

Oral History Interview
With
Dr. George Regas,
of All Saints Episcopal Church
Conducted by
Dr. Elizabeth McBroom for
California Social Work Archives
University of Southern California
School of Social Work
At
Dr. Regas' office in Pasadena, California
September 19, 1990

McBroom: This is Elizabeth McBroom interviewing Dr. George Regas in his office in All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena on September 19, 1990.

McBroom: I would first like to ask you have you done an all history interview with anyone?

Regas: No.

McBroom: We ask that so that we can have access to it. With that, maybe we can now get launched and you can tell me how you came to your calling?

Regas: In the apostle priesthood or to all things factored in?

McBroom: The apostle priesthood and then all things.

Regas: As I grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee the Episcopalian Church was very important in my life. My mother had died and I was a very small boy of five (5) when I was about 10 or so I began to see an Episcopalian minister and every once in a while I would go to church there. He was just wonderful to me. My father was a Greek immigrant so I was baptized in the Greek Orthodox church and that was my choice. But in a little place in Knoxville they didn't have a Greek priest and only once a month in Atlanta so I never did visit a Greek church. I liked the Episcopal Church and I liked the minister so I gradually drifted into the Episcopal church. When I went to college I

stayed there, helping him do things. So I made the decision, and it was just a simple decision for I felt I had some gift, I loved the church, and I just said, yeah, I will be of what use I can be. It was a very simple kind of decision; that was important to me, and I felt I could do some good there. Now, what kept me in for 34 years is a lot different than that, but it was just that I decided to use my gifts in a place that I felt was very important to me and the world.

I have had 3 jobs in 34 years. I went to England when I was ordained and I was a graduate student there for almost 2 years, at Cambridge University, then I had a small church for 2 years in Selassie, Tennessee where the Klu Klux Klan was organized, and that was really hard work. Then I went to Nyok, New York for seven years -- just outside New York City, I've been here for 23 years. It was a church that was very involved in the community. The director before me, John Burt, went on to be Bishop of Ohio. He was a very strong advocate for racial justice. This is a hard issue in society and so when somebody said that job was open, are you interested, I said I was. He put my name on the list. One day a man called me and wanted to come and hear me preach. One thing led to another and I came here when I was 36 years old, very young and some what inexperienced but excited about the kind of foundation on which I could build the ministry. I was right and I have not been disappointed. I feel very excited about my work here, my ministry, what I've been able to do and what people have been able to do.

McBroom: What are some of the things that have kept you in the ministry for 34 years? Now, the ministry was started under your predecessor.

Regas: When John Burt was here, from 1956 to 1966, those were hard years of social ferment and turmoil, John's calling was to be a prophet out on the front line. There was

not a church anywhere in America that thought the issue of racism posed about the – then injustice. In those years for John to begin to say the church was conflicted about the - then horrible state of racial injustice and the church must do a better job than in it's own house and do a better job in the community where black people are very much disadvantaged. So his job was to say that, and draw people into an awareness of it. So actually it also did not have a substantial social action ministry; it had a growing consciousness and a very much growing sensitivity to what was what a church is supposed to be doing. My job was not to diminish that personal witness but to try to bring the community of the church the parishioners, the leadership to bring them into an alliance with me and then some of those ministers. So I began lots of different things. The first thing I did was a very hard thing and I think I made a serious mistake, the United Farm Workers Union representative called me and said that John Burt, my predecessor had been supportive of them and they wanted to come and have a table out on the lawn or someplace where people could come and get information about the struggles of Cesar Chavez who unionized the farm workers. I said that since John Burt was your friend I'd be glad to have you and I didn't know much about the farm workers. I'd been here maybe two, three months. That morning in church I said well what representatives from the United Farm Workers Union are here and they have some information to share with you. I am sure that you will be interested in that and will be supportive of them and so I encourage you to go by. Sitting there in the congregation was the largest corporate farmer in America and he was so incensed with that. He caused such an incredible turmoil that I spent about 6 months trying to make my way through that. Now we did end up with a very significant ministry with farm workers. We

established a day care center in Delano out of this church and we've been supportive of the farm workers ministry although I didn't start it very wisely and it was difficult.

McBroom: Was this corporate founder a member of your church?

Regas: Yes, but he left. I never could correct that breach though I've tried. There are several people in the congregation involved in farming and agricultural industry and I have maintained some good friendships with them and many of them have stayed with me there has been some conflict but we've stayed together and they supported me. But when I began to be involved in the Vietnam war protest in 1970, I took a strong position on that and I asked the parish to open itself up to that issue and to join me in establishing a peace center that is the heart of the church and so we did that and so the parish was very much involved in that. I gave leadership to it. They knew where I was standing and I brought energy to that movement that was a deep involvement of the congregation -- a deep involvement of the leadership. They came on aboard on that.

McBroom: Well, this marked the difference between the way you launched that and the way you launched the farm workers.

Regas: Yes. We did pretty good work. We had a struggle in Pasadena. It's not a community where you can oppose the President of the United States, oppose the war, try to stop it without great pain. So it was a hard piece of work and there are some scars still here. A group in the church formed called "Save all Saints" which was really a group trying to get rid of me as Director. A very powerful group, wealthy people, conservative people, and they sent out letters to the congregation asking the congregation not to support the fund drive because of what was going on. If they could cut us off the money they would have to terminate me. It didn't work. People were supportive and so that

lasted about four years, that struggle -- about 1971 to 1975. I think that having gone through that struggle and stayed with it somewhat uncompromisingly even though we compromised and some places tried to keep people up with it but we worked very hard on it. So we got along with each other and listened and had meetings and tried to resolve conflict. I think that experience marked the kind of church we are. We survived it and we came out stronger.

McBroom: Do you think some of these conservative people are strong members of your congregation?

Regas: Well, lot of them left but some of them stayed. Some of them remain supportive or don't agree with me on a lot of issues. But they remain supportive. Some left and I grieved that departure. They were there for us.

McBroom: All Saints has taken a very much of a leadership role in civil rights movement....

Regas: Well, one of the early controversies we had was that we wanted to try to make our commitment to what was talked about in the late 60's and early 70's, self determination in the urban black communities instead of all the patronizing that has gone on. We really wanted to go into empowerment to black terrorism. We took some money and gave it to several groups in Pasadena. Some of it worked but, and some of it didn't. To avoid any kind -- It caused lots of conflicts which wouldn't cause any conflict today at this Parish if we decided that was a ministry we had but in 1967/68 that was not where the mind was. I mean empowerment was to blast black terrorism, you know, and so a lot of people were just scared. Well we did it and we did some important work in 1975 from Pasadena. We were the first community outside the South for Federally ordered school

integration. We were very lucky to be involved in that. We organized our people to help and I think that we were significant in the enrichment to that process in the education system in Pasadena – quality, integrative education. It's always grieved me that All Saints have not had a larger percentage of its congregation made up of minorities. I probably have now 10 percent of the congregation that are minorities. Southern Pasadena should be larger than that. So a lot of people are distressed at that and we are working on it and we are very much involved with the Black community. But there is a Black Episcopalian church with an all black congregation in Pasadena.

McBroom: Do you think that will be a persistent thing? Do you think there will be a special Episcopalian church for black people?

Regas: It is an anomaly. Well, it was started for the servants, you know, 50 years ago. People would come out to spend the winter in Pasadena, they would bring their servants that kind of thing.

McBroom: And, it still survived?

Regas: They are good people. Wonderful people. And they have a good rector. They are very small.

McBroom: But, very segregated.

Regas: It is all black. So, it's a stressful phenomenon. But that's where we are.

McBroom: Every period seems to bring a social upheaval of the battle, I know off hand it's been very much in the forefront with homeless people. Could you tell us something about that?

Regas: About say eighteen or twenty years ago we started a little store front on Union Street and we called it Union Station. We started out serving donuts and coffee in the

morning and we had begun to see that there was a significant population of people who lived on the street. Most of those twenty years ago were older, most of those people had drinking problems that we rarely saw about in the first six months. But the issue was very significant so we started this ministry called Union Station. It has now entered its twentieth year, its more of an ecumenical thing now and we've invited other churches in. We've just built a 1.5 million dollar building down on South Raymond that sleeps about forty-eight people, and we have a health clinic and a counseling component as well as seating people. We have constant AA sessions, a good counseling program, a good social work prevention, trying to help people cope with that person of homelessness. Some quality groups. Over the twenty years we have tried to deal unholistically with the issue of homelessness and see that getting someone off the streets isn't just for a lot of beds for two nights. Getting someone off the streets means that you've got to have low cost housing, you've got to have skill centers for people with tools for education. You've got to really have a social work network for people to know what is available to them. You've got to get them into health, 30 percent plus of those people are mentally ill. So what we tried to do is to develop those ancillary ministries that are important part of breaking that cycle of homelessness. We started a skill center, we were the primary movers behind and we got the city, fathers and mothers, PCC and public education board all three to go together and form a Pasadena Skill Center to equip people for some kind of work. I mean unskilled people can't survive in this society. Then we went together with three other churches, the Roman Catholic Church, Methodist, Presbyterian and when they wanted to sell the YMCA a 120 FRO rooms we said that you cannot take those rooms from Pasadena. Where would the people stay? We now own that component of the Y

building and we've gotten money to renovate them, it's that important that we haven't been willing to just say we will give you a cot for the night. Not that there is anything wrong with that. God knows they need that. But it is important to bring a fullness into that life as much as a wholeness -- as much as we possibly can. Lot of people are into the AA programs and the cocaine anonymous program and they meet twice a day. It's amazing the number of people who feel that for the first time in their lives they have been able to get off the alcohol. It's been an important enrichment to our whole ministry. Because you know, in many of those shelters on that evangelistic side say "you know you got to do these things and then we will feed you." We stayed away from that; we just said we want to make you healthy. But we want to provide those places where you can gain the health through therapy sessions, through coming to the health clinic, through coming to the social worker that maybe can get you some kind of federal help. Our ministry, although a very religious ministry is not a self-conscious ministry.

McBroom: Do you think that the medical effort is meeting the need quantitatively?

Regas: The fact that it is ecumenical has allowed us to do more work. But it certainly does not meet the total need. Well, I think that part of the solution is the growing awareness that a healthy just society has no place for homelessness that in order to have a healthy society we must find a way to deal with homelessness and we must break that cycle. When President Reagan said that the state mental institutions were no longer helpful and no longer needed and that those large institutions were going to be closed down, that was not all crazy. You know there was something unwise about those massive programs, but he didn't and no one following him then has created the alternative method of taking care of mentally ill people. Society is just filled with the

mentally ill who are not able to work, who are not managing their lives on the street, and so I think the answer is a society with a much great social conscience, a society with a presidential leadership and congressional leadership that say the kind of society that we create means that public health and public wealth are primary and that we're not going to sacrifice public wealth or private wealth and that they give that vision of that new kind of society in which people have seem to be pressured and the resources that we share together are made available. That's not going to solve it. I think people are beginning to see that this is not just a lot of crazy optimism or romanticism that talks about a new society and that the old society isn't working. People are not happy with the kind of society we have created. I mean the children in this society are in a desperate place. They are primarily the first society in the history of civilization where the children are vastly worse off than their parents. Who wants that kind of world? I think people if given some leadership, will come to the place that they see that what we do with each other, the kind of healthy just social community we create, the more we gain from it. It's not that I do something for you and get no return. If I can create a world where all of the children have a healthy life, a good education, good opportunity to work -- I get a pay off for that myself. I live in a better place. I just have not been able to get people caught up on that and buy into it. They think, what can we have for ourselves? How much can we reduce taxes? How much money can we put into our own bank accounts? The Presidential leadership and the congregational leadership has not given an alternative vision to that. The greed part in us is just nurtured.

McBroom: I know that All Saints has addressed the problems of children too and I was wondering if you would say something about the Office of Creative Prevention.

Regas: Well it really is a wonderful piece of work. We celebrated our centennial six or seven years ago and part of that centennial was that we wanted to make a gift to the city. We didn't know what that should be. I had a woman in the parish, Denise Wood who worked at Marlboro School and had just retired from being Dean at the school. I asked Denise to come and talk to me. I said Denise I'd like to hire you for three months and pay you \$1,000 dollars a month for three months to go out into Pasadena and just talk with people and try to see where we can make a great contribution to the city. Well, not too long after interviewing lots of people, she came back with the idea of the Office of Creative Prevention. That idea was that the church is not connective tissue that brings together the resources with the problems. It was a remarkable idea. Non-adversarial but tough, and that was her style. She was really focused on those problems and she wouldn't try to flak everybody around but she had that wonderful grace that allowed her to put the search light on those problems and then raise up resources and connect them. Out of that came the Healthy Children Program with Lorna who took her place who has done wonderful research on that and part of Denise's research and Lorna's research was the revelation of a desperate plight poor children are in health wise. Just desperate. There was the revelation that only one pediatrician was willing to serve poor children; so that research revealed that the children of Pasadena were in a very unhealthy state and that drew together the medical community's good people. People don't want that to be the state of reality, and the result was drawing the hospital administrators, doctors, directors and nurses and working through a program of attending to health of children in the schools of Pasadena. We raised a hell of a lot of money. Over a three year period she has a \$360,000 budget to do that and Lorna has raised about \$180,000 dollars. It is a

really an important piece of work. I think that if you look at the plight of children, there is no way to call America a great nation. You can't treat children the way we treat them. I think the people are being helped to know that and they are willing to see that situation transformed. We have been very much on the pro choice side of things rather than a lot of conflict. We have said around here there will be far fewer decisions to choose abortions if we could get some helpful prenatal care, if we could get some help for poor children when they are born, if we could get some help in feeding them. If mothers knew that it would not be bleak beyond description, they would not opt for abortion. Part of creating a society in which abortion was less and less, it should create a society that loves children, cares for children, that won't trash them. It cares for pregnant mothers.

McBroom: You have taken a strong pro choice stand in your ministry.

Regas: Yes. After the Webster case decision last July I preached a strong sermon on the pro choice issue and then I called together a group of twenty-five women that I knew would be supportive and interested. "I've done my part of that and empower you to take it." We have created a wonderful ministry of women working on that pro choice issue and all of its ramifications.

McBroom: Tell me about that. What are they doing?

Regas: They are involved in legislation, trying to understand what the legislative issues are and being advocate pro choice. They run seminars all the time, education where they are constantly doing work shops and seminars. Like Sunday, the 30th we are going to do another forum with that pro choice task force to explain where we are and the issues.

They are involved with the health in children projects of OCC. The part of our ministry; not so with pro abortion; we were pro choice. We want a society in which abortion is less

and less a practice. Therefore we must create this kind of society and so we have some people working on that and working on the whole sex education dimension.

McBroom: Is there a sex education component, youth education program?

Regas: Yes, Yes. Yes. As much as it ought to be. We are working on that. We have been very straightforward on that. When you say that 50 percent of teenagers are sexually active, then that is a problem to be addressed. That doesn't mean to say that we feel that it is healthy for a fourteen year old boy or girl to be sexually active. It is complicated and very difficult. There is another issue if that is the reality then we're saying, we want to try to prevent these pregnancies. Lots of people are working on prenatal care and trying to get more prenatal care.

There are a couple other people in the task force field.

McBroom: You have some who are very strong for pro life?

Regas: Yes. Well, I think that we have done alright with that here. We worked hard at it. We had all kinds of meetings with the congregation, we've written position papers and sent them out and talked about it and redrafted them and redrafted them and redrafted them. So that people feel that even though they are impatient with pro choice and how do we do that and what are the bases for that?

McBroom: You mentioned about Alcoholic Anonymous among the homeless. Do you want to say something about that?

Regas: Well, we have a pretty substantial community of people working on alcohol and drug abuse. It is a very active group. They have all kinds of programs going and we have once a month encharist that is called a recovery encharist and people come to that who are recovering from drugs and alcohol and some come to that who have friends,

families and lovers, spouses recovering. We have about a hundred people come and they do the communion together in the Episcopal Church with grape juice instead of wine. They love that and we have a pot luck supper and sit there together. We have, as an off shoot out of the Office of Creative Connection, we have a program named "Day One." It's a program that is dealing with the issue of drug and alcohol because its use in the larger community -- an education program and treatment program that came into being predominately out of the Office of Creative Connection and that has become more of a community wide thing. Our view at the church is to try to make it more ecumenical.

McBroom: Well, many things have been generated and a great many have been taken over by the community and become community wide and ongoing.

Regas: Yes we have. We have a huge AIDS ministry. We have an AIDS service center. A very big operation, hard work, very hard work.

McBroom: This is All Saints.

Regas: All Saints AIDS Service Center. It's over on Pasadena Avenue. We sort of wandered around; we started out here, and then we rented some space at the Y, and we just continued to expand. That is not ecumenical so much but its still All Saints at this point. But it got to become more and more other, because in 1991 were looking at budget about a \$1,200,000. I spent money all the time to keep those programs going but we did very important work. Pasadena, outside of Los Angeles and Hollywood, all of Pasadena has higher rate of AIDS in the state. There's been a lot of accelerated growth and persons with AIDS in the minority community in Pasadena, so the work is enormous.

McBroom: All Saints makes an outreach to the Gay and Lesbian community as well.

Would you tell something about that?

Regas: Well, that has been an interesting evolution. In the past seven or eight years there has been more of a conscious embracing of the gay and lesbian community. Since we have been here we have had gay and lesbian people in the congregation and people have come to see me with the struggling with that issue and from various perspectives, but several years ago several gay men came to see me and made it very clear that they did not feel that I was sensitive enough to the gay issue, that the church was not resourceful to them enough. They had needs that were not being met here and so we struggled along and discussed that and tried to understand it. Out of that came what is called the "Gay and Lesbian," of all things, Galas. It really is a very defined community of gay and lesbian people who meet in mutual support a couple of times a month. It's published in the newsletter and in the service and they are not part of the central ministry of this place. That is an important thing. That visibility and that statement say you're welcome here, that you are called into completely equal ministry has been a powerful message to people who have been abused deeply by the religious community. The religious community has been historically very abusive to homosexuals. Lots of homosexuals love God and they love the Christian community and so it's been difficult for them to live with that abuse. So to come into the Christian community, that says we accept you, we love you, we call you into the service and to leadership. Lots of the gay and lesbians people come; we have about three gay men on the rectory.

The issue of sexuality is a hard issue. It would be a mistake to tell you that everybody is at peace with that. That is not the case. People want this church to have the ministry that it has. I have been putting it off and putting it off but the issue that makes sense in the gay and lesbian community is, I will finally say they are equal in

membership if I would bless same-sex union, to recognize that the gay and lesbian couple to a committed relationship, especially if they have been together for years. They feel that they are all alone and they want the church to say “we bless you, on your way. The way to do that is to bless our unions.” Well, the church nationally and other churches worldwide has not accepted that. But I am struggling with that in my mind and how to deal with that. Because it is a very sensitive issue to that community.

McBroom: You mean you might do it ahead of the church nationally.

Regas: I’m thinking about that. That would provoke great controversy and whether that is at all helpful to the total ministry of this place, I don’t know. But I am thinking very seriously about it.

Another big issue that I started discussing earlier on our Vietnam war opposition is that we have been very much involved in all kinds of peace work. We established ten years ago, 1979, with Leo Beck Temple, an interfaith center. It is a very important part of our lives and the churches’ lives. Then in 1983 we became a sanctuary church, we developed a Central American ministry to try to say something about national policy and also to deal with the effects of national policy was regarding people beginning a sanctuary church. We tried to develop a ministry for those people who were trying to escape political persecution and we also are trying to say something about the national policies that fed that persecution. We had a lot of people from Central America, a lot of people involved in that. They know the continuation of that war in El Salvador and they know that the country of Nicaragua. Then we have built a church around saying that the arms race is destructive not only to our souls but destructive to the economy and the social life of the nation. That whole peace thing had been an important part.

McBroom: Would you explain what sanctuary church is exactly?

Regas: A sanctuary church is a church for refugees from El Salvador and Guatamala who cannot be given asylum in this country, cannot become immigrants in this country because the law of the land does not allow it. They are not allowed to be accepted as an immigrant into this country. We have tried to change the refugee law so that the people from El Salvador and Guatamala could be viewed as political refugees. The federal law and the immigration service did not allow that. They termed them economic refugees because to say that the war in El Salvador, that we were funding, created persecution that made the people flee from the country, was unacceptable to the government. So we said, that we would allow you even though you are refugees from El Salvador and Guatamala -
- we will allow you to have sanctuary.

McBroom: Does that mean that they actually come into the Church?

Regas: Well, we have a house. We bought a house and they've come in.

We've had a number of families with us over the years.

McBroom: Will this involve the church and civil disobedience?

Regas: Yes. Very luckily we have not had any federal official debate us on that. I guess they chose a couple of places as cases to be looked at and to show that you will be prosecuted like the ones in Arizona. They have not done that in any of the places in Los Angeles.

McBroom: Is your place continuously occupied?

Regas: Yes. But the issue of being a peace church was really worked though several years ago -- what is really meant to be a peace church. That is really important to this

place. How do we witness the fact that as a Christian community we're called to be the advocate for peace? We've really worked on that from all kinds of angles.

McBroom: That all points to society.

Regas: All the rhetoric, all the media: like the Persian gulf problem today. It is very complicated but there is a stream of fierce thing support and now the momentum is building that even though it's a standstill and Sadam is not going to invade Saudi Arabia, it's the time now to strike and get rid of him and get him out. It's amazing to me that the media supported that. Therefore, 80 percent of the population say we will arrive at some other thing, and about 60 percent say that it is ok to contain the Husain military. It is something to try to induce some alternative vision. But it is also exciting piece of work.

One of the things on the homelessness issue is that we went in with the Leo Beck Temple not only in forming an innovative center, but we went in with them in buying three hotels on Skid Row in Los Angeles, at Fifth and Main. The toughest place in L. A. We bought these three hotels for about just under 10 million dollars. Again we had help from all sources. We renovated those three hotels and they have been our real oasis of hope and dignity in the middle of that area.

McBroom: Is this the collaboration with the Temple something quite unique? The first time?

Regas: It was the first time. There have been two other projects on the drawing board of Jewish synagogues and other churches in L.A. trying to come together. We are hopeful that more will follow our way. But it has been hard work, but wonderful work and the people just love seeing what happens when people walk off of those streets. From just such clutter and filth and degradation in to a place that says you're precious, you're an

important person, you are a human being treasured, and here is a chance. Some appreciated it and some of them didn't respond.

McBroom: The Rabbi must be of kindred spirit?

Regas: Oh, yes. Leonard Berman and I have been the closest of friends for 23 years.

McBroom: And your subjects are the homeless and peace and other subjects?

Mr. Regas. Yes. Now we have traveled together all over the world on peace issues.

That's a quick run through of at least what was on my mind as I thought about it.

McBroom: What do you wish you had achieved that you haven't so far?

Regas: Well, I think that the many of the problems still exist and that is discouraging. I wish I had been better able to communicate on some issues and I had worked harder to capture the attention of people. You hardly got any hearing during the 1980s on the arms race. I mean what Reagan did is just unbelievable and so I soon left the danger of nuclear catechism. That was a real issue. I began talking about what it is doing to us as a society. I kept talking about what it was doing to us economically. Seventy percent of all scientist were in the military. What does it say about our own technological development? What does it say about our economic competitiveness, etc.etc? Now we wake up to this incredible disaster. We wake up to be a second rate power of economically but we have so damaged the social fabric of this nation that is almost irretrievable and so that all those years I have kept trying to say that and I sort of wished that I had pushed harder and more forceful.

McBroom: Its sounds as those you have been very protective about bringing your congregation along in some of these hopeful movements, in overcoming opposition that we've met in some of these things.

Regas: Well, we've done a lot of that. I feel good about that. We've done a good job. It's a never ending job because new issues create new conflicts that requires new energy to build a community and workforce. I think the other thing that weights heavy on me and disappointing to me has been my inability to get very far on the idea of the solidarity of the human family, the solidarity of the citizens of Pasadena. You can't have a healthy city and nothing that is established out here for the economic enrichment of the poorest part of our society. We have now the Ritz Carlton being built by the old Huntington Lodge. If that is what is needed then I am for what is successful. But for our city to be successful you can't have a city all excited about the Ritz Carlton but not excited or committed to finding how to fund housing for the poor.

McBroom: That solaridation we have seen it increase haven't you?

Regas: Significantly so. Not to see that in various clear ways we are bound together in a society. From a religious point of view that the way God has created the human family. That we don't live alone we life together and that my destiny is tied up with everybody else's destiny. I cannot be healthy if my sisters and brothers are sick. That is so lacking in our society.

McBroom: Well, at this point can you speak about the message about the human family taking hold?

Regas: Well, here and there it is. I think that if I allow myself, I can become very pessimistic about it. I keep looking at what we have accomplished and what can happen in the future. Everything in America indicates that rich people do not do their best to make tides inseparably against poor people, that in the world we do not see the strength

of western democracy apply to the development of the Brazils and Panamas. So until that kind of solidarity comes into reality, I think indicates that we are in a bleak place.

McBroom: Why don't we contrast where we are now with 34 years ago when you came into the ministry?

Regas: Well, I think that people are more aware that the church's path is to do the kinds of things we have been talking about. Lots of people disagree with it. There are some everywhere who would disagree that a church should be doing that. But I think that over these years it has been established that the church, a religious community, needs to be involved in alleviating the pain and suffering and injustices to the people. And offer ways to do that. When I started out 34 years ago, that was faith.

McBroom: You know the Episcopal church has kind of a stereotype, I think, at least an old stereotype of being exclusive, exclusionary. Certainly that is All Saints' stereotype.

Regas: I think it does. I think that what lots and lots of people enjoy about this congregation is that it is a very inclusive community. Because people come here off the streets, people come here out of missions and people come here who are gay and they are straight and divorced, married. That's very important. I wouldn't want a church that wasn't that way. It's good. I think that it's task: being inclusive. Exclusivity is very deep in us. I'm in the business of embracing everybody and saying you are part of my life and come on in. That is the epiphany of grace.

McBroom: That and a lot of hard, hard, hard work. That comes through as very impressive and how successful you been in so many things.

Mr. Regas: I am glad that we could talk. I'm glad.