

Author offers 'wake-up' call for facing crises

Wild Hope: Crises Facing the Human Community on the Threshold of the 21st Century, by Tom Sine, Word Publishing (Dallas, 1991); 343 pages; \$12.99.

By Dr. Christine M. Bochen
Guest contributor

This book is timely and important reading for all of us as we approach the third millennium. Sine's message is clear and compelling: "if we don't begin in our lives, professions and churches to anticipate the new challenges and the new opportunities the twenty-first century brings us, we will quite literally be buried alive in the onrushing avalanche of change."

The evidence of change is all around us — in the environment, in the economy, in technology, in politics — and these changes are profound and far-reaching in their effects. Though we certainly experience significant changes in our communities and in our nation, we are increasingly aware that changes are global in their scope and in their ramifications.

What happens in one part of the world affects the lives of people in another as events in Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East continue to illustrate.

Religion is not exempt from these waves of change. Sine argues that Christians — to whom he addresses this book — will fare poorly if they do not recognize and respond to what the future holds.

The author's agenda for Christian churches is simply stated. We need to "anticipate" the future, "examine and clarify our vision" for a better future, and respond more creatively to future challenges in light of that vision.

In other words, we need to take stock of today's world and church, imagine what we would like tomorrow to be, and commit ourselves to working to achieve that vision. If this sounds like good background reading as we prepare for the upcoming diocesan synod, I think it is just that.

What specific advice does Sine, who is a consultant for futures research and planning for Christian churches and secular organizations, offer us?

- *Wake up to the world.* Address the challenges facing us today from threats to human and planetary well-being to the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor; from the ways in which technology has become an intimate and intrusive part of our lives to the demographic revolution that is transforming the complexion of the

American population, which is becoming increasingly diverse, "gray," disaffected.

- *Wake up to the changing religious scene* with its competing world traditions, emergence of new religious movements, rise of fundamentalism, and advancing secularization coupled with increasing hunger for spirituality.

- *Wake up to the illusion of the "Western Dream,"* which equates "happiness with acquisition" and embraces "secular values that are antithetical to values of God's kingdom — the values of self-seeking, individualism, and materialism."

- *Unleash the "Wild Hope"* of a God who "creates, covenants, and liberates" and who calls us to repentance, conversion, and the promise of a new creation.

It all boils down to taking a close, honest, hard look at the our lives in terms of the Christian faith and making hard choices. The fundamental crisis, Sine reminds us, is a crisis of vision and "without a vision the people perish." (Proverbs: 29:18)

We are called to becoming a people with a vision, seeing clearly and acting decisively. To aide us in that task, Sine concludes each chapter with questions that invite us to imagine and envision

our future as people of faith.

His questions are incisive and provocative. Here is a sampling:

- "How can we reorder our lives and priorities around God's intentions for the future, giving greater place to a life of prayer, service, and celebration?"

- "How can we through whole-life stewardship create a range of new possibilities for vocation, housing, and celebration?"

- "How can we live our lives with a greater sense of ethical integrity in the workplace, as consumers, and in relationship to the created order?"

- "How can we enable the young to create new possibilities for their lives?"

These questions and many more like them invite us to think, talk and pray together as we search for ways in which we can, "in community with others, give greater expression to the Wild Hope of God in (our) lifestyle, spirituality, outreach, and celebration."

I found this book disturbing, encouraging, and well worth reading. I trust you will too.

Dr. Bochen is professor of religious studies at Nazareth College of Rochester.

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Hoop comedy fails to get off the ground

By Gerri Pare
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) — Woody Harrelson of *Cheers* and Wesley Snipes of *Jungle Fever* try to out-con each other on and off the basketball court in the bickering-buddies comedy, *White Men Can't Jump* (20th Century Fox).

The only things these two dudes have in common are a need for big bucks and smooth moves. Together they figure they can clean up by hustling cash in street games.

The only problem is that Sidney (Snipes) and Billy (Harrelson) aren't always straight with each other, and Billy has a knack for losing his gambling winnings. This infuriates his hot-tempered girlfriend (Rosie Perez), to say nothing of gun-toting loan sharks who have trailed them cross-country.

All Billy and Sidney need is one more score to placate the women in their lives, but can they trust each other in one final scam?

Writer-director Ron Shelton has turned out a shrill comedy of ear-splitting proportions. The hip humor is predi-



Neil Leffer-20th Century Fox

Woody Harrelson (left) plays Billy Hoyle and Wesley Snipes is Sidney Deane in *White Men Can't Jump*, a comedy-drama about basketball.

cated on a stream of racial insults and four-letter words. After a while the viewer feels like an unwilling witness to an embarrassing diatribe that just won't let up.

Snipes and Harrelson have the slick, macho posturings down pat and some may find that in itself fairly funny. Perez as Billy's gutter-mouth girlfriend also ekes out some appeal when she makes her years of memorizing almanacs pay off by appearing on *Jeopardy*.

Mostly though, the movie's a shriek-fest with even quiet moments marked by insipid dialogue such as the girlfriend's lament that Billy, when asked how much he loved her, didn't know enough to respond, "I love you infinity plus infinity."

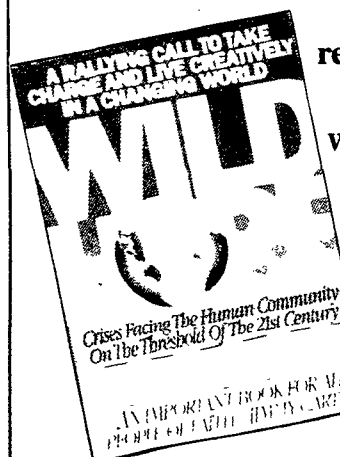
At least the action on the court is fast and furious. Too bad the movie is neither fast or funny — just furious.

Due to continual rough language, brief bedroom shots, much gambling and some nasty menace, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

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WILD HOPE—
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As we stand poised on the threshold of a new century, the future is barreling down upon us. And though some events herald new possibilities, many others signal a troubled tomorrow. Christians and non-Christians alike commonly wonder, "What's the use—what can I do?" But Tom Sine writes to counter such shoulder-shrugging fatalism with the "wild hope" of biblical promise.

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