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Monthly newspaper and website covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest

online in color at www.thefigtree.org

King's words inspire people today

By Mary Stamp

Part of the power behind the Rev. Percy Happy Watkins' leadership comes from the many proverbs he has committed to memory to share as needed to lend an insight.

He is most known in the region for passionately reciting words of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., especially his "I Have a Dream" speech. Happy makes King's words alive today.

He also has truisms from his grandmother and quotes picked up along the road of life to lead people by reminding them of insights to make them pause and think.

The Washington Association of Churches is honoring him with one of their four annual ecumenical and interfaith justice leadership awards, the one designated for an Eastern Washington leader. Awards go to individuals who put their faith into action for justice and understanding.

Alice Woltdt, director of the WAC, which presented the other awards at its annual dinner in Seattle, decided to make the presentation to Happy at the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference, Saturday, Jan. 22, at the Cathedral of St. John in Spokane, to share his recognition with the faith



The Rev. Happy Watkins has been pastor at New Hope Baptist Church since 1990.

community of this region.

Commenting on leadership, Happy has said: "Some people make things happen. Some people watch things happen. Some people ask, 'What happened?'"

Happy started as pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in 1990. He said the church's call was for him to serve the community, not just the congregation, which ranges from 40 to 60 members as people come and go from the area.

So he has worked in the community to improve the correctional system, police department, school district and youth programs, especially addressing racial issues. He has also served on ecumenical bodies to bring reconciliation among churches and faiths.

Connection with the correctional system passed on to him from his predecessor at New Hope, the Rev. Jim Sims, who led services at Pine Lodge Correctional Facility Sunday afternoons and at Geiger Sunday evenings, and led a Wednesday Bible study at Pine Lodge. Happy continued that work and then participated in a program that allowed churches to bring prisoners to their services. They did that for three years until they

Continued on page 4 and 5

Riverstone Family Health Northeast Clinic opens

Doors to health services at the new Riverstone Family Health Northeast Clinic opened on Jan. 3, giving nearly half of Spokane County's 40,000 medically uninsured residents in the Northeast Community Center (NECC) service area access to medical care.

The 31,000-square-foot, two-story facility, beside the center at 4001 N. Cook, houses a 15-room medical clinic, and a 13-chair dental clinic with a procedure room and oral surgery center.

The dental clinic will open in March in conjunction with a grand opening.

A major fundraising effort ensured construction of the Riverstone Clinic, which has support from federal, state, city, corporate and individual funding and donations.

"The construction was collaborative effort," said Jean Farmer, NECC director, done in "inclusive, supportive and transparent relationship" with surrounding neighborhoods.

Architects and contractors ensured the new building would look like it belonged in a residential neighborhood.

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'Beyond a Climate of Fear' is theme for Jan. 22 conference

Faith community will explore issues and ways to empower common action

Jim Mohr, chair of the Institute for Hate Studies at Gonzaga University, will be the keynote speaker for the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference, addressing the 2010 theme, "Beyond a Climate of Fear: Empowering the Community of Faith to Action."

The conference will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 22, at the Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th in Spokane.

Jim is director of student achievement, student activities and diversity programs at the Community Colleges of Spokane.

He completed his doctoral degree in leadership studies at Gonzaga University and served as interim director of the Institute for Hate Studies, which recently changed its name from the Institute for Action Against Hate, to reflect its commitment to establish and expand the academic field of hate studies.

The institute was established to combat hate and hate crimes through fostering understandings of the causes and effects of hate, and strategies to combat hate, bigotry and intolerance.

A highlight of the conference is the recognition of the Rev. Happy Watkins, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church and community leader, by the Washington Association of Churches (WAC). The WAC will present him their annual Eastern

Washington award for ecumenical and interfaith justice leadership during the event.

Sponsored by the Lutheran Public Policy Office (LPPO), the WAC, Catholic Charities Spokane and The Fig Tree, the event will address the current political climate that promotes fear—dividing people and increasing citizen apathy.

There will be two sessions of workshops with panels addressing current immigration, poverty, and police/civil rights issues.

Workshops and leaders will include;

- **"Beyond Fear of the Stranger:** Immigration, Refugees and Trafficking," with Greg Cunningham, Catholic Charities' Refugee and Immigration Services director; Azra Grudig of Lutheran Community Services Northwest, and Mark Kadel, director of World Relief;

- **"Beyond Economic Fears:** Budget Shortfalls and Tax Cuts, Widened Disparities between Rich and Poor," with Erica Scott, community organizer with VOICES (Voices for Opportunity, Income, Childcare, Education and Support), Nadine Van Stone, director of St. Margaret's Shelter, and Shar Lichty, outreach coordinator of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane.

- **"Beyond Fear for Personal Safety:** Civil

Continued on page 3

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Religious leaders support ongoing peace talks

In the fall, 28 religious leaders representing Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities declared that peace is possible and offered support for the administration's efforts to continue peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

The leaders, including the general secretary of the National Council of Churches (NCC), presented a statement at Sept. 29 meetings with National Security Advisor General James Jones and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, on behalf of the National Inter-religious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East.

"We are people of hope. We call on members of our religious communities to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and to support active, fair, and firm U.S. leadership to advance comprehensive peace in the Middle East," said the statement. "It will be difficult to achieve, but peace is possible."

The statement called for a two-state solution as the only viable path to peace and said sustained U.S. leadership for peace is essential.

"The 36 member communions of the NCC agree peace is not only possible," said the Rev. Michael Kinnamon, general secretary, "it is essential for safety and progress of the people of the Middle East. It is essential for succeeding generations of children and grandchildren. We reject the cliché that peace in the Middle East is impossible. It underestimates the power of the one God and the sacred will of human beings to do what is just and right."

The Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders said: "Our faith traditions teach that every person is created by the one God and deserving of respect. This common religious heritage finds expression in our common commitment to peace with justice for all."

They consider it imperative that peace talks continue.

"While we have long supported a halt to all settlement expansion, we support the United States working with Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas to reach an agreement to allow negotiations to continue. We stand united in support of active, fair, and firm U.S. leadership for Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace. Two years ago, we issued a statement on "a window of hope."

They declared "New Hope for the Peace of Jerusalem."

"Since 2003 we have worked together for a two-state solution that will bring Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace within the framework of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242, 338 and 1397," they said. "As religious leaders in the United States, we have prayed for peace, made public statements, met with public officials, and stood in solidarity with religious leaders in Israel, the Palestinian Territories and throughout the region."

"Despite tragic violence and discouraging developments, there are signs of hope," they said. "Majorities of both Israelis and Palestinians support a two-state solution. Arab states have declared their commitment to peace in the Arab Peace Initiative. There are U.S. diplomatic efforts to restart Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese negotiations for peace. Official and informal negotiations have produced outlines of compromises for resolving the conflict, including final status issues: borders and security, settlements, refugees and Jerusalem. Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious leaders here and in the region reject killing innocents, support a just peace and believe sustained negotiations are the only path to peace."

They are aware of the danger that cynicism will replace hope and that people will give up on peace.

"We believe that concerted, sustained U.S. leadership for peace is essential. Delay is not an option," they said.

"The path to peace shuns violence and embraces dialogue. It demands reciprocal steps that build confidence and lead to Israel and a viable, independent Palestine, living side by side in peace with security and dignity for both peoples, stability in the region, and a peace between Israel and Arab neighbors," they proposed.

The leaders believe the United States has a special responsibility to pursue peace. Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace will make the world safer.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Rev. Leslie David Braxton is keynoter at Martin Luther King commemoration

The Rev. Leslie David Braxton, senior pastor of the New Beginnings Christian Fellowship in Renton, Wash., will speak on "The Dream: Remember, Celebrate and Act" for Spokane Martin Luther King, Jr., Day events Saturday through Monday, Jan. 15 to 17.

The Martin Luther King, Jr., Family Outreach Center's Scholarship Benefit from 6 to 8 p.m., Saturday, at Calvary Baptist Church, 203 E. Third Ave., will be a Music Extravaganza, "How Sweet the Sound."

The commemorative celebration, featuring Braxton, will be at 5 p.m., Sunday at Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, 806 W. Indiana. He will also speak during the rally before the Unity March and Community Resource Fair, beginning at 10 a.m. Monday at the INB Performing Arts Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.

The march goes from there to Riverpark Square for the Community Resource Fair on first and second levels. The Children's Learning Resource Fair will be on the first level of the STA Plaza.

The Rev. Happy Watkins, one of the organizers for Martin Lu-

ther King Day events with Ivan Bush, said this year the new rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom, Rabbi Robert Goldstein, the new Catholic Bishop, Bishop Blase Cupich, and regional church leaders will participate in a commemorative service at Holy Temple Church of God in Christ. A reception and discussion with Braxton follows.

Braxton, who grew up in Tacoma, earned a bachelor's degree in 1983 from the University of Puget Sound, a master of divinity in 1987 from the Colgate Rochester Divinity School and a doctor of ministry in 1996 from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

For 12 years, he was pastor of First Shiloh Baptist Church in Buffalo, N.Y., promoting community empowerment through housing development, serving disadvantaged youth and starting a Christian high school.

As senior pastor of Mount Zion Baptist in Seattle from 1999 to 2005, he added 1,400 new members, increased giving from \$800,000 to \$1.8 million, and developed progressive ministry formation, adult education, dis-

cipleship training, outreach and community service.

He initiated a black-church-based clinical pastoral education program and involved Mount Zion in community partnerships to offer financial-literacy education, child-advocacy training for parents and community-leadership skills.

In 2005, he began New Beginnings Christian Fellowship in Renton, with 650 persons. Its emphasis is on the church functioning as the family of God, committed to the ethic that "family takes care of family."

He speaks nationally on non-violence, police accountability, homelessness, racial issues, education and health issues.

For information, call 455-8722.

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Conference highlights issues

Continued from page 1

Rights, Criminal Justice, Police and Jails" with Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich; Liz Moore, director of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, and ecumenical and human rights leaders Happy Watkins and Yvonne Lopez-Morton.

The Rev. Paul Benz, director of the LPPD, will review issues before the state's legislative session. Alice Woldt, director of the WAC, will discuss "Messaging Faith Communities and Our Culture."

They will present an "Action Toolkit" with resources to engage congregations members in education and advocacy.

Area religious leaders, coordinated by the Rev. Nick Block of the Spokane Friends Church, will lead opening and closing worship times using resources from the 2011 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources, with a focus on peace, justice and reconciliation. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is Jan. 18 to 25.

Area congregations, parishes, ministries and nonprofits are encouraged to send participants and bring displays for a resource fair. For information, call 535-4112.

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Program recruits mentors for positive intervention in teens' lives

Spokane's Mentoring Children of Promise (MCP) program connects more than 40 at-risk children and youth with a mentor. It has a waiting list of 25, mostly boys.

The program of Goodwill Industries of the Inland Northwest aims to have 75 matches by September and 60 more matches in 2012 and in 2013.

January is the 10th anniversary of National Mentoring Month. Nationally, MCP provides mentors for more than 7 million children and youth.

"Since 2002, U.S. youth mentoring programs have received presidential support and federal funding to continue work with children who have a parent in a federal or state prison," said Robert Shaw, recruitment specialist.

"These youth are at-risk because without proper intervention 70 percent of them will end up in prison themselves, he said. "These odds are reduced when a child has a volunteer mentor who consistently spends two hours a



Robert Shaw mentors a teen, along with recruiting mentors.

week with them over a year."

Robert, who works for Goodwill and is also a volunteer, has seen positive changes in 14-year-old Jake, whom he mentors.

"Jake has improved his grades since we have been hanging out, but we haven't spent any time together doing homework," said Robert, a graduate of Central

Valley High School, who after serving in the Navy earned a bachelor's degree in math at Eastern Washington University.

He came on when Goodwill hired several youth mentors, and he was asked to stay.

"He plays football, and I told him about how I was suspended from my high school football team for several games because I had bad grades," Robert said.

Jake's mother, Tracy, has also noticed positive changes in Jake's behavior. She recently told MCP staff, that he "is more respectful to adults now and is in trouble less at school since having a mentor."

MCP began in 2000 in Philadelphia as Amachi—People of Faith Mentoring Children of Promise. While MCP started off as a small, faith-based program, it has spread to more than 200 U.S. cities. Various nonprofit organizations run each program.

Joy Jones, program manager for MCP Spokane in the Emmanuel Family Life Center at 631 S. Rich-

ard Allen Ct., said the goals are to build friendships and have fun.

"Positive relationships are the best intervention for youth," she said.

In Spokane County, more than 4,000 children and youth have a parent incarcerated. In September 2010, Goodwill gained a three-year extension to operate MCP, which started in 2003.

Spokane Public Schools counselors, who see children and youth

on a daily basis, recommend them for the program, said Robert.

MCP recruits volunteer mentors from churches, businesses and other sources. MCP makes presentations to local churches and Bible study groups. They recruit students at Gonzaga and Whitworth universities. They also advertise on Craigslist for volunteers.

For information, call 703-6839 or email RobertS@giin.org.

Our Place plans Jan. 27 theatre benefit

Gonzaga University is hosting a theatre benefit performance of "Chicago, A Musical Vaudeville" for Our Place Community Ministries, beginning with a silent auction at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 27, at the Magnuson Theatre.

For information, call 313-6553 or 326-7267.

Grand Coulee church offers lay speaking course

Grand Coulee Community Church is planning a Lay Speaking Ministry Basic Lay Speaking Course from 6:30 to 9 p.m., Friday, Jan. 28, and 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 29, at the church. The course prepares laity to explore what God is calling them to do in leadership, caring and communication. For information, call 509-633-3319.

Non-violence workshop series continues

The next series of three workshops on "Exploring Nonviolence," led by Rusty and Nancy Nelson, former co-directors of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Jan. 29 and Feb. 5 and 12, at the Community Building, 35 W. Main. The series will look at challenging structural and institutional violence through awareness of authority and conformity, of past social movements and of the power of nonviolent action. For information, call 838-7870.

Author-therapist offers session on PEARL Process

Susie Weller, author of *Why Don't You Understand? Improve Family Communication with the 4 Thinking Styles*, will lead a workshop on the five-step "PEARL Process," tools to transform irritants of life into gems from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 22, at North Idaho Unity Church, 4465 N. 15th in Coeur d'Alene. For information, call 255-6676 or visit www.susieweller.com.



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Black clergy collaborate on police, education and civil rights issues

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realized some prisoners' minds "were not on the Lord."

He has found that blacks, who are about two percent of Spokane's population, make up 18 to 25 percent of the people who are incarcerated, on trial, on probation or waiting to be sentenced.

"We need to turn those figures around," he asserted. "Education is the means to do that."

Happy, who has received many awards over the years for his contributions to the community, has twice been president of the Spokane Ministers Fellowship, a monthly gathering composed mostly of pastors of predominantly black churches.

"We work together on police and school issues," he said. "We also put on events to break barriers of religious differences as we work together to address common concerns such as the learning and graduation gaps."

"One thing I learned from Dr. King is to sit at the table of brotherhood and sisterhood, put the issues on the table and discuss them to gain understanding," Happy said.

In 1986 when there were no black police officers, pastors and community leaders met with the police chief to learn why. They found that white men and women scored higher on the civil service exam and were accepted immediately into training. Hispanic, Native American and blacks passed the test, but were often in the bottom third. Test scores expired after two years before all candidates in the pool entered the academy, so those with lower scores had to retake it.

Examining further, the leaders learned the civil service manual says if an ethnic population is not represented on the police force but a member of that group passes the civil service test, that person can float into the pool.

So in 1986, six black, two Hispanic and one Native American went through the Police Academy and became officers. Happy's son, Percy, was one.

Church and community leaders also met with police after gangs started coming from California. Police began profiling local black teens. If more than two or three young black men were standing on a street or driving in a car, police stopped them. There were many instances of people being stopped and searched, including one of Happy's sons.

"It was a tense time for the community of color and police," said Happy, a member, and past vice president and president of the NAACP, a partner in police and school challenges.



Happy Watkins and Ivan Bush, a colleague in projects on education, police, civil rights and Martin Luther King Day. Behind them a new street to honor Martin Luther King, Jr., will extend from Riverside into the education district.

Former University of Idaho President Tim White asked him and other black pastors and leaders to help after a black football player was shot by two black men from Seattle. To bridge relationships, Happy contracted as a consultant to visit the campus for seven weeks and then to continue going there for three years until the UI hired a multicultural specialist. Three years ago, Tim awarded him the President's Medallion for his work.

Because pastors often know parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles of school children, they have access to their homes and often have the trust of family, so they can mediate when a child misbehaves or parents feel their children are not treated fairly.

"If families can't go to PTA, we as pastors can do that, because it takes a village to raise a child," said Happy, who sometimes goes to schools and reads to children. Wherever there is a need and I can help, that's where I will go."

To overcome the achievement gap, Happy works to assure that children and youth of color graduate, take college-prep classes or attend trade schools, and are informed of the variety of career choices. He helps organize a trade fair for teens at East Central Community Center. Along with vision and hope, he said youth of color need meaningful jobs.

Through the South Hill Leadership Group, he has worked with principals, counselors and community people to improve the learning environment for children, reaching them early so they are not frustrated in later school years. He meets with students and advises staff and teachers about ways to meet their basic needs so they can learn. In December, he talked with a student who was paying attention and found he was cold at home.

The oldest of 10 children

growing up in a poor family in the Bronx amid 2.5 million diverse people—black after block like his street with thousands of blacks and whites, Puerto Ricans, Irish, Poles, Italians and Jews—he was shocked by the quiet and seeming wilderness of Spokane when he, at 19, arrived in 1961 with the Air Force.

Within a month, he was attending Morningstar Baptist Church, which lightened the depression, homesickness and loneliness he felt at first. There he met his wife, Etta, in 1962 and married her in 1963. Discharged from the Air Force in 1965 after serving 18 months in Okinawa, he decided to stay in Spokane.

Here he has made an impact in civil rights, race relations and ecumenical ties, as he and Etta have reared their four sons.

In the early 1960s, the height of cultural unrest after the 1956 bus boycott in Montgomery, Little Rock's Central High School's 1957 integration and civil rights freedom riders, Spokane challenged unequal housing access. When he and Etta first looked for housing, it had been hard to find anything outside East Central, Geiger Heights and Rogers neighborhoods.

Teams testing for bias in sales and rentals finally broke open the housing market in the late 1960s so blacks could live anywhere.

Happy's work with youth began in his early years in Spokane. He has been involved with the Martin Luther King, Jr., Family Outreach Center for many of its 40 years.

The Rev. Dick Leon of First Presbyterian Church and pastors on Spokane's East side formed a committee in 1961 to bring children and youth off neighborhood streets. They created a drop-in center, offering activities at Bethel African American Episcopal Church. The program grew. They

remodeled Bethel's basement and it became the Martin Luther King Center.

When it outgrew that space in the 1980s, Ivan Bush, who was director, moved the program to the fire station on Sherman that had just closed.

The dream grew as the community expanded and remodeled the building, which they lease from the city for \$1 a year.

Now called the Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center, the program provides daycare, parenting education and family services, before- and after-school, summer, literacy and tutoring programs. Programs encourage children to stay in school, prepare for college, gain job skills and contribute to the community.

"The caring children receive there enhances their learning," said Happy, who has served 10 years on and off on the board. "As little things we have done have mushroomed, the budget has mushroomed. Now the center plans a capital campaign to expand facilities to serve more children and families."

The center has also been central in organizing 21 years of marches on Martin Luther King Day.

Happy said 54 participated in the first march from the county courthouse to the federal building in 1989. The march has grown to nearly 4,000 participants, gathering at the INB Performing Arts Center and marching to Riverpark Square for entertainment and a community resource fair.

Happy and Ivan Bush, the primary organizers, coordinate a team of volunteers. They also convinced the city to name a street to honor Martin Luther King, Jr.

Besides the influence of biblical proverbs and Christ's walk, he said his life turned around when he read: "Life is in session. The question is, are you present?"

Happy's knack for memorizing began with reciting speeches and verses for Christmas, Easter and Mother's Day children's programs in the Methodist church his family attended. Because he was not athletic, teachers at Alfred E. Smith Vocational High School asked him to enter two speaking contests. He

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Supported by a grant from the Community Building Foundation and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Broadband Technology Opportunity Fund

Reciting 'I Have a Dream' gives pastor chance to urge pursuit of goals

Continued from previous page placed first in the Bronx and third in New York City.

After Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968, his speech became popular. A woman at Hutton Elementary School asked Happy to read "I Have a Dream."

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed a law establishing Martin Luther King Day on the third Monday of January. When it was first observed in 1986, former Washington Governor Booth Gardner traveled around the state to honor King.

Lydia Sims, then president of Spokane's Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), arranged for the governor to come to a luncheon at the Ridpath and asked Happy to read the speech.

"Sunday after church at Calvary Baptist, I shut myself in a room from 2 p.m. to 3 a.m., memorizing the speech," he said.

When the emcee announced to dignitaries that he would read the speech and he recited it, complete with emotional climaxes, people were excited, teary and emotional, he said.

Things happened for Happy because of giving the speech.

He has given it at Fairchild, Spokane area elementary, middle and high schools. Soon he was asked to give it from Genesee, Idaho, to Cashmere, Wash., at Spirit Lake, Coeur d'Alene, Rathdrum, Sandpoint and Lewiston schools; at Creston, Wilbur, Moses Lake and Clarkston schools. He gives it at many churches and at universities around the region.

In Cashmere, children of farm workers and orchard owners go to school together and get along well. He was moved to recite it to those children who were living into the dream.

At Sandpoint, teachers joined the children to hear "I Have a Dream." Afterwards, some asked for his address. Reluctantly he gave it. A few days later, a package arrived at his home, filled with 90 letters typed on 8 1/2 by 11 paper, thanking him for coming.

"I kept them by my desk, and whenever I feel discouraged, I read one," said Happy.

Now he gives the speech 30 to 40 times a year in the two weeks around the celebration of Martin Luther King Day and during Black History Month. Along with reciting the speech, Happy teaches

children, teens and adults about segregation, civil rights and life.

"I tell about separate facilities, the bus boycott and freedom riders," he said. "From reading many books on Martin Luther King's life and speeches, I learned that keys to his life were his family, home and kitchen table."

As King's parents did for him, Happy hopes to instill self esteem and help students lift their sights for their lives.

"A setback is a setup for a comeback," he told students in Sandpoint, which has a high rate of teen pregnancy and substance abuse: "You need to work harder to define your goals and go where you need to go to achieve them."

Over the years, he has performed many weddings for young people who heard him talk about the family, the home and the kitchen table.

Sometimes through weddings and funerals, he said, God and "the angel watching over me have guided me around dangers seen and unseen." Sometimes an honorarium comes just when he needs it.

When he says, "if it is to be, it's up to me," he means with God's help.

"I know God lives, and I depend on God," he proclaims.

Happy's journey into ministry grew through his life-long involvement in church.

After leaving the Air Force, he worked six years in a grocery store, learning to treat every customer with respect, regardless of age or how much they spent.

Those years, he also drove a school bus and did school maintenance in the summer. That started him on a five-year stint of playing Santa, and jovially addressing children's questions because he was a black Santa.

Traveling as a salesman—selling life insurance, copy machines, women's cosmetics and pharmaceuticals—in North Idaho and Western Montana, he also learned to defuse racial encounters.

In 1973, when he went into a restaurant in Bonners Ferry with a colleague, he said, "the place stopped. Everyone turned and looked at me." Happy added that it seemed the pancake the cook was flipping stopped mid-air.

"It was curiosity, not hostility. I was the first black person they had seen," he said.

He puts people at ease, build-



The Rev. Happy Watkins recites "I Have a Dream" at the Martin Luther King Day rally in 2007.

by the Rev. C. W. Andrews, he went to New Hope Baptist.

The last two of 12 years Happy worked in security at Deaconess, he took clinical pastoral education (CPE) training. He served a year as chaplain at Deaconess and several years as chaplain and patient advocate at Holy Family Hospital.

He served on the former Spokane Christian Coalition Board when it started Nightwalk Ministry in downtown bars, the Interstate Task Force on Human Relations and The Fig Tree. He now serves on The Fig Tree Board.

Happy went by his first name, Percy, until he was 14. Then, learning his middle initial "H" stood for Happy, he chose to go by that name, put aside his childhood shyness, and since then has lived into his name.

For information, call 535-1336.

ing trust just by being friendly.


"When I met people as a salesman, I asked where they grew up and what their interests were to break down distrust," he said.

In 1981, he followed his dream and opened a restaurant in Shadle, serving barbecue favorites. Naive about business, however, he closed it after two years and has spent years paying back taxes.

A minister in Seattle who knew of his interest in ministry helped him restart the Sharon Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, where he served from 1982 to 1985 becoming licensed, a de-

con, an elder and then a full pastor—earning \$300 in four years.

After five years as assistant pastor at Calvary Baptist, mentored



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Informal ecumenical ministry serves people on the Yakama reservation

Several small congregations and ecumenical ministries on the Yakama Reservation mingle their resources to serve their communities of Toppenish, Wapato, White Swan and Zillah.

From the 15-member Christ Episcopal Church in Zillah to 50-member congregations, they struggle to maintain buildings and pay pastors, but are committed to cooperating to build cross-cultural understanding, break down racism, house homeless people, feed hungry people and spread hope.

At the fall 2010 Episcopal Diocesan Convention in Spokane, David Hacker, a member of Christ Church and postulant for the priesthood, told of the interrelated ministries on the reservation.

With a \$20,000 grant the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane received for cross-cultural, anti-racism training, David, who recently began working as statewide director of congregational relations for the Lutheran Public Policy Office of Washington, and David Bell, who co-directs the Yakima Christian Mission with Belinda Bell, will facilitate ecumenical training for the communities and churches.

“Our goal is to model God’s multicultural kingdom here among the Hispanic, Japanese, Filipino, African American, Native American and European American people,” he said.

Participating in this unnamed, informal relationship are Toppenish United Methodist, Faith Lutheran in Toppenish, White Swan United Methodist, Wapato Community Presbyterian, the Disciples of Christ’s Yakima Christian Mission in White Swan and Christ Episcopal, plus Campbell Farm, Noah’s Ark Shelter and Mending Wings ministries in Wapato.

They connect with efforts of the Indian Shaker Church and Longhouse religion efforts to reclaim culture, language and traditions, lost through boarding schools and public education.

Several churches help support Mending Wings, a Native American youth group that meets at the multicultural Presbyterian Church.

Denominational ministries now overlap. When the Presbyterian church wondered how to keep up its 75-year tradition of serving a turkey dinner in November, Episcopal and Methodist churches helped, and Carman Pimms, director of Campbell Farm, organized the kitchen crew.

That Sunday Christ Episcopal



David Hacker gives presentation on ecumenical cooperation. Inset: Noah’s Ark Shelter mural

members attended worship at the Presbyterian church.

Discouraged by finances, the Presbyterian church’s session voted on a Tuesday in October to close, but the next Sunday, members said, “Wait, the community needs our vision and mission.” The session reconsidered their decision and the congregation continues. Once a predominantly white congregation, the church is now learning to embrace its multi-ethnic identity, welcoming the homeless, ex-gang members, Native and Latino youth and families.

Although small, Christ Episcopal gives 10 percent of its income away each year. It supports Zillah Food Bank, recently sent \$750 for Episcopal Relief and Development to dig a well and supports other local-to-global missions. It has new life, with baptisms and a confirmation class, David said. It is doing a shared Bible study with the United Methodist churches.

The churches have held and are planning several joint services—a Taizé service, an animal blessing and a Good Friday service. In June, the group will hold a joint Pentecost service with shared communion.

A cooperative of local pastors and lay leaders meet monthly to coordinate shared ministry activities: Two non-stipended priests, Joan Dahl and Beth Kuhr, serve Christ Episcopal. David Norwood, pastor at Wapato Presbyterian, recently added a job with Hospice. Derel Olson serves the

Methodist churches. Carman, who is Native American, is in the process for ordination in the Lutheran Church.

The goals of these ministry partners on the 1.2 million-acre Yakama Reservation—home for 10,000 Yakama—are to 1) enhance worship in congregations, 2) coordinate service projects, 3) coordinate mission groups, 4) offer theological education and 5) engage in advocacy.

On the reservation, about 90 percent of children receive free or reduced-price lunches. While the tribe is an extended family and seeks to care for its people, poverty, suicide and homelessness rates are high.

David told how the ministries respond to those struggles.

United Methodists in Toppenish and White Swan assist the 85-year-old Disciples Yakima Christian Mission in White Swan. Native American parents going to the mountain to pick berries, the forests to hunt or the river to fish, once left their children in the care of the church and boarding school, which sought to “civilize” them. Now its summer and after-school children’s programs, nutrition and literacy programs, summer camps and sustainable teaching farm seek to restore Yakama culture and ties to the land.

The 40-acre Campbell Farm, a Presbyterian mission, receives groups from around the nation who come for a week to live in community, work on the farm, share in cross-cultural community

services and return home to share what they learn.

“They not only help children, but also are transformed so they will help change policies that affect what happens here,” David explained.

At Campbell Farm, young people help grow and harvest wheat, thresh and winnow it, and make bread. They grow, pick and press grapes, learning to be in relationship with the land.

Generating Hope, which operates Noah’s Ark Shelter, takes people off the streets and helps them find substance abuse counseling and medical care. Volunteers help cook meals for 30 to 50 people who stay there at night.

Volunteers from churches and the community worked with shelter residents last summer to paint a mural on the shelter’s exterior wall. One church funded the mural, designed by David’s daughter, Hilary Hacker, and her friend, Alicia Martensen.

The mural, dedicated in September, depicts the hopes, dreams, strengths and visions of shelter residents. It shows bears, eagles, horses, salmon, apples, wheat, potatoes, camas, huckleberries, mountains, rivers, forests and fields. It depicts a Native American catching a fish beside a Hispanic farm worker picking fruit.

“It’s an image of people with a home and places to hunt, fish and live on the land,” he said. “It expresses the hopes of people who are dispossessed.”

David hopes the multi-cultural

training will help people learn new ways to live together.

“Cross-cultural communication requires persistence and patience,” he said, “learning by being with people, interacting with and even risking offending them, being flexible and aware of one’s limitations.

“We listen and observe, tolerating ambiguity, respecting others, avoiding stereotypes, being non-judgmental and praying for the Holy Spirit’s leading,” David said. “For churches to be multicultural, they need to let their walls be porous to include the community.”

Anti-racism training can help churches see how the system benefits white people. That awareness, he said, can help people embrace multiculturalism.

David also believes people need to know the history of the Doctrine of Discovery, Papal Bulls giving Christian explorers the right to claim land they “discovered,” and its impact “on our government’s relationship with First Peoples of this land.”

“We need to understand about treaties with the federal government,” he added.

Twenty years ago, David earned a master of divinity from the Episcopal Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley. After seminary, he directed a family shelter and an emergency food bank in Stockton, Calif., where he met his late wife, Sheri Noah. In 1995, he directed the Hunger Action Coalition in Detroit.

While he and Sheri co-directed Campbell Farm from 2001 to 2007, they attended the Presbyterian church.

After she died in 2007, he began attending Christ Episcopal Church and bought the building that houses Noah’s Ark, named in her memory.

He also teaches critical thinking at Heritage College in Toppenish and is coordinator for the Yakima County VISTA program

Working with the Lutheran Public Policy Office, he invites people to advocate for the poor and speak out for justice. He is developing the Advocating Congregations Program to help congregations embrace advocacy as one of their major ministries, create annual advocacy plans, choose issues, educate themselves and others, write letters, and challenge unjust policies.

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Fairly traded scarves connect women economically and spiritually

By selling fairly traded scarves made by women weavers in Chimaltenango, Guatemala, Debbie Dupey seeks to empower women there and in the United States.

Part of selling scarves at a fair-trade festival, private showing or church event is sharing stories of women's lives, connecting them economically and spiritually.

Sales provide income for 15 Guatemalan weavers in desperate need, she said. Many are widows, displaced from the mountains in the civil war. Backstrap- or footloom weaving is the only source of income for many of them.

Buying rayon or cotton scarves empowers U.S. women as they learn about the weavers' lives," said Debbie in a recent interview.

She co-founded Corazon Scarves with Sandi Thompson-Royer out of their work together in violence prevention, training Central American women leaders, teachers and child advocates. The name is from the weaving group's name, "Corazon de Mujeres," and means "the heart of women."

Debbie's global connections began as research associate for People to People. From 1998 to 1999, she went to Nepal and helped women create an economic empowerment program.

Local artist Judy Patterson designed the logo Corazon Scarves now used for the Women in Nepal program. It comes from an ancient Buddhist story about Nangsa Obum, a woman oppressed in an arranged marriage. She took a scarf she had woven and turned it into wings of liberation. The scarf became a symbol of personal freedom and compassion for the wellbeing of others.

In Nepal, she helped a Buddhist organization start a nonprofit to address women's issues and produce clothes. That planted a seed, but it did not come to fruition there. Now she does what she can on those issues in Guatemala.

Debbie, who has lived in Spokane since high school, now lives part of the year in Guatemala, returning to Spokane to sell scarves and calendars. She now uses what she learned from bachelor's degrees at Eastern Washington University in creative writing in 1986 and in education in 1990, plus a master's degree in organizational leadership from Gonzaga University in 1999.

As director of Lutheran Community Services' ACT for Kids program, she published resources to protect children from sexual abuse and trauma. She was educator for the Spokane County Domestic Violence Consortium. Then she worked with Washington State University and the Department of Justice to provide



Debbie Dupey at the recent Fair Trade Festival in Spokane.

training on human trafficking, and she helped form the Inland Northwest Task Force on Human Trafficking. She did a survey on human trafficking and training on abuse prevention, domestic violence and human trafficking.

About 10 years ago, Debbie began leading domestic violence workshops with Sandi, who started Women Walking Together when she was in Spokane. Sandi now manages a fair-trade shop in Leavenworth. The women began going to Central America, where Sandi had connections through the Presbyterian Church (USA), to train women in Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Costa Rica to be natural helpers and train women to help women struggling with domestic violence.

Eleven years ago, Debbie went to Vietnam to do a workshop on child witnesses of domestic violence.

From her visits to Guatemala, she also wanted to write a book to tell stories of women who experience domestic violence, gender and ethnic discrimination.

"I wanted to spend more time there to learn about women who survived the 36-year civil war and their issues," she said.

She met weavers at Corazon de Mujer and their stories "touched my heart," she said. "I was eager to share their stories."

When the women sell their scarves on the streets in Guatemala, they do not receive a price that reflects the value of their work and art, she said. They have a hard time feeding, educating and

housing their children.

Most did not have an education until they were in their 40s. They want to send their children to school. They pool funds if a woman's child is at risk of leaving school for a lack of money.

In 2009, Debbie talked with Sandi about selling the scarves in the United States. They bought a few in the summer and last Christmas, when they launched their website at corazonscarves.com.

She has published the weavers' stories in a 2011 calendar. She plans to produce a similar calendar every year, focusing on women in different countries to raise awareness of women's lives, issues and stories. Funds from each calendar will go for a project in the focus country. Haiti is next, then Nepal. She is expanding Corazon scarves to offer a market for women survivors of violence and oppression in different regions of the world.

On the island of Lagonav, Haiti, families struggle to survive as once fertile soil washes into the sea with each rain. Images on silk scarves women weave reflect their lives. Providing income for their families gives the women voice in their community.

Debbie also looks forward to going back to Nepal, where her idea originated.

Going back and forth between Spokane and Guatemala for two and a half years, she decided to study Spanish and settle in Antigua. Her son, Marcel, came to visit. Having studied Spanish and business in college, he decided to

study a quarter there and loved it. Having experience working at a Spokane restaurant since he was 14, he bought a restaurant in Antigua.

Last fall Debbie came to Spokane, sold scarves at about 10 events and told stories of how the sales give women more options.

"One Guatemalan woman, who had lived with her sister for nine years, finished building her house. Another woman put in a toilet. A third woman paid for surgery to overcome a life-threatening illness," Debbie said.

Sales have increased the standard of living and security for about 55 women in three groups: the 15 Corazon de Mujeres weavers; 36 women with Voice of the Tz'ujiles, who make dyes at Lake Atitlan, and a family in San Antonia Aqua Caliente who make a different style scarf.

The group at Lake Atitlan suffered since a tropical storm hit Guatemala and partially flooded San Juan. Tourists, who usually buy scarves, did not come because of publicity about the storm and the U.S. economy. Guatemala is recovering, roads are passable,

and it's now "a lovely time to visit there," Debbie said.

"The women are grateful. It also makes a difference in my life and allows me to follow my dream," she said. "Mostly women buy the scarves, but men also buy scarves as gifts for women."

A Spokane woman told Debbie that in Guatemala she bartered a woman selling a scarf to a small price. She said: "Realizing she needed the money more than I did, I felt guilty. So I felt good buying a Corazon scarf."

Before leaving Jan. 18, she will participate in a human trafficking vigil at 6 p.m., at the Women's Hearth, 920 W. Second.

"Guatemala is a source of human trafficking," she said. "Buying scarves is a way to prevent it. Women are vulnerable to it if they do not have a viable income."

Debbie works with different faith communities here and in Guatemala, because "the faith community is often a great structure to work with in a society," she said. "It plays an important role in healing and connecting people."

For information, call 434-4379 or email debbiedupey@aol.com.

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Jewish rabbi teaches Old Testament as professor at Jesuit university

One of the Old Testament professors in the Religious Studies Department at Gonzaga University is a Jewish rabbi.

Elizabeth Goldstein finds students she teaches at the Jesuit Catholic university interested in learning about Judaism, exploring the spiritual values of Judaism and interfaith work.

"At first, I felt different, but that difference is appreciated," she said at the end of the semester. "Students appreciate hearing from a Jewish perspective."

Elizabeth will teach a class on Judaism in the spring, the first class on Judaism for at least a decade. She said she has also submitted a suggestion that the Old Testament course she teaches be renamed "Hebrew Scriptures."

For the spring, she is coordinating a Jewish Passover seder in April for the Gonzaga community, geared to educate them about the Jewish practice. She is also planning a Holocaust remembrance.

Through University Ministry, she is working to connect with Jewish students and other Jewish faculty. She had one Jewish student in a fall class.

In addition, she hopes to be a bridge between Gonzaga and the Jewish community and in order to promote Christian-Jewish understanding. Elizabeth is attending both of Spokane's Jewish communities, Temple Beth Shalom and Congregation Emanu-El, keeping ties to both the Conservative and Reform traditions.

Elizabeth taught three sections of Old Testament in the fall semester. For spring semester, she will teach one course on Judaism and two on Old Testament.

"I find students interested in learning about Judaism and its connections to Christianity. They are interested to learn that the purity of animals in Leviticus is the basis for Jewish kosher laws," she said. "Some are curious about their own religion and sometimes need to look through the lens of another religion to learn about their own."

She wants her students to learn about the biblical roots for social justice, stories that are problematic for women, literal reading vs. biblical interpretation, discussions of morality in the Bible and how they can learn to be better people from studying the Bible.

"Sometimes Scripture should impact moral decisions and sometimes it should not," she said. "Scriptures often play a smaller role in our moral ideas."

As she teaches, she takes into account her path of learning about Judaism, growing up in Wyckoff, N.J., and attending an Orthodox Jewish day school, even though her parents were not Orthodox.

"I was exposed to traditional Judaism that was different from my family's traditions," she said. "I gained views of the spectrum of



Elizabeth Goldstein

the Jewish community and ideas about women.

"My parents were traditional in some ways and liberal in other ways. Their synagogue, Beth Rishon, which did not affiliate, included Reform and Conservative Jews," she said.

"I was introduced to shades of gray early. That lesson takes one far in life," said Elizabeth who studied religion at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., where she was exposed to other faiths.

A non-religious person taught that the Old Testament was written by human beings.

"The Torah became demystified, disconnected from God. It was painful," said Elizabeth, whose only Jewish community was the campus Jewish student group, Hillel.

While the deconstructionist approach distanced God from the Bible, years of life experience helped her realize God is greater than the Bible.

"I became less tied to the literal word and understood God is greater than any text and has a compassion for humanity," she said.

"Some Christians have no problem seeing Hebrew Scriptures as written by people. Catholics have had so much interpretation over the generations by church fathers that they do not read the Bible literally," Elizabeth said.

Some Protestants she teaches at Gonzaga, however, struggle when they hear it is not the direct word of God.

After graduating from Dartmouth, she spent a year in Israel studying at an Orthodox Jewish school, Pardes Institute in Jerusalem.

"We studied the traditional Jewish sources all day, from 9 to 5," she said. "It was great preparation for rabbinical school, immersed in learning Hebrew."

She returned to begin rabbinical school at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. After a year at the Conservative seminary, she spent a year as a hospital chaplain in San Francisco, and then completed her studies in 2001 at Hebrew Union College at the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City, part of the Reform tradition. In 2001, she was ordained as a rabbi.

After two years teaching at Jewish communities in San Francisco, she completed a doctoral degree in biblical studies at the University of California, San Diego, in July 2010. She applied for an opening in teaching Old Testament at Gonzaga and began in September.

Elizabeth appreciates the interfaith aspect of her job at Gonzaga, an opportunity to expose students to Judaism, the biblical heritage in the context of the ancient Near East, and what the Bible means to Jews and Christians as sacred literature.

Elizabeth seeks to shed light on the Scriptures from understandings of her faith tradition.

For example, Numbers 6:24-26, "May the Lord bless and keep you, shine his countenance upon you and give you peace," is used as an Irish Catholic priestly blessing and sending. Protestants often use it as a benediction.

"Some Jews, believing they are descended from priestly tribes that served in the temple, would see the blessing as a channel of divine power," she explained. "It is blessing the community in

a call and response. The priests are in the front, not looking at the people, because their prayer shawls are drawn over their heads in a mystical ritual. It's a central prayer at the high point of the Sabbath morning liturgy."

Elizabeth has been in Israel twice—three months in college volunteering with Ethiopian immigrants in 1992, and the year after college.

"It was a scary year. A bus was bombed in Tel Aviv. Israeli soldiers were captured. The second intifada began. Gaza was still part of Israel. A high school friend went to the beach by bus one day. The bus was bombed. She was killed. Another high school classmate died a year later in a bus."

Those losses do not stir revenge in Elizabeth, who sees hope in efforts such as Rabbis for Human Rights, which she said is "on the left" of the Jewish community on Israeli politics. Many Israeli leaders, she said, are on the right wing.

"There's always the sense that we can't critique Israel if we do

not live there, but we can and have to when we see injustice," she said. "The way to peace is to make peace with Palestinians."

"Like any peace negotiation, there are three steps forward and then someone throws a bomb because of fear of financial loss," she said, affirming that there are human rights concerns for both Jewish and Arab Israelis.

"It's fair to criticize Israel and look at all issues. Some do not understand that Israel lives surrounded by Arabs who don't want Israel to exist," she said. "We need to not let fear get in the way of progress to peace."

Fear means Israelis don't let Arab families visit family members, or move freely to engage in business, so Palestinians are angry and economically impacted, Elizabeth said.

"I criticize, defend and love Israel, and I believe we need to make peace with Palestine if we are to exist there," Elizabeth said.

For information, call 313-6788 or email goldstein@gonzaga.edu.

Gonzaga University offers students perspectives from world's religions

Linda Schearing, chair of the Religious Studies Department at Gonzaga University, said that hiring Elizabeth Goldstein was part of the department's intentional effort to have someone on staff to teach Judaism.

Five years ago, the department hired John Sheveland to teach inter-religious dialogue and world religions. His expertise is in the Eastern religions. Father Patrick Baraza is a lecturer, teaching African Catholicism and Islam.

Next year the department seeks someone to teach fundamental moral theology, with a possible secondary expertise in environment and ecology.

"The fact that Elizabeth is a rabbi was serendipitous," Linda said, adding her appreciation that the rabbi is also involved in outreach to Jewish students through University Ministry.

For information, call 313-6797 or email schearing@gonzaga.edu.

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Interfaith program gives overview of welcoming, coming of age traditions

Recognizing that each faith has ways to celebrate birth, honor children and recognize a coming of age time, the Spokane Interfaith Council held a panel presentation in October at the Cathedral of St. John to discuss those traditions.

In addition to presentations by representatives of Baha'i, Latter-Day Saints, the Center for Spiritual Living, Catholic, Muslim and Hindu traditions, 30 participants engaged in one-to-one discussions on their traditions.

Baha'i traditions

Joe Urlacher, active with the Interfaith Council for many years, said the main teaching of Baha'i is that all religions are one and represent aspirations of humankind. Their prophets and manifestations of God all receive God's Word, he said. Baha'i, which started in 1844, has no ritual for welcoming children, said Joe, an East Valley elementary school teacher.

"We teach children virtues. The first is unity," he said. "The second is love.

"We believe children from four to six years already possess a pure, kindly, radiant heart," he said.

He said Baha'i help children internalize God's word in Baha'i sacred writings and learn about different religions.

"In time, they own God's word for themselves," Joe said. "At age 15, the Baha'i faith recognizes children as spiritual adults. They can make a declaration of their faith, affirming how they will recognize their purpose in life to follow God's word and Baha'i laws of fasting and prayer."

Latter-Day Saints traditions

Dave Ross, co-director of public affairs for the Inland Northwest Area of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, said the family, with the church's help, orients children to believe in Jesus Christ as savior.

"Babies are not baptized in the first few weeks but are blessed at a service and have their names recorded in the church records. Children attend primary classes from ages three to 12, and learn principles of goodness and belief in the Bible as God's Word and in the Book of Revelation of the Book of Mormon, another testament of Christ," he said.

Eight is considered at the age of accountability when they are baptized for the remission of their sins and become full members.

At 12, there is a "coming of age" when girls enter the young women's program and boys enter the young men's group. Young men are ordained to the priesthood and can serve the sacraments during Sunday services, he said.

Dave added that when young men turn 19, they are encouraged



Shonna Bartlett and Joe Niemiec converse after the program.

to serve a two-year mission.

Science of Mind traditions

Joe Niemiec, co-minister of the Center for Spiritual Living, said his faith is based on the Science of Mind and writings of Ernest Holmes. While some in the New Thought community consider themselves Christian, others see Jesus as a great teacher and study the Bible metaphorically.

"We consider that a child is born perfect, not with original sin, so we introduce and welcome a child to the spiritual community by sprinkling the child with water to acknowledge his or her perfection," he said.

The center has primary classes for children up to 12 and a youth group for 13- to 19-year-olds. The youth experience includes an annual summer week of intense seminars, part of a coming of age process men and women do separately.

Roman Catholic traditions

Shonna Bartlett, program director of Gonzaga University's Ministry Institute and member of St. Ann's parish, said Roman Catholics have prayers of blessing for pregnant women, new babies, cribs and all aspects of life.

While once baptism was viewed as a sacrament to protect a newborn from going to Hell, it is now about welcoming a baby into the community of faith, and about the parents, godparents and community promising to raise the child in the faith, she said.

Full initiation into the Roman Catholic Church includes three sacraments: baptism, first Eucharist and confirmation. At seven, considered the age of reason after a child has done some study, a child has first Eucharist, formerly first communion. Confirmation, which was once a sacrament for junior or senior high youth, is now offered at the first Eucharist.

"Then children at St. Ann's can be lectors, Eucharistic ministers and do other liturgical tasks so

they know they are part of the community," Shonna said.

"There is not a coming of age ceremony in the Catholic Church itself, but ethnic groups have welcoming ceremonies, such as the Quinceañera celebration of Hispanic cultures when a young woman turns 15 and makes a profession of faith," she said.

Muslim traditions

Nasreen Shah, a student at Eastern Washington University and member of the Spokane Islamic Center, said Muslim traditions vary, because people coming to the center are from so many national and cultural heritages.

When a baby is born, parents recite the Asan, or call to prayer, in the baby's right ear: "God is the Greatest. God is One. Mohammed is the last and final messenger. Always come to prayer. God is the Greatest. God is One."

Parents choose a child's name from the Koran. In some cultures, such as Pakistani, parents may sacrifice a lamb or goat and give the meat to the poor.

Coming of age for Muslims, she said, is at 14 or 15. Then a young person is treated as an adult and expected "to participate in more of the regulatory traditions, such as fasting during Ramadan."

Parents teach prayers and the Koran, having children recite teachings in the Koran, she said.

Growing up in Spokane, Nasreen attended Sunday classes with children of four other families at a North Spokane house, the Spokane Islamic Center's former meeting place. Because the Muslim community is larger today, they use a curriculum.

"We learned Suras—Arabic prayers—so we had to learn the alphabet. We learned in the Koran of stories of Noah, the prophets, Moses and Jesus," she said.

Hindu traditions

Sreedharani Nandagopol, a Hindu, who teaches math at Spokane Falls Community College and leads the South Asia Cultural Association, said she could not briefly summarize 10,000 years of Hindu tradition, because it "is not a structured religion."

Children are considered children from birth to five, and then are youth. Teachings are through home life.

"Hinduism represents one billion people in India with more than 1,000 languages," said Sreedharani, who is from South India and does not know North Indian traditions.

The main traditions include a baby shower and blessings in the seventh month of pregnancy. From then through birth and after, the mother is not left alone because of difficulties in late months of pregnancy and early months after birth with the possibility of postpartum depression.

Grandfathers take a baby out-

side and sit in the sun on days one and two, to relieve jaundice.

"Hinduism is a practical faith combining science and religion," she said.

The 10th day, a baby is named, often for a Hindu god or goddess, so names of gods and goddesses are always on people's tongues, she said. A child is taken to the temple from then on.

There are celebrations of the first solid food, haircut and other firsts, Sree said, "because we like holidays." The Saturday after the 10th day is a festival to the goddess of education. Children learn first to respect their mothers, second their fathers, third their teachers and fourth their guests.

Children learn at home as they hear parents and grandparents chanting prayers at home every day and see how they live.

Boys come of age between seven and 15, and girls, at their first menstrual period.

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Small bites of bright ideas offer a new model for media activism

A new TV news project is doing what The Fig Tree has been doing for 27 years, celebrating the many little ways people are helping and can help address issues to make a difference in the lives of people. Their focus is global health challenges.

The first "Be the Change: Save a Life" show on ABC's 20/20 ended each segment by describing solutions suggesting that viewers can help with small gifts: \$20 provides a snugly wrap that keeps a newborn warm in India, or \$15 a month provides a container of peanut-based paste that can end malnutrition for children in Guatemala, or chlorine tablets and jugs of water to use until permanent pipes or wells can bring clean drinking water to Bangladesh.

"Be the Change: Save a Life" focuses on solutions, recognizing that by sharing news about what is possible through people's ingenious ideas and commitments, lives can be improved and saved.

ABC News plans a year-long project to focus attention on diseases and health conditions that disproportionately affect

the world's poorest people.

As we know, when people are *informed* about what people are doing to transform lives, they become *inspired*. Many may simply be encouraged to continue what they are already doing, knowing they are not alone. Many others may become *involved*, finding their niche to create solutions using their gifts and resources.

Accompanied by the saveone.net website, the program offers descriptions of the projects and videos summarizing them.

One page suggests: "Put your creativity to use. Ordinary people share their ideas to fuel a global water movement. You could be next. Take action." The interactive feature of the web means people can instantaneously click to make donations that may improve the quality of people's lives.

Communication is key. Imagine if this focus spreads in the mainline media and continues for more than one year-long project. Imagine if journalists deflect their attention from the usual ho-hum sensation of wars, sex, crime, celebrity and polarizing

politics. Imagine if it becomes popular to cover solutions, to tell stories of how people's sufferings can be alleviated.

Actually, I've been tired for a long time of the ever escalating violence, sex and media fare, shoveled out to the point it's numbing and boring.

Public broadcasting veers away from the junk-food media diet—that purportedly assures profits—generally offering a menu to stir thinking, tell stories, investigate issues and raise awareness.

What's refreshing about ABC's effort is it combines media immediacy with enough depth to understand and become concerned, plus a dash of hope and a way to act.

In addition, as an "antidote for bad news," NBC Nightly News has shown since 2009 segments on "Making a Difference," highlighting good news of people giving time to help others.

Let's hope others catch on. Then we can spend some time in coming years, yes, informed of problems—conflicts, crimes, corruption—so we can be involved in the

democratic process and see with new eyes beyond the problems to the many, many people working on solutions.

Through solutions, we can see impoverished strangers far away as people like us, caring about families. Media can help us be in solidarity with people who suffer, learning beyond simple health-care fixes that there may be systems of injustice behind inequities causing their suffering.

Imagine, if corporate leaders put some effort into these projects, met people and became involved with them as brothers and sisters sharing the planet.

Imagination is what I hope the ABC program stirs.

That's what we seek to stir. Feedback coming with donations let us know people are refreshed by our content.

It's a joy to be part of this journalistic venture, and we look forward in 2011 to educating more people on and modeling solutions-oriented journalism.

Mary Stamp
Editor

Well, the taxes are cut for everyone, now we need the promised jobs

We have been told repeatedly by various members of Congress that one of the main reasons for continuing to give tax breaks to the wealthy is because the wealthy are the ones who create jobs.

When it has been pointed out that they haven't exactly excelled at job creation during the eight years that they have had the current tax reductions, they explain that they haven't been sure of which way government policies, inflation, the world situation or any of a number of other iffy situations were going.

When they are more confident, we are assured, they will act. That sounds like the fix we are all in. Fear of the unknown is always with us.

People who have jobs are afraid of losing them, even as they are having to work

harder than ever because of personnel cutbacks around them.

A couple hopes that the refrigerator that is making new and mysterious noises is going to last a while longer because they fear laying out money to buy a new one.

A church board fearfully avoids spending on outreach, insisting that, "We have to take care of ourselves first." Pervasive fear narrows our outlook and our choices when what we need is a broader outlook.

Let's try an exercise in supposing. The United States Senate has long been known as a millionaires' club. The House of Representatives is catching up.

According to a number of news sources, there are now 235 millionaires in Congress. That comes to 44 percent of the 535 members, and 50 of those have a net worth of

more than \$10 million.

They belong to the group that they have been telling us creates jobs. Shouldn't they begin to take that job seriously and create real jobs? Steady jobs. Jobs that contribute to the common good. Jobs in the United States. Jobs with living wages. Jobs with health care benefits comparable to those enjoyed by members of Congress.

They could pool their tax savings and make a real difference in our country's wellbeing. It shouldn't take any more legal or organizational expertise than getting elected.

Wind power is an appropriate choice for this project. It's a small but promising part of our economy, and contributes to the balance of trade, because other countries are

buying the technology. It would contribute even more if more of the equipment were manufactured in the United States.

Jobs could be developed at all levels and throughout the country: research and development, constructing factories, skilled industrial work, selection of sites and installation and maintenance of sites.

Everyone could find something to be happy about: an expanded job market, lowering the deficit, green energy, becoming a positive role model. It's an interesting pipe dream.

The point, however, is that we're all in this together, and each of us needs to do what we can to make a positive contribution—even if it requires something radically different from us.

Nancy Minard - Editorial Team

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

Former President Dwight Eisenhower told us that: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed."

While people are losing their jobs and homes, state and local governments are cutting needed services. In Washington State, more than 40,000 people have lost basic health coverage, funds to reduce class size in our schools have been cut 70 percent, college tuition has risen, library hours are being cut, and the Governor has put forward an all-cuts budget again. Meanwhile, taxpaying families in Eastern Washington have spent \$2.1 billion for the wars since 2001.

Given that picture, we at the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane are launching a "Bring Our Billion\$ Home" campaign in January. Its goal is for local elected bodies like the city council to urge our Congressional delegation to stop funding the wars, occupations and military activities in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, and to shift priorities to put money now wasted on the bloated Pentagon budget into putting people back to work and funding education, health care and community services.

We are launching signature gathering on January 17 at the Martin Luther King march and celebration. Our March conference will help people connect the dots between militarism and social and economic exploitation, oppression and poverty. In April, we will hold a "Bring the Billion\$ Home Community Speak-Out," where survivors of this crisis and affected agencies can tell their stories.

The fiscal crisis that now afflicts nearly every state, county and city government may be presenting an opportunity to

generate pressure on Congress from a different source – local elected officials. Our state's crisis is a symptom of our unstable and structurally insufficient state revenue system and our country's toxic addiction to militarism. As resources are sucked into war, local governments receive less and less from state and federal sources, and communities feel the pinch.

Across the country, there is a resurgence of local organizing efforts to move our money from the Pentagon to our communities to fund the jobs and services we need.

PJALS has joined the New Priorities Network, a national effort to support breaking down the silos between movements, building power at the grassroots, organizing for the long term, focusing on what matters to our neighbors, and connecting the economic pain of today with the 'justice economy' that's possible.

Liz Moore, director, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane

In my family, hunting and fishing were favorite pastimes, so most of my childhood summers were spent at deer camp. By the time I was 10 or so, I discovered that I didn't have the heart to pull the trigger, but I still had the eyes and ears of a hunter.

Years of sitting on deer stands with my mother and riding along skid roads in our old Bronco with my dad and brothers had trained my senses. I learned to distinguish feral hogs from a humped dark rock or a burnt stump and to steady binoculars on the edge of the Bronco's bed, picking antlers from a tangle of brush.

My native senses had been honed for a new thing, a kind of questioning. It's not so different from the question from John the Baptist: Are you the one? Like a hunter

straining to perceive a subtle variation of texture or the betrayal of movement, John tries to make out how this "one" fits into the Story he's been living.

We're all John the Baptist—each charged to make straight the paths of the Messiah, each called to sort out God from not-God. Are you the one? It's the question we ask as we try to spot Emmanuel among the thickets and brambles of our lives.

It takes some practice—this whetting of our spiritual senses. Left to our natural instincts we're likely to perceive God only where God is least threatening to our personal status quo. To fully perceive the transforming power of God-with-us is to risk all we think we are.

If we mean to live fully into God's Story, nothing less will do. We must become God hunters, learning God's ways, God's habits, God's movements in our lives and in the world. By persevering in prayer and contemplation, we train our ears to hear God moving among us. By stubbornly staring into the undergrowth, our eyes will learn to spot God in the midst of it: God-with-us.

**Kris Christensen
Holy Trinity Episcopal**

Hospitality was deeply ingrained in the Israelite culture, prompting Mary and Joseph to invite travel-weary magi and their entourage in when they knocked.

The wise men introduced themselves and said they were "from the East." Was it Arabia? Mesopotamia? It was a long way away, and they were tired, hungry and thirsty. They must be fed.... Mary had only half a loaf of barley bread, some goat milk and maybe a little wine. She would make do. Hospitality and acceptance were important.

It *could* have happened like that. This much is certain, the wise men came from

a foreign country. They were dressed in an unusual way. They spoke with an accent. They represented a different ethnic culture and set of values. They were total strangers. Nevertheless, the door was open to them. How could we expect anything else when Jesus is in the house?

**The Rev. Wilbur Rees - Shalom
United Church of Christ - Richland**

Is it ethical for a Christian to "re-gift"? Does frugality trump deceit? Is it still a blessing if you pass the blessing on without enjoying it yourself? Is it disrespect to the giver if you show respect for the next recipient by passing the gift on to them? Do the original giver's feelings have to be considered?

If you think about it, Christianity is mostly a matter of re-gifting. Everything about our faith originates with God, the Giver of All. So go for it. Re-gift galore. Re-gift your delight and your faith all year.

**The Rev. Carl Martin
Audubon Park United Methodist**

The relationship of the church to the culture is changing. We live in a post-Christendom age. We need to see this in the larger context. The church reflects what is happening in the culture. We are in the midst of some major social, cultural, economic and political changes, at a level never experienced before. This can be unsettling. We fear we are losing control of what used to be. We need to step back and look at the larger sweep of history, a 500 year picture, and a global picture, and remember that Jesus, too, was born into a world of fear, war, power politics and poverty. What might the hope he brought look like for us?

**The Rev. David Helseth
Englewood Christian - Yakima**

Serving young will have long-lasting effect

Continued from page 1

"In a down-turned economy, it was incredible to have such partnerships behind this project," she said. "Everyone acknowledged the incentives for economic development."

Last May, the NECC, which has served people in Northeast Spokane for 30 years, reached an agreement with the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic (YVFWC) and the Spokane District Dental Society Foundation (SDDSF) to open the clinics.

The medical clinic has capacity to serve 100 patients a day and the dental clinic, 75 patients daily. Access to the Riverstone Family Health Northeast Clinic is not limited by geography.

"We welcome everyone, including the East Central and West Central neighborhoods who want to use our services," Jean said.

Through their partnership, the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic brings expertise in community health care to offer affordable health care to families in need, said NECC board president Bill Duffy.

Since 1978, the YVFWC has offered low-income communities medical and dental care, behavioral health care and counseling, pharmacy services, treatment for substance abuse, community health services and nutritional services in clinics across Washington and Oregon.

Spokane Falls Family Clinic, an affiliate of YVFWC, will continue to serve patients at 120 W. Mission Ave. under the supervision SFFC director Randy Hartman.

The YVFWC provides operational funds for the clinics.

Maria Gadayan, SFFC office supervisor, said about 20 health-care providers and staff serve the Riverstone Clinic—family practice doctors with obstetrics training, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, medical assistants and registered nurses.

The clinic also features on-site lab services, a pharmacy and a behavioral health component.

Organizers said the NECC service area has one of the highest childhood obesity rates in Spokane, with 26 percent of 12- to 16-year olds overweight.

"With better health care, preventative care and nutrition, our neighbors will be healthier and better able to work and reach their potential. The opportunity for regular check-ups will prevent greater health problems which

strain our community because of their higher cost," Bill added. "The ability to treat children from a young age will ensure a healthy start to their lives."

The Spokane District Dental Society Foundation began as a group of dentists in 2006 and became a nonprofit in 2009. They promote oral health and opportunities for direct delivery of dental care to people in need in the community, plus educational programs and collaboration with existing programs. Riverstone is their first clinic.

Mark Koday, dental director for YVFWC, said the clinic is the largest in their network.

"If we start young, we have a chance to affect the overall health of the community," he said.

YVFWC will bring dentists and

support staff from the Spokane Falls Family Clinic. Dentists from YVFWC will serve most chairs, leaving three open for volunteer specialists from Spokane District Dental Society.

In addition to general dentists and specialists, the dental clinic will house University of Washington School of Dentistry students completing their residencies through the Regional Initiatives in Dental Education (RIDE) program.

The program was designed to help meet the oral health needs of rural and underserved communities in the Northwest and to increase the likelihood the students will select further training or practice opportunities in rural and underserved regions.

For information, call 326-4343.

Calendar of Events

- Jan 6 & 20 • **PeaceWorks**, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m., 838-7870
- Jan 7 • **Peace Corps returnees exhibit**, Latin America and the Caribbean, First Friday Art Walk, Express Employment, 331 W. Main, 5 p.m. on, 868-0302
- Jan 8 • **Inland NW Chapter of Germans from Russia Heritage Society**, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 314 S. Spruce, 1 p.m. to midnight, 467-7572
- Jan 8 & 9 • **Boy Scout Troop 304 Christmas Tree Recycling**, Rosauers at 14th & Lincoln, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 363-1882
- Jan 11 • **Human Trafficking Vigil**, Women's Hearth, 920 W. Second, 6 p.m., 455-4249
- Jan 12 • **New Year's Potluck** for the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, 35 W. Main, 5 p.m., 838-7870
- Jan 13 • **All City Prayer Event**, Greater Spokane Association of Evangelicals, Zion Christian Fellowship, 545 E. Wellesley, 7 p.m., 487-7429
- Jan 14 • **American Cancer Society Relay for Life** of Coeur d'Alene Kick-Off Party, Kootenai County Fairgrounds, ID, 6 p.m., spencer@in.com
- Jan 15 • **Martin Luther King Family Outreach Scholarship Benefit Concert**, Calvary Baptist, 203 E. Third, 6 p.m., 455-8722
- Jan 15 & 16 • **Food & Hygiene Supply Drive for YWCA's Women's Safe Shelter**, Health & Beauty Spa Show, Spokane Community College Lair, 1810 N. Greene St., Sat. 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sun. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., 218-6519
- Jan 16 • **Martin Luther King, Jr., Commemorative Celebration**, Holy Temple Church of God in Christ, 806 W. Indiana, 5 p.m., 455-8722
- Jan 16 • **Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Worship Service**, Central Lutheran, Yakima, 3 p.m.
- Jan 17 • **Martin Luther King, Jr., Rally and March**, INB Performing Arts Center, 334 W. Spokane Falls Blvd., 10 a.m.; **Resource Fair**, Riverpark Square, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and **Children's Learning Resource Fair**, STA Plaza, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., 455-8722
- Jan 17 • **Martin Luther King Walk** from 5th and MLK Blvd. in Yakima to Yakima Convention Center, walk begins at noon
- Jan 20 • **Spokane City Forum Luncheon Lecture**, First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar, 11:45 a.m., 777-1555
- Jan 21 • **Spirituality Support Group**, St. Joseph Family Center, 1016 N. Superior, 7:30 p.m. to midnight, 483-6495 x 16
- Jan 22 • **Eastern Washington Legislative Conference**, "Beyond the Climate of Fear: Empowering the Community of Faith to Act," Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 535-4112
- Jan 22 • **PEARL Process workshop**, North Idaho Unity Church, 4465 N. 15th, Coeur d'Alene, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., 255-6676
- Jan 27 • **Our Place Ministries Benefit** "Chicago: A Musical Vaudeville," Gonzaga University Theater, 6:30 p.m., 326-7267
- Jan 28 & 29 • **Basic Lay Speaking Course**, Grand Coulee Community Church, 6:30 to 9 p.m. Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturday, 509-633-3319
- Jan 29, Feb 5 & 12 • **Embracing Non-Violence** Workshops, Peace & Justice Action League of Spokane, 35 W. Main, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., 838-7870
- Feb 2 • **Fig Tree distribution**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m., 535-1813, 535-1813
- Feb 3 • **Fig Tree Board**, Emmanuel Family Life Center, 631 S. Richard Allen Ct., 1 p.m., 535-1813



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Author-teacher expands awareness of cultural, spiritual traditions

By Yvonne Lopez-Morton

Spokane author and educator Sarah Conover's inspiration for her books comes from her travels and a commitment to share with children and adults the richness of the world's traditions of wisdom and spirituality.

As a teacher and public TV journalist, she has helped connect people of different cultures and has fostered open media.

Through her books, she engages children, young adults, educators, and parents to look beyond their own understandings of life so they consult and profit from the wisdom traditions of humankind.

After earning a master's in fine arts and creative writing at Eastern Washington University in 1998 and a teaching certificate from Gonzaga University in 2000, she worked from 2001 to 2008 writing books and teaching honors humanities, American studies, radio journalism and a writers' workshop at the West Valley School District.

Sarah grew up outside New York City, reared with her sister, Aileen, by an aunt after their parents and grandparents were lost in 1957 sailing off Key West when Sarah was 13 months old.

In her teens, she began exploring spiritual options outside her Presbyterian roots. She attended friends' bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs and attended Catholic and Episcopal services.

While earning a bachelor's degree in religious studies at the University of Colorado, she studied martial arts with an Aikido master in Japan. She sampled various churches as an adult while living in Northern California.

"I have been a seeker from the get go," Sarah said.

Sarah met her husband Doug Robnett, during her 15 years in Colorado. From 1983 to 1989, she produced documentaries and series for Denver public TV.

She became a senior producer at Internews, an international non-profit fostering open media. In that role, she produced "Agenda for a Small Planet," a series that aired in 33 countries, and many public television programs, including the National Academy of Science's "The Medical Implications of Nuclear War."

In Northern California where they moved in 1988, Sarah, who became Buddhist, worked part time for Internews and spent time at home with her children.

When the family moved to Eastern Washington in 1992, they lived in a rural area outside Spokane where most of their



Sarah Conover has shared in classes, books and broadcasting.

neighbors were Christian.

In her book, *At Work in Life's Garden*, she describes her life there: "The dissonance between our beliefs and our country neighbors' beliefs proved a rich opportunity for the children, albeit not always pleasant. Ironically, the situation became the ultimate ready-made lesson on tolerance—giving us many opportunities to discuss world religions, prejudice, fanaticism and wars."

Shortly after moving to Eastern Washington, she founded and directed for four years the Doula Spokane Program at Childbirth and Parenting Assistance (CAPA), a program of Catholic Family Services that supported teen mothers pursuing education.

In *At Work in Life's Garden*, Sarah said working at Catholic Family Services introduced her to "remarkable Christians who were as close to saints" as anyone she had ever read about.

In 1999, the family left behind their rural lifestyle and moved to Spokane's South Hill.

Sarah's first book, *Kindness: A Treasury of Buddhist Wisdom for Children and Parents*, published in 2000, shares traditional and humorous Buddhist tales. Spokane artist Valerie Wahl illustrated the stories that encourage people to let go of anger, fear and greedy desire to embrace gladness.

In 2001, the American Library Association's Booklist magazine named this book one of the five best spiritual books for children.

Valerie also illustrated Sarah's 2003 young adult/adult anthology, *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents*. In 2004, *Newsweek* named it one of the best multicultural books, and the American Folklore Society gave it the Aesop Prize.

For this book, Sarah collaborated with Freda Crane of the Islamic Society of America.

"It draws not only from the core of Islamic spirituality and ethics, the Qur'an and hadiths (the observed traditions) but also from mystical verse, folk tales and

exemplary figures of the Islamic narrative," Sarah said.

She wrote on Islam, because of a lack of material on Islam for Western children and young adults. She had studied Islam in a comparative religion class at the University of Colorado.

With Spokane author Tracy Springberry, Sarah co-edited the 2005 book, *At Work in Life's Garden: Writers on the Spiritual Adventure of Parenting*. It will be re-released next spring.

The book features a collection of essays by ecumenical and contemporary writers, such as Barbara Kingsolver, Anne Lamott, Barry Lopez and local writers.

Half the proceeds from the first edition went to Mercy Corps. The humanitarian agency CARE will benefit from the re-release.

In addition, Sarah collaborated in 2003 with four Spokane women authors on *Daughters of the Desert: Remarkable Women from the Christian, Jewish and Islamic Traditions*, 18 stories of often-overlooked women who played important roles in the early days of Judaism, Christianity and Islam 4,000 to 1,300 years ago.

Although women played key roles in the development of the three faith traditions, men who recorded and copied the Scriptures and other documents rarely recognized them, she said.

Her 2008 book, *Harmony: A Treasury of Chinese Wisdom for Children and Parents*, co-authored with Chen Hui, draws on 24 ancient Chinese "chengyu"—Chinese sayings and proverbs—and provides insight into what largely defines Chinese culture.

As a teacher, Sarah has expanded horizons and cultural connections of area teens. While teaching for West Valley schools, she produced "Raise Your Voices" on KYRS Thin Air Radio. She said it was the only public affairs program produced by teens in the Inland Northwest.

Sarah encouraged her students to reach outside Eastern Washington and participate in a pen pal project with classes in Egypt.

"When the United States invaded Iraq, my students were in the second year of their pen pal project," Sarah said.

The Egyptian students told the West Valley pen pals how upset they were about the invasion.

"They were passionate," Sarah said. "My students were taken aback because they had only our media perspective on the war."

Despite their expressing strong feelings, the American-Egyptian friendships led to continued dialogue between the students and a study of media war coverage.

For information, call 979-3376 or email sarahconover@mac.com.

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