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Reality is half a mile away

By Mary Stamp

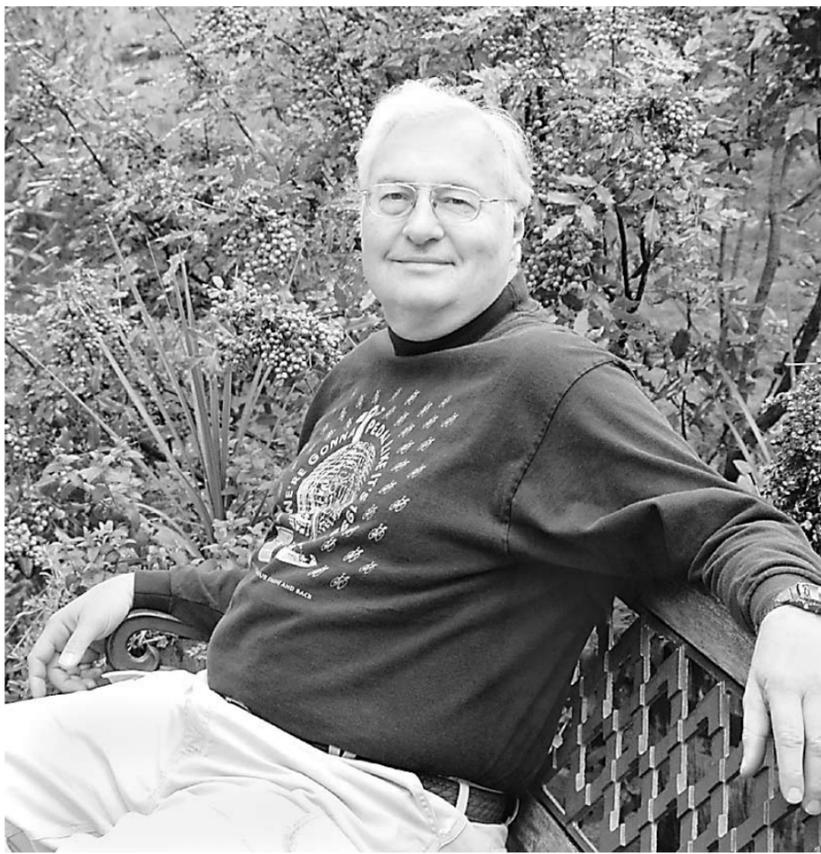
Joe Kramarz challenges Americans to go “an extra half mile to encounter real people”—be it in Mexico or Spokane.

On his first international mission trip 10 years ago—after doing some volunteer mission work in Spokane—he stayed with a mission team in a Presbyterian church on the island of Cozumel, 12 miles from Cancun, a half mile from the coastal boardwalk tourists would visit from cruise ships anchored off-shore.

After a day of pouring cement for a community center, Joe took time off to go to the tourist area and relax. Watching tourists paw through tee shirts and other tourist items to take home to say they had been to Mexico, he wanted to invite them to walk with him a few blocks to see the “real Mexico of people living in stick houses with hammocks hung from wooden beams and hibachi cookers in corners, women selling tortillas on the street while their children play in the dirt, and people struggling with life.”

Silently he sat in the shade and realized there are also half-mile walks people could take in the

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Joe Kramarz goes the extra steps to encounter people in poverty in Spokane, Mexico, Honduras, Romania and Cuba to gain a sense of other realities of life beyond suburban comfort in a North Spokane neighborhood.

Fig Tree continues to upgrade website

On The Fig Tree’s website at www.thefigtree.org, newspaper readers can find color photos, more photos, articles and information not included in the newspaper.

“When someone asked what Donna Hanson had said to Pope John Paul in 1987, we found a copy and added it,” said editor Mary Stamp. “We also plan a breaking news box to link visitors to our website to websites with developing news on disasters and issues of concern in the faith community.”

In November, The Fig Tree will contract with a web designer to develop a new design that will prepare the site for content from around the Northwest.

“More people and funds will make these changes possible,” Mary said. “Readers who are not yet supporters may join the sponsors.”

To pay the designer and purchase equipment to maintain the site and develop multi-media content, there is an immediate need for \$9,000.

The Fig Tree needs volunteers to serve one morning a week in the office at Unity House and additional staff to keep up with the growing demand for its services.

Donors may send the form on page 2. Volunteers may call 535-1813.

Disasters build up ecumenical ties, ongoing stream of donations, actions

While Lynn Magnuson sighs at how busy the regional Church World Service/CROP Walk office in Seattle is in the midst of the stream of disasters, she knows she is busy because people care and want to help.

Relief efforts have created ecumenical opportunities.

Despite the successive disasters, she is hopeful because denominations in the United States and partner agencies throughout the world are working together.

“European aid agencies have approached us because we have been present in Pakistan and Afghanistan for 45 years, and have been aiding Afghan refugees there for last 10 years. European partners are sending \$3 million so our partner agencies in Pakistan and Afghanistan can respond to the earthquake survivors.

“Agencies throughout the world are working together because needs are so overwhelming that it takes everyone,” Lynn said.

With the need for shelter, CWS purchased 45 tons of tents in Oslo, Norway, and airlines shipped them free. The Pakistani army is

dropping CWS food and shelter packages in inaccessible areas.

Lynn likes the quote: “Every disaster is a local disaster for the people who live there.”

“When we as Christians talk about who are our neighbors, we need to realize everyone in the world is our neighbor—anyone who is hungry or homeless is experiencing a disaster,” she said.

In conjunction with World Vision, CWS had recently trained 2,000 teachers in disaster preparedness at Mansehra in northern Pakistan. That training, according to CWS reports, saved lives.

One teacher, Mushtaq Ahmad, applied his learnings during the earthquake when he was at school. He quickly evacuated a majority of school children and other teachers, saving their lives.

When Hurricane Wilma hit Southern Florida on Oct. 23, Church World Service, similarly, was ready to help. The area has been hit so many times that CWS helped form local groups, like the network that the Washington Association of Churches, CWS and Washington Voluntary Orga-

nizations Active in Disasters are developing in the Northwest.

CWS, which has been in Mansehra 20 years, has more than 70 staff and volunteers there.

Doug Bean, a member of the Cathedral of St. John in Spokane and recently retired staff from CWS, worked half-time for seven years in Mansehra.

“My immediate concern was for the safety of staff and families. While the 10 staff are fine, about 60 of their family members died and 30 were injured.”

About 90 percent of the homes were destroyed, so the staff are living in tents, he said.

Doug’s second concern was for people in rugged terrain, whose geographic setting does not permit aid to reach them quickly.

“About 48,000 in that one area are known dead. Government and nongovernmental organization (NGO) teams seek to reach people with aid before the cold weather of November cuts off helicopter access to remote villages and leads to more deaths from cold, exposure, starvation and

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Camp PEACE organizer brings new vision, energy

By expanding Camp PEACE, Sarah McConnel hopes to draw together stereotypical cliques in high schools—from cheerleaders to debaters—as well as to build interracial and intercultural bridges of understanding and respect.

An AmeriCorps volunteer with the Interfaith Council of the Inland Northwest since early October, she is recruiting high school teams from Eastern Washington and North Idaho for retreats Nov. 10 to 12 and Dec. 1 to 3 at N-Sid-Sen near Harrison, Idaho.

Peggy Federici of North Idaho College will facilitate the experiences that give students tools to take back to their schools to break down bigotry, harassment and bullying.

Sarah seeks to form an organization for students who have participated in Camp PEACE to plan reunion retreats and follow-up meetings to re-energize them to work throughout their high school years. She is also networking with the Task Force on Race Relations and other agencies working on youth and diversity issues.

Sarah, a 2005 graduate in theatre arts from Gonzaga University, plans to continue work for a master’s degree in higher education and student affairs with the goal of working in residence life on a college campus.

As a residence advisor beginning her sophomore year, she realized that education extends beyond classrooms into the rest of a person’s life. Through her work with the Council, she hopes to learn about diversity education.

The council has two other AmeriCorps positions: Joscelyn Vila is coordinating the Circle of Caring. A coordinator for the Faith and Environment Network will begin in January.

Continued on page 2

Religion News Briefs

Around the World

Ecumenical News International, PO Box 2100
CH - 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland Tel: +41-22 791 6111
Fax: +41-22 788 7244 Email: eni@eni.ch

U.S. group concerned about Afghan journalist

New York (ENI). U.S. advocates of religious freedom have raised concerns about a two-year prison sentence meted out to an Afghan journalist convicted by a court in his country for blasphemy against Islam. Journalist Ali Mohaqiq Nasab, editor of Haqooq-i-Zan—"Women's Rights"—was sentenced in October for articles that upheld equality between the sexes and questioned the need for harsh punishments, such as death by stoning, against Muslims who convert to other religions.

Franciscans demand apology about war crimes

Warsaw (ENI). The Roman Catholic Franciscan order in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina has demanded an apology from United Nations' war crimes prosecutor Carla Del Ponte after she accused members of harboring a general wanted for war crimes. "We have been deeply injured by these undeserved claims," the order's five provinces said in a joint letter. "Our love for truth entitles us to expect a public apology."

European church bodies seek migrants' rights

Geneva (ENI). Church agencies in Europe urge European Union countries to ratify a key United Nations agreement on the rights of migrants as part of a strategy to combat human trafficking. "While migrants move in greater numbers and across bigger distances, their legal status is still the subject of diverging national legislation. This leads to problems, among which trafficking and new forms of slavery are the most dramatic," the agencies said in a submission to the EU.

Slovak cleric urges study of 'reality' TV

Warsaw (ENI). No-holds-barred television "reality" television programs draw mass audiences around the world while religious leaders often deprecate what they see as the broadcasting of immorality for blatant commercial gain. The head of a mainly-Protestant church grouping in once-communist Slovakia says churches should find out why such shows are fashionable before they call for them to be banned.

Church seeks declaration of food shortage

Lilongwe (ENI). Malawi's Council of Churches, grouping 22 denominations, has urged President Bingu wa Mutharika to declare the central African country to be in a state of national disaster in order to draw more international food aid to address a hunger crisis that is already claiming lives.

Reformed leader appeals for economic justice

Evian (ENI). The fabric of the world is being ripped apart by an economic system that makes a mockery of the biblical promise that all people are created in the image of God and should be treated with dignity and respect, said the Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) president at the annual meeting of the governing body of the alliance of 75 million Christians from 107 countries. The meeting set a slimmed-down structure that will reduce costs but involve more members. The WARC also told the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa that it must publicly recognize that its support for apartheid was heretical before it can be readmitted into the alliance from which it was suspended in 1982.

Zimbabwe's chiefs back ban on polygamy

Harare (ENI). Zimbabwe's traditional chiefs have backed a recent decision by local Apostolic and Zionist churches to ban polygamy to counter the spread of HIV/AIDS, which kills 2,000 people every week in this southern African country of 12.7 million people. "The ban will certainly work in that the figures of new HIV infections will be reduced with time," Chief Fortune Charumbira, president of the Zimbabwe Council of Chiefs, was quoted as saying by the government-owned Sunday Mail newspaper.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Teachers can instill a love of diversity

Continued from page 1

Attending a private high school near Portland, Ore., Sarah began to open her eyes to the world outside what she experienced as a child and a teen. She grew up in the Catholic Church and found Jesuit Catholic education at Gonzaga poignant for her with its emphasis on mission and justice.

Teachers there instilled in her a life-long love of diversity and intercultural competence.

"The earlier we learn about diversity, the more we absorb and the more passionate we become about it," Sarah said. "I hope we create such passion in high school students, so when they enter college, they will make a difference, too. One person can make a difference."

"We all are different, part of different cultures, but come from the same web of roots," she said. "Even if we look different, we may have another a base of commonality," Sarah said.



Sarah McConnel develops Camp PEACE.

"For example, a black Jewish man and a white Christian man both share some common experiences as men. We need people to look at the simple things that bring them together."

"It can open a world of possibility, whether differences are visible or invisible. I refuse to believe that two people cannot find some

common ground, even if it takes a while," she said.

Sarah hopes Camp PEACE might eventually influence a core of 10 percent of high schools to be passionate about diversity, so they can become creative, educated, diverse, tolerant, loving communities.

For information, call 329-1410.

Faiths collaborate to discern priorities in advocacy

"Common Dreams, Common Work, Creating the Common Good" is the theme for a public policy and advocacy workshop from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 19 at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr. in Spokane.

The Washington Association of Churches (WAC) and the Washington Unitarian Universalist Voices for Justice are sponsoring the event for advocates for social and economic justice.

"The workshop is an opportunity for people of faith to identify common concerns and priorities for the 2006 legislative session," said Alice Woltdt, public policy director for the WAC.

"We usually help lead legislative briefings when the legislature is in session to encourage advo-

cacy on issues, but this is an effort to listen to the faith community up front," she said.

Another workshop will be held in Seattle on Nov. 20. The workshops will inform people of priorities set by their own and other's national faith communities.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's (UUSC) associate program director Jackie Ladd and Washington, D.C., lobbyist Shelley Moskowitz will speak.

The UUSC is the national arm of the Unitarian Universalists, promoting human rights and social justice in the United States and throughout the world.

Jerome Chroman and Corinne Kelley are coordinators of the Unitarian Universalist Voices for Justice, a statewide legislative advocacy network for Unitarians.

"Many Unitarians are active advocates on social justice issues, but we haven't had statewide coordination," Jerome said.

The Washington Association of Churches, which recently celebrated its 30th anniversary, engages the ecumenical community in public policy education, organizing and advocacy.

It gives a prophetic, progressive religious voice in partnership with others for peace, justice, sustainability, fairness and equity, said Mark McDermott, co-chair of the WAC's expanded board.

"The association is building a movement of the faithful in Washington State to create a more just and compassionate society," he added.

For information, call 458-3988 or email donandelva@comcast.net.

UN Association raises funds to clear land mines

As a benefit for Adopt-A-Minefield, the United Nations Association Spokane Chapter is featuring a "Night of 1,000 Dinners" potluck at 6 p.m., Monday, Nov. 14, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr.

With there being 45 to 70 million land mines in 90 nations maiming or killing at least one person every hour, the Spokane

gathering is one of thousands in 50 countries raising awareness and millions of dollars for land mine removal and survivor assistance.

Participants bring food to share—often international dishes—and learn about the continuing devastation by land mines.

About 70 percent of their victims are civilians, mostly children.

The Night of 1,000 Dinners was launched globally in 2001.

For information, call 624-3608.

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Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

hosted at
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Thanksgiving Day - 10 am - Thursday, Nov. 24
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INTERFAITH COUNCIL
Creating Justice, Celebrating Differences

Financial donations and non-perishable food items will be accepted to alleviate hunger in Spokane.

Organized by the Interfaith Council

Two men drive truckload of relief supplies to Louisiana

Dan Ko had written checks for charity and relief projects, but decided it was time for him to take time off from work and drive a rental truck full of relief supplies from Blaine Memorial United Methodist Church to Louisiana.

Brad Miyake, who works for the City of Bellevue utility department, joined him.

"A group from our church sharing the conditions they found on a Volunteer in Missions trip to Honduras made me realize how easy it is to help if we take time," Dan said.

In the past, he wrote a check and let someone else do the legwork.

"God doesn't want us just to write checks if we have the skills and ability to assist," he added.

Brad and Dan left Blaine on Oct. 17 and stopped at Highland Park United Methodist Church in Spokane, where they picked up donations from area United Methodist churches—Audubon Park, Manito, Moran, Covenant, Highland Park, Bonners Ferry, Lewiston and Connell.



Hida Yonago and Jeanne Yamada prepare health kits.

The shipment will assist relief efforts from the United Methodist Committee on Relief's Sager Brown Depot in Baldwin, La. The depot is the denomination's storage and distribution center for domestic and international relief.

People in Eastern Washington and North Idaho donated 25 blan-

kets, some work gloves, a chain saw, 390 health kits, 85 school kits, nine air mattresses, 20 packages of diapers.

The day before the truck came, Hida Yonago and Jeanne Yamada were at Highland Park putting together health kits.

For information, call 535-2687.



Dan Ho and Brad Miyake load boxes of relief supplies.

With the year of disasters, people continue to care and help

Continued from page 1
disease," he said. "I have heard reports that the deaths could go as high as 300,000."

Lynn said CWS staff in Pakistan are talking of potential loss of life greater than the death toll of 175,000 to 275,000 in the Dec. 26 tsunami, because so many people are without shelter.

She sees less response to the earthquake in Pakistan—as well as to hurricane damage in Guatemala and the Yucatan—than to the disasters in the U.S.

"I don't think its because people's capacity for compassion is lessened. People care as much about one disaster as another. It's

more a matter that media coverage has impact on Americans' knowledge of events.

"The tsunami was on front pages for weeks. Affected areas were more accessible for media than the remote mountain areas in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kashmir. Media also make choices of where to send reporters based on their limited resources."

Lynn noted that during Katrina, reporters flew in to cover the story, but could not just fly back out. Many of them rescued people in the helicopters they took and brought supplies.

While receiving fewer phone calls and donations for the earth-

quake, she has received some heartening notes:

- "Thank you for always being there."

- "What a year of disasters. I hope this extra will help."

"Churches are still taking special offerings and putting together more health kits, school kits, baby kits, and now children's kits that combine health and school kit items with something fun. Children need to remember how to laugh," Lynn said.

People rarely send cleanup buckets because of the expense of shipping, but some churches display a sample of items in them and invite people to donate cash to

support purchase of those kits.

"It would be poor use of resources to ship them," she said.

CWS buys shelter kits and food kits in bulk. It does not accept donations of tents. Food kits provide enough to feed a family for a month. Medicine boxes contain supplies for 1,000 people for three months.

Lynn said donations are needed during disaster times and between disasters, so CWS will be prepared for the next one.

"The health, school, baby and kids kits give people a personal connection as they put them together and think of the person or family who will receive them,"

Lynn said. "That personal connection is important for everyone, but particularly children and youth."

"When I was 10, I put together school kits at my church in Tacoma. It impressed me so much that here I am now, telling people about ways to respond to disasters."

"Doing is an important part of learning what it means to be in mission," she said.

For Lynn, the stable support of CROP Walks "tells me that people care about what happens in other countries as well as here."

For information, call 888-297-2767.

<p>Trinity United Methodist Church 1725 E. Bridgeport - Spokane Bazaar & Turkey Dinner 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 10</p>	<p>The Fig Tree will run another composite ad in the December issue. Cost: \$12 / col. inch</p> <h1>Bazaars</h1> <p>Bake, Craft & Book Sales, Meals</p>	<p>CHRISTMAS BAKE & CRAFT SALE Saturday, Dec. 3 - 9am-2pm Bethlehem Lutheran Church 2715 S. Ray 535-3333</p>	<p>FESTIVAL OF FAIR TRADE holiday sale of fairly traded handcrafts from around the world - clothes, gifts, pottery Nov. 25, 26 & 27 - 10am-6pm Community Building - 35 W. Main 747-1477 or ghimal@aol.com</p>
<p>Christmas Shoppe Christmas gifts & ornaments, bookstore, homemade sweets & our famous apple dumplings 9 am-3 pm Saturday, Nov. 19 Audubon Park United Methodist 3908 N. Driscoll corner of Garland</p>	<p>Liberty Park United Methodist Bazaar & Luncheon Saturday, Nov. 12 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. QUILTS • FANCY WORK Luncheon 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. for \$4 INCLUDES SOUP, PIE AND BEVERAGE 1526 E. 11th Ave. - 535-5588</p>	<p>You're invited to the Cathedral Advent Festival Family Day for children & their parents 11 am- 3 pm, Saturday, Nov. 19 Come and learn about Advent and Christmas through fun activities and art with Art Factory • Visit with Saint Nicholas • • Enjoy a hot dog lunch • "Fish" for prizes • <i>The Cathedral of Our Lady of Lourdes</i> 1115 West Riverside Avenue Call 358-4293 for details</p>	<p>OPEN TO PUBLIC Alternative Gift Fair Our holiday market leaves shoppers uplifted, communities at home and abroad enriched! Saturday, Dec. 3 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane 4340 W. Fort Wright Drive Simplify holiday shopping and support life-giving projects in local, national and global communities through organizations with established track records. Join us for an afternoon of fun, fellowship and responsible consumerism. Live music, crafts and refreshments. Sponsored by the UU Environmental Stewardship Ministry For information, call 747-7637</p>
<p>Westminster Congregational hosts 2nd annual Weihnachtsmarkt Traditional German Christmas Market and Craft Bazaar 10 am - 4 pm Saturday, Dec. 10 4th & Washington Christmas Stollen from Great Harvest Bakery Live music Jams & Jellies • Baked Goods Hand-crafts • Used books Silent auction Kids' arts & crafts Lunch served 11:30 am - 1 pm Children's Christmas Program at noon St. Nicholas arrives at 1 pm</p>	<p>THE FALL BAZAAR 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 12, Manito United Methodist Church 3320 S. Grand Blvd.</p>	<p>St. John's Cathedral BAZAAR at 12th & Grand 9:30 am-3 pm Saturday, Nov. 5 Lunch available 11:30 am-1 pm Cookies, Breads & Mustard Handcrafted Items</p>	<p>Jubilee International Marketplace Unique gifts, alternative gifts, and gifts for people who have everything Friday, Nov. 18 10 am - 8 pm Saturday, Nov. 19 9:30 am - 2:30 pm First Presbyterian Church 318 S. Cedar Maple St. Exit off I-90</p>

For Joe Kramarz, mission seems to propel mission

Continued from page 1

United States. Joe challenged himself to find ways he could take that half-mile walk in Spokane when he returned, crossing "a million miles of separation from where Christ calls me to be," he said.

For some members of Whitworth Presbyterian Church, where he is mission chair, that half mile is bridged by bringing homeless people into the church.

The church has participated in the Interfaith Hospitality Network for seven years. As the church's coordinator, Joe and three assistants recruit 55 volunteers every 12 weeks to set up and take down roll-away beds in church school rooms, to supply and cook food, to sit with families at meals and to stay overnight as hosts.

He estimates that more than 100 church members have been involved. Some help each time; some help only on occasion.

"I like it because it's a way to be directly involved with people," he said.

Because his church has about 1,000 members, there is no need for a support church to share the work.

With experience in both global and local spheres of mission, Joe finds that churches and individual Christians involved globally are also involved locally, helping people with food, housing, emotional support and listening—in contrast to the view of those who think churches ought to keep support limited to missions close to home.

For him, mission seems to propel mission.

A Whitworth Presbyterian member, Dick Carpenter, realizing that homeless families needed furniture and household goods when they found permanent housing, started the New Start Warehouse on North Foothills Dr.

People with furniture to donate call, and volunteers pick up the items. Later, volunteers deliver items families choose.

"You couldn't pay me to help do it," Joe said of lugging furniture up to a second-floor apartment. "I do it because of my faith."

He gladly volunteers, because his reward comes when children jump up and down on their new-to-them beds, exclaiming, "It's mine! It's mine!"

For 35 years, Joe sold hospital equipment in Detroit, in Chicago and, after 1973 in Spokane. He retired in 1995, returning to work again from 2000 to 2002.

In 1996, he helped Northview Bible Church bring together supplies for a medical clinic for Romania. He collected used medical



Joe Kramarz meets children in Honduras.

Photo provided by Joe Kramarz

equipment from hospitals when they were upgrading their equipment and no longer needed it.

Joe and his wife, Becky, a retired registered nurse, went with the group delivering the clinic. In 1997, he went again, taking two lab techs from local hospitals to train the Romanians. He also delivered some dental equipment.

"The dental equipment was important, because the two major U.S. imports to Romania have been soft drinks, which eat people's teeth, and toothpaste. Younger Romanians drink the soft drinks to their detriment."

Three years ago, he went with Whitworth College students to Honduras to build homes for coffee workers. The students had approached the mission committee for financial support. He volunteered to go as one of the adults, along with other church members. The group of 12 spent almost two weeks building 25 cement-block houses.

"We encourage Whitworth students and our members to bring us ideas for mission projects through our Partners in Mission program. We provide supplies and scholarships for half the cost of transportation."

During many years that Joe traveled around the Northwest meeting people in his sales job, he did not travel the half mile.

His first mission project was with Whitworth students who go Saturday evenings to the Otis Hotel and other low-income hotels on West Third to hand out sandwiches and visit people, hoping to lead some to Christ.

"Over one Christmas break, students were gone, so they asked

adults to fill in. When they invited me, I at first felt: 'Who me? Go there? Meet strange people?' I was scared when I began knocking on doors. Since then I have learned to trust."

He went and the people touched his life. That was his first step into that "half mile" in Spokane, coming from the suburbs, never knowing of the life of people in downtown Spokane.

One time a man who answered Joe's knock was so drunk he put his arm around the man to hold him up, while the student spoke to him. The next time, the man was not drunk. The third time, he asked for a Bible.

That man had a master's degree in psychology and had attended a Christian college, but experienced personal difficulties, became alcoholic and lost his family.

"In four weeks, we saw a complete transformation in him. He moved from the hotel to a better place," Joe said.

Another time, Joe was in a tavern visiting with some of the Otis residents, and a man who was drunk asked people there to pray for him. They knelt in a circle and asked Joe to say the prayer.

"I asked the Holy Spirit for words," he said.

In 1999, Joe also went on a mission trip to Cuba through Covenant Presbyterian Church in Austin, Tex., where a former pastor at Whitworth Presbyterian, Jim Singleton, served. That church related with a Presbyterian church in Havana. Joe met some women from a Presbyterian church in Santa Clara and hoped to return to help restore a Presbyterian camp there.

In 2000, he was among 18 men from Pacific Northwest churches who visited the camp to build a new kitchen and sidewalks.

Joe was born into a Catholic family, reared in a Baptist church, married a Methodist and became Presbyterian. He joined Whitworth Presbyterian in 1975.

"I honor all churches, but have found a home at Whitworth Presbyterian. After careful analysis of North Spokane churches, we chose it because it was the closest to our home," he said. "The vibrancy of the faith of the men there drew and held me."

For those who question giving beyond the local level, Joe offers a reminder that "Jesus said to go out into the world," which includes both the local and global parts.

He added that everywhere is local for someone.

Recently a more-than-50-member adult Sunday school class raised more than \$8,000 to build a skill center for Muslim women in Ghana, a project they learned about from a member involved

in Partners International, which has its headquarters in Spokane. Some class members now want to go there.

"It's a state of mind and heart to care for people in Mexico, Honduras, Cuba, Ghana or downtown Spokane," he said.

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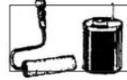
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- Bring food to share for dinner
- Bring a donation for clearing land mines & aiding survivors
- Facts at www.1000dinners.com

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Thirty-four churches temporarily house, support homeless families

From an East Sprague store that once sold wedding gowns and formals, the Interfaith Hospitality Network seeks to mend lives of homeless people—stitching them together with the aid of churches opening doors to house families for one week every 12 weeks.

Families move from church to church until they find permanent housing.

The network now has 11 hosting churches—but 12 are needed—and 23 supporting churches that cluster around a host church to provide volunteers, resources, food and other services.

It accommodates a few families at a time—a maximum of four families or a total of 14 people, the number who can fit in a 15-passenger van with the driver—making a difference in their lives as well as the lives of people in host and support churches.

In late September, the network, which was founded in 1997, held an open house in its new day center and office at 2515 E. Sprague, which has more space than its former locations, a house at 517 E. Indiana and an office at Covenant Church, 212 S. Division.

In August 2004, Larry Stephenson, who grew up in Wallace, Idaho, moved from Seattle to be near his parents in Rathdrum and succeeded T.J. Sather as director.

Completing a master's degree in social work at the University of Washington while in the Navy from 1976 to 1994, he was a drug and alcohol counselor and then worked with foster families through the state.

Today, with extended families far away, he knows most homeless families lack connections to provide the support his family provided when his mother needed



Larry Stephenson

medical care. He lived for a year with an aunt and uncle.

"Interfaith Hospitality turns the clock back, providing an extended family and neighborly care through congregations seeking to create community," said Larry, who grew up Episcopalian, was nurtured by Navy chaplains and now attends different churches, at home or on weekend motorcycle trips with his wife.

"I appreciate the broad community of faith," he said.

Families enter the day center from a parking lot on the side of the building. Offices are in the storefront. Two small apartments upstairs are being renovated. There is space for an outdoor play area for children.

The location is on a bus route

and within walking distance of the Spokane Neighborhood Action Program and services at the East Central Community Center.

"Because we rely on volunteers, we screen families for domestic violence, mental health issues and drug abuse," Larry said. "They must have basic stability so volunteers and churches are not at risk. Social service agencies referring families do preliminary screening, including a criminal background check."

Dominican Sister Patty Beatrice, caseworker, interviews new families to identify needs and evaluate whether the network can address their issues safely and effectively.

"Moving every week is disruptive, so we evaluate whether they

can handle it," Larry said.

Families change churches on Sunday afternoons. By 6 p.m., they have a home-cooked meal, followed by time for children to do homework or participate in games and activities.

By 9:30 p.m., children are in bed, and at 10:30 p.m., adults go to bed. They wake up at 6 a.m., so there is time for breakfast and making lunches. At 7 a.m., they come to the day center. Children are transported so they continue attending the same school.

From the day center, parents make phone calls, do laundry and go out to search for housing, work, support and programs, or to attend classes.

Sister Patty helps them set goals, find permanent housing and access services.

With cuts in funding for the national housing voucher program, Larry said the network lengthened its maximum time frame for housing families from 40 to 60 days.

"With six to eight in a family, it's hard to find affordable four-bedroom homes," he said.

Host churches provide shelter and meals, setting up roll-away beds in Sunday-school rooms, and organizing volunteers to cook, serve meals and stay overnight with families.

Supporting churches help with those tasks, with transportation and with providing volunteers to spend time with families.

Larry said Interfaith Hospitality is primarily an urban program, because so many people are needed to help. He recently met with people in Coeur d'Alene and Lewiston interested in developing the program in their communities.

"We need enough churches to share the load," he said.

Families become homeless for many reasons, including loss of jobs and medical situations that tap all their resources so their utilities are shut off and they are evicted. Once they have a poor credit rating, it becomes even harder to either rent or buy.

"The faith community's influence is subtle—through role modeling parenting for young parents whose parents may not have provided a model," Larry said.

"We model what to do, rather than saying, 'Don't do this.' Church people know resources to help people find jobs or provide furniture when a family moves into an apartment or house."

The only faith-related expectation is that families say grace before the evening meal. Karen Olson, who started the program in 1985 in New Jersey, established that tradition.

"Gratitude is a family value as well as a religious value," said Larry, who has learned to trust "God will take care of things" along with volunteers and staff doing the legwork.

"If we mention a need for furniture, someone donates what we need to set up the families in their new homes," he said.

Interfaith Hospitality is one of 122 Family Promise networks in 30 states, involving 95,000 volunteers and 3,000 congregations.

In Spokane, the host churches are Covenant United Methodist, Spokane Valley Baptist, Manito Presbyterian, Whitworth Presbyterian, Sacred Heart Catholic, St. Mary's Catholic, Spokane Friends, North Hill Christian, St. Joseph Catholic, Prince of Peace Lutheran and Beautiful Savior Lutheran.

For information, call 747-5487

Network continues ties of churches since split

Interfaith Hospitality has been one of several ministries maintaining ties between Manito Presbyterian Church and Southside Christian Center, which split over theology and direction a few years ago.

As coordinator at Manito, Linda Barnes works in partnership with support from Southside and St. Augustine Catholic Church.

Older people among Manito's 200 members need the assistance of younger people among the 900 members at Southside, which she also attends.

"I'm half and half," she said, "serving on the mission team of Southside—with outreach to Uganda, Mexico and Gua-

temala—and remaining loyal to Manito. "I enjoy worship at both churches. There is need for both."

The churches also connect because Southside Christian School is at Manito, and Manito members help at the food bank at Southside Christian in the Lincoln Heights shopping center.

Linda, one of the founders of Interfaith Hospitality in Spokane, values how it accepts people as they are, reaching them with the gospel shared by example.

"I have learned to become more understanding of why people are homeless and more grateful for my blessings," she said.

Linda relishes watching people

in the families grow and eventually "fly on their own." She has kept in contact with some of the families and following them as friends.

Some of the families continue in the network's After-Care Program that gathers families to share information and support each other.

"Some have become Christian because of seeing the example of people who hosted them, caring enough to help them improve the quality of their lives," she said.

Sometimes the "witness" is just in a moment a host holds a child, demonstrating to the parent how holding the child close calms the child, Linda observed.

Program awakens comfortable

Mike Leinweber, coordinator at Covenant United Methodist Church, said that for his middle-to upper-middle-class congregation, hosting homeless families has been "an awakening to the needs of the community, gaining awareness of problems Christians need to address."

When they help quarterly, the church recruits 20 volunteers, including a core of repeat workers and new volunteers each time. Plus it has the assistance of volunteers and resources from

St. Joseph's Catholic in Colbert, and breakfast provided by Our Savior's Lutheran.

As a grandparent, Mike said it's heart-wrenching for him to see the children who are victims of circumstances—being homeless and moving each week.

However, at a reunion of families last summer at Whitworth Presbyterian, Mike was heartened to hear the success stories. Families do find housing and jobs.

"It makes it worth it if one family escapes poverty," he said.

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'Developmental' approach draws more into the diversity journey

Coming from monocultural roots in an Iowa community on the Mississippi River and entering the larger world as a "big, white, male of German heritage" fueled Dan Distelhorst's interest in "intercultural sensitivity."

That term is a shift in emphasis from "diversity training" in the 1990s that sometimes left him and other white men feeling guilty, alienated and defensive, rather than open to learning, he said.

His initial exposure to racial, cultural and religious diversity in the Air Force and with Xerox—in Hawaii, Florida, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and then Spokane—led him to evolve from management training to organizational development to education for "intercultural competence."

The goal of the intercultural approach is to move participants along a developmental scale in how they react to difference—from denial to defensiveness to minimization to acceptance to adaptation to integration.

"We previously focused just on changing bigots to give up bigotry until we realized that most people are relatively decent people who developmentally may still be defensive or who may minimize cultural and racial differences—the case for 68 percent of people," he said.

"Moving the majority from minimizing to accepting is a more useful approach than focusing on fewer outright bigots," said Dan.

Intercultural competence starts with the premise that everyone has a "multifaceted cultural identity, so every interaction is an intercultural interaction. The only difference is the degree of difference," he explained.

As someone from the dominant culture, Dan finds teaching intercultural workshops more effective if he partners with someone from another culture or race. Co-teachers include Raymond Reyes, vice president of diversity at Gonzaga University; Gordon Watanabe at Whitworth; Vince Lemus, affirmative action director at Eastern Washington University, and Marcella Banson Quanzena of Fielding Graduate University in Santa Barbara, Calif.

"Dominant-culture people tend to be more open to listen to someone like themselves at first and then will listen to someone not like themselves," Dan said.

A workshop handout lists denial, defense and minimization as the "difference-avoiding stages" that precede a paradigm shift, when people move to acceptance, adaptation and integration—the "difference-seeking stages," he said.

"The focus is on what people are to do rather than on what they are not to do, shifting from difference as a problem to difference as a resource."

He found two problems in the early diversity training:

- 1) Diversity was about others, rather than about everyone.
- 2) Often trainers unconsciously



Dan Distelhorst

considered participants "racist, sexist pigs."

"The sub-message, 'You are bad' put people on the defensive and impeded learning, in contrast to the concept that we are all on a developmental cycle, learning how to live and work with others different from ourselves," he said.

As a consultant in organizational management, leadership development and intercultural competence, Dan serves banks, media, utilities, technology firms and nonprofit boards.

He has also shared his insights through Leadership Spokane and the Congress on Race.

After graduating from the University of Iowa, he entered the Air Force and was assigned to Honolulu. For the first time not in the majority culture.

After working several years with Xerox, starting in Honolulu and ending up in Spokane, he started a land brokerage firm and then became human resource de-

velopment director with the firm, ISC. While in distance-learning doctoral studies with Fielding, he did organizational development work with Group Health.

In his research, he studied group dynamics among mixed-gender and single-gender teams. He found less interruption, more talk and more synergy in mixed-gender groups. In all-male groups, men tended to compete for dominance. In all-female groups, there was an emphasis on relationships.

Dan, who grew up Catholic and now attends Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, hopes the developmental model will help people "expand the borders of their in-group to all humanity." For example, "we become concerned not only about U.S. soldiers who have died in Iraq but equally about the thousands of Iraqis who have died.

"The human species will survive if our in-group is everyone," he said. "The we-are-right-and-

you-are-wrong mindset leads to crusades. I'm crusading to stop crusades—to move people beyond just tolerance of differences to valuing differences as resources."

This approach is in line with today's way of doing mission "walking alongside people, knowing there are many paths and not imposing ours," he said.

"If people stay in the ethnocentrism of 'my in-group is good and others are bad,' stereotypes persist. Hopefully, with education, we can move people to the intercultural competence of accepting and adapting," Dan said.

"My goal is for human beings to live and work together in harmony on a global scale, so we no longer think we have to kill other people in wars or acts of racial or religious hatred," he said.

Dan encourages people to separate what is unfair dominance of their culture from what is just cultural style.

"We each need to be okay with our own culture, even if we are not okay with some parts of it," he suggested.

Knowing that many people fear that acceptance of other cultures means relativism or giving up one's own values, he pointed out that "seeing other's values doesn't mean giving up one's own. It just means noticing that different values drive other people's behavior."

At the 2005 Congress on Race Relations in Spokane, he led a workshop with Raymond, helping people explore these ideas. They put quotes on the wall, things people might say or hear said, and asked participants to stand near one they criticized and then by one that expressed openness.

Participants' comments revealed their varied interpretations, perceptions and assumptions.

"If 50 people look at the same sunset, they have 50 perceptions," Dan said.

"We work and live with people who are different from us. The question is: How do we encounter these cultural differences, aware that 99 percent of human beings'

genetic structure is the same?"

He hopes to help people see ethnocentrism as a stage and become aware that different values, beliefs and assumptions do not mean that "I need to give up my beliefs, adopt someone else's and become like them."

Dan suggests that people tend to see commonalities, because most people are in the minimization stage, seeing cultural differences as superficial and believing people are basically the same.

"Seeing sameness is okay unless it inhibits seeing differences," he said. "For example, while most people respect human life, they differ on the death penalty."

Raymond pointed out that words activate images: The word "dog" brings different images to different people—a St. Bernard, a Chihuahua, a beagle—or the word "road"—a highway, a city street, a country lane—even in an apparently homogeneous group.

"Our sacred story is an intersection of our biology and our biography," he said. "In the developmental model, one thing happens before another. I begin to recognize and appreciate differences in behavior and values. Celebrating diversity is a journey or process, not a destination.

"Sometimes we do not hear people's words over their actions. Adaptation includes empathy, shifting one's frame of reference to understand and be understood across cultural boundaries.

"Integration internalizes multiple cultural frames of reference. The developmental approach deals with identity in the context of cultural flexibility," Raymond said, calling participants to "respect the dignity of persons and see the Good News in each other."

In his presentation at that event, Dan challenged participants to move from their comfort zones. He believes that intercultural competence provides a positive way to use human difference as a creative resource rather than being polarized by it, "so different people can work together harmoniously."

For information, call 465-5971.

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service is Nov. 24

Spokane's Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be at 10 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 24, at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th. Bishop Martin Wells of the Eastern Washington/Idaho Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will be the speaker.

People of many faiths will share stories, songs and dances of Thanksgiving from Jewish, Russian, Asian, Indian, African

American and Native American perspectives—including Pastor Alexandr Kaprian of the Slavic Baptist Church telling his story of immigrating to the United States to escape persecution in Russia.

An offering of financial gifts and non-perishable food will go to alleviate hunger in Spokane.

The event is sponsored by the Interfaith Council. For information, call 329-1410.

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Truth Commission heard victims and confronted perpetrators

By Beth Kowal

South Africa began healing from apartheid through one person's story at a time, the former Methodist bishop of Johannesburg told people gathered in Spokane for the recent Faith in Action Dialogue, sponsored by The Fig Tree.

The Rev. Peter Storey affirmed the power of stories to wake people up, people like those retired Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu spoke of when he said, "The person hardest to wake up is the one pretending to be asleep."

In 1994, South Africa awoke to its first democratic election, which Peter calls South Africa's "day of grace." He spent that day in the Soweto Township where people were "rising up to greet their freedom in immense joy."

Questions of how to deal with the country's past still cast a shadow.

The question remained: "In freedom today, how are we going to deal with what we did to each other under 40 years of apartheid—the brutality, atrocities, violence and crimes?"

Two sides held fast to their positions.

One side said "prosecute and punish," while the other side said "forgive and forget." Each view had its objectors. Many who advocated forgiving and forgetting were in the former regime.

Who should be prosecuted for the atrocities? Where in the chain of command would it stop—the former president, generals, colonels, civil servants or youth? Did the country want a trial like the one for Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg, Germany? Would they use resources of a poor nation to hunt for people and seek retribution?

How could a country tell a woman whose husband and son were murdered for speaking English rather than Afrikaans to "forgive and forget?"

Peter and others asked a different question: "Is it possible to both remember and forgive?"

To find resolution to apartheid crimes, the government formed a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Peter had met former President Nelson

Mandela during years he was a chaplain at Robben Island Prison and Nelson was a prisoner. As President, Nelson asked him to help select commissioners to hear victims' stories, to listen to persecutors plead for amnesty and to grant reparations to groups of people.

The entire country was able to hear victims and perpetrators share their stories in public courtrooms and on the radio. Anybody was eligible to apply to serve as a Truth Commissioner.

After reviewing thousands of applications and hearing testimonies, the selection committee chose 26 people for the commission. Most found it hard to process the horror stories told by both victims and persecutors, Peter said.

The TRC created three committees to structure the two-year process: 1) the Gross Human Rights Violations Committee to hear the victims' stories; 2) the Amnesty Committee to hear amnesty appeals from human rights violators, and 3) the Rehabilitation and Reparations Committee to find ways for communities to restore justice and relationships.

"The victims were heroes, having endured emotional pain and physical torture." Peter said. "More than 20,000 victims and families came forward to express their anger, grieve over lost lives and unleash caged-in memories.

"The nation would recognize their pain and hold reverence for their suffering," he said. "The most painful thing for a victim had been to be told, 'Nobody will hear you scream.' Through TRC hearings, the whole world heard their screams."

Commissioners traveled to townships to listen to the stories of the people. They had *khulumani*—Zulu for "Speak Out!"—groups to help people tell their painful experiences, he said.

Victims found freedom in their individual and collective voices. A television reporter, talking to a man who had lost his legs in the political struggle, asked the victim, "How do you feel?" The victim

replied, "It feels good today. South Africa cried my tears today."

"It is healing to tell one's story," Peter affirmed.

After the Gross Human Rights Violations Committee heard one torturous story after another for six months, the Amnesty Committee allowed perpetrators to plead for amnesty. Until the last week, few perpetrators came forward. The week before the amnesty application deadline, more than 7,500 came forward.

Perpetrators had to meet four conditions to receive amnesty:

1) They had to make a full disclosure of details, how many people they killed, the method of torture or death, and when the crimes happened.

It was the first time those on the winning side were held accountable, too.

2) They had to take full responsibility as individual "moral beings"—not hiding behind a military or political group—and had to face the families of those they hurt. There was no umbrella amnesty.

3) They each had to have had a political motive for their actions.

4) The committee had to discern the proportional level of the punishment to the action or crime the person was charged with doing. For example, was the victim being tortured or shot for handing out papers, for protesting or for throwing grenades at people?

Even with these conditions, the commissioners had a difficult time discerning who should have amnesty.

"It was hard for me to stay and listen. Sometimes I struggled with wanting to see the criminals punished," Peter said.

One by one, perpetrators confessed grave stories of violence, abuse and hate-filled crimes.

"The TRC was the first time in history those on the winning side were held accountable for atrocities. The victims of the liberators—the winning side—were included. Clearly, human suffering knows no party or race," Peter said.

"That was a giant step in moral ac-

countability," he said. "Restorative justice represented a break with the past."

Peter gave an example of the potential for healing achieved with confessions.

"A young policeman who had killed several people went to the home village of his victims and confessed to them directly."

He told the families, "I can never make up for what I did."

One after another, family members shared how they felt about him and his acts. At the end of the day, the village leader said to the man, "We will speak again."

"That meant there was hope," Peter said. "Sometimes there has been forgiveness. For some, it will take time. Some need to know more. Some were set free from nightmares and thoughts about perpetrators.

"It may be possible to remember and forgive," he pointed out.

The final group, the Reparations Committee, struggled to award reparations.

"How do we say, 'I'm sorry'?" Peter asked.

While that committee has funded some village memorials and community projects, he said that reparations were often weak, because not all has been or ever can be restored.

South Africans and other citizens of the world ask, "Did the TRC succeed or fail?"

"The TRC did not fail," Peter said. "It did everything it could. It is now up to South Africans, white and black. We do not have time for resentment. The perpetrators are not being hunted down and killed in revenge. The victims are moving towards healing.

"We are not arguing about what did or did not happen. We understand that apartheid was not a good policy that went wrong. It was evil," he said. "We also learned that telling of and listening to pain is therapeutic.

"Humans are fallible and many prefer amnesia," Peter said, "but I have seen enough to know that God can do something with fallible human beings."

Cup of Cool Water celebrates 10th

Cup of Cool Water celebrates its 10th anniversary with a benefit concert by Christian musician Jamie Slocum at 7 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 4, at Fourth Memorial Church, 2000 N. Standard.

The ministry reaches youth living on Spokane streets because of abuse, rejection or rebellion.

"Homeless youth end up downtown where drugs, crime and sexual exploitation are the norm," said Mark Terrell, director. "Without positive adult role models, they will likely continue abusive, criminal behavior."

Through relationships and services, Cup of Cool Water, at 1106 W. 2nd, seeks to empower youth living on the streets to follow

Christ and to leave street life.

Starting in the back of a car, it now has a drop-in facility and hopes to have an overnight shelter and alternative high school.

For information, call 747-6686 or email, cup@cupofcoolwater.org.

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Denominational leader plants seeds to build healthy congregations

Contrary to quick-fix expectations of today's society, Inland United Methodist District Superintendent Jo Ann (Joey) Olson finds that building healthy congregations takes time.

As regional supervisor of pastors in 53 congregations, as in youth work she did in Texas, Joey finds that ministry is about planting seeds.

"If we look for quick results, we are in trouble," she commented, aware that it often takes many meetings over many years for churches to act, so pastors may not know their influence until after they leave.

At the recent wedding of people who were in her youth group 15 years ago, she was reminded of that reality, learning how that ministry mattered in their lives.

Planting seeds

Joey shares the seed-planting expectation as she visits pastors and congregations in the district.

"Our culture says there is a quick fix and change comes fast. The spiritual reality is different. The Exodus from Egypt did not come until 400 years after the Israelites had been in slavery. They spent another 40 years wandering in the desert and the wilderness.

"We want to avoid wildernesses and deserts, but the Scriptures are clear that we cannot avoid wildernesses and deserts in our spiritual journeys," she said.

Discovering her call

After earning a bachelor's degree in history at Austin College, Joey taught history and English, married and reared two children.

"As a young woman, I had a calling to be a pastor, but I had no vision that women could do it," said Joey, who began informal studies at Southern Methodist University in the 1970s and then earned a master's degree in theology at Perkins in 1984. She also served as an associate pastor and youth minister of several large churches in Dallas.

In 1996, after she married Ole, an artist, she moved to the Northwest and served a Methodist church in Ocean Shores, Wash., for four years and a church at Mill Creek for another four years.

Creating healthy relationships

When the bishop asked her to be superintendent for the Inland District, she accepted, realizing that her background in family systems counseling to create healthy family relationships could help make church family life healthy, too.

"It's hard to deal with conflict and help church people live an abundant life and thrive when their churches face declining memberships," she said, but she believes both are possible.



The Rev. Joey Olson

While many church people feel health relates to size, Joey said different-sized churches are different types of churches with unique structures and leadership needs—familial churches lean on a pastor, programmatic churches have staff leading programs, and corporate churches' pastors are like CEOs.

"There are healthy infrastructures for each size. Small group ministries that are lay-led build maturity," Joey said. "You cannot change church size without changing church form. There is no growth without change, and there is no change without conflict, which many people fear.

Assuming leadership

"Leadership is key to healthy congregations, just as it is to families," said Joey.

"We need to connect with our families of origin to help churches understand emotional triangles. Someone mad at the pastor may call the district superintendent to help. Rather than becoming caught as one part of a triangle, I know my role is to help the church and the pastor work out the conflict," she said.

She invites people to come together as mature people, setting

aside blame and defensiveness, and looking at their realities so they can overcome their anxieties and see their choices.

"The way to build leaders is to shore them up and offer choices," Joey said, aware that people in churches, like children not hearing their parents, may not hear what she offers, but may "overhear" the same message later in another context and respond.

Offering choices

"My job is not to solve their problems, but to be proactive and offer choices they as mature people can make. My role is to stay calm. There is no quick fix for church problems. Change is slow," she repeated.

To build healthy relationships in the district, Joey works with some churches more than others, particularly consulting with them when they need a new pastor.

Sundays she preaches or worships in different churches.

"I didn't realize there was a South until I left the Bible Belt. Here, I realize in visits to churches that the Pacific Northwest is the 'None Zone,' as one author has said. In this region, many survey respondents check 'none of the above' when asked their religious

preference. In Dallas, people expect to go to church Sundays, not to kayak, hike or stay in bed.

Mission begins at our door

"So this is a mission zone," she said, adding that, in fact, "every area is a mission zone. The Bible Belt may be less aware of that than here. Our mission field begins at our front door."

Joey encourages churches to help members become the body of Christ, sharing the love of Christ and a love of neighbors that is global. As part of that vision, she appreciates connection with an ecumenical group of regional church leaders who have a similar vision of the church.

"Churches do amazing work when they extend their vision to

the global," she continued.

Being 'missional'

"It's not about doing mission but about being missional. My identity comes out of being sent for Christ," she said. "Yes, people may sit in the pews and become comfortable, but worship is about being sent to be Christ's presence in the world. If we do not understand our identity, we can become exhausted by doing little projects without understanding God's project of salvation and in building God's reign."

Joey's passion for ministry comes from biblical texts announcing God's reign and presence in the world.

For information, call 838-3085 or email joeywolson@aol.com.

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Preaching Clinic

The Weyerhaeuser Center for Christian Faith and Learning is sponsoring a special preaching clinic for pastors. The purpose of the clinic is to talk about the art of good preaching and work at strengthening and honing preaching skills through the use of sermon videotapes and in-class preaching and reflection. Topics include

- Understanding and developing God's gift of creativity
- Ethical issues involved in preaching
- Interpreting biblical texts
- Sermon introductions and conclusions
- The use of language in preaching
- Understanding and using stories in preaching
- Sermon structure

The eight-session clinic will meet at Whitworth College 9 a.m.- 1 p.m., Thursdays, Feb. 9 & 23, March 9 & 23, April 6 & 20, and May 4 & 18, 2006.

Dr. Ron Pyle, associate professor of communication studies at Whitworth and the Rev. Dr. Tim Dolan will facilitate the clinic. Cost \$100 (lunch included)

WHITWORTH

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Priest believes people are healthy if they are more than their ideology

Addressing polarities in families, churches, communities, schools, cultures, the nation and even within individuals, author and lecturer Father Ron Rolheiser, OMI, unraveled myths about conservatives and liberals.

He believes people are more than their ideology if they are healthy: "We need both polarities living in tension in us to be healthy," said the president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Tex.

Along with the human tendency to classify is an innate tension in churches, communities—even in Jesus—between conservative and liberal values, he said, in the "Catholicism for a New Millennium" series at Gonzaga University.

"There are and always have been polarizations. Sometimes they are less, but today we are highly polarized," Father Ron said, noting that when polarizations were less intense from 1962 to 1965, Vatican II was possible.

He is concerned about divisions behind the red- and blue-states map after the 2004 presidential election and about current controversies over abortion, gay marriage, stem-cell research and confirmation of judges.

"In the church, an ecclesiastical apartheid divides liberals and conservatives. We are nice to each other on the surface, but avoid each other."

Despite that, Father Ron considers polarization between liberal and conservative principles a necessary, life-giving part of life.

"We are born with both temperaments," he said. "If God designs us that way, there must be a purpose."

"Many people have friends on both sides of the ideological fault line. Some want everything to stay the same. Some think everything should change."

"Both temperaments are gifts of God," he affirmed, "part of every person, family, church, community and country. Without a liberal component, life petrifies. Without a conservative component, relationships dissipate. The conservative temperament pulls people together, makes rules and sets boundaries."

Father Ron said Peter, as the first pope, had to be conservative, drawing boundaries and setting rules. The Apostle Paul ministered on the edges, on ships, "working with weird people."

"Sometimes we are conservative or liberal by principle, but liberal or conservative by practice, such as someone in a conservative job volunteering with the poor."

"I'm in a mission congregation that is liberal by principle, living

at the edges and trying to make new life, stretching Catholic principles," he said. "So I am liberal in my job, but hold some conservative ideas, too."

Father Ron finds tension in ecclesiology, theology and Jesus' life. For him, a difficult passage is the one about Jesus walking on the border of Samaria and meeting a Phoenician woman, who is walking on the edge of her country, ethnicity, gender and religion, seeking a miracle.

"Although not a Jew, she addressed him by his Jewish identity: 'Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. Heal my daughter.' He gave a conservative reply, saying it was not fair 'to take the bread of the Hebrew children and give it to the dogs.' So she addressed him by his universal identity, saying 'Adonai, even the dogs eat crumbs that fall from children's tables.'"

Father Ron likened that to a leader of Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) who had just led 20 people through nine months of preparation for baptism. A woman comes and asks, "Are you an RCIA leader?" and says, "I'd like to be baptized."

"Others took the full program. It's not fair for her to jump in at the last moment. However, if she asks, 'Are you a Christian who believes in the universal God, and in grace and salvation through Jesus,' it's clear she is ready to be baptized."

Father Ron said Jesus has two identities and loyalties—as Hebrew God and universal God.

"Being a universal Christian is a powerful identity we can't blow off any more than I could blow off my identity as an ordained Catholic priest in the Missionary Oblate order, loyal to canon law under Pope Benedict XVI."

"Someone may be a Presbyterian or Episcopalian, but also is a human being, a universal instrument of God. No one can blow off that identity," he said.

"Part of each of us needs to be part fiercely liberal and part fiercely conservative," he said.

"On abortion, the right understands that the unborn child is a human life. The left says a woman's right to choose is the only issue. Both are important issues," Father Ron said.

"In Canada, we just had a fierce debate about gay marriage. The right and the left knocked each other out. The right defended the constitution, and the left emphasized freedom of religion."

Teaching in a graduate theological school, he considers theology a liberal enterprise and catechesis a conservative enterprise.

"The purpose of theology is to stretch our minds to ask questions,



Father Ron Rolheiser

so we mature in faith. There are no irreverent questions. Catechism nurtures neophytes into faith, teaching rules, dogma and doctrine," he said. "Both are needed in the church."

While calling Catholics in the audience to be loyal to their church, he asked what that loyalty means about Hindus, Taoists, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews and others, given that "we are brothers and sisters under one God, the God of all who created all."

"That reality creates an innate tension we must carry," he said.

Two years ago, the most popular movies were "The Passion of Christ" and "Fahrenheit 911." Catholics produced both films. Mel Gibson, a right-wing Catholic, produced "The Passion of Christ." Michael Moore, a secular humanistic Catholic, produced "Fahrenheit 911."

"Wouldn't it be wonderful if Michael and Mel were in the same parish—even in the same person?" Father Ron contemplated.

He then noted some principles to help people develop inclusive ecclesiology and humanity.

"We need to carry both parts of Christ: the Christ who came to the world and loved it in a way that scandalized the world, and the Christ who stood where the cross was erected—wherever anyone

is rejected or excluded for being unborn, old, even a murderer.

"Capital punishment excludes. Standing at the cross, we must tell the world it is wrong," he said.

With God as author of all that is, Father Ron advised saying "yes, but" to the world—"yes" for example, to the Olympic Games for the beautiful, disciplined bodies, but "no" to Nike's labor practices, to steroids and to competition.

"We must see both what's right and what's wrong," he said.

Similarly, no matter how great people think the United States is, he said, they should not be afraid to offer criticism if they love it. Part of loving and being loyal to

family, friends, church and country means to be critical and speak if something is wrong and needs to change, he said.

"That's how to bring the tension together and carry it," he said. "Sensible people feel the tension in the church and society."

"Jesus is right, left and middle, so we do not need to be right, left or middle, but men or women of faith, letting faith lead us to be compassionate," he said.

He considers ideological liberalism or conservatism "phases we go through to reach our second naiveté, which is past sophistication, polarities or common ground."

Rather than letting an ideology limit, Father Ron advises letting faith "stretch you further."

"Ideology is like a disease. If we think based on group thinking, we inhale ideology like a virus. We need to ask what is real and what we really believe."

"To be healthy, we need to know there are boundaries to truth. We need to know dogma and be obedient, because without laws, we have anarchy. We also need poetry—theology and love—that inflames and inspires our hearts."

So he calls for "giving up our need to be right," stopping at the foot of the cross aware "we will transmit the hatred and injustice we don't transform into love."

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Teaching the Bible in Small Groups
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Program Costs

Due to a generous grant from the Presbyterian Church (USA), we are able to offer this program at the reduced price of \$175, which includes books, materials, and lunch. All sessions are held at Whitworth College. A \$50 deposit is required to register. Half of the remaining balance is due February 2 and the other half is due March 30. A 10% discount is offered to those who make payment in full by February 2. Scholarships are available.



WHITWORTH

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Frenzy of fear impedes role of citizens to think and act responsibly

The words of President Franklin Roosevelt in another time offer us wisdom for these times: "We have nothing to fear but fear itself."

In covering hurricanes, earthquakes, mudslides and flooding, mass media seemed to catch on to the ongoing disaster of poverty. Reporters seem to be asking more questions about the poverty they met face to face as people cried for help.

With one disaster following on the heels of another, coverage slides on the the previous one. Will we again lose sight of poverty and vulnerable people when it's not in our faces, as we have swerved from coverage of the earthquakes in Pakistan? It's the biggest disaster news in lives lost, but for lack of accessibility, it has been covered less than the disasters closer to home.

The cycle of such events easily feeds unprecedented fears we have been experiencing about terrorists, avian flu, sex offenders, high energy costs, limited funds, cancer, crime and more.

Aware of how fear begets more fear, Americans of faith must reflect on what they expect from government, faith, friends and family to overcome their fears. What security, insurance, investment, comforts and reassurance do we need? What will it take to stir us to act and vote? What assumptions do we need to rethink?

We need to be aware of our insecurities and suspicions, our fears and frustrations, because each can be an ingredient in political, consumer or personal manipulation to discourage us from acting, risking, speaking out, trusting, hoping and even loving. Our fears can keep us separated from poor people, even though we all are vulnerable.

When congregations, denominations and faiths enter the fear frenzy, they, too, subject themselves to manipulation, tempted to be more "businesslike," "patriotic" or "faithful" in the world's terms, subjecting them to act contrary to faith.

Liberal-conservative divisions, declining memberships, apathy, busyness, limited funding and anxiety about survival as businesses also tempt the faith community to compete with each other for funds, people and programs—rather than collaborating.

For example, how much money are denominations funneling into ad campaigns to compete with brothers and sisters in faith, rather than sharing with the poor? Quick fixes can be expensive in the long run.

We as people of faith need to declare our freedom from our fears and anxieties so we can respond to God's call to us, so we can walk with people in poverty, hopefully walking them out of poverty.

We need to recognize those who prey

on our fears and embrace truth telling, prophetic advocacy and common action against powers and principalities.

Hope, though dashed, rises again, countering fears and giving us eyes to see through simplistic solutions to complex problems. Will media help us?

By Nov. 8, we must sift through competing promises initiatives offer us as voters.

Competing ads contradict and confuse. Voters pamphlets are sometimes hard to understand, making it easy for people to be uncertain about the measures.

So the Interfaith Council's public policy team gathered for dialogue, assessed shared values and reviewed implications of the initiatives. Then they gathered people four forums to discuss the issues, listening to and learning from each other, not just hearing from others as "experts."

Presenters summarized five values their faiths hold in common as a to guide for reflection on the initiatives.

Those values are 1) community responsibility, 2) civic participation, 3) care of vulnerable people, 4) fair treatment and 5) recognition that government budgets are value statements.

Those, along with the differing values of our faith communities, can help us reflect responsibly, setting aside fears.

Initiatives 330 and 336, for example,

offer different approaches to the health care crisis. Both fall short of and deflect discussion from the issues for consumers of health care—access, quality, equality and costs of both care and insurance.

By dealing with limited aspects of the crisis—protecting or punishing physicians or attorneys—neither makes changes needed for health care to be more available, responsible, effective or just. Neither assures the most vulnerable will have the care they need.

Arguments for and against measures, telling only part of the story, confuse, just as each new disaster diverts attention from those suffering from the previous one.

Will media, having glimpsed into the eyes of poverty, forget what they saw or will they help make connections as lawmakers again propose balancing the budget on the backs of the poor and vulnerable by taking funds from food stamps, college loans and medicaid?

Will they feed our fears, so we ignore those who suffer, or inform us of budget shifts and of people who care?

Being informed is critical to stepping out of fear. As media ask the "big" questions, they become effective servants, watchdogs of democracy, quelling misinformation and freeing people to think, care and act.

Mary Stamp - editor

Understanding values means seeing with love beyond single issues

Today, when groups gather and conversation moves from football or food, the subject often discussed is values.

Americans can disagree on almost everything, but everyone is on the bandwagon about the importance of having values, even though the meaning of the term is a little hazy. One person's values are often regarded as another's ideology or fanaticism.

When we say that people have good values, we imply that they have high standards and principles.

If people say they have high moral standards in one area of life, shouldn't their

standards be uniformly high? How can those who promote values in one segment of life ignore values in other areas?

In many instances we are hitting each other over the head with opinions and political stands masquerading as values. Each political party claims the subject as its own private reserve.

Misunderstandings about the word are often present among churches, also.

Some seek to pinpoint values by asking, "Is your church pro-life?" They ask the question in all sincerity, but we might ask how we should determine that label. Which criteria should be used? Only abortion, or

also the death penalty, war/peace, human rights, health care access and adequate resources to help the poor rise out of poverty, hunger, homelessness and hopelessness?

Using opposition to abortion as the sole criterion, for example, does not reflect understanding of values inherent in living a faithful life.

There is disconnect in being lectured on what it means to be pro-life by people who otherwise exhibit greed for money and power, or use a single issue as the only issue to determine who should fill a judicial post.

In the faith community, we need not be

drawn into the political fray, fed by mass media's oversimplifying issues.

We are challenged to approach a disparity of viewpoints with the truths of love, forgiveness and redemption. The great Shema and Christ's great commandment should transcend viewpoints—loving God and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

If we can move beyond a need to feel that we have a corner on the truth, we can bridge this divide with love and healing.

Then the journey of life can go on with joy and adversity alike.

Jo Hendricks & Nancy Minard
Editorial team

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

We have recently been overwhelmed with images of the tsunami, hurricanes and earthquake, seeing people's lives disrupted by the forces of nature. It reminds us how fragile life is. Physical storms blow through, but personal storms grow gradually—drug abuse, mental illness, homelessness, domestic violence and hunger.

We all experience personal storms. We do not need to wait for a tsunami, hurricane or earthquake.

We can see the effect of personal storms on women who are homeless, sleeping on cement or in a car. We can see them in women whose boyfriends abuse them, who abuse drugs and who lack education to find a better job.

Every day someone in Spokane experiences the result of personal storms. Every day Transitions provides some of them with shelter from the storm, a sofa to sleep on, a bite to eat, a social worker to connect them with services, warm arms to hold and rock a child, an extended family of women who share dinner and personal space as we help women and children recover from their personal storms.

It's a lengthy process we do day in and day out, month after month, helping families grow and change.

Mary Collins Murphy
Transitions Board Chair

Early Christians seemed to have ethics that were distinct from their unbelieving neighbors. There was something

about them that set them apart without WWJD bracelets, fish decals on cars or scriptural T-shirts.

Faith for them wasn't an accessory to their lives. It was a way of life. It makes me wonder if there is anything substantial about my own life that sets me apart from my unbelieving neighbors.

Without the milieu of persecution, it may be difficult to know when faith is mere window dressing and when it has true, rubber-meeting-the-road authenticity.

Still, I have a solid sense that difficulty of any kind—how we respond to it for ourselves and others—reveals for us who we really are and indicates our progress in growing from a mere profession of faith in Christ—lip service—to lives lived in rigorous obedience and joyful trust in God, even when things are tough.

The Rev. Eric Peterson
Colbert Presbyterian

We know that it will take money, time and heart to rebuild, restore and heal after the physical and spiritual wounds caused by the recent hurricanes on the Gulf Coast and the earthquake in Pakistan. I believe we have what is needed and will have the strength of heart and the will to do this great work.

Discouragement is a threat to our strength as a nation, as individuals and as churches. Whenever I think something is too big, too impossible a task, I recall the many other impossible realities I have witnessed—the destruction of the Berlin Wall, the end of

apartheid in South Africa or the rebuilding of Hiroshima. Miracles happen.

As disciples against discouragement, we might take inventory of the amazing, wonderful, downright spooky miracles that happen in our lives and in the world.

The Rev. Andy CastroLang
Westminster Congregational United
Church of Christ

As people of God, we are called to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, and to let the oppressed go free, as Jesus announced as he began his public ministry (Luke 4:18-19).

Maybe it is time to stop the quarrelling about who is right or wrong about our petty differences in our faith communities and to discuss ways we can be about the ministry we have been called to do.

How might our churches speak out against injustice, help the oppressed, bring good news to the poor in spirit and to those who are financially poor? We can start by becoming aware of our attitudes about racism and intolerance.

The Rev. Phylis Stromme
St. Paul Lutheran - Colville

When we see pictures of the devastation in the Gulf Coast region, when we watch the nightly news covering the conflict in Iraq, and whenever we look up and see faces different from ours, I hope we pause to remember how much we are alike

rather than different.

Recently, I took a Spanish immersion program at La Casa Hogar. The teachers were mainly Mexican women who learned English at La Casa Hogar and now share in teaching others. They told us of their home country, shared their food and customs and became our friends.

I experienced how difficult it is for those who come to a foreign land and work hard to learn a new language.

More than anything, I recognize how much we are alike rather than different. We have homes, families and loved ones. We like and dislike many of the same foods.

We work in our own ways for a better world, a better future and places of understanding.

May we each do our part to build bridges of understanding and peace—here and wherever our steps lead us.

The Rev. Bonnie Chandler-Warren
Wesley United Methodist - Yakima

As we study together the core values of Jesus' ministry, we will touch on some of the strict versus nurturing models—law vs. grace, discipline vs. caring. We will discover that both models have some value, for the individual as well as the nation.

I worry, however, when one model becomes the norm for domestic and international policies.

The Rev. John Temple Bristow
Country Homes Christian

Faith and Environment Network forms

A new Faith and Environment Network, formed to connect the faith and environment communities for education on the environment and lifestyle choices, is planning a benefit presentation by Peter Illyn, director of Restoring Eden, a nonprofit group in La Center, Wash., that seeks to make environmental stewardship a core Christian value.

His talk, with a panel discussion by local network members, will be at 7 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 17, at Central Lutheran Church, 512 S. Bernard.

"The network seeks to mobilize volunteers to work with environmental groups on local conservation projects and campaigns," said Jason Duba, an intern with Conservation Northwest, which is working in conjunction with the Interfaith Council of the Inland Northwest on this project.

The project has received an AmeriCorps grant for someone to work through the Interfaith

Council and an advisory board. The benefit will raise funds for the AmeriCorps matching requirement.

Impetus for this collaboration came from a 2003 dialogue series on religion and the environment.

Many, like the Rev. Gail Duba of Central Lutheran Church, consider environmental stewardship as integral to their religious beliefs: "When faith and environ-

mental beliefs intersect, we have the opportunity to put faith into practice," she said.

Amber Waldref of the Lands Council, an advisory board member, believes that collaboration between the faith and environmental communities will connect citizens seeking better solutions and policies to preserve "the natural splendor of our region."

For information, call 329-1410.

Calendar of Events

- Nov 2, 16, 30** • The Fig Tree Show: Peter Storey on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Comcast Channel 14, 4 p.m.
- Nov 3** • GSAE Tax Seminar, Fourth Memorial, 2000 N. Standard, 8:30 a.m.
- Nov 3, 17** • Peace Vigil, Monroe and Spokane Falls Blvd., 4:30 p.m., PeaceWorks, 35 W. Main, 6 p.m.
- Nov 4** • World Community Day, Church Women United, "A Light to the Nations," Community Congregational United Church of Christ, 525 NE Campus, Pullman, 10 a.m. - call 344-3929
- Cup of Cool Water Concert, Fourth Memorial, 7 p.m.
- Nov 5** • Volunteer Chore Services Leaf Raking Blitz, O'Malley Hall, 330 E. Boone, 9 a.m. - call 328-8400
- NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet, Northern Quest Casino Pavilion, Airway Heights, 5 p.m. - call 467-9793
- Nov 6-7** • Cancelled: The Common Ministries' Roger Williams Symposium with Carter Heyward in Pullman - call 332-2611
- Nov 7** • Living Wage Meeting, 35 W. Main, 5 p.m.
- Nov 8** • Vote
- Nov 9** • Faith in Action Dialogue 2006 Planning Committee, Women's Hearth, 906 W. 2nd Ave., 8 a.m. with breakfast
- Nov 9, 23** • Pax Christi, St. Joseph's Catholic, 1503 W. Dean, noon
- Nov 11** • Whitworth International Banquet - call 777-4509
- Nov 12** • City Gate benefit concert with Mark Pearson and Mike McCoy of the Brothers Four Folk Singing Group, Plymouth Congregational, 1502 W. 8th Ave., 7 p.m. - call 838-8666
- Nov 13** • "The Wal-Mart Movie," Global Folk Art, 35 W. Main - call 838-0664
- Nov 14** • Night of 1,000 Dinners, United Nations Association, Unitarian Universalist, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr., 6 p.m.
- Nov 15** • Earth Day Planning-Coeur d'Alene, 411 N. 15th, 7 a.m.
- Witness for Peace in Nicaragua, Beth Poteet, 35 W. Main, 5 p.m.
- Nov 16** • Spokane City Forum: "Diversity—A Practical Approach," Debbie Bird, business development director of Safeco's Jackson St. Center in Seattle, First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar, 11:45 a.m. - call 777-1555
- Nov 17** • Martin Luther King, Jr., Family Outreach Benefit Luncheon, Davenport Hotel, 10 S. Post, 11:30 a.m. - call 455-8722
- The Other Side of War, "Recent Catholic Thought on War and Peace," Thomas Shannon, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Foley Center at Gonzaga University, noon
- VOICES, Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway, 5:30 p.m.
- Catholicism for the New Millennium, "Cloning and Stem Cells: Reflections of a Catholic Theologian," Thomas Shannon, Barbieri Courtroom, Gonzaga Law School, 7:30 p.m.
- Faith and Environment Network Benefit, Peter Illyn and panel discussion, Central Lutheran, 512 S. Bernard, 7 p.m.
- Nov 18** • Diversity Awareness Series, "Learning from the Stories We Hear and Tell," Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 11:30 a.m.
- Nov 19** • "Common Dreams" advocacy workshop, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr., 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. - call 458-3988
- Nov 20** • Taizé worship, St. Stephen's, 5720 S. Perry, 7 p.m.
- Nov 24** • Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave., 10 a.m.
- Nov 25-27** • Fair Trade Festival, 35 W. Main
- Nov 30** • Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark's Lutheran, 24th & Grand, 9 a.m.
- Nov 1** • Fig Tree Board, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 7:30 a.m.
- Tues-Sats** • Habitat-Spokane work days - call 534-2552
- Fridays** • Colville Peace Vigil - call 675-4554
- 1st Sats** • Ministers' Fellowship Union - call 624-0522
- Sundays** • Taizé worship, 7 p.m., Community Congregational United Church of Christ, 525 NE Campus, Pullman - call 332-2611

Center plans benefit lunch

"Living the Legacy of Dr. King: Developing Tomorrow's Leaders" is the theme for the 2005 Martin Luther King, Jr., Family Outreach Center Benefit Luncheon at 11:30 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 17, at the Davenport Hotel, 10 S. Post.

Proceeds support children's out-of-school programming and parent education at the center in East Central Spokane. The center serves children, youth and families through culturally responsive educational and social service programs that reflect King's vision of equal respect, treatment and accessibility.

The center's programs serve more than 1,200 children and adults, fostering connections, relationships and community.

For information, call 455-8722.

GSAE hosts tax seminar

The Greater Spokane Association of Evangelicals is presenting its "2005 Church and Clergy Tax Checkup" from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 3, at Fourth Memorial Church, 2000 N. Standard.

Wayne Vinson, an accountant doing church and clergy taxes for 10 years, will help participants understand new rules and regulations related to managing finances for tax purposes for ministries, churches and pastors.

Keeping up is necessary and not always easy, said Wayne, a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and financial advisor to the GSAE.

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Muslims share meal, value of fasting

Around a meal breaking their Ramadan fast at sunset on Saturday, Oct. 22 at the Cathedral of St. John, Spokane area Muslims provided an educational, community building event. Ramadan concludes on Nov. 4.

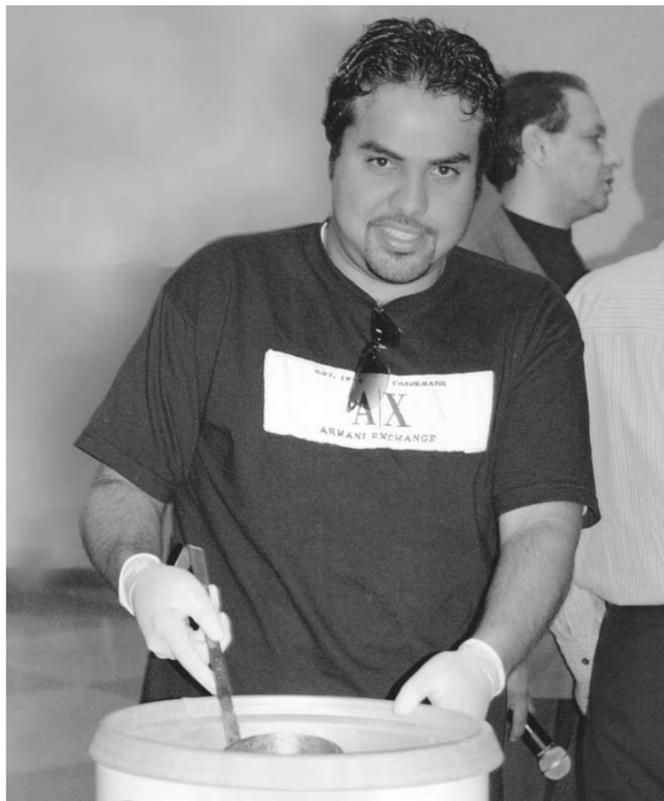
Breaking the fast began with dates, juice and samosa potato pies. Muslims joined in their sunset prayer. After the evening meal, Mamdouh El-Aarag of the Spokane Islamic Center gave a presentation on the significance of Ramadan in Islam.

He described Ramadan as a month in which people seek mercy, forgiveness and patience.

"People fast to purify their souls and bring them closer to Allah (God). It trains people to stay away from forbidden things and expresses self-discipline, self-control and self-evaluation," Mamdouh said.

He discussed several spiritual, social and physical benefits to the fasting person—forgiveness of sins, intercession on the judgment day, appreciation of blessings, empathy for the needy, cleansing the body of toxins, weight reduction and clearing the brain.

During Ramadan, believers are to give charity to the poor and to work to improve human relation-



Abdullah Albinali, a student from Qatar, served soup.

ships, he explained.

Mamdouh said Islam promotes good conduct, honesty, love, standing by the needy, visiting the sick, guarding one's tongue,

respecting parents, stopping disputes and being united.

"Our goal is to know and worship Allah and to spread peace, love, justice and mercy," he said.

Events teach, preach and pray for an end to domestic violence

An Oct. 21 candlelight vigil at Hillyard Baptist Church honored victims of domestic violence.

The Rev. John Dotson, pastor, recited statistics on domestic violence in the Spokane area and read names of dozens of local people killed by intimate partners. He recognized hundreds of others who were not named.

"God's plan for marriage is intimacy and trust. Domestic violence breaks our Creator's and Savior's heart, but there is hope for the abused and for those who abuse," he said.

In addition to testimonies of victims and survivors, there was a candle-lighting ceremony. Participants lit a candle and spoke the first name of a loved one who suffered violence at the hands of another. Some wept openly.

When a middle-aged woman lit her candle, she turned and whispered the name of her elderly mother who was with her. The women embraced and shared an emotional moment.

The evening ended with release of balloons into the night air as a symbol of moving forward in life.

Three local organizations collaborated to sponsor the event: Abuse Recovery Ministry and Services, the Interfaith Council and Summit Quest.

That remembrance was one of 18 events of teaching, preaching and praying organized in October through the Circle of Caring program of the Interfaith Council on the theme, "Domestic Violence—A Community Issue."

Other participating congregations were the Antioch Four-square Church, the Baha'i Faith in Spokane Valley, Centenary United Methodist, Congregation Ner Tamid, Country Homes Christian, Covenant Christian, Emmanuel Lutheran, First Church of Religious Science, Living Word Center, Mission Community Presbyterian, Our Lady of Fatima Catholic, St. Aloysius Catholic, St. Ann Catholic, St. Mary's Catholic, the Spokane Buddhist Temple, the Spokane Islamic Center, and Unity Church of Truth. For information, call 329-1410.

Moscow, Pullman faith groups make friends around dinner tables

By Carol Spurling

Members of Pullman and Moscow faith groups find that making friends is easier when they sit around a dinner table together.

The Interfaith Potluck that was sponsored by the Pullman Interfaith Dialogue on October 20 at Gladish Gym gave people such an opportunity.

Called "Feasting and Fasting," the event was held in honor of the October and November holy days of four faith traditions: Ramadan in Islam, the Birth of The Báb in Bahá'í, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur in Judaism, and All Saints Day and All Souls Day in Christianity.

"The Interfaith Dialogue started long ago. Leaders from different faiths meet regularly in Pullman and Moscow," explained organizer Gail Stearns, director of the Common Ministry at Washington State University (WSU).

"After Sept. 11, 2001, we decided to have a potluck and invite everyone. Hundreds of people came. We've done it every year since as a way for people to meet and learn about their neighbors," she said, pointing out how the event helps people experience the advantage of living in a small, but

diverse community.

About 90 people attended this year, bringing such dishes as noodle kugel, samosas, lasagna, khataif, sopa de arroz, brownies, baklava and apple crisp.

The start of the dinner coincided with sunset, so those fasting during daylight hours for Ramadan would be able to eat.

Many attendees were international students and professors from WSU and the University of Idaho (UI), people who help create the local diversity.

Speakers summed up aspects of holy days in October.

S.M. "Ghazi" Ghazanfar, emeritus professor and chair of the UI College of Business and Economics, welcomed the crowd. He is a member of the Moscow Interfaith Dialogue.

"It used to be that each faith had its own enclave," Ghazi said, "but living in isolation is not possible in this age of technology. All of us need to learn to live together. We can't assume that other people don't exist, and we need not only to live together but also to accept each other."

Sayed Daoud, associate professor of pharmaceutical science at WSU, introduced Ma'en AlMaq-

bleh to discuss the importance of fasting during Ramadan. His wife, Raja AlKhalili, is working on a doctoral degree in English literature at WSU.

"Fasting from dawn to sunset teaches people about the suffering of the poor," he said. "It is also a way to express spiritual devotion, cleanse body and mind, and show kinship with fellow believers."

Brad Vonhof of Pullman, a member of the Bahá'í faith, shared historical background about The Báb, its founder-prophet, born in October, 1819.

"As Christ had innate knowledge and conversed with Jewish leaders while a child, The Báb had innate knowledge he shared with the leaders of Islam," Brad explained. "Also like Jesus, he

was martyred at a young age."

Erica Austin, a professor of communications at WSU, said Rosh Hashana is the Jewish New Year and the beginning of a 10-day period of introspection that ends with Yom Kippur, the day of atonement. Observant Jews who are able fast for 24 hours on Yom Kippur.

"It's a time to think about priorities, how to be a better person, and how to make the world a better place," Erica said. She ended her remarks by blowing a ram's horn called a shofar, the traditional end-

ing to Yom Kippur.

Father Steve Werner from St. Thomas More Catholic Newman Center in Pullman said that unlike the other holy days honored at the potluck, All Saints Day and All Souls Day are minor and not celebrated by all Christians.

"These are days to remember those who have died and days of hope in what God has planned for us," he said.

Each speaker expressed the desire that members of all faiths live in harmony.

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