

# Century Marks

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Martin Sutovec, Slovakia

**Healing dialogue:** Healing sometimes comes in unlikely settings. Patricia Dahlgren experienced some healing for the murder of her mother in the presence of the very man who committed the deed. Nearly 12 years after her mother was murdered, Dahlgren spent an entire day in prison with the killer, accompanied by a friend and a minister. The meeting was arranged by two members of the facilitated dialogue program of the Oregon Department of Corrections. Dahlgren shared with the killer her emotional journey after the loss of her mother. The killer told her exactly what he had done and said he was sorry for it and ashamed of it. The meeting ended with Dahlgren telling the killer she forgave him, which stunned everyone present (Naseem Rakha, author of *The Crying Tree*, a novel about murder and forgiveness, at [OregonLive.com](#), May 22).

**No regrets:** You've heard of Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, founders of the hugely successful Apple computer company, but you've probably never heard of Ron Wayne, Apple's other founder. Wayne bailed out of the firm after only 12 days because he was afraid of losing his shirt in a risky venture. His original 10 percent stake in the company would be worth more than \$22 billion today—if he had held on to it. "I left Apple for reasons that seemed sound to me at the time. Why should I go back and 'what if' myself?" Wayne said recently. At age 76, he is living off Social

Security checks and earnings from the sale of stamps and coins (*Chicago Tribune*, June 7)

**Being grounded:** Christian Wiman and his friends were talking at a dinner party about how their lives are riddled with anxiety. It didn't occur to him until the next day that God was never once mentioned in their conversation. No one at that party likely would have thought of Christianity as the answer to their anxiety. "Christ is not an answer to existence but a means of existing," says Wiman. And yet "it is a strange thing how sometimes merely to talk honestly of God, even if it is only to articulate our feelings of separation and confusion, can bring peace to our spirits," says Wiman. "You cannot work on the structure of your life if the ground of your being is unsure" (*American Scholar*, summer).

**Multifaith precedent:** Claremont School of Theology, which has had longstanding ties with the United Methodist Church, will become the first multifaith seminary this fall when it adds ministerial programs for Muslims and Jews. In response to objections from the denomination, the Muslim and Jewish programs are being established as separate entities funded by pledges from philanthropists. Eventually Claremont wants to add curricula for Buddhists and Hindus. The Muslim program at Claremont will be one of the first programs in the U.S. to train imams. It is unclear how much integration of curricula or interaction between students of different traditions will take place (*Los Angeles Times*, June 9).

**Horns for God:** The vuvuzela is a loud plastic horn used by African fans at soccer games. Its constant use at the World Cup games in South Africa has generated complaints. Critics claim that it can cause permanent hearing loss and that it limits the ability of coaches to communicate with players on the field. Tinyiko Maluleke, South African church leader and president of his country's council of churches, has come to the defense of the vuvuzela. Acknowledging that the sound is obnoxious, Maluleke says the horn is "a symbol of Africa's cry for acknowledgment" and that attempts to ban it are an expression of colonialism. A church member from Botswana has another explanation: "The vuvuzela is a biblical instrument; it is a trumpet, and God expects us to blow the trumpet in offering praise to him" (ENI).

**Kick ball:** Some right-wing figures refused, seemingly on principle, to get excited about World Cup soccer. "I hate it so much, probably because the rest of the world likes it so much," said Fox News host Glenn Beck. Matthew Philbin, of the conservative NewsBusters site, declared: "The liberal media have always been

uncomfortable with ‘American exceptionalism’—the belief that the United States is unique among nations, a leader and a force for good. And they are no happier with America’s rejection of soccer than with its rejection of socialism” (Progress Report, June 15).

**Boycott BP?** A Boycott BP campaign is gaining steam in response to the company’s disastrous oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and its slow response in cleaning it up. Making a dent in BP’s corporate income will not be easy. BP owns other petroleum companies and products like Arco, Castro and Aral. It also owns AMPM, a chain of convenience stores, and the Wild Bean Café chain of coffee shops. Other petroleum companies have their own questionable histories. “The best option is for individual consumers to reassess their own consumption habits and figure out how I can use less, not how can I buy oil from a more moral oil company,” said Tyson Slocum, a representative of Public Citizen, one of the sponsors of the BP boycott ( [MotherJones.com](http://MotherJones.com), June 14).

**Antidote for animal abuse:** Evidence is mounting for a link between cruelty to animals and other forms of abusive behavior. In one study, children ages 6–12 known to be cruel to animals were more than twice as likely as other children to be reported to juvenile authorities for another kind of violent offense. Another study concluded that pet abuse was one of five factors that were predictive of other abusive behaviors. Ironically, some children and youth whose ability for empathy has been stunted by repeated exposure to animal abuse are finding healing through therapy programs involving animals (*New York Times*, June 7).

**The flesh is weak:** Mark Souder, the Republican congressman from Indiana who recently resigned over an extramarital affair, made this confession to *World* magazine: “I prayed multiple times a day, sang hymns with emotion and tears, felt each time that it wouldn’t happen again, read the Bible every morning. . . . So how in the world did I have a ‘torrid’ (which is an accurate word) many-year affair?” (RNS).

**Antireligion campaign:** The Wisconsin-based Freedom from Religion Foundation has started an ad campaign, which includes this sign posted on buses in Chicago: “Sleep in on Sunday” (*Chicago Tribune*, June 16).

**Pigs gone to pot:** Uganda police are investigating a convent where an acre of marijuana was found in its garden. Two porters were arrested, and two nuns were questioned but not arrested. One of the nuns said the marijuana was used for

medicinal purposes for the pigs and other farm animals kept at the convent (UPI).