, "if you love me, how could you put yourself in this position?" They don't know what it's like to risk a life, so they don't understand. That we keep together is a miracle.

Another respondent, married with three children, remarked that when she recently told her husband that she wanted to go to Guatemala, he said, "fine, we'll get a divorce"; it was "non-negotiable." Seemingly undaunted by this ultimatum, she planned to go to Guatemala the next year "as a research assistant for this repatriation program."

Some women's children posed a problem for their activism. As noted, a caretaker at the informal Catholic sanctuary became personally involved with a refugee family, integrating them into her household. She related that her son became overwhelmed by competition, disturbed by the blurring of family lines and a double standard of behavior for the refugees and himself. His resentment and guilt, expressed during family therapy, reflected the underlying stress borne by the family, who then had to "set new limits." Her son "put it all into words" - "all the frustrations" they had experienced for two years. Her narrative reveals a class-related link between anger and guilt; it also illustrates how issues of sharing and fairness - of being lenient, perhaps patronizing, toward guests - are learned at home:

My son totally blends in with the children. The negative side is sometimes he feels I'm more lenient with the Central American kids than him. When all the

others came there was more vying for attention between the children, and more competition. He began feeling funny - he just let go about all this stuff about the Guatemalans - that they were really poor and we weren't. He felt guilty. But he was very upset that the little girls could eat apples in the livingroom, and nobody else could. The little girls would spit out the peel on the floor. One time, the grandpa sat on the couch and peeled an apple with his knife. And at school, Miguel would take (son's) food. He'd take a bite, and (son) wouldn't want it back. Miguel would have a tortilla and an egg, and (son) could have a choice. He never wanted to tell us about it. But we became overwhelmed - thinking, breathing Guatemalans. When he said all this, it was really clear that it was bothering us all. The kids would walk in without knocking. With only four, it was okay, but with so many, they'd be more rowdy. When I wasn't there, they couldn't come in. We gradually set new rules.

Setting limits took time - caretakers at this site had at first tended to indulge the refugee children:

When they first came, they didn't know what gifts were, all wrapped in paper. Now, there's all these kids, and we've had to set limits.

In another case, a clergy woman had difficulty explaining her activism to her grandson from a military family. She described her struggle to integrate her activist and family roles - how she risked looking like a "bad person" to her grandson in order to educate him:

I was going to Rock Island to block the arsenal, and my grandchildren from the air force (family) were here. I explain(ed) to my eight year-old grandson what we were doing, and that we might go to jail. He was astonished - he thought only bad people go to jail. On the way there I turned my ankle and couldn't go. My grandson said, "that's a good thing you were going to do - wanta play cards?" What really bothers me is his war toys - it makes me want to weep. I won't play with them, though. But I don't say anything.

In contrast to these respondents' families, other

women's families were more approving of their activism, or at least of their volunteer work. Overall, their husbands were more cooperative and accommodating, although this may reflect more appreciation of wives' volunteer work than acceptance of their activism. For example, one woman received "tremendous support" from her doctor husband; she claimed that "he doesn't seem to mind - he never tells anybody what to do." Another's woman's family "could always talk"; although her architect husband came from an old-fashioned, patriarchal family which "expected the food to be on the table," he had "let go of that model."

Most women's children experience sanctuary as positive. Respondents discussed children's involvement in terms of educating them to the issues. One remarked,

I took my kids to the apartment to see the family. I got them in touch with the situation, and how to act on it. These are examples of courage and sacrifice.

Similarly, another remarked that

We always involve our kids. The kids respect and understand - they were very much a part of this and have very strong feelings about this. They know not everyone's life is on a tree-lined street.

Yet she stressed the importance of "balancing" family life "so as not to become martyrs to a cause," describing how the family would get active, then take a rest.

Another respondent discussed her children's involvement in terms of the career of the family, with its divisions, coming to know others, and making new rules:

We have a real active household, and the kids are real aware of what's going on. I take them with me a lot when there's something going on with the refugees. At first they say, "I don't wanta go. I don't know anyone." But then they have a great time, running around the church, playing with the refugee kids. At first (son) was hesitant - he said, "I can't talk to them." My daughter was already connecting.

Women's perceptions of family roles significantly affected their sanctuary activism. Some women experienced conflicts between their leadership role in a political movement and being a "good" woman; wife and mother. A thirty year old paid staff member, married with no children, described a conflict between her sense of leadership in sanctuary and femininity in her marriage. She could not make the connection between her roles as leader and wife. She saw leadership as a "male role", and feared being accused of "taking power":

Sometimes because of the role I'm in - it's such a male role - I wonder about my femininity. It's about power and control. If (husband) did sanctuary, he'd have to deal with his wife in leadership. We're both leaders. If we were in the same organization, he's be accusing me of taking power.

The conflict which she perceived between power, control, and femininity emerged around issues of sex, where she felt like a "good man":

Sometimes I wish he'd just do something. I wish he'd initiate, at least once in a while. That, coupled with my role in the group, makes me feel I'm not a good woman, but a good man.

She also perceived conflict between being a leader and having a baby. She described how having a miscarriage

made her feel "irresponsible":

When the (coalition) first got going, I was working fifty to seventy hours a week. I was pregnant, and miscarried. I felt I miscarried because I was being ambitious, acting like a man. Later, I found out how common it is. It's all tied up with conflict about being in a leadership position and having a baby.

she was deeply concerned that she could not be both an activist and a "good wife and mother":

I worry that because of my activism, I won't be a good wife and mother. And I really want to have children, and to be a good wife and mother. It makes my very sad to think about. One day I was so absorbed (at the church), I forgot to pick up my husband from work four hours earlier. The group was teasing me. A man said, "that (husband) is either headed for sainthood or a divorce!" This really stung.

She believed that she would eventually "straddle" motherhood and activism - somehow "restructure and reprioritize" - although she didn't know how. Her rhetoric illustrates how having children - or even planning to have them - may cause women to redefine their expectations of their future activism:

When I have children, I'll probably straddle the two. I know I couldn't be happy just being a mother, although i could be happy just being an activist...my sense is that things will change when we have kids, that my sanctuary work will be cut in half...I've seen my friends go through this - they settle for a smaller part, but most stay active. (how would you do this?) I don't know. That's a good question.

Another respondent - age thirty-three, also married with no children - expressed concern and frustration over the perceived conflict between motherhood and activism. She, too, believed that she would learn to straddle the



two - another case of women's expectation that having children would reshape their future activism:

I plan to have kids fairly soon. That brings up a whole other set of questions about how it all fits together. I'd like very much to stay at home when they're little. I don't know if we could afford that. I don't feel conflicted about having kids, but about how all this will work out. I feel real boxed in right now. I wouldn't stop (activism) - I just got started. I think somehow I'm going to organically evolve into these things all fitting together.

For another respondent - age forty-one, married with an adopted baby - the outcome of trying to balance activism with motherhood was "pulling back", not "fitting" them together. She described limiting her involvement, and indicated that CD and travel may also be off limits:

When (baby) came, I pulled back a bit. I was on the outreach committee until December, but I don't want to spend my Saturdays away from (baby). Right now, with (baby) my extra-curricular time is limited. I've got to figure out what my involvement will be. I'll keep working at (church) and at the (coalition). I'd love to return to Guatemala and El Salvador, but with (baby), that's got to wait.

Many women described their sanctuary work from the perspective of the family. Karen Sacks notes that women workers in a hospital union drive used "familistic language" to establish a framework for unity. In Sacks' view, familistic concepts "contain oppositional meanings and political potential" (p. 84):

(f)amilistic symbols and values (are)...the antithesis of confrontation politics...Part of the strength of these values lies in their multiple meanings and their ability to bridge racial, gender, and occupational divisions (p. 83).

Family roles are based on reciprocity and hierarchy: all adults are to be accorded respect by all other adults regardless of their social position. Sanctuary women's use of familial language both empowers the refugees and expresses their perceived childlike dependency. For example, one respondent described her "sense of keeping the family together" in her sanctuary work:

Again, the feminine. The refugees are brothers and sisters in need, and we take them into our family.

Another described sanctuary work "as an internal process, like a family that has to feed and clothe its children."

Another saw differences in how men and women perceive the relative importance of "caring" and "achievement" over their lifespans - that women directing their "caring energy" toward social causes was a "natural" thing to do:

Women's whole orientation is toward growing, changing, caring, and loving. When women are through with their life work - done raising families - they're ready for more. That's what my mother did - she put her caring energy into the peace movement...Men spend their lives achieving and getting ahead. When their life's work is over, there's nothing left for them. Because when you can't achieve things anymore, your life collapses.

Women trained as social workers and counselors tended to combine familistic and therapeutic rhetorics in describing their work with the refugees. Robert Bellah notes the increasing fit between "the therapeutic attitude of self-realization and empathic communication" with the nature of work in the U.S. In his view, not only is

therapy work, much work is a form of therapy. Respondents' use of the languages of families and helping professions illustrates this fit in sanctuary work. A social worker claimed that viewing the family as "a unit where all people have input, even kids," had helped her to understand "the interpersonal struggles of the movement."

Similarly, a special education counselor articulated her view of the refugees as "identified clients" who are part of a "sick family system." Casting the refugees in the image of dependent children, she made a connection between nondemocratic families and oppressive U.S. government policies. Since parents are part of the problem, her solution included Americans seeing themselves as "creators of what's happening"; otherwise, she believed that sanctuary is merely "band-aid treatment":

In family systems, the identified client seems to have the problem. The refugees are like the identified client - we have to concern ourselves with their safety needs. But sanctuary itself isn't going to work - we're part of a sick family system. We're all invested in keeping it going. Our government is invested in calling the refugees "communists" and insisting they go back to their own country. We have to then admit that we're the source of evil. We are the oppressors. It's like a family where a kid is abused and acting out. He's saying, "somebody do something, because this is crazy!" That's what the refugees are saying to us. "We can no longer stay there because it's crazy!" That's why their message is so powerful. Not just their suffering, but at our hands. It's our fault. If we don't see ourselves as oppressors, everything we do will be band-aid treatment. It's like the parents sending the kid to therapy but not going themselves. And the therapist that allows that is colluding with the parents.

claiming that the U.S. will always create refugees so long as it denies third world countries' transition to independence, she patronized the refugees by comparing them to "kid(s) leaving for college":

In anybody's normal development there comes a time when people become adults. To continue holding power over them is to deny normal development. In a healthy family, transitions are handled well. The system adjusts. Like a kid's leaving for college - parents don't do fucked up things to keep the kid at home. We as a nation don't allow other nations to make those transitions. We pretend they can't do it without us. When that kid leaves home and goes to college you want him to come back, and have a healthy relationship as adults. It's going to happen - they're going to leave home. It's a presumptuous analogy, because this isn't their home. In exerting power over others, we'll always create a situation where we have refugees.

In summary, women's sanctuary involvement mutually affects their families. About the same number of respondents' families approved of their activism and involvement outside of the home as disapproved. Parents and in-laws based their disapproval more on value judgments; husbands and children, on the perceived loss of women's presence at home. Other family members both restrain women's activism and are shaped and educated by it. Women often experience conflict between their activist and family roles, their conception of which shapes their expected future activism. Women use the rhetoric of families and therapists to express their sense of the refugees' independence and equality, as well as their underlying view of the refugees' dependency.

## Conclusion

Women's participation in all sanctuary activities is characterized by patterned conflicts surrounding issues of class, culture, gender, and race which inevitably emerge due to women's and refugees' contrasting backgrounds and positions in the movement. How women interpret and resolve these conflicts is important to the movement's success and longevity. Women's awareness of interlinking issues generally indicates the degree to which they transcend their own perspective and consider a more global view. Making these connections seems to be a prerequisite for developing a political identity and an activist career in the movement. The following summarizes women's participation in sanctuary, emphasizing the above patterns in each area of their activism.

Leadership Women draw great power, protection, and resources from their status as white, middle-class women. They see themselves as bridges connecting their world with the refugees', and use their backgrounds to tap enormous resources on the refugees' behalf. Yet they see class as a barrier which isolates them from both recruits and refugees. How women define and resolve these perceived obstacles determines whether as leaders they "stand with" or "work for" the refugees, an outcome important to the movement's goals.

Conflict over women's leadership in sanctuary is best illustrated by a fight between women religious and central American women over gender parity on a national organizing committee, which brought out serious differences in their views of women's leadership role in the movement. This incident reveals North American women's fundamental lack of power in a movement which they constructed and sustain. How they resolve these issues gives shape to the national movement, since women increasingly predominate as its leaders.

Outreach Women are important in bringing refugees' stories to the public, and in persuading others in everyday life of the righteousness of the refugees' cause. Women bring many resources to outreach work - they are well-connected to a wide variety of formal and informal settings and networks, and continually "plant seeds" and "bring others along." Women predominate as translators in formal outreach, giving feminist interpretations of the refugees' subjective accounts. Women seem extremely well-suited for outreach. Their position is one in which the personal and political come together: they impart the personal when they translate the refugees' point of view by giving them a voice and platform in public; they impart the political when they "plant" the refugees' stories in personal, everyday settings.

Civil disobedience Women's participation suggests new ways of viewing the link between women and protest. Women's CD is closely related to their work in outreach and in informal networks; it is about persuading others. A large number of sanctuary women demonstrate and are arrested. Their backgrounds as white, middle-class women work for and against them. With some impunity, they break the law and commit deviant acts in public to bring attention to the refugees' cause. Yet their backgrounds - and the issues' lack of salience - obstruct their getting arrested. Again and again, officials look the other way, which is both a strength and a weakness of women's CD. Women's history of actions and arrests indicates their level of commitment to the issues and the development of their activist careers.

Travel to Central America About two-thirds of respondents had traveled to Central America to confront the issues more directly. They had engaged in activities ranging from low-risk "personal witness" to high-risk "repopulation and accompaniment", marked by increasing levels of fear, danger, commitment, training, and travel. Like CD, women's role in these activities represents a stage in the development of their activist careers. How they face diverse cultural conflicts in their travels, and how they link together the issues, represents another kind

of development. How women define the issues and see their own role in relation to them differentiates the activist from tourist, true believer from ugly Americans, and reality from the romance-oriented - an outcome of great significance for the movement.

Translating Women play a special role in the movement in translating activities. Women are more likely to be bilingual and closer to the refugees than men, and predominate as translators bringing the refugees' stories to the public. As interpreters, they convey the refugees' point of view by doing feminist work on their subjective accounts. Translating represents a special link between the movement, women, and their network centers; women do the translating, and women's groups select translators, both matters of importance to the movement. Women's skill at directing translators with "good critiques" toward public work and those with "social skills" toward informal get-togethers is critical to the movement's success. Like outreach, women experience few conflicts in translating, and are extremely well-suited for it.

Caretaking Mostly women do the caring, their approach affecting the outcome of sanctuary. While women express both humanitarian and political concerns in caretaking, two Catholic groups represent the extremes, suggesting two models for understanding how means affect



ends in caretaking. In the end, politically-oriented caretakers tended to continue their work in the movement, while humanitarian ones tended to withdraw when their work with individual refugees was done. This difference is important to the future of the movement, and to the development of women's activist careers.

These two groups are also instructive because they reveal two systematic ways in which women defy authority, express care, use free space, understand and resolve conflicts, conceive of and link together issues, and view their own role in social change. These women's positions - married homemakers and celibate nuns - invite comparisons of the patriarchal institutions of marriage and church, and of how women's accommodation and resistance within each sphere affects the outcome of their political awareness and activism. These comparisons raise questions about the ways in which patriarchy affects women's political consciousness.

Families both shape and are shaped by women's activism. Some approve and cooperate, others disapprove and resist, depending on value judgments and perceived loss of women's presence at home. Families restrain women's activism, and women challenge families to change. Many women experience conflict between activist and family roles, which shapes their expectations for future

activism. Women's familial and therapeutic view of the refugees helps bridge differences between them, yet reveals their fundamental sense of the refugees' dependency. How women overcome obstacles presented by families, educate and win families over to the refugees' cause, balance activism with other family roles, and avoid hierarchical images of family in relation to the refugees are important to the movement, and to the development of women's activist careers.

This chapter has examined women's participation in sanctuary in terms of patterned conflicts which they systematically encounter surrounding issues of class, culture, gender, and race. It has shown women's role in each kind of activity, and the kinds of problems they encounter developing political identity and activist careers. It has emphasized how women's awareness of these interlinking issues determines the course of their development and their commitment to activism. Next, I examine how women's understanding of these issues is related to their conceptions of human liberation, and of women as agents of social change.

## ENDNOTES

1

See Appendices D and E for samples of Guatemalan and Salvadoran refugees' stories presented at local churches in 1987. Their narratives reveal sharp differences in terms of class, race, and culture in their backgrounds and in the circumstances of their exile; they also suggest other differences regarding how they interact with North Americans and how they adjust to life in sanctuary.

2

Max Weber discusses this ideal type of authority in *Economy and Society*. Guenther Roth & Claus Wittich, eds., New York: Bedminster Press, 1968.

3

See Joyce Rothschild-Whitt, "The Collectivist Organization: An Alternative To Rational-Bureaucratic Models." Pp. 509-27 in *American Sociological Review*. Vol. 44, August, 1979; and "Conditions Facilitating Participatory-Democratic Organizations." Pp. 75-86 in *Sociological Inquiry*. 46(2), 1975.

4

See Pauline B. Bart, "Seizing the Means of Reproduction: An Illegal Feminist Abortion Collective - How and Why it Worked." Pp. 339-57 in *Qualitative Sociology*. 10(4), winter 1987.

5

See Bart.

6

Page 93 in Karen Brodtkin Sacks, "Gender and Grassroots Leadership." Pp. 77-94 in *Women and the Politics of Empowerment*. Ann Bookman & Sandra Morgen, eds., Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988.

7

Page 77 in Sacks.

8

See Bart.

9

Page 80 in Sacks.

10

Page 90 in Sacks.

11

See Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1976.

12

Pages 78-9 in Sacks.

13

See Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*. New York: Vintage Books, 1980; and Jo Freeman, "The Origins of the Women's Liberation Movement." Pp. 792-811 in *American Journal of Sociology*. 78, January, 1973.

14

See Natalie Porter and others, "Are Women Invisible Leaders?". Pp. 1035-49 in *Sex Roles*. vol. 9, no. 10, 1983.

15

See Joanna Brenner and Nancy Holstrom, "Women's Self-Organization: Theory and Strategy." Pp. 34-46 in *Monthly Review*. 1, 34, 1983.

16

Pages 91-2 in Sacks.

17

See Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Harvard University Press, 1982.

18

See Sacks' discussion of "familistic language" by members of another kind of rising class - women participants of a union drive - in "Gender and Grassroots Leadership." In Bookman & Morgen.

19

Often called "repopulation and accompaniment", these are sanctuary activities in which North Americans travel to Central America, witness peasants' displacement from the land, and accompany them in their efforts to return to their war-torn villages.

20

For a documentation of the emergence of liberal feminism in the origins of Western democratic revolutions, see, for example, see Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism*. New York: Basil Blackwell, Inc., 1981.

21 See Arlene K. Daniels, "The Hidden Work of Constructing Class and Community: Women Volunteer Leaders in Social Philanthropy." In Gerstel & Gross.

22

See pp. 138-42 in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. Kurt H. Wolff, ed., New York: The Free Press, 1950. Simmel indicates the unique qualities of intimate relationships in his statement, "as soon as a third element is added... (p)arty formation is suggested instead of solidarity" (p. 141).

23

Civil disobedience may be defined as "the

deliberate and open violation of a norm for the purpose of changing it because it is perceived as being unjust"; p. 692 in Allan G. Johnson, *Human Arrangements: An Introduction To Sociology*. Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich, publishers, 1986.

24

See Marie Marmo Mullaney, "Women and the Theory of Revolution and Personality." Pp. 49-70 in *The Social Science Journal*. 221, 2, April, 1984.

25

See Marcia Millman, "She Did It All For Love: A Feminist View of the Sociology of Deviance." Pp. 251-279 in Millman and Kanter.

26

For an account of how women's deviance is hidden, denied and channeled, see Richard Cloward & Frances Fox Piven, "Hidden Protest: The Channeling of Female Innovation and Resistance." Pp. 651-69 in *Signs*. vol. 4, no. 4, 1979.

27

Talcott Parsons coined the term, "sick role," to describe societal expectations for a person viewed as ill; see Parsons' discussion of sick roles, pp. 428-79 in *The Social System*. New York: Free Press, 1951; "Definitions of Health and Illness in the Light of American Values and Social Structure." Pp. 165-87 in E. Gartley Jaco, ed., *Patients, Physicians, and Illness*. New York: Free press, 1972; and "The Sick Role and the Role of the Physician Reconsidered." pp. 257-78 in *Milbank Medical Fund Quarterly, Health and Society*. 53, summer, 1975.

28

According to this respondent, this means "approval and solidarity with."

29

See Sacks, in Bookman & Morgen.

30

Max Weber's concept of ideal type refers to a construct or model that serves as a measuring rod against which actual cases can be evaluated; p. 219 in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. New Work: Galaxy Press, 1958.

31

Page 290, "The Sociology of Feeling and Emotion: Selected Possibilities." in Millman & Kanter.

32

See Sacks' discussion of women workers' use of familistic language in a hospital union drive in the struggle to extend their adult stature in the family to their diminutive roles in the workplace in "Gender and Grassroots Leadership." In Bookman & Morgen.

33

See Horace Minor, "Body Ritual Among the Nacerima." Pp. 503-7 in American Anthropologist. 58, 1956.

34

In the film, "El Norte", a young Guatemalan girl comes illegally to the U.S. and works briefly as an undocumented domestic in a suburban Los Angeles home. She is overwhelmed by gadgets and formulas for doing the family wash, and proceeds to do it her way, scrubbing the pieces by hand on the driveway and laying them on the grass to dry. When the woman of the house returns and discovers this cultural breach, she is fired.

35

See "Sacrifice, Satisfaction, and Social Change: Employment and the Family." Pp. 61-79 in My Troubles Are Going To Have Troubles With Me. Karen Brodtkin Sacks and Dorothy Remy, eds., Rutgers University Press, 1984.

36

For a discussion of the social benefits to their families of women's volunteer work in the community, see Arlene K. Daniels, "The Hidden Work of Constructing Class and Community: Women Volunteer Leaders in Social Philanthropy." In Gerstel & Gross; and Susan Ostrander, Women of the Upper Class. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984.

37

See "Gender and Grassroots Leadership." In Bookman & Morgen.

38

Page 123, Bellah & others, Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life.

## CHAPTER VIII

### FEMINISM AND LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Earlier chapters considered sanctuary women's vocabularies of motives for developing activist careers and entering the movement, their part in constructing individual sites, and their rhetoric explaining their position in conflicts over issues of class, culture, gender and race in all areas of their participation. This chapter examines how women link these issues together in terms of a rhetoric of human liberation, and how they see women - and themselves - as agents of social change.

Women predominate in the sanctuary movement because it is a care-based, religious-based movement which allows them to combine humanitarian and religious concerns in social action. However, women's predominance does not make sanctuary a feminist movement, nor sanctuary women, feminists; even women religious at the heavily woman-based Catholic Sanctuary indicated that introducing feminism would be "a horse of a different color." Sanctuary women care for refugees, not women.<sup>1</sup> If feminism is "an ideology that directly opposes sexism by supporting gender equality,"<sup>2</sup> then some clearly have sexist views.

Sanctuary women's ideas about feminism are nonetheless important because they reveal how they see their role as women, how they identify with others' struggles, and how they view the terms of their own liberation. Like women in the abolition movement, sanctuary women have "untenable" positions: although from the colonizing class, they struggle to empower the colonized. Yet their work on behalf of others tends to develop their own awareness and struggle. How sanctuary women define and act on their own behalf has serious consequences; how they interpret their role as agents of social change is a cost or contribution for women as a class, and for the sanctuary movement.

I asked several respondents to discuss their ideas about feminism and liberation theology, and if they perceived a link between them. Liberation theology is a concept helpful in explaining both the refugees' situation at home, their presence in the U.S., and the sanctuary movement's religious identification with the refugees' cause. Liberation theology first developed in the late 1960's within the Roman Catholic Church out of the base-community movement in Latin America. Beginning with the established teaching that Christianity offers liberation from human sin, it also asserts that the church has a responsibility to help people liberate themselves from



poverty and oppression. The movement is based on three basic principles: human suffering exists on a massive scale; widespread suffering is inconsistent with Christian moral principles, contradicting God's vision for human existence; and as an expression of faith and conscience,<sup>3</sup> Christians must act to relieve this suffering.

I discussed these issues with eleven lay women - five Catholic and six Protestant - and six women religious - two clergy women and four nuns.<sup>4</sup> Most claimed some ties to feminism and liberation theology, expressed an awareness of the importance of women's role in sanctuary, and indicated a religious-political orientation to the movement. Otherwise, views ranged widely. One striking difference was between how women religious and lay women conceived of feminism and its link to liberation theology.

Women religious articulated the integration of these ideologies in the language of a feminist theology, equating women's oppression in male-dominated hierarchies with that of the poor in stratified society. In this view,<sup>5</sup> neither is the will of God, and both are sinful. This is no surprise; women religious have greater access to religious ideas and are generally more politically oriented, which fits with their more articulated, goal-oriented behavior. What is notable is that all used this rhetoric to place women prominently in their conceptions

of human liberation. For example, one saw "all kinds of links" between feminism and liberation theology, one "honestly didn't know the difference," and another viewed feminism as North America's contribution to the liberation theology tradition.

Lay women, most married with children, represented a more diverse group in terms of how they identified feminism and liberation theology. Many indicated that liberation theology had politicized their religious beliefs. A few had barely heard of it, yet had a favorable idea of it. They had mixed use for feminism, and all expressed reservations about linking it to liberation theology. Most conceived of feminism in the terms and rhetoric of a liberal feminism<sup>6</sup> concerned with women's class rights, which they seemed to dismiss along with the middle class. In their struggle for power in the home, church, community, and movement, they failed to develop a unifying view of women's place in a larger struggle related to their own. Acknowledging the importance of "entitlement" for middle-class women, they tended to reject it along with their backgrounds. Viewing women's rights as class rights while condemning their class, they rather self-righteously rejected a claim to their own rights.

Women religious and lay women were also generally

divided between those who, prior to sanctuary involvement, never left the institutional church, and those who had previously lost, found, or changed faith. Out of their lives in religious institutions and communities, women religious made more connections between social movements and women as agents of change. These differences are important because each group's lives are rooted in a patriarchal institution representing an arena for accommodation and resistance to male power. How women interpret their positions within these arenas says something about the conditions in which women develop political and feminist consciousness and activist careers.

#### Lay Women

Catholic and Protestant lay women expressed a wide range of views on feminism and liberation theology, although none linked them together. They tended to see feminism as women's class rights, which they rejected along with their backgrounds, minimizing feminism's importance in terms of a larger global struggle. None saw a comfortable fit between the two, and none considered their experience as women as the basis for a unifying principle of social change.

A Catholic woman active in the student movement in France in the 1960's sought a social action church to satisfy her "spiritual quest" for "faith and

responsibility toward self and society". Married with children and working part-time, she participated in sanctuary in day-to-day care-giving until family conflict over her involvement caused her to pull away. She recalled first realizing her "feminist consciousness" during an argument with her mother:

I shouted at her that I wasn't going to go along with something even though that's what was expected of me as a woman. She said, "you sound like a feminist!"

Describing feminism as women's "right to speak out, to have (her) own ideas, values and priorities," she saw an overlap with relating to "others' oppression," and believed that women are more empathic toward suffering:

Suffering as women helps relate to others' oppression. We can either victimize or empathize. Suffering helps us empathize.

However, she claimed to know little about liberation theology, which apparently bore little on her activism:

I have an article at home I haven't read yet on that.

A Protestant woman, married with children, played a critical role when her church declared itself a sanctuary in 1982. A full-time volunteer then, she now operated a home business and supported sanctuary and other social causes only financially. She had no use for feminism, claiming that she didn't have to "fight for rights anywhere - in (her) family, business, or church." She had no personal meaning for liberation theology, although she

saw it as part of the "same desire for justice to prevail"

- "part of our becoming aware":

How do you define it?. I don't know how it fits in, but I suspect it's because of the courage of people like Oscar Romero. Whether we do sanctuary or not, liberation theology will go on. You can't hide the truth. These people are coming across our border. These injustices are closer to us than Maine.

An older Catholic woman, divorced with grown children, provided humanitarian-style care at a Protestant site until the refugees moved on. She related to feminism and liberation theology in the personalized terms of her own experience. She linked feminism with feeling "very disadvantaged" by her divorce, which she "just wanted...over with" and "didn't get anything." She always believed that "more equality" was important - "not just paychecks." She related liberation theology to choosing a church, not political activism:

I've always been a bit of a maverick with worship. Now that Central America is experiencing liberation theology, I agree with those people. If the government is suppressing people, and the church hierarchy at the top helps, I think it's sinful. If I lived in Central America, I'd be doing that too. If not, I'd just worship within myself. I couldn't go to cathedrals where government officials go.

A young Catholic woman - married with a baby, a graduate student in theology until her pregnancy - was active in care-giving through her prayer group at a Protestant site until the refugees moved on. She linked liberation theology with the "inspiration", "energy and

hope" which "the people of Central America" gave her, acknowledging that she was "not oppressed by the same things":

I see people in Central America who can still laugh and love as inspirational, to show that the kingdom of God is in this world - I see people in the sanctuary movement as trying to build that kingdom in the U.S.

She saw no link between feminism and sanctuary, expressing the liberal feminist notion that feminism means "progress in the business world," and the cultural feminist <sup>7</sup> one that women are more nurturing than men:

Feminism depends on how you define it. The kind that says women are better than men or should be like men, I don't follow. Instead of becoming more like men, we should make the world more feminine. Nurturing men should be the role models and leaders. It's a real mistake to give this up.

A young, newly-converted Catholic woman - formerly Protestant, married with no children, and a special education counselor - worked with an "EMH" refugee child in the Catholic Sanctuary. She attended demonstrations, but felt that this would soon conflict with having children. She related her interest in liberation theology to a book she read in her prayer group, illustrating how its rhetoric had helped develop the group's political view:

It's basically saying what Christ said - we can't elevate anything to be above God. When Caesar asks to be put above God, he's asking us to indulge in idolatrous behavior. Our government is asking us to put them before God. Sometimes we have to say no to our government. We're being asked by our government

to accept their decisions about foreign policy, illegal actions, covert operations, without any sort of challenge. They're asking to be put above God.

Her view of liberation theology was personalized, based on her conception of her wedding vows. Her narrative reveals how the rhetoric of liberation theology melds with women's religious, political, and humanitarian concerns, and how women easily become true believers in a "community of other people":

Priest gave a beautiful homily at our wedding about marriage being liberating. I think that's what liberation theology is all about - reclaiming the gospel message that Jesus came to liberate us from oppression and fear. People involved in sanctuary have been very strongly moved by Latin Americans' interpretation of the gospel, making it come alive in a real, new way because we have an example of what Jesus was talking about. Sanctuary people are deciding what part they'll play re-enacting the gospel. We are compelled to put our money where our mouth is. A big part is about having the support of our community, which allows us to criticize systems and challenge authority the way Jesus did of those who put themselves above God.

As for feminism, she believed that sanctuary "moves beyond" it. She knew "some men" - "some women too" - "turned off by that." She claimed that sanctuary moves "past the angry strident feminism" to "relate to people from a compassionate position, not a power position" - that feminism "takes a back seat to being human together." This illustrates a perceived conflict between women's compassion and power, and her image of feminists as wrathful, power-broking women:

I don't see sanctuary as a feminist movement. While I consider myself a feminist, there's something beyond feminism, like going beyond being "politically correct," which is no longer important. Feminism may have taken us into a power realm by helping us find a place in a hierarchy or having some power in the world, but you move beyond that to relat(ing) to people in a compassionate way.

Another young Protestant woman, married with no children, was a coalition staff person, involved in translating at outreach events, civil disobedience, and caretaking. She learned about feminism at age eighteen, reading "Our Bodies, Ourselves." Her "father accused" her of "reading pornography;" her "mother was too embarrassed to even talk about it." The book became a "rite of passage" imparted to a sister when she turned eighteen, warned to "hide it from the folks." Yet her claim on feminism failed to relieve the conflict she perceived between being "both an activist and a good wife and mother;" her "male role" as staff person made her feel that she was "not a good woman, but a good man."

To her, liberation theology meant "ideas the oppressed have about liberating us." While it politicized her viewpoint and rhetoric, she had little faith in North Americans to act, and rejected the middle-class, which she seemed to believe was better left unorganized. This illustrates a contempt for her own background:

Liberation theology means liberating ourselves from others' oppression...When you ask people around here, "what are the real issues of concern?", they say, "dog



shit on the lawns." If they adopted liberation theology, they'd be real reactionaries. The idea of bringing liberation theology to the U.S. makes me very nervous - it could just make people more entrenched.

A Protestant minister's wife and mother who was involved in outreach, travel to Central America, civil disobedience, and refugee care, also had little faith in U.S. citizens to act. She doubted that liberation theology would transfer to the U.S., which she felt had to come up with its own version to liberate people "horribly oppressed by the system." Perceiving that the "system" was not savable, she called for a "revolution":

I think we're still working on our own liberation theology. We haven't even liberated our own people from our government - Indians, women, minority people here. If enough people could realize that we'd have some kind of revolution.

She believed that an "embracing" theory was necessary to liberate all oppressed groups, but expressed doubt about feminism as an organizing principle, which she associated with "white feminism" and rejected with the "system":

It depends on what feminism we're talking about. I know struggles black women have expressed about white feminism. Liberation for people in this country has to happen for women and minorities - we have to find a way of embracing all oppressed groups so we can liberate all people.

A Catholic woman - married with children and a graduate student, involved with outreach and debate, formal translating, and caretaking at her parish - indicated the connections she was learning to make between

the refugees' situation and her own community:

Paulo said something one time that really struck me. He'd spent two hours talking about base community, and someone said, "it's fine for you, in your situation, but it doesn't relate to me." Paulo said, "I'm part of your community too, and I'm oppressed."

She identified feminism as a middle-class women's movement for "entitlement", which she failed to claim for herself. Her sanctuary involvement caused conflict in her family, and she worried that not doing as much for her family made her a "bad person." Working with battered refugee women, she identified with "latinas", and noted that liberation theology hadn't yet "hit" them:

Liberation theology occurred because priests made people aware of their oppression, that they're entitled - but this hasn't yet hit women refugees. They see themselves as contributors, but in the domain of the home.

A Protestant woman, married with a baby, involved in outreach, travel to Central America, caretaking, and leadership at her church, saw no link between liberation theology and feminism, but indicated the connections that liberation theology was helping her make between her own position and the plight of the oppressed:

I'm part of the oppressed - the U.S. is causing this oppression. I'm part of the moneyed class. I've read some liberation theology stuff, and it's so exciting. What does it mean for me, an upper-niche white woman working for a conservative health agency? In what ways am I contributing to this oppression, and being oppressed too?

In sum, although some had little awareness of its

content, most Protestant and Catholic lay women described liberation theology as a useful, unifying theory for human liberation, compatible with their religious beliefs. However, few placed women or feminism prominently in their conceptions of liberation theory. They tended to view feminism as women's class rights, which they acknowledged were important but seemed to dismiss along with their own backgrounds. Some conceived of feminism in terms of a conflict between women's compassion and power, and cast feminists as angry, selfish, power-seeking women. Many struggled for power in the home, church, community and movement; yet none saw its legitimacy or connection in the context of a more global struggle.

### Women Religious

All women religious - nuns and clergy - articulated the integration of feminism and liberation theology in terms of a feminist theology equating women's oppression with that of the poor. They all placed women prominently in their conceptions of human liberation, expressed in terms of a radical feminism in which sex is the basis of oppression, and women, the center of social change. One indicated that she viewed feminism as North America's contribution to the Latin and Asian traditions of liberation theology.

A young clergy woman, active in outreach, civil

disobedience, and travel to Central America, stated that the appeal of liberation theology to North Americans was that it cut through "all the crap of institutional religion" and brought them back to the "mandate of the gospel," which included "being political." She was disgusted at the "institutional traditional patriarchal oppressive civil religion" in North America:

I've been shaped by liberation theology. It makes sense to a lot of North Americans and that's why we've bought into it so much. It brings us back to feeding the poor, liberating the oppressed, being political. A lot of people are turned off by the religion we have in this country that's so tied to being an American that it's disgusting - that we have flags in our churches - that criticizing the government is unpatriotic. Liberation theology brings us back to the truth.

She believed that the exclusion of women from traditional liberation theology was "more than an oversight," and suggested that women's liberation from patriarchy was "what North Americans can add to it":

Women's liberation from patriarchal oppression has to be included in liberation theology. The character of liberation theology has been Latino and Asian - this hasn't been recognized. I think this is what North Americans can add to it from our own experience.

An older clergy woman, married with grown children, active in outreach, civil disobedience, and travel to Central America, indicated her perceptions of liberation theology, and how it politicized her religious belief:

Liberation theology comes out of "God in the midst of", not "God greater than" or "other than". God and justice are equated. It brings with it the power to

operate out of that. I believe there's a preferential option for the poor - that Jesus made a radical decision to talk among the oppressed - that therefore the Christian community has explicit guidelines. Rather than, "the poor, they shall always be with you," try, "and you shall always be with the poor."

She "absolutely" perceived a link between liberation theology in Central America and the sanctuary movement:

I see sanctuary as intervention or resistance that says to forces standing in the way of life for Guatemalans and Salvadorans that we stand here too; that you're preventing the life that we're here to enable. It moves the focus to El Salvador by doing accompaniment, by saying, "El Salvador should be a sanctuary." We're saying, "no more!"

Regarding the link between liberation theology and feminism, she claimed that she "honestly d(id)n't know the difference between the two." She believed that liberation theology was "true" for whoever read it in "exactly the same way" that it was important for Central Americans:

I assume feminism is liberation theology for women.

A young nun in the Catholic Sanctuary described the perceived significance of liberation theology for North American culture:

How it translates on our soil is, we're vacuous in theology - we don't have a theology - or I'd hate to think what it is.

She articulated a feminist theology of women as "the underside of history." For her, that "women are the poor" was the "starting point" for linking feminism and liberation theology. She articulated a connection between "women...the poor...(and) the voiceless" - the same

connection which sanctuary women make when they give the refugees a "platform":

Women and the children for whom they care are the most disenfranchised. Most liberation theologies are by men. Knowing of the Divine Person's special care for women as the poor provides a basis for a feminist movement. God has a special love for the poor, and women are the poor. They are the voiceless. Women are full human beings in the eyes of God.

An older nun, active through her prayer group at a Protestant site, was involved in care-giving, travel to Central America, and civil disobedience. She had the most arrests and had been active for almost four decades. She described her "first awareness of feminism":

When I was teaching in (state), (nun) wrote that I should read Mary Daly's "The Church And The Second Sex". It was spring, 1969. I read it and thought, yes! I was resonating with what Mary Daly said.

Calling feminism "another way of condemning oppression," she articulated a critique of patriarchy and a model for shared power as a basis for world leadership:

It's patriarchy. At first, I couldn't articulate it, but now I see. We need people with a whole new kind and style of leadership. It's not who's in power, it's how it's used. So far, we've had only a male-style power system.

Expressing her ideas about the link between feminism and liberation theology, she made a connection between women, the poor, and women in developing countries:

Both feminism and liberation theology recognize oppression and domination, and work toward equality. Liberation theology articulates the attempt of the poor to come to equality, to take their rightful place in the world. They have no desire to dominate, just to

be treated as human. This is like women. Especially women of color in third world countries.

An older nun in the Catholic Sanctuary, involved in leadership, outreach, travel to Central America, and civil disobedience, saw "all kinds of links" between feminism and sanctuary:

It's women taking responsibility not only for their own lives but for the life of a nation. Feminism is transformation of value system. The women's movement wants mutuality, cooperation, collegiality. Sanctuary and the women's movement will do a lot for humanitarianism. The women's movement breaks down old structures.

Another older nun in the Catholic Sanctuary involved in leadership, outreach, travel to Central America and civil disobedience indicated that for many women religious, activism came out of "a whole idea of women as people who give birth," linking together giving birth with giving the poor "a voice":

The majority of us are celibates, and the world hardly understands that. But we think of ourselves and how we live as giving life to a new vision and to the poor - giving them a voice because we have a voice.

She articulated a radical feminist view of sex as the basis of human oppression:

The historical treatment of women is quite possibly the foundation of all kinds of oppression, because if you can own your wife, you can own a country, and other races. Others are less because someone in your home is less. It's not only legitimate, but normative.

She discussed why she believed that this view was less widespread among sanctuary women, articulating a cultural

feminist notion of women's special nature. In the rhetoric of separatist feminism,<sup>9</sup> she indicated that living in a community of women represented a free space from "male dominance":

Because women are sensitive to suffering, they make real issues of hunger, homelessness, and think of themselves last. Relating to other women has always been felt to be a value, but we'd never say it outloud - that relationship to other women is important. The problem with that is, people say, "are you talking about lesbians?" My very best friend is a man. I'm not anti-male, but what I find intolerable is a patriarchal system. Many women have to separate themselves from men because they're living out the rage and anger. Because I've lived my adult life in a community of women, I don't, but I feel it's certainly justified for women who feel they need to to be free to discover our strengths.

In conclusion, while most respondents claimed some ties to feminism and liberation theology, important differences emerged between lay women and women religious. Although some knew little about it, lay women tended to identify liberation theology as a politicizing component of their religious beliefs. However, they had mixed use for feminism, which they perceived as women's class rights. None saw a link between them. Their activism tended to be more short-lived; it was generally tied to local participation, and often caused conflict at home.

In contrast, all women religious articulated an integrating link between feminism and liberation theology in the language of feminist theology, and placed women



prominently in conceptions of human liberation. As members of religious communities, these women have access to different ideas and are more knowledgeable of the issues. Although their lives revolve around a male-dominated institution, their activities generally exclude men. They identify less with "male systems" and more with women-centered ones; in their world, women are important political actors.

Because of their sanctuary work, women religious and lay women each face conflicts in the patriarchal institutions of church and family. Each find ways to accommodate and resist men's power. For women religious, the roles of activist and nun or clergy woman seem to coexist in a seamless web; for lay women, the roles of activist, wife and mother seem to occupy discrete spheres. Lay women not telling parents about their activism, and families complaining about it, indicates the difficult fit between these roles. This suggests that the collective space of religious communities may enhance the identity of women religious as agents of social change, whereas the privatized family space of lay women may inhibit it. This difference has great significance for the movement, and for women's activist careers.

## ENDNOTES

1

Refugees in sanctuary at churches and synagoges in the Chicago area seemed to be about half men and women, and about half families; the Overground Railroad worked almost exclusively with men who had been detained by INS in Texas.

2

Page 694, in Allan Johnson, *Human Arrangements*.

3

A growing number of Catholics have allied themselves with the poor in a political struggle against ruling powers in Latin American societies, although costs have been high; a number of church members have been killed in the widespread violence that engulfs much of the region. Liberation theology has also met with resistance within the Catholic church. Pope John Paul II, who visited Latin America in 1983, has strongly opposed mixing politics with traditional church doctrine, and has forbidden church officials from participating in social conflicts. The Vatican claims that some forms of liberation theology represent a fundamental danger to Catholic faith, threatening to divert attention from otherworldly concerns and embroil the church in political controversy. Nonetheless, the liberation theology movement continues to grow in Latin America, fueled by the belief that both Christian faith and a sense of human justice demand efforts to change the plight of the world's poor.

Liberation theology rejects development theory - the idea that "they'll become like us" - i.e., the third world will emulate Western patterns of growth. Rather, each situation is seen as developing its own model for peace and justice. Contrary to the viewpoint of white, Western, male, capitalist culture, Latin America has not experienced the West as a democratic power (Susan Ross, lecture, Loyola University of Chicago, February, 1987).

See Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*. New York: Orbis Books, 1986; and *Church: Charism & Power. Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*. New York: Crossroad Publishers, 1985; Blase Bonpane, *Guerrillas of Peace: Liberation Theology and the Central American Revolution*.

Massachusetts: South End Press, 1985; and William K. Tabb, ed., Churches in Struggle: Liberation Theology and Social Change in North America. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987.

4

The concept of liberation theology grows out of a religion which Catholic and Protestant women share with the refugees. Since it is unrelated to their religion, Jewish women weren't questioned about it. However, they discussed Judaic concepts which were similarly politicized. For instance, the Exodus narrative was the central biblical text cited to justify sanctuary activism. One respondent discussed the importance of "pikuach nefesh" - the saving of lives - to Jewish sanctuary:

It's the only reason for violating rules on Sabbath - to save a life. One can work, turn off lights, drive - do all those things a Jew cannot ordinarily do on the Sabbath. That's what justifies this activism. It's saving lives.

5

Susan Ross, lecture entitled, "Feminist Theology As Liberation Theology." Loyola University of Chicago, February 1987.

6 Liberal feminism "advocates such reforms as legal equality between the sexes, equal pay for equal work, and equal opportunities, but denies that complete equality requires radical alterations in basic social institutions"; p. 280, in Mary Ann Warren, The Nature of Woman: An Encyclopedia and Guide to the Literature. Inverness, California: Edgepress, 1980.

7

Cultural feminism "changes the focus of the women's movement from winning...freedom to being a 'good person.' It promotes the therapy model of liberation...and replaces political organizing with moral rearmament"; p. 25, Brooke, 1975, in Sara Scott, "Holding On To What We've Won." Pp. 23-7 in Trouble and Strife. 1, winter, 1983.

8

Radical feminism holds that "women were historically the first oppressed group; that women's oppression is the most widespread; that women's oppression is the hardest form to eradicate and cannot be removed by other social changes, such as the abolition of class society; that women's oppression causes the most suffering to its victims; and that women's oppression provides a conceptual model for understanding all other forms of oppression"; p. 86, Alison Jagger & Paula S. Rothenberg, Feminist Frameworks: Alternative Theoretical Accounts of

the Relations Between Women and Men. 2nd ed., New York: McGraw-Hill Publishers, 1984.

9

Separatist feminism is "separation...from men and from institutions, relationships, roles, and activities which are male-defined, male-dominated, and operating for the benefit of males and the maintenance of male privilege - this separation being initiated or maintained at will by women"; p. 96, Marilyn Frye, *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Trumansburg, New York: The Crossing Press, 1983.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONCLUSION

#### Sanctuary As A Woman's Movement

Sanctuary has provided a case study in which to examine women's specific roles in a social movement. It has also provided an example of a woman-based movement. While not a feminist movement, sanctuary is a woman's movement; its members are primarily women, its activities center on "women's work", such as networking, community organizing, mobilizing resources, and caretaking. These features make sanctuary a useful example for understanding the connections between women's roles in social movements and society, and women's perceptions about their roles as agents of social change.

Several theories help to explain these connections. Resource mobilization theory helps to explain the intentionality and political significance<sup>1</sup> of women's activism. It replaces the idea of women activists as passive or secret deviants who get involved only through men, with one of women as committed political actors whose activism men both restrain and promote. Resource mobilization theory emphasizes the importance of middle-

class women's access to resources to the movement's success,<sup>2</sup> and the consequences for refugees when needed resources lie outside of their control.<sup>3</sup> While women mobilize on the refugees' behalf, at times they misperceive or compromise the refugees' actual goals. Women's concern with supporting the refugees masks refugees' abilities to bring about change on their own.

Political process theory helps to explain how women's activism develops in an ongoing process of interaction with the larger sociopolitical environment.<sup>4</sup> This perspective emphasizes the link between women's activism and an interconnecting network of sanctuary sites, "peace and justice" organizations, and a larger movement against foreign intervention in Central America. In this view, sanctuary's success depends on a combination of factors. First, vulnerability of dominant groups and institutions increases the opportunity to bring about change. Shifts in U.S. policies toward Central America in the wake of the Iran-contra scandal, Arias Peace Plan, and negotiations between contras and Sandanistas may affect opportunities for activists to promote sanctuary's cause. Second, collective action depends on how participants think about their situation. Sanctuary women experience cognitive liberation, or new ways of thinking about social situations and prospects for change,<sup>5</sup> as a result of their

personal experiences in everyday life. Shared experience and action nurture the belief that change is possible.

Symbolic interaction theory helps to explain how the movement and women's activist careers produce one another. First, it links all observable activity in society to acting units.<sup>6</sup> In sanctuary,<sup>7</sup> acting units are mostly women, who socially construct the movement through their networks in communities, churches, synagogues, religious orders, and anti-intervention agencies. They also produce the movement out of resources to which their white, middle-class status gives them access - goods, services, funds, favors, audiences, travel, and legal protection. In turn, through a converting process, the movement produces and develops women's activism; in a Meadian sense,<sup>8</sup> the two are twin-born.

Second, group action takes place by individuals fitting their lines of action together, "ascertaining"<sup>9</sup> what they are going to do by "taking the role" of others. In sanctuary, women's socially trained empathy and group orientation enhance interpreting and aligning actions in groups. Respondents' socially constructed biographies reveal the early development of these skills. How they link together their concern for others, religious beliefs, and desire to "do something" represent different developmental paths by which they learn to take others'

roles and fit their actions with those of others in groups. The movement and women's activist careers both rely on this process.

Third, many situations may not be defined in one way. If participants' lines of action fail to fit together, collective action is unlikely unless new interpretations and accommodations are worked out.<sup>10</sup> In sanctuary, collective action is reduced by participants' contrasting perceptions of and failure to resolve conflicts over issues of class, culture, gender, and race. Whether or not women reinterpret situations, accommodate others' interests, and align their actions with those of others depends on how they perceive issues, linkages, and their own role in resolving or perpetuating conflicts.

Last, "organization and changes in it" are the product of human activities, not simply outside forces.<sup>11</sup> In sanctuary, organization is produced in women's formal and informal groups. Increasingly, changes result from women's shifting meanings for their lines of action and their roles in the movement. Whether women decide to discretely care for the refugees or publicly protest U.S. policies - whether they see themselves as volunteers or guerrillas - helps to determine the outcome of both the movement and women's activist careers.

Sanctuary's dual focus of protesting U.S. policies



and harboring refugees gives rise to two orientations to social action - political and humanitarian. It also gives rise to two models for understanding how women both facilitate and deter collective action. They represent two sets of costs and contributions to both the movement and women's activist careers, and suggest two scenarios for their futures. While most women fall somewhere between the two ends of the spectrum, women religious and married homemakers exemplify these models.

Women religious contribute to collective action in their greater awareness of the issues, risk-taking, travel experience, and alignment of actions and goals with those of the refugees. They deter collective action by failing to accommodate the position of Central American women in their view of women's place in society and the movement. Differences in how they view issues of gender parity, birth control, washing machines, and reliance on men suggest that women religious anticipate that Central American women will become like them - middle-class women, independent of families and men.

Married homemakers contribute to collective action in their roles as professional volunteers. Using their networks and status in communities, they literally create new lives for the refugees. They deter collective action by imposing their own cultural values. Differences in how

they view issues of family size, birth control, bonding, breastfeeding, and assimilation suggest that homemakers expect refugees to imitate their example as assimilated, upwardly mobile nuclear families. Both groups' expectations present problems to Central American women, and indicate contrasting views of women's path to success.

These perspectives produce different results which represent costs and contributions to women's activist careers. Viewing local action as isolated from broader political issues, and failing to recognize or connect their own struggles as women, makes women's activism short-lived. Linking local action with larger spheres of change, and making a connection with women's struggles, develops women's activism. Women religious focused on changing U.S. policies; they tended to view themselves as guerrillas, and women, as special agents in an international struggle for power. Homemakers focused on caring for a particular set of refugees; they tended to view themselves as community volunteers, and to see no connection between the refugees' and women's position. Both groups experienced conflicts with the refugees due to their own expectations; neither seemed aware that their claims for women - for example, to bond, breastfeed, use birth control, washing machines, and live apart from men - reinforced their own class and culture, and their

positions as middle-class women. An important difference was that women religious planned to continue their activism after the refugees moved on, whereas homemakers generally withdrew from the movement. This indicates that women religious face more opportunities than lay women to resolve issues, realign their actions, and continue their activist careers. It also indicates the comfortable fit between the roles of activist and nun or clergy woman, and its importance to their enduring commitment and activism.

#### The Future of Sanctuary

These models suggest how women may react to changes in the U.S. government's response to the movement or the refugees. The sanctuary movement is in transition, developing along both humanitarian and political paths. Whether the Reform Act actually extends asylum to more Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees or merely diverts attention from their plight, it provides routes by which some participants may channel their activism.

Evidence suggests that since the Reform Act, there has been less emphasis on transporting and sheltering refugees and more on attempting to assist those already here through counseling and legal representation, in part to help win legal status for those previously barred as not qualifying for political asylum.<sup>12</sup> However, evidence also suggests that the movement has become more overtly

political in its opposition to the U.S. government's policies in Central America. As the Reform Act has masked differences between political and economic refugees, sanctuary activists have shifted their attention to "turning the railroad around", accompanying refugees home to repopulate their villages.<sup>13</sup>

May 4, 1988 was the deadline for applying for amnesty under the Reform Act. More than one hundred twenty thousand of Chicago's estimated three hundred thousand illegal immigrants applied for legal status, more than ten thousand of those filing on the last day.<sup>14</sup> Since then, signs from around the country have pointed to stepped up INS raids, the continuation of political asylum denials to Salvadorans and Guatemalans,<sup>15</sup> and the use of children as "bait" to capture their undocumented parents.<sup>16</sup> In Chicago, the day before Good Friday, INS agents arrested eighty-five people; a week after the May 4th deadline, a factory with one hundred twenty-six employees was raided and one hundred twenty-two were arrested, all suspected by INS of being undocumented. During May, INS agents boarded Chicago Transit Authority buses and detained several suspected undocumented people riding buses, many reportedly simply because they had Hispanic features.<sup>17</sup>

Respondents tended to anticipate that the Reform

Act would be used to justify a new wave of government repression and harassment of sanctuary workers and refugees. For example, one believed that its "residual effects" - deportations and family breakups - would make sanctuary more necessary. Another expected that "strategically targeted groups (would be defined) by our government":

They'll say, "see...we have only communist subversives entering the country...The decent people who want to join us and be Americans and get real jobs and pay income tax have applied. The others are expendable."

They also generally perceived the need for more direct action in the future. For example, some stressed the importance of "repopulation and repatriation," "turning the railroad around and getting the refugees home," "escalation and creativity of activities," and targeting those "more directly complicit - the army, military, and police."

Respondents were nearly united in their belief that sanctuary had been and would continue to be effective in challenging U.S. policies in Central America, which they expressed in the rhetoric of the winning side. As one woman put it, "we're on the right side." Some gauged the movement's effectiveness in terms of the government's formal and informal sanctions against it. For example, they cited "all the FBI infiltration and bugging," "church people targeted by the CIA," "the Tucson trials" and

"sanctuary break-ins" as evidence of "just how effective" the movement had been. One woman stated that, "just by how the media picked up on...the Tucson trials...backfired on the Reagan administration"; another, that "the government lost the trials," giving the movement "publicity", "attention", and "name recognition."

Others gauged the movement's effectiveness by its ability to "educate" and "expose" others to the issues at the grassroots level. For example, one woman stated that, "people on our own peace and justice committee who knew nothing about Central America found out about it." Another claimed that sanctuary's educational role - "its concern for the growth of North American people" - was "the whole key" distinguishing it from other "solidarity groups." Another believed that others' exposure "will eventually have an impact," but that "it takes a long time for that groundswell to manifest itself."

Many linked the movement's effectiveness to its partnership with local and national anti-intervention agencies. For example, one described sanctuary as "one of hundreds of resistance movements" which "added legitimacy to anti-interventionist work." Another commented that "all these causes are interrelated." One woman stated that because of these organizations, "you can't deny there's a war going on"; another, that they were "the

reason we're not involved in a war in Central America right now." Three women claimed that sanctuary and other anti-intervention groups "may have staved off an invasion of Nicaragua."

Respondents generally believed that they were "in this for the long haul - (perhaps) fifteen to twenty years"; and that "the war in Central America (would) be around for a long time." They anticipated activist burnout - "radical grouch" - and discussed problems of "how to sustain work over time," including continuing the movement without the refugees' presence. They didn't expect change immediately, and some commented that they didn't believe that they would see change in their lifetimes. In sum, they perceived that "the U.S. empire isn't going to give up."

Their rhetoric indicates how the religious character of their involvement helped them maintain their commitment to activism. For example, a clergy woman referred to the "inevitable outcome" of sanctuary as the "Kingdom on Earth" - the "New Earth, with capitals N and E." Another claimed that "when the time is right, people will be converted...(by) an unseen power." A lay woman stated that "we have to be converted as a nation" - that sanctuary was fighting for "the salvation of the soul of America"; another claimed that she had been "called".

Respondents perceived the critical role of religious institutions in their struggle to change U.S. policies. For example, one woman saw the church as "a formidable opponent" of the State Department. Another described the role of the church in her political map for "getting the truth out":

Since we don't receive a balanced picture from the press - the print and electronic media are all controlled - the military is the government - the church is probably one of the main vehicles for getting the truth out.

A woman on the national task force of President Reagan's denominational church recounted how Reagan called a meeting with the group to chastise its "strong stand against his policies." He reportedly accused them of being "deluded by the propaganda machine of Nicaragua," claiming that "the U.S. government has access to more information than anybody else in the world." She indicated how the group used "the church" as a weapon in its response:

"There is no institution outside of the church that more permeates society and has access to more information in Nicaragua."

She interpreted this meeting as a recognition of "the threat by the people of God in this country," indicating how "God" and "church people" were also used as weapons:

(S)ecular powers recognize the significance of in our case the Christian faith way more than us Christians ever believe - it's the power of God that threatens them. Otherwise, why are church people the first to



be killed?

Respondents articulated a variety of perceptions of sanctuary's problems and solutions. Only a few indicated a naive understanding of the issues. For example, an older Catholic woman who knew only what she "think(s), feel(s), and see(s)" claimed that the U.S. government was "creating these refugees"; she didn't believe the movement had been effective, nor know "what more we can do." A younger Catholic woman believed that "greed" was the major problem, and "sharing and greater compassion," the solution. A Jewish woman disbelieved that "our leaders know" how "repressive Central American governments" are. She claimed that "they're not that smart...they don't even speak Spanish." She believed that they may simply be afraid that the refugees will "take all our jobs." She hoped that the refugees would assimilate and "meld into the country," as her maid and the "boat people" had done. She believed that, "if they have a work ethic, they can survive." She saw no viable solution to the refugees' problems, although she hoped sanctuary would play a role in "stopping the whole cycle." She was unconcerned that "what's his name" in Nicaragua might be a communist.

Others cast problems and solutions in more political terms. Some indicated their concern with movement strategy. For example, one woman spoke of the

importance of preserving plurality by including "legislative acts like letter-writing" with "civil disobedience." Another prioritized "getting the people back home and bringing peace and justice to their countries" over "making a national movement." Another indicated that the solution lay in being both a prophet and community organizer:

People in the Old Testament were prophets - they could criticize and get out of town. They didn't stay and orchestrate a movement. The challenge is to remain strategically clever.

Some offered somewhat sophisticated political analyses. For example, a young Protestant woman spoke of the "historical arrogance of the U.S." as evidenced by the Monroe Doctrine and Alliance For Progress. She described Nicaragua and Grenada as "real threats" to the U.S. by posing an "alternative model that addresses human needs":

I think that we, the movement, can provide space for hope of alternative models to survive, and their success will be the solution.

An older Protestant woman described "charisma and sensationalism" surrounding President Reagan as the problem that "worrie(d)" her "the most":

(For) the public - once they've raised somebody to the pinnacle they have Reagan - it's hard to realize the emperor has no clothes.

A Jewish woman described the "confluence of events" creating the situation in Central America, and the U.S. government's role as an "active participant" in

maintaining "this system," although indicating that she tried to treat the refugees' presence at "face value." Another Jewish woman linked problems of sanctuary to "denial in America," similar to the problems her relatives faced during her childhood. For her, "we're talking about a nation of cowards who choose illusions over reality."

In summary, respondents were united in their view of sanctuary's effectiveness in challenging U.S. policies in Central America, and in their commitment toward changing them. They indicated that they were prepared for the "long haul" such change required, and trusted their religious-based approach to bring about change. They spoke in the rhetoric of winners, using "God," "the church," and "church people" as weapons against U.S. policies. They also tended to talk tough. For example, an older nun claimed that "CD is never convenient," but that if the U.S. were to invade Nicaragua, she would "be out there." She indicated that for every "frontline resister," there were "fifteen more who...when push comes to shove" would "resist"; "twenty-five to thirty more" would "at that point come out of the woodwork." She stated that "everybody in all these solidarity groups has friends," and that "the network is much, much larger than the government thinks." She was confident that "if push comes to shove," the American people would "side with a

revolutionary movement."

In conclusion, women create the sanctuary movement, which in turn develops women's activism. However, they also have lives of their own. Individuals and institutions enter and leave the movement in somewhat predictable stages of involvement, "jumping in" and "pulling back", transforming and being transformed by the movement. When they move on, the movement becomes institutionalized, sustained by newcomers and new sites. As the movement grows, its goals shift; <sup>18</sup> for example, its response to new immigration policies or to changing U.S. policies toward Central America may point to more humanitarian aid, or to more political protest. This further transforms the lives of individuals and institutions. Sanctuary is larger than the sum of its participants, transcending personal goals and conflicts.

By making the invisible visible, this study presents evidence that women play a critical role in one movement. It has developed two models for understanding women's participation in social movements, and examined the hidden costs and contributions of each for social movements. It points to the need for more sensitivity to the hidden work which women do in movements, and for further studies of women's political activism.

## ENDNOTES

1

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2

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3

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4

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5

For a discussion of cognitive liberation, see McAdam.

6

Herbert Blumer, P. 150 in "Society as Symbolic Interaction." Pp. 145-154 in *Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology*. 2nd ed., Jerome G. Manis & Bernard N. Meltzer, eds., Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc, 1972.

7See Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Doubleday/Anchor Books, 1967.

8

See George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934.

9

Boumer, page 148.

10

Blumer, page 151.

11

Blumer, page 152.

12

New York Times, "In the Sanctuary Movement, Unabated Strength But Shifting Aims." Peter Applebome. Page 8, October 27, 1987.

13

Ibid.

14

Chicago Sun-Times, "Immigrant advocates protest end of amnesty." Tim Padgett. Page 35, May 6, 1988.

15

According to Refugee Reports, the U.S. approval rate for political asylum cases for fiscal year 1988 were: Salvadorans, 3.2%; Guatemalans, 2.7%, Hondurans, 5.8%, and Nicaraguans, 74.9%; p. 15 in Basta!, June 1988.

16

Page 14 in Basta!, June 1988.

17

Page 15 in Basta!, June 1988.

18

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**APPENDIX A**

## APPENDIX A: METHODS

This is an ethnographic study of women's participation in the sanctuary movement in the Chicago area, based on in-depth interviews with thirty women at local churches and synagogues who participated in sanctuary between 1982 and 1987 (see Table 1). The study includes nine sanctuary sites in five neighborhood coalitions - two Jewish, two Catholic, and five Protestant (see Table 2). Half were in the city, half, in the suburbs. The Overground Railroad, a parallel but unrelated sanctuary operation headquartered in the area, is also included (see Appendix B).

I began in the community I live in by interviewing a friend of a friend, who referred me to friends in other communities. In a snowball sample, respondents recommended their acquaintances along a city-wide network. At its limits, I made cold calls to rabbis, ministers, and chairpersons of social responsibility committees and asked for referrals. Because of when, where, and with whom I gained entry to this network, I first interviewed the care-givers at local sites who did the day-to-day work of sanctuary, and later, the leadership.

I made contact with all respondents first by phone, at which time I introduced myself and the study. I described the project as a study of how women in social movements contribute to social change. Early on, I named who had recommended them as "good" people to interview, as well as who they knew among those I'd already interviewed. We then set a date, time, and place for an interview, as respondents preferred, anywhere from one week to two months away. I felt this gave them time to check with those already interviewed, or reconsider participating. No one refused an interview, and no one called the university I attend to confirm the study's legitimacy.

All women in the study - three Jewish, sixteen Catholic, and eleven Protestant - were interviewed once, four women twice, for an average of two and two-thirds hours (2.69) and a total of ninety-one and three-quarters hours (91.75). The interviews took place between May and November, 1987. Twenty women were interviewed at their homes, and three at restaurants. Seven others were



interviewed at their jobs - three at anti-intervention agencies, two at universities, and two at churches.

Because of sensitivity of subject matter, concern for participants' confidentiality was central to the study. No recording device was used - interviews were recorded in longhand, then transcribed later on a computer. Except for four well-publicized national sanctuary figures, all persons, sanctuary sites, and supporting organizations have anonymity; denominations appear merely as "church", "parish", and "synagogue".

Sensitivity of subject matter shaped other aspects of the study. Initially, I planned to interview sanctuary women in Tucson and Chicago, with regional differences as a major focus. Early on, I visited a local anti-intervention agency and discussed the project with four agency women. They were rather silent about the movement and noncommittal about participating. I came away with the sense that getting Chicago women in sanctuary to talk to me could be difficult, and breaking into the Tucson movement, nearly impossible. I was grasping that my interests in the sanctuary movement were shared by government agents conducting their own surveillance, for whom such a study might be useful, and decided to limit it to the Chicago movement. After two months' corresponding by mail and phone, I gave up trying to interview women at this agency, and made contact with women at sanctuary sites and other anti-intervention agencies interested in being interviewed.

Sensitivity of subject matter also shaped the study in more insidious ways. I learned early in the field that the paradigm of the social research interview according to methodological texts was inappropriate for gaining entry to and information about an illegal movement. This paradigm casts the interview as a "mechanical instrument of data-collection" in which one person asks questions and another gives answers.<sup>1</sup> This neutral role was too like that of a government agent; as one respondent remarked, "INS always wears a yellow shirt and blue tie". My third informant told me, "the government would send somebody like you to infiltrate the movement in the North". I shed this neutral role and settled for a strategy of talking to respondents about sanctuary-related issues before beginning the interview. The Iran-contra congressional hearings were ongoing and often on TV when I arrived, and I began exchanging news and gossip with respondents about emergent scandals. In adopting this approach, I measured one risk against another - the greater possibility of

being suspected an agent and learning little because I appeared neutral, against the lesser, of biasing respondents already committed to the issues because I appeared to concur with them.

I asked several questions of all respondents, followed by many specific ones for more details and explanations. Patterns emerged early on regarding respondents' orientations and reasons for participating. Their rhetoric about their early caring, special fathers, religious development, desire to "do something" about social issues, and activist careers suggested to me the importance of the humanitarian, religious, and political as central concepts; I began using respondents' language and directing questions along these lines:

how did you first hear about sanctuary?  
 how did you get involved in sanctuary?  
 what do you do in the movement?  
 are there family conflicts? do your kids participate?  
 do you see gender patterns in the movement? conflicts?  
 do you recall early eye-opening experiences regarding others' oppression?  
 how do you perceive changes in your orientation toward social issues over time, in terms of humanitarian, religious, and political values?  
 what does feminism mean to you? liberation theology?  
 do you see any links between these? And sanctuary?  
 what do you see as problems and solutions?  
 do you feel the movement has been or will be effective against U.S. policies?

Discussion was expanded or contracted depending upon respondents' time constraints. Twenty of twenty-three lay women were interviewed at their homes; these were generally longer and more focused on life histories and day-to-day experiences with the refugees. Five of seven women religious were interviewed at their jobs at churches, universities, and social justice agencies; these were briefer, focused on the movement, and difficult to arrange. Interviews were also qualitatively different - lay women spoke freely and at length about their personal histories; women religious didn't have as much time, and tended to stick to the larger issues. These differences created some unevenness in the data.

1

See Ann Oakley, "Interviewing Women: A Contradiction In Terms." in *Doing Feminist Research*. Helen Roberts, ed., London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.

**APPENDIX B**

TABLE 1: SUBJECTS BY RELIGION, AGE, CHILDREN,  
AND MARITAL STATUS

Subject/Age*	Children	Married	Divorced	Single	Widowed
clergy					
21 - 30				X	
31 - 40				X	
51 - 60	5	X			
nuns					
31 - 40				X	
51 - 60				X X X	
61 - 70				X X	
lay Catholic					
21 - 30				X X	
31 - 40	1, 2, 1	X X X			
41 - 50	2, 3, 6	X X X			
51 - 60	4		X		
lay Protestant					
21 - 30		X		X	
31 - 40		X			
41 - 50	1, 2, 1	X X X			
51 - 61	4, 3	X X			
71 - 80	3				X
lay Jewish					
41 - 50	2, 2	X X			
51 - 60	4	X			

\*Mean age, 44; median age, 42.

TABLE 2: COALITIONS AND SANCTUARY SITES  
 BY RELIGION AND YEAR OF DECLARATION

Coalition	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish
A	1982		
	1986		
B	1985	1985	
C	1983		1987
D		1986	
E	1985		1986
F*	1983		

\* Overground Railroad

TABLE 3: SANCTUARY IN THE MEDIA IN 1984 AND 1985

Year	Newspaper					Total References
	CSM	WSJ	WP	NYT	LAT	
1984	0	0	5	0	0	5
1985	12	2	10	34	14	72

CSM Christian Science Monitor  
 WSJ Wall Street Journal  
 WP Washington Post  
 NYT New York Times  
 LAT Los Angeles Times

**APPENDIX C**

## APPENDIX C: THE OVERGROUND RAILROAD

The Overground Railroad [OR] is a unique form of sanctuary - a national organization which assists political refugees out of detention centers to sanctuary in Canada. Its headquarters are in Evanston, Illinois at Reba Place, a small, Mennonite church which coordinates its operations. The Overground Railroad operates legally, and in partnership with Jubilee Partners, a Georgia-based faith-based organization working with refugees. Because it primarily aids INS-detained refugees seeking asylum in Canada, the Overground operation entails a great deal of contact with INS and Canadian consulate officials.

A staff person for the Overground Railroad in Evanston described oppressive conditions in Central America, and right-wing U.S. churches' activism there, which led to the creation of the Overground Railroad by the minister of Reba Place in 1983. She indicates many of the differences and similarities between overground and underground sanctuary operations:

OR got started in an interesting way. Reba Place has contacts with several other groups around the country. One is Gospel Outreach [GO] - an evangelical group who had done alot of mission work in Guatemala. But they'd gotten mixed up with right-wing politics there - they were seduced into it - the then president of Guatemala - a general - was a member of the church, and they were really trying to support him. I don't know many details but alot of right-wing evangelical groups have gone to Central America knowingly or unknowingly supporting the military regime and oppression down there. The basic reason was that they were connected to power and money here. Some may have been genuine but they were being used by U.S. economic interests. This was in the early 80's. The evangelical groups were saying, "poverty is God's will - accept it humbly, don't try to change God's will - God has ordained all national leaders". Anyone involved in social change was seen as agents of communism, which the evangelical groups said was Godless and evil and must be resisted with violence. This mindset caused the massacres - it allowed them to occur. Peasants were seen as carriers of communism



because they were ignorant. This is a label given Indians by middle-class ladinos. There's always been conflict between Indians and ladinos in Guatemala - racial tension. Ladinos are able to take advantage of it - they said, "not only are Indians holding us back from becoming more Western and material, but they're carriers of evil in the world". The Indians were finally speaking up for themselves, claiming rights, becoming involved in determining their own destinies. This was a threat to the status quo. This had been going on for decades but it escalated in the late 70's. Reba Place was becoming aware of this situation and of the GO role. Reba Place's minister and a woman in the community called a meeting with the Chicago GO group to discuss it and to help raise consciousness. They had several meetings...In 1983, Jubilee Partners [JP] had just begun working with Central American refugees - previously, they'd worked mostly with Asian refugees. Julius' original idea was to do what JP was doing - bring refugees to Chicago for interviews with the Canadian consulate...In 1983, JP and Reba Place merged. JP has a bus, and each month it takes a busload of refugees from Texas out of detention centers and church shelters...JP buses people from Texas to Georgia, where they interview with the Canadian consulate in Atlanta. People being interviewed stay at JP until visas are issued...Every other month, or bustrip, a new group of refugees is brought to stay at JP and wait for visas, get medical exams and Canadian security checks, and receive English and American culture orientation classes. [what are these?] They're taught how to dress for the climate, read maps, get familiar with North American geography, food, hygiene, appliances, shopping for food in boxes and cans, field trips, banking...Half the time, the refugees stay at JP for orientation before entering Canada. Other times, they go to host churches around the U.S. for six weeks to six months while they're waiting for visas. The host church is responsible for housing, orientation, finding them jobs, and so on. Reba Place does coordinating - a large part of our work is finding host churches all around the U.S...The other main Reba Place support is through the Canadian consulate in Dallas. He comes down to the Grande valley so refugees can go right to host churches after the interview. Reba Place does all the finding of host churches for JP. Three Reba Place people work full-time in Texas, going in to detention centers and churches to screen and pick out refugees.

**APPENDIX D**

## APPENDIX D: A SALVADORAN REFUGEE'S STORY

E.C. was an economics professor in San Salvador until he was exiled in December, 1987. The Overground Railroad was facilitating his movement to Canada where he had applied for asylum status. While staying at an Overground host church in Indiana, awaiting entry, he related the story of his exile to a group of about thirty at a church in the Chicago area one Sunday evening; a man from the church translated:

EC: Each person has a different story. I'll give a brief history of El Salvador, then tell mine. El Salvador received independence in 1821. A massacre occurred in 1932 in which "communism" was posed as the threat - thirty thousand died. Rebellions occurred in 1962 by workers struggling for better wages and living conditions. The National Democratic Party [NDP] came to power then, and is still in power. The rebellion grew, and the government began to commit assassinations in 1979 when a group of military men took power. The NDP won elections in 1972 and 77, but the army wouldn't let the party take power. Duarte was beaten [literally] and exiled to Venezuela. In the 1979 coup d'etat, young military men tried to form a pluralistic party. They invited the communist party to take part, but it was a trick to the people to show another image, because the military was really in power. The newly elected renounced their positions a few months after elections. Duarte offered to come back and share power - he wrote "The Communitarianism for a More Humane World", laying out his plans to nationalize banks, reform agriculture, etcetera. From 1979 on, violence and disappearances were many. Between 1979 to 86, there were about seventy to eighty thousand deaths and disappearances. The impact on the economy is that many industries pulled out, resulting in very high unemployment. People in the streets selling food and drinks became very common because so many are used to being out of work. After last year, San Salvador's population reached two million, with an unemployment rate of eighty-three percent, the biggest in Central America. The economy was further destroyed in the October earthquake. The social aspect is a big division, because the NDP party, instead of unifying

people. has created hatred between classes, saying that the rich are to blame, even though many NDP's are rich. So anyone who wants to better their life is looked at as a communist and assassinated. Oscar Romero denounced injustices of the government; repression grew larger, there was more violence, and more poverty. I'll now tell my story. I wasn't interested in the poor or their problems; I was only interested in making money, so I entered the university and studied economics. As long as I was making money, I didn't care. One day I had an encounter with the only one who affects the lives of the people [C. had a religious conversion] - I learned that the poor will always be with us, that we must help them. It was in a jail - I was there for an accident I didn't commit. There I saw the injustice - someone with money could buy their way out; the poor couldn't. There I began my life as a Christian, in prison. There I began to love poor men and women. When I was free, I kept working with the poor. I was at a church - I studied theology, pastoring at a few churches. But I found out that churches are always filled with good people. Outside are people who need help - drug addicts, prostitutes, homosexuals. I studied psychology - I wanted to help. I don't know how I became so involved with those in need. I never had enough hours to do all that was needed. El Salvador is demoralized by the war - families are broken, women are depressed, children are drug addicts and prostitutes. I'm sure I was being watched. That was my life until the earthquake. God allowed me to have a big salary and share it with others. The afternoon of the quake, we organized brigades to go out and help people who'd lost their homes and families. In a barrio school, about thirty-five children died and nobody wanted to go pick up the bodies. A group of us from the university took a truck and got the bodies. It was one of the hardest things, as a parent, to do. I realized all the things the victims will have to face - it was very sad. After this, we kept going different places helping people, mostly giving food. Meanwhile, the President was appearing daily on TV, saying how thankful he was to all the countries giving supplies and medicines. But the people we were helping never got any of these. It's very sad to see a group of children sleeping under a plastic sheet to keep the water off, while Duarte was talking about all the food and supplies. We - a university group - began investigating earthquake relief. We did a "CIA job" - we needed to

find out what was happening. We lied to many people, changed our names, playing the role of delegates from institutions giving aid. This opened many doors for me - I got to enter warehouses where food, clothing, and medicines were kept. Being a Christian kept me from killing them because I was so angry. Our investigation revealed that people in the government were selling the stuff for private gain, at the death and hunger of our people. [later, C. mentions the goods were sold to the military]. I decided to write up the findings of the project, and they became a series of articles in a newspaper. This paper always published articles against Duarte and his gang. The articles denounced the government, and some of my friends said, 'be careful'. I wasn't really preoccupied about this. On December thirteenth, 1986, they knocked at my door. When I got to the door, two men armed to the teeth identified themselves as members of a special police group, and said I should go with them. I came in to speak to my wife, and they followed me in, saying, "don't make things difficult", and "come with us". I said good-bye to my wife and left, with three dollars and the clothes on my back. They took me in a car, and didn't tell me what they would do with me. I was very afraid of torture - not death. I asked, finally, and they said, "we're taking you out of the country because of what you wrote". They took me to the Guatemala border to a deserted place and handed me over to the Guatemalan army. I was taken to customs and given permission to go through the country. I was put on a public bus and taken to Mexico. At the Mexican border, the police just said, "get out of here". But I had no papers. I talked to coyotes - they wanted forty to fifty dollars, but I had no money, so I went back to Guatemala and tried to enter through immigration. The same police took me back to the same place. I walked fifty kilometers to a city and went to the bus terminal. When I arrived, someone called my name - an Argentine couple working out of the Argentine embassy in El Salvador, en route to California for vacation. They paid my bus to Mexico City. I stayed at good hotels and had food for two days while my friends were there. Then my hotel was the street, and I had to stop eating. I went to the National University of Mexico to find friends, but it was closed for the holidays. I slept on the streets and smelled food for five days. On December twenty-third I was very hungry and sleepy. I know that in El Salvador and the U.S., there are rich people who beg. I always wanted to do

that in my country. In Mexico I had that chance. I went to a place where mariachis hang out. It was right before the holidays, and well-spirited people gave money. I bought some tacos and ate, then slept in a cheap pension. It was a very good sleep. On December twenty-fourth, I was back on the street. I found a Baptist church and asked for help - they gave me refuge, and I met some people. On December twenty-eighth these people received a money order from a family in the U.S., and they offered to pay my ticket into the U.S. We became buddies in begging - we shared everything. On December thirtieth we took the train to Monterey, arrived at two am. and stayed at a hotel. On December thirty-first we went to the bus terminal to get information - we took the last bus that night, figuring that officials would be drunk at checkpoints. We arrived at two am. and sought refuge in a church. We were taught how, where and when to cross the river. On January 4, 1987, we crossed - we were eight people carrying our clothes on our heads. When we got to the U.S. side, we saw Mexican immigration police on the Mexican side shouting at us to come back - they shot at us, then left us alone. We walked to Brownsville [TX] and looked for a church. The Disciples of Christ gave us food and shelter for eight days. We found out about a program assisting refugees get to Canada. We went to Casa Romero, and there met Overground Railroad people. I applied, and they thought I had good chances. Jubilee Partners in Georgia are partners with these people. They take refugees to Georgia and prepare them for interviews to enter Canada. On February fourth, I was coming on the bus with the other refugees. We were stopped at a checkpoint - two of us had no papers, and they jailed us to get our papers straight. I was taken back to the valley and put in INS detention for ten days. On February eighteenth I was freed - I went to a refugee camp in South Texas where I was asked to stay to help with a refugee cooperative - arts and crafts - for two weeks until the next bus left for Georgia. In March we had legal papers; when we got to the same checkpoint, it was closed! [i.e., no problem passing it this time]. I arrived in Georgia on March eighth and on March eighteenth had an interview with the Canadian consulate and was accepted. They found a church in Indiana where I could stay until going to Canada. Meanwhile, my family knew nothing; my letters weren't delivered. One day when I was still in Texas, I got a call from Indiana asking what I needed - I said, 'money, so I can call my family'. On March

sixth I called my wife - she'd got real scared - she was expecting a call that my body was found, or that I'd "disappeared". She got real happy. On March twenty-first I arrived in Indiana, and two days later received a letter from my son. My wife had had a heart attack, and was in the hospital for five days, in critical condition. The stress and uncertainty caused the attack. On April first, my birthday, the church gave me a present - a call home. I talked with my wife and she said all was okay. But three weeks ago, I received another letter from my son - my wife was in the hospital two more days. Her economic situation was very bad - I got preoccupied, and very sad. My wife called last Thursday and said she was much better - she said she'll send copies of medical reports so I can see that she's better. This is my life - it's what happens to somebody who tries to help the poor. I don't regret it - I don't regret denouncing what I've denounced. If not, I'd have been an accomplice. I want to ask you tonight to think about this and try to understand in my country the misery of the children when they have nothing to eat. I want you to think about this - all those people escaping El Salvador, afraid to walk in the streets, afraid of being pointed out as an enemy of the government and killed. Think of the families who've lost their loved ones; young people who have no where to go - tables with no food on them. Think of all the people in this country who have escaped this, who are trying to eat, to survive. I wish we had more awakened conscience. In the book of St. James, it says if we know somebody in need and we don't give, if we just say, "I understand your situation", it's a breach of faith. I have alot of faith - God has changed my life and is working in my life. [people in the audience ask questions: what can we do?] We have to find a way. I used to ask myself that: "what can I do?" Now I ask, 'what am I not doing?' We each have to answer that ourselves. [are there organizations in El Salvador helping the people?] Many are right-wing parties who'd forget about the workers and campesinos if they got into government. The people aren't really organized. [is UNICEF helping?] Yes...somewhat [said with no conviction]. [How do you see FLMN - do they have any support?] Apparently there's some popular support, but I've always maintained that the guerrilla movement isn't the answer for El Salvador. We can talk about this all night. There's been alot of desertions in the guerrilla movement - those who were in it for economic gain. Economically, this war

is costing you money - the U.S. government sends about two million a day. We're going backward, not forward. What good is a guerrilla movement if it succeeds and the U.S. puts an embargo against El Salvador, like it did to Nicaragua? The solution is that humans will have to learn to live together. We must change our hearts, thoughts, and ways of being. The poor are exploiting the poor [C. gives as example the inflationary cost of one egg - sold to and by the poor - before and after the quake]. I must change myself most of all, in order to work for others. This kind of change is one solution. Economic theories, in the long run, are no good. [What thoughts do you have about going back?] I've lost my life and everything. I think in terms of rebuilding my own life, but as a Christian, I don't feel good making plans for tomorrow. God is taking care of everything. I was an economics professor for many years, and I knew something like this might happen. [what options are there for young people in Central America?] Lack of education is a big problem - we're a people oppressed. [how does one search for peace in El Salvador in a nonviolent way?] I don't know. [You advocate nonviolence, yet you had to leave; that doesn't help those left behind.] This is true. I read the biography of Thomas Edison - he was a very persistent man - we need someone like this in El Salvador to teach the poor to live without the necessity of violence. [translator: I'd like to make a comment - I believe the FLMN has just made the government stronger and more oppressive. The U.S. is sending more money. I'm for their ideals, not for their method of killing people. This makes the government more repressive.]



**APPENDIX E**

## APPENDIX E: A GUATEMALAN REFUGEE'S STORY

D. is a Mayan Indian from the Guatemalan highlands, in sanctuary with his family at a church in the Chicago area. Accompanied by his wife and a woman translator from his sanctuary, he related the story of how he became a refugee to a group of about thirty one Sunday morning at another sanctuary church. Both D. and the translator spoke Spanish as a second language:

D.: I'm a Guatemalan Mayan Indian. I'm going to tell you what happened in 1983. Spanish domination began over five hundred years ago. They had us on the plantations, picking cotton. At first, everything was well with our ancestors, but then they began to exploit us. In our culture, children must begin helping parents at an early age, because we don't have enough land to work on the "fincas" [plantations]. They have all the good land where they grow all the good stuff - bananas and coffee. We get the highlands. We get malaria, TB, etc, from gasping on crop-dusting chemicals. Our babies die right in the fields. There's no housing or shelter for us to stay in; no medicine, plumbing, clean water to drink. We must drink lake water, so there's much sickness. The pay isn't enough to maintain our families when we return to the highlands. By 1970, we got sixty cents a day; then seventy-five cents, then a dollar a day. In conclusion, we had a lot of illness, and not enough land to work for ourselves. Between 1970 and 1975, the church began to organize us, and bought land for us to work and live on. It was three days' walk to this land. The church saw the need to do these things - to buy land and organize the people. Now, we could plant cotton, coffee, and bananas. Before, in the highlands, we could plant only peppers, corn, and beans. Now we could plant all of these, in the warm lowlands. There were twenty-two different Mayan dialects, but we began to build churches, clinics, roads. We began to organize "base communities" and talk about "Christian life". There were about twenty-two hundred people living in the co-op. In the afternoons, after our work, we had meetings. We discussed the work, and helped each other with needed medicines, housing. If someone died, everyone came

together and helped the family. We'd bring things to coffee. The government accused us of being communists, but we were practicing what we learned from the bible. We were helping people and sharing with others what we learned. We never had a chance to go to school and read and write but through the bible we began to learn these things. We took courses in agriculture, learning to read and write, then we taught others in the community what we learned. Our ancestors had different traditions, and we don't want to lose them. the Spanish came with their culture, but we still have ours. When the government accuses us of being communists, it's because they don't want us to wake up. At first, they didn't want us to learn to read and write, because they don't want to think that we're intelligent, capable people. We're here today to tell about the massacre at our co-op in 1983. When the soldiers came, they burned houses, killed catechists, neighbors. In 1976, our priest [a Texan] had been killed in a small plane crash. They who organized the trip said it was an accident, but no - it was a new plane. It's because he was working hard for the indigenous people. [D. says he left in 1979 because soldiers began disappearing the catechists. He returned, then fled in 1983 with his wife and two small children. They spent five months walking through the mountains with no clothes or food. They just ate fruit off the land. They read the Bible. Finally, the arrived in Mexico.] For a long time I didn't know what happened, but I received word thanks to some Mexican campesinos. They helped us with refugee camps. We were in a camp near Campeche, a southern state of Mexico. The Guatemalan soldiers crossed the border into Mexico and continued to massacre, killing six people in our camp. We moved to a different part of Campeche, but it was very difficult - deserted jungle land. There, we again began to help people in the field. We'd been speaking in churches and schools where people are organized. We still have difficulties here - because of language and culture differences. It's difficult for us. We can't return to our country. Although there's a new civilian government, it's still under military control. It hasn't changed. I heard on channel forty-four that "indigenous people in Guatemala are fighting each other". It would be very difficult for us to return - because corn, clothes there are so expensive. With the new laws, we don't know what would happen to us. We need your help and solidarity, not only for ourselves but for people in our country.

We need to help each other to lift our spirits and live what we've learned in the Bible. So this is what we're talking about, telling what has happened. This is all I have to say. [question in the audience about the day of the co-op massacre] About two hundred people were killed in 82. [Wife] and the kids were at the river that day - everyone came running, no chance to go back even for a blanket or anything - we just ran for the mountains. In the second camp, in the Yucatan peninsula (Mexico), it's a jungle, but we're trying to build a co-op. The Mexican peasants are pleased because the Guatemalans are teaching them how to organize and to interpret the Bible. They're also learning about having a clinic and school in the central area of the co-op. We haven't forgotten our own culture. Our population was eighty percent, now it's sixty percent. The government plan is to take those who remained and put them in "model villages" - like in Vietnam - controlled by the army. They use the indigenous to patrol themselves. The president of Guatemala said, come on back, but when they went back, others were occupying their land. There are thirty-two hundred soldiers in the area, but there've been no outbursts. They've been slick, letting people fight it out among themselves [over the land]. [question in audience: what are your hopes and dreams?] To return to Guatemala where the government would let everyone have land - no human rights violations - all could work the land. And that the U.S. government will stop sending military aid. Two weeks ago, the President was in the U.S., asking for more money. [question asked by the minister: where did those priests come from (the ones who began organizing the peasants)?] The priests came from Texas, where people could see what was happening. They said, "we'll give our lives for you, because we really see the injustice of your situation". The idea is to get us out of our oppression in the fincas and back to our land.

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Robin Lorentzen has been read and approved by the following committee:

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Nov. 16, 1988  
Date

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