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Fortunes, futures intertwine

By Mary Stamp

Believing the fortunes and futures of the United States and United Nations intertwine, Jo Stowell first joined the United Nations Association-Spokane four years ago and is now the chapter president.

Offering reflections as the chapter celebrates the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, founded under “the strong influence of Americans,” she quoted former South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, “The only way we are going to survive is together.”

Although she spent 25 years as a psychotherapist focusing on the micro issues of human relationships, her interest in the macro issues of international relations motivated her, too. She wanted to be a diplomat.

After early years on a farm in Ord, Neb., she went to the University of Denver to study voice, but earned her degree in social sciences. She also earned a master’s degree in international affairs in 1972 at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

“Growing up in the Methodist Church also gave me a foundation in a tradition that respected diversity,” said Jo who was a leader in her high school youth group and the Methodist Student Foundation

Continued on page 4



Jo Stowell leads local United Nations Association Chapter.

Photo by John Kerkering

Donors need to sustain area nonprofits, too

The outpouring of support for victims of the recent hurricanes hitting the Gulf Coast exemplifies the generosity and caring of people during a disaster, especially when media attention focuses on losses people are experiencing.

With major disaster, area nonprofits often experience a downturn in giving to their ongoing efforts.

The Fig Tree covers both the crises that arise on a massive scale and people in the region dealing with the everyday crises and disasters in the lives of people.

“It’s not a matter of either-or, but of both-and,” said editor Mary Stamp. “Extraordinary events call for extraordinary giving and outreach, stretching our often limited senses of stewardship to meet both immediate and ongoing needs.”

This issue looks at varied ways faith communities are responding to the Gulf Coast disaster, as they continue support for long-term recovery and rebuilding from natural and human-caused catastrophes, such as the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in 2004, other hurricanes, wars, disease, refugees, displaced people, poverty and injustices.

In Sounding Board, three pastors lend insights on prayer during times of crisis and every day.

Rob McCann is successor as director

Donna Hanson leaves legacy at Catholic Charities

Donna Hanson, director of Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Spokane for 27 years, died Friday, Sept. 23.

“She was open about her impending death from cancer and looked forward to going home to her Lord,” said Monsignor Frank Bach, her predecessor at Catholic Charities. “She leaves a magnificent legacy of service to the poor, the hurting and the needy.”

At her funeral Mass on Sept. 28, he spoke of her life focused on love of God, family and Catholic Charities.

“For Donna, God loved the world into existence, so it was her duty to love,” he said. “She often said, ‘We create the path by walking.’ By doing that, she took Catholic Charities on an incredible journey of service to Eastern Washington.”

She helped start community centers and spun them off. She guided expansion of low-income housing for farm workers, single

parents and disabled people. In addition, she oversaw relocating and rebuilding Catholic Charities’ most visible programs—St. Margaret’s Shelter for Women, House of Charities, and St. Anne’s Children and Family Center.

“Frustrated by the lack of women’s rights in the church, Donna worked in and with the church. Her insights were respected,” Father Frank said.

“Deeply spiritual, she sought God in people—particularly poor, hurting, vulnerable people—taking literally ‘what you do to the least’ (Matt. 25) and the call to ‘act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God’ (Micah 6). She left a wonderful example to emulate,” he concluded.

Her successor Robert McCann, who has worked as associate director since February 2000, asked for prayers to carry on in her footsteps.

Before coming to Spokane, Rob worked with Catholic Relief

services, an international disaster relief and development agency serving in poverty-stricken areas of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. He worked in refugee camp management and evaluation. He also collected food from rural areas of the United States to transport and distribute to starving people through Harvest for Hope. He visited more than 20 countries under CRS.

“Catholic Charities is a vibrant organization that operates and creates programs for the most vulnerable members of our community. It is built on core values of respect, compassion, justice and collaboration,” Rob said.

Catholic Charities is a network for 15 programs serving 44,000 people in 13 counties of Eastern Washington.

For information, call 358-4274 or read Donna’s last Fig Tree interview at www.thefigtree.org/summer05images/donnahanson.html

Panelists explore area’s ‘hidden slave culture’

State and local experts will discuss facts, statistics, cases and community responses to human trafficking in a panel discussion sponsored by Lutheran Community Services (LCS) from 8 a.m. to noon, Friday, Oct. 7, at the Foley Library Teleconference Center at Gonzaga University.

“Human Trafficking in Eastern Washington: Working to Uncover Spokane’s Hidden Slave Culture” is the focus of presentations by Lynda Buehring and Jill Peoples of Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Sergeant Harvey Sloan of the Seattle Police Department; Carrie Schonwald of the Refugee Women’s Alliance; Yvonne Lopez-Morton of the Commission on Hispanic Affairs for Eastern Washington and Tatyana Bistrevsky of the Washington State University Extension Center.

Melissa Cilley, director of the LCS Victim Rights Response Team of the Sexual Assault and Family Trauma (SAFE) Response Center, said LCS and other agencies have little experience with that issue. When federal funds were available two years ago, she asked other area agencies about forming a task force, but most thought there was no problem.

In asking more people, she has found that “we do have it, but we don’t know how to identify it,” so this training will create awareness of trafficking to help people identify victims, decide what to do and form a task force to offer more training events. For information, call 747-8224.

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*

Nigerians displaced through conflict, disaster

Abuja (ENI). Five million Nigerians displaced by religious and ethnic conflicts, as well as natural disasters between 1990 and 2003, severely affect Nigeria's role in humanitarian operations in conflicts in Africa, says Nigeria's Vice President.

Bosnian urges Europeans to accept Muslims

Warsaw (ENI). An Islamic leader in the Balkans urges European Christians not to blame all Muslims for acts of terrorism but to accept Muslims as patriotic Europeans. "Don't blame every Muslim for the next 10 centuries for what happened in New York, Madrid and London, as you blamed Jews for centuries for Christ's crucifixion," said Mustafa Ceric, chief mufti, or Rais-ul-ulema, of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Russian bishop seeks alliance to fight secularism

Warsaw (ENI). A Russian Orthodox bishop has appealed for a European Roman Catholic-Orthodox alliance to combat secular influences. "Europe has so rapidly de-Christianized that urgent action is needed to save it from losing its centuries-old Christian identity," said Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev of Vienna and Austria, the Russian church's representative to the European Union.

Armenians mull sainthood for massacre victims

Sofia (ENI). An Armenian Apostolic Church committee is considering sainthood for victims genocide from 1915 to 1917 by the Ottoman Empire, which became Turkey after the First World War. Armenia says one and a half million people died as a result of a systematic genocide as the Ottoman Empire forcibly removed Armenians. Turkey rejects the term "genocide" and says mass removals were to clear people from a war zone.

Chinese hear from U.S. physicist

Hong Kong (ENI). When religious leaders cast doubts on the theory of evolution, science and religion can appear on a collision course, but a U.S. Nobel laureate and physicist, speaking at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, said the two can work side by side for all of humanity. Charles Townes, who helped develop the laser, said: "Science deals with how the universe works, and religion searches for its meaning and purpose."

Anglican bishops want apology for Iraq war

London (ENI). Four Anglican bishops suggest that the Church of England arrange a meeting of Muslim and Christian leaders to initiate an apology by Western countries involved in the War in Iraq. The initiative is contained in a 100-page document prepared by a group working with the bishop of Oxford.

Israeli rabbis ask Pope to combat anti-Semitism

Jerusalem (ENI). Israel's chief rabbis urged Pope Benedict XVI to speak out against terrorism and anti-Semitism during a meeting to mark the 40th anniversary of a Vatican document, "Nostra Aetate"—In Our Times—that transformed Roman Catholic-Jewish relations by rejecting collective Jewish guilt for the crucifixion of Jesus.

Relief aid reaches home clearance victims

Harare (ENI). About 37 tons of food aid from the South African Council of Churches for victims of Zimbabwe's internationally-condemned home clearance program arrived in Harare after government officials held up the delivery for seven weeks. Zimbabwean officials held up the aid—maize, beans and cooking oil—saying they wanted to ensure the maize was not genetically-modified.

Canadian campaign against small arms

Vancouver, Canada (ENI). The peace agency of the Canadian Council of Churches, Project Ploughshares, has launched a campaign against small arms and light weapons which it says are responsible for half a million deaths each year—300,000 in armed conflict and 200,000 from homicides and suicides. The agency says there are more than 600 million small arms and light weapons in circulation.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Faith communities will pray for healing

Nine faith communities will participate in "The Faith Community Raises Its Voice: Domestic Violence—A Community Issue," holding services during October to educate people about domestic violence and pray for its victims.

"October is domestic violence awareness month," said Kateri Caron, director of the Interfaith Council, which recruited the churches as part of its Circle of Caring program.

With one of every three women in Spokane County a victim of domestic violence, according to statistics gathered by the Spokane County Domestic Violence Consortium, the council seeks to raise awareness, so victims and survivors no longer suffer

in silence.

"We encourage faith communities to educate their congregations and build community involvement," she said.

The following is a partial list of services scheduled.

At the Spokane Islamic Center there will be services at sunset Saturdays, Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, during Ramadan.

At Unity Church of Truth, 2900 S. Bernard, there will be an 8 a.m. meditation on Tuesdays, Oct. 4, 11, 18 and 25.

St. Aloysius Catholic Church at 330 E. Boone will hold services at 5:15 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 8, and at 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 9.

Solid Rock Christian Center

at 205 E. Ermina is planning a service at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 12.

At Country Homes Christian Church, 8415 N. Wall, the service is at 10:30 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 16.

The Baha'i Faith meeting at Argonne Library, at Argonne and Upriver Dr., will have its service at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 19.

There will be a service at Hill-yard Baptist Church, 2121 E. Wabash, at 6 p.m., Friday, Oct. 21.

Living Word Christian, 3510 E. 55th, will hold its service at 8 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 22.

The service at Covenant Christian Church, 4204 E. 30th, will be at 11 a.m., Sunday, Oct. 23.

For information, call 329-1410.

NAACP banquet features Charles Steele

Charles Steele, national president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, will be the speaker for the Annual Freedom Fund Banquet of the Spokane Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The event is at 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 5, at the Northern Quest Casino Pavilion in Airway Heights.

Proceeds benefit the Col. Michael Anderson Scholarship Fund

and local community programs.

Charles, the first black person elected to the Tuscaloosa, Ala., City Council, also served in the Alabama State Senate.

In 2004, he succeeded Martin Luther King, III, as SCLC president. The organization, founded in 1957 by Martin Luther King, Jr., works to end discrimination, register voters, educate citizens and improve life for all people.

Charles will speak on "The

Three Views: Economics, Education and Empowerment," said V. Anne Smith, chapter president.

Economic development means jobs, housing and health care for all, she said, and education provides tools for shaping the future for all, not an exclusive few. To be a community united, she calls for a consistent focus on empowering and enriching the lives of underserved youth and families.

For information, call 467-9793.

Tri Cities presents Common Ground Film Festival

The Benton Franklin Dispute Resolution Center and Three Rivers Campus will present the Common Ground Film Festival at in October at Three Rivers Convention Center in Kennewick.

"Long Night's Journey into Day: South Africa's Search for Truth and Reconciliation, will be shown at 6 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 11. The documentary captures the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa as it examined the crimes under apartheid and decided who could seek amnesty.

"Blacks and Jews," at 6 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 12, explores relations between old allies and new adversaries, challenging complacency, re-examining the relationship between Jews and Blacks based on five stories.

"The Friendship Village" depicts Vietnam Friendship Village Project's mission to reconcile and heal wounds from the war, uniting veterans and citizens as they build a village in Vietnam for children deformed by Agent Orange.

It runs at 6 p.m., Thursday, Oct.

13, along with the eight-minute film, "Dinner for Two," about two chameleons in a rainforest caught in a conflict over territory that affects their whole environment

At 2 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 16, there will be two films:

- "Compromise: A Palestinian Israeli Co-Production of Romeo and Juliet" searches for solutions to these groups' rivalries through history.

- "Improbable Pairs" shows images of peace—people who might be enemies working for peace across profound barriers.

The films at 6 p.m., Monday, Oct. 17 are "Just a Little Red Dot" about a fifth grade Sri Lankan newcomer to Canada and "An Unlikely Friendship" about the relationship between an outspoken black woman civil rights activist and a leader of the local Ku Klux Klan in Durham, N.C. in the early 1970s.

"Seeds," at 6 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 18, follows 10 teenagers from war-torn countries as they spend three weeks together at the Seeds of Peace International

Camp in Maine, learning to share their dreams and fears, listening to opposing views, seeing beyond prejudices and respecting each other as individuals as they attempt to build what they all want: a future.

For information, visit www.bfdrc.org or www.sfcg.org.

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Editorial Team
Editor/Photographer - Mary Stamp
Sr. Bernadine Casey, Nancy Minard

Coordinators
Jim CastroLang - Interactive Website
Deidre Jacobson - Administration

Fig Tree Board
Bob Bartlett, Sr. Bernadine Casey, John Coleman Campbell, Jo Hendricks, Lance Jacobson, Mary Mackay, Michael McKay, Carl Milton, Nancy Minard, Roger Ross, Mary Stamp, Marilyn Stedman, Wesley Strait, Edie Volosing
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Fall Folk Festival

The Fall Folk Festival is sponsored by the Spokane Folklore Society a non-profit organization serving Spokane since 1977.
For information call 747-2640 or visit www.spokanefolklore.org

**10th Annual Fall Folk Fest
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**Saturday Nov. 5 11 am to 9 pm
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**Spokane Community College
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Dance & Music
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Food
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Evening Contra Dance
Live KPBX Radio Show

Religion and politics are advocate's family dinner discussion topics

Returning to Spokane after studies in history and religion at Mt. Holyoke College in Massachusetts, 22 year-old Laura Jennison found a job that fits her interests.

She is the new coordinator for the Interfaith Council's Advocacy Action Network of the Inland Northwest.

In that role, she is preparing four Initiative Education Forums to inform voters in churches about five initiatives on the ballot for the election on Tuesday, Nov. 8.

In Laura's family, religion and politics have been everyday discussion topics, so she speaks with ease about the intersection of these issues.

"When state or national legislation affects people in poverty, people without health care and people living in inadequate housing, people of faith care," she said.

Her job is to inform people, so they can talk to or write their representatives to tell them how they feel on issues because of their faith.

"Part of my role is to remind people of faith that it is our responsibility to care," Laura said.

Along with the forums, she meets with congregations to do advocacy training, educate them



Laura Jennison develops advocacy education programs.

on issues, and remind them "why we as people of faith care about these issues."

She knows it's easy for them to lose sight of their responsibility.

"The talk of separation of

church and state, which is important, often means that people of faith do not bring their faith values into the public square and do not work for issues of concern," she said. "Often they separate what

they learn and do in worship from what they do in relationship with the government. Many see church as a private sphere, separate from the public sphere, limited to personal relationships.

"We lose sight of the role of the congregations as communities involved in the public process to help people who are poor or hungry. Many will help people through church or nonprofit agencies, but few want to deal with the systemic changes, so people can provide food for their families on their own," said Laura, a member of North Hill Christian Church.

"I don't expect that vast, sweeping change will happen quickly to help people move from poverty and live on their own as they want. People who work full-time at minimum-wage jobs cannot work their way out of poverty. People should be able to support themselves and their families without having to work 60 to 80 hours in two or three jobs. Even working that much, many still do not have health care."

Laura is concerned that the nation is deep in debt and adding to it with hurricane recovery.

"Social welfare programs are more desperately needed now than ever," she said. "Before the hurricanes, Congress was planning to consider legislation proposing deep cuts to Medicaid, food stamps, Medicare, housing assistance and financial aid for college students."

Because of spending priorities in recent years, Laura said, the federal government is spending more than it receives. Congress is considering \$35 billion in cuts that would cut millions of children and adults out of access to food

stamps, health care, housing and education. Meanwhile, other bills seek to make \$70 billion in tax cuts for the wealthy permanent.

While tax cuts sound generally beneficial, she said people who earn little income or have small estates reap no benefit from them.

"We are responsible as a faith community, as neighbors, as cities, as states and as a nation to help people who do not have as much as we have gain access to medical care and to free them from worry about how they will put dinner on the table," Laura added.

"All faiths have a tenet of social justice—to help and protect those who do not have the means to take care of themselves," she said.

For her, that means more than individual assistance through charitable ministries and organizations. It also means that individuals need to try to affect the whole society, to make changes so everyone has opportunities.

An ingredient in action is hope, Laura said.

Although the degree of hope she has realistically depends on the day, she is overall hopeful that it is possible to change society.

"I have faith that the people of this country are good and care about each other," she said. "We may not see vast social change today or tomorrow, but there is a brighter future out there."

For information, call 329-1410.

Forums scheduled in Pullman, Spokane

Initiative Education Forums sponsored by the Interfaith Council and Catholic Charities will be held at 7 p.m. the following dates and places:

- Thursday, Oct. 20, at St. Mark's Lutheran Church at 316 E. 24th Ave. in South Spokane;

- Monday, Oct. 25, at St. John Vianney Catholic at 503 N. Walnut in Spokane Valley;

- Wednesday, Oct. 27, at Country Homes Christian at 8415 N. Wall in the Spokane area, and

- Tuesday, Oct. 26, at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 440 NE Ash in Pullman.

Presenters will explain initiatives and analyze them from various religious perspectives. They will not support either side, but will share resources so voters can make informed decisions.

Ballot issues include I-330 and I-336, which deal with medical lawsuits; I-900, which requires the state auditor to do performance reviews with 16 percent of

the state's portion of sales taxes; I-901, which would expand smoking prohibitions in public places, and I-912, which would repeal the recent gas tax passed by the legislature.

For information, call 329-1410 or email laura@interfaithnw.org.

Abrahamic faiths join in fast, prayer

Call to Action Spokane set a Prayer Service for the International Synod on the Eucharist, and the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, Ramadan and Rosh Hashanah, at 7 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 4, at Sacred Heart Parish, 219 E. Rockwood.

Nationwide, with the confluence of sacred seasons for the Abrahamic faiths in October, The Tent of Abraham, Hagar and Sarah, the National Council of Churches and Shalom Center call for a day of fasting, reflection, repentance, reconciliation and renewal for Christians, Jews and Muslims on Wednesday, Oct. 13.

Supporters encourage people of faith to "walk together, learn together, pray alongside each other, listen to each other, and work together for peace, justice, human rights and the healing of our earth."

The Muslim lunar month of Ramadan and the Jewish lunar month of Tishrei begin Oct. 3 and 4. For Christians, Oct. 2 is Worldwide Communion Sunday and Tuesday, Oct. 4, is the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. For information, see nccusa.org.

The local Pax Christi will join in the fast. For information, call 928-0216.

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1603 N. Belt Street

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344-7787

Bazaars

Bake, Craft and Book Sales & Meals

The Fig Tree will run another composite ad in the issue out on Nov. 2. Cost: \$12 / col. inch

<p>SCANDINAVIAN BAZAAR Proceeds benefit local charities Friday, Nov. 4 - 10am-2pm <i>Kaffe Stua 9am-1pm</i> Central Lutheran Church Corner of 5th & Bernard LEFSE, SCANDINAVIAN COOKIES, CANDY, BAKED GOODS, CRAFTS</p>	<p><i>Trinity United Methodist Church</i> 1725 E. Bridgeport - Spokane Bazaar & Turkey Dinner 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 10</p>
<p>Mini-Bazaar & Teriyaki Take-out Saturday, Oct. 8 - 11am - 3pm <i>Chicken, rice & salad</i> Reservation required - 535-2687 Highland Park United Methodist 611 S. Garfield</p>	<p>Bazaar & Bake Sale <i>St. Mark's Lutheran Church</i> 316 E. 24th Ave. - Grand Blvd. & 24th 9 am-2 pm, Saturday, Nov. 5 <i>Coffee bar, bake sale, quality seconds and crafts</i></p>
<p>Holidays in the Valley 9 am-2 pm, Saturday, Oct. 29 Lunch 11am-1pm Spokane Valley United Methodist Women 115 N. Raymond Rd. For information, call 924-7262</p>	<p>Harvest Dinner 5-7 pm, Saturday, Oct. 29 Veradale United Church of Christ 611 N Progress - Spokane Valley 1 block west of Sullivan, south of Broadway 926-7173</p>
<p><i>Cheney United Church of Christ</i> Bazaar & Lunch 9am-2pm, Nov. 5 at 423 N. 6th Baked Goods, Produce, Crafts Silent Auction, Children's Activities Lunch 11 -1:30 • Raffle at 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">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>

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United Nations Association leader believes

Global ties make boundaries artificial

Continued from page 1
at the University of Denver.

When her former husband was in the military in Germany, she taught enlisted personnel history and U.S. government in a high-school diploma program. Eventually, she became a school counselor, decided to study counseling and earned a master's in counseling and human services in 1976, switching from macro to micro relationships.

She headed a rural mental health center in Nebraska before coming to Spokane in 1980 to work with the then Lutheran Social Services. For three years, she counseled child victims of sexual abuse and trained volunteers for the rape crisis line. Then she entered private practice.

Poor eyesight led her to retire in 2000, when she was unable to pick up on body language of clients.

Volunteering at the YWCA led to connections with the UNA-Spokane.

Now a member of Unity Church, she finds its philosophy, in words opening Sunday worship, saying that "we honor all cultures and religions, and promote the oneness of all of us," Jo said.

"Every two weeks, we see slides of different countries and peoples, whom we hold in our prayers," she said.

"Our church has a global view. I believe national boundaries are artificial. We cannot hide behind them. We need to be concerned about the welfare of people all over the world," she said. "So my view of the world fits the United Nations' concept."

As a freshman at the University of Denver, she learned about the United Nations and joined the in-

ternational house, doing activities with international students.

She said she saw people as people, relating with no cognizance of racial differences. Later, one daughter married a man from India, so Jo has grandchildren who are part Indian.

Out of touch with the United Nations while rearing her family and counseling, she now believes it is "the only hope for the planet, the only global organization concerned with the welfare of people and with the means to help people emerge from poverty."

She finds hope in the United Nations' Millennium Goals for Development.

"I see Kofi Annan and UN leaders as sincere, honest people who want to bring a better life to the poorest billion people in the world," Jo said.

"The UN cares about issues. It's the only organization bringing together so many different countries, cultures and attitudes to cooperate," she added.

Jo is concerned that press coverage about the UN focuses on criticisms, rather than publicizing the advances that have resulted from people working together, such as the eradication of smallpox and the near eradication of polio under the World Health Organization.

The many successful peace-keeping missions are also not publicized, she said.

She believes the UN could do more, but can only do what the five permanent members on the Security Council—including the United States—and what the full Security Council and General Assembly approve.

Jo was disappointed that the 39-page draft prepared for the

recent World Summit was nearly completed when the new U.S. ambassador came to the U.N. with more than 450 amendments.

"Other countries became angry and wanted to add amendments, too, so it turned into chaos," Jo said. "If we do not make the United Nations work, the world will turn to the law of the jungle with those who have the biggest weapons and most money ruling imperialistic empires, and poor people in all countries will suffer."

"We need the United Nations if we are to build some semblance of a peaceful world with survival and a decent standard of living for all, rather than with one billion people dying of starvation and disease."

"If some do not consider they have a moral obligation to care, as I do, at least they should realize it is in our enlightened self interest to take care of people, rather than sending troops to one failed state after another," she said.

"The 60th anniversary could have been a great milestone if the World Summit had handled matters in a different way. Now it will be hard to meet the Millennium Development Goals, but at least we have them. At the 60th, we can look back on all the UN has accomplished."

Jo considers that it's appropriate to make changes and reforms, because the world today is different from the world 60 years ago. The UN now has 191 members, in contrast to just 51 founding members.

"We need to deal with changing realities of the world, looking to see what needs to be done in a globalized world, in which we can no longer hide behind national boundaries," Jo concluded.

For information, call 624-3608.

Shifted from macro to micro relations and back

United Nations Day speaker focuses on children's issues

On the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, the United Nations Association-Spokane will hold its annual United Nations Day Celebration and Dinner beginning at 5:30 p.m., Monday, Oct. 24, at Mukogawa Commons, 4000 W. Randolph Rd.

Mary Ann Murphy, executive director of Spokane's Partners with Families and Children will speak on "Child Health and Survival, Local to Global."

Her agency is a collaborative service that evaluates and treats children—and their families—who are victims of abuse and neglect, or who have been exposed to drug abuse and violence.

Mary Ann will discuss the fourth of eight UN Millennium

Development Goals related to reducing child mortality. She will discuss the national and global aspects, as well as what Partners with Families and Children does locally.

Children from the Martin Luther King Family Center will entertain with African drumming.

The United Nations, which has 191 member states, was founded in 1945 after World War II to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations and achieve cooperation among nations.

Member states determine its actions. Recently, more than 170 of them met in New York City for the Millennium Plus Five Summit, discussing eradication

of poverty, the millennium goals, health issues and security.

Former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt laid the groundwork for the United Nations Association-USA, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization supporting the work of the UN.

For information, call Janet Eiden, at 448-0762 or check www.unaspokane.org

Health for All asks churches to promote health-care access

By Deidre Jacobson

Health For All, a project linking Eastern Washington individuals and families to health-care services, wants to involve churches and faith-based organizations in health-care access ministries.

Some congregations offer parish nursing or preventive screening of blood pressure, but Ralph DeCristoforo, coordinator, believes they could also help screen members for eligibility and access to health-care resources.

"There is a tendency to overlook the problem of health-care access, because it is hidden," he said. "Pastors would be surprised how many people in their congregations are among the 100,000 uninsured people—10,000 of whom are children—eligible for state-sponsored coverage. Many others are underinsured and quietly in need."

He suggests that congregations form health-care access teams to assist members and the community. Health For All can train them on the eligibility for and access to programs, and on how to eliminate accessibility disparities in the health-care system.

"I long for a system, in which all children have access to affordable, appropriate services at the appropriate time. I dream of a system that takes care of seniors and is not so confusing that health-care professionals cannot clearly explain how it works or why. I pray for a system where people do not have to choose between health care and food," Ralph said.

Health for All, which operates under the umbrella of Community-Minded Enterprises, has helped

48,000 people find affordable health care and more than 19,000 uninsured people become insured on state sponsored programs such as Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program and Basic Health plans.

Health-care and community-service providers refer uninsured people to Health For All. Staff screens them, helps them fill out applications and guides them through the system.

Ralph said grant funding for Health for All runs out Dec. 31.

"We will provide assistance until we run out of funds, if that comes," he said, hoping to find new sources to keep it going.

A recent analysis by the Morgan Leigh Group found that for every dollar Community-Minded Enterprises, formerly Health Improvement Partnership, has secured for Health For All, Eastern Washington hospitals have saved at least four dollars, he said.

"Things have been financially tough for the health-care industry in Eastern Washington," said Dan Baumgarten, executive director of Community-Minded Enterprises, "but without Health For All, they would be tougher."

Dan has initiated a local campaign to reduce reliance on grants. He is meeting with organizations, businesses and faith groups as part of the quest for resources.

For information, call (866) 444-3066 or email ralphd@community-minded.org.

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Faith response to disasters continues after media attention wanes

With the momentum generated by media attention on disasters, faith communities naturally mobilize in response. Beyond that, faith organizations continue when media attention wanes.

Working for years with Church World Service, the Christian Reformed Church and Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, Neil Molenaar fosters interfaith response to long-term post-disaster needs and training for preparedness in case of disasters.

His vision is to develop for Washington a comprehensive interfaith and ecumenical—in the broadest sense—capacity for response to a major catastrophe.

As he “retires” from his volunteer role as regional manager of Christian Reformed Church (CRC) disaster recovery programs, Neil will mentor his successor and write a history of the CRC World Relief Committee from 1972 to 1990, when he was director. He will do that along with developing the Washington Faith Based Disaster Recovery Network and organizing interfaith response to recovery from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

So he has little time to sit in the sun reading a book and ignoring the problems of victims of the recent hurricanes.

Neil is working with the Washington Association of Churches in partnership with Church World Service to facilitate statewide response to evacuees trickling in and on long-range plans.

“Hurricane Katrina is the first catastrophic disaster I have dealt with,” he said. “So I’m ready to think outside the box, in order to respond effectively and efficiently. We cannot let old patterns control. I can’t say because of my experience that we should do something one way because it’s how we always did it.”

FEMA has given Washington an emergency declaration, so what the Washington VOAD does on the state level will be reimbursed. In the past, clients referred to faith-based and voluntary disaster response organizations were asked if they had registered with FEMA, which does not release funds until they inspect the home to confirm it is destroyed.

“People coming here cannot wait for their needs to be assessed. We must address immediate needs of evacuees who are arriving all over the state, coming to stay with families and friends. We in the faith community need to respond to their needs,” Neil said.

Over the years, he has established networks of organizations and resource people. He meets



Neil Molenaar, holding the board at the right, does organizational and hands-on response.

Photo provided by Neil Molenaar

with them in conference calls to determine ways for the faith community to respond.

“In every county, we will address how to meet special needs of evacuees beyond what the Red Cross and FEMA do,” he said.

Neil has been a pioneer in establishing interfaith disaster relief efforts, particularly through Church World Service and Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).

He helped form the Inland Northwest Interfaith Disaster Response Network after floods in 1996. Once rebuilding was done, that network, which formed under the then Spokane Council of Ecumenical Ministries, closed. After wildfires in the Okanogan area in the summer of 2004, he developed an interfaith recovery program there.

In both cases, regional interfaith disaster groups formed and raised funds from local and national sources to meet long-term needs of those who lost homes.

“People are normally not concerned about disasters nor are they interested in being involved until there is a major disaster, but disasters can strike any time,” said Neil, who lives in Bremerton.

“While media make hoopla about a disaster, people are concerned, but when it goes off the media radar screen, few are interested in the long-term recovery to put people back on their feet.

“I work with the church, because they have a mandate to work long-term,” he said.

Neil said government and faith communities want to develop interfaith disaster response groups, so there is understanding and respect for the response needed five

months to five years after a disaster. Interfaith organizations repair and rebuild homes, or build new homes to replace those damaged or destroyed.

“Along with physical needs, there are long-lasting emotional, psychological and spiritual needs. We focus our attention on vulnerable people, the poor, disabled, single-parent families and elderly. Those with insurance can hire people to do the reconstruction,” Neil said.

“It takes months to generate money and volunteers. With the work of volunteers giving 10,000 hours—worth \$17.50 an hour—after a disaster in Skagit and Snohomish counties, we had a sizeable contribution, along with \$60,000 in financial gifts,” he said.

“Often recipients are amazed that people would leave their homes to spend two to three weeks to help them rebuild. They are amazed by that kind of love. They wonder what drives the volunteers. Many do it as Christians, an expression of their personal faith in gratitude to God.

“Many volunteers are at a time in their lives when they want to do something meaningful, something that has sustainability and helps people restore their lives,” he said.

As director of the national CRCWRC in Grand Rapids, Mich., Neil developed a disaster response program when Church World Service (CWS) had no defined program. He recruited volunteers through the CRC and has a pool of people ready to respond.

“Interested in the role of churches in long-term assistance

in disasters, he decided to give his talents to the church. His goal was to inspire one-to-one connection among lay people.

He realized that skills from helping prisoners put their lives back together after the disaster of incarceration would transfer both to disaster aid and to helping church people reach out to care about people next to them in pews and outside the church.

Involvement in 1976 response to a flood in Colorado led to connections with Church World Service (CWS), which has provided an ecumenical base for building volunteer disaster consultants.

In 1990, he returned to Washington to manage a Red Cross Chapter. From 1992 to 1994, he was the first consultant for the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), working with CWS and the Christian Reformed Church to develop state VOADs to connect volunteer agencies.

In 1994, he started Northwest Mercy Ministries, a network of 60 Christian Reformed Churches. He was director from 1995 to 2002.

In the aftermath of Sept. 11, he was appointed one of two part-time, volunteer disaster response recovery liaisons with Church World Service.

“I hope the state’s faith groups work with the Washington Association of Churches and Church World Service, so when a disaster happens here, we will be ready to respond immediately.”

For information, call 360-479-5167.

His current efforts in response to Hurricane Katrina can be tracked at www.Katrinanwvoad.org.

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Disaster response includes prayers, collections, volunteering, welcoming

Congregations respond through many networks

In response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, area congregations are sending donations through their faith networks, many of which work collaboratively through InterAction, a coalition of 160 U.S.-based private relief, international development and refugee assistance organizations that abide by a set of standards to assure accountability to donors and quality service.

There is information on those agencies at interaction.org.

While many are sending funds, others are collecting material goods and sending them by mail or truck.

Heavy media coverage has brought a surge of response. The following reports from people in the Inland Northwest give an overview of the types of response from communities of faith.

Praying, giving donations, delivering necessities, sheltering people, rescuing people, resettling people, rebuilding lives and caregiving are typical responses from people of faith.

Richland pastor leads preparedness training

Knowing disasters happen any time, the Rev. Stephen Eriksen of Shalom United Church of Christ in Richland, is available to train churches in disaster relief and preparedness.

He is involved with the Washington Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters.

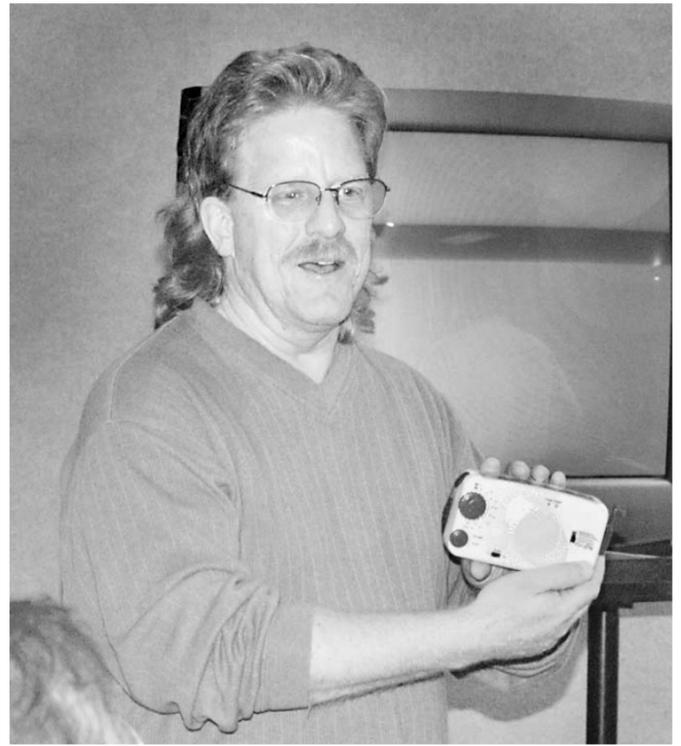
Hurricane Katrina confirms his belief that churches should be prepared to respond to possible disasters in the Northwest—farm chemical explosions, drought, blackouts, extreme cold, radiation fallout, dust storms, shipping disasters, fog and smog episodes, toxic waste in landfills or train derailments.

“From when the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) began in 1964 up to 1998, nearly 1,200 disasters tapped FEMA funds,” he said.

First responders, he said, are police, fire fighters, medical services and the National Guard. Second responders are the Red Cross and Salvation Army, providing temporary shelter and food. Third responders are local churches and communities involved in rebuilding and long-term recovery, including spiritual, psychological and physical needs.

Eriksen urges churches to have disaster plans—so members help each other and neighbors, manage donations and respond to vulnerable, grieving people.

He suggested some spiritual care guidelines:



The Rev. Steve Eriksen suggests having a crank or solar radio.

Salvation Army reports high giving

Donations flow into the Salvation Army by mail, in person, on-line and by phone, said Christy Markham, development director.

By Sept. 14, the Washington, North Idaho and Western Montana division received 13,693 gifts, totaling \$2,476,718, more than for Sept. 11 or tsunami relief.

“The closer a disaster hits to home, the more people there are affected and the more people see the disaster in the media, the more they are likely to respond. There was heavy coverage the first weeks,” she said, “but we still are receiving gifts every day. Some give general gifts. Others designate for the disaster.”

Christy, who grew up in Coeur d’Alene, said if people cannot afford to give now, they may give for future needs: “New problems emerge every day, such as with

Hurricane Rita, and the Salvation Army will remain in affected areas as long as needed. We are still assisting victims of Hurricane Dennis earlier this year and four hurricanes that struck Florida in 2004.

“We work with other national and community agencies. First, we meet immediate needs and help people to safety. Then we help people find assistance and line up jobs,” she said.

The Salvation Army is using food, clothes and material goods received locally for evacuees who come here. They encourage people who want to help people in the Gulf area to hold garage sales and send the proceeds.

“Media helped us inform people that the need is for cash, not material aid,” said Christy.

For information, call 325-6810.

- Caregivers need to assure people when they are safe, so they can begin to restore trust.
 - Caregivers need to be good listeners, letting people tell their stories and ventilate their anger.
 - Caregivers need to practice hospitality and remember it’s not possible to fix everything.
 - Caregivers need to take care of themselves and pray regularly.
 - Steve suggests churches hold yard sales and send money.
- Children can make health, baby or school kits to send through Church World Service any time, before or after disasters, so they are ready for the next disaster.
- “Everyone can do something,” Eriksen said, adding that youth can use computers to scan photos for church families, keeping a copy on a CD at the church. “Then families won’t worry about saving photos during a disaster.”
- For information, call 943-3927.

Catholic Charities resettles some families

Hurricane response from Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Spokane took a personal turn when it began helping resettle five families in Spokane, said Scott Cooper, director of Parish Social Ministries.

A Cuban father and son, who lived in New Orleans, are being housed temporarily at Immaculate Heart Retreat Center. A mother and two teen boys are in the Riverside area. A mother with three children is in the Spokane Valley. Some who come have family or friends in the area.

“With most evacuees in immediate rings of the area, some may begin to move to farther, non-affected areas. We expect to take a few families at a time, as a psychological shift progresses from expecting to return soon to wondering if some will ever go back.

“As people learn of successful relocations, more will consider

that option,” he said.

Scott said the diocese first told people to send donations directly to Catholic Charities USA, to avoid double bookkeeping. St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Spokane Valley collected \$10,000 on Labor Day weekend. Now some donations are being accepted locally to assist with families who relocate here.

“Media coverage has made people aware of poverty, at least for a fleeting moment. With the focus on localized poverty in New Orleans and the South, I have not seen that Katrina coverage raised overall awareness about poverty across the country,” he said.

“At least it rose to the top of the news and public dialogue for

a while. We can see the power of the media to raise concerns and make money flow,” said Scott.

He believes people will begin to connect concern about poverty to federal proposals to cut \$35 billion in health care, food and other social services, and to retain tax cuts.

“How will we pay for up to \$200 billion? Many are saying the proposed tax and service cuts must be delayed or modified,” Scott said.

He anticipates there will be linking of parishes and dioceses to rebuild churches. In the Diocese of Biloxi, Miss., every church has reported some damage or outright destruction of its building.

For information, call 358-4273.

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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)



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Church World Service fills gaps, aids those overlooked

Church World Service regional director Lynn Magnuson in Seattle has had many calls from people wanting to know what they can do. Church World Service is the relief, development and refugee assistance ministry of 36 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican denominations in the United States.

"We are organizing local faith communities for interfaith, cooperative action in both immediate relief and long-term recovery," she said. "Ecumenical agencies, churches and faith groups in states affected are forming regional interfaith disaster response efforts, networking with people who want to help rebuild.

"Nationally, we sent 10,000 health kits and light-weight blankets, so we need churches to supply more," she said.

Lynn expects that many churches will work through their denominations to partner with churches in the Gulf Coast area, to help with rebuilding buildings and lives. CWS is forming partnerships with small denominations and independent churches, particularly in poor, rural areas. Working through CROP Walk committees, it is aiding evacuees and people in their homes. In coming months, she expects evacuees will need housing, and those who return will need help rebuilding.

CWS is coordinating with FEMA and the Red Cross, who refer people forgotten by other programs. Lynn said power and services will first be restored in urban areas where there are more people. It may be months to restore services in rural areas.

When headlines fade, CWS will still be present in recovery efforts, just as it continues to help communities affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake-tsunami rebuild schools, houses, clinics and livelihoods, said Lynn. Local faith-based organizations work with Washington VOADs to support families running out of money. They need resources, too.

For information, visit www.churchworldservice.org and the www.ucc.org websites, or call 888-297-2767.

Pastor connects with Baton Rouge church

At an initial meeting of the Spokane Katrina Coalition, Pastor Otis Manning of the Word of Faith Christian Center said pastors decided to contact their church networks to learn of needs of churches along the Gulf Coast.

Through the national 400-church Fellowship of Inner City Word of Faith Ministries, he called Pastor Lynn Norrison, Jr., at a church in Baton Rouge.

When Pastor Otis learned the population of Baton Rouge had doubled overnight, he figured it was a needy city.

He also learned first response agencies are active in urban areas, but have overlooked needs in rural areas. He expects churches will fill in the holes.

"Pastor Lynn said shelters were crammed and people were living in their cars and in parks," he said. "He requested several items for people in a shelter."

So members at Word of Faith Center began collecting personal hygiene items, diapers, bottled water, clothing and other items to pack in boxes and send by mail. Olyvia Manning, his 11-year-old daughter, helped pack items.

Jean Farmer, director of Northeast Community Center, learned



Olyvia Manning helped pack boxes her church sent.

what they were doing, and spread the word, contacting Shaw Middle School, which decided to have a drive for material goods to send through the Spokane church to the church in Baton Rouge.

Pastor Otis came to Spokane in 1985 and worked in evangelistic ministry, helping ex-offenders, before starting the congregation five years ago.

For information, call 891-5253.

Pastors coordinate volunteer organizations

The Rev. Phyllis Todd, president of the Inland Northwest Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster for 12 years, keeps up with statewide efforts and United Methodist Committee on Relief efforts to send cleanup and health kits.

She said thousands of kits have gone from the area to the national warehouse in Sager Brown, La.

"When FEMA and the Red Cross complete emergency relief, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters pick up, said Phyllis, a disaster response leader for the Pacific Northwest United Methodist Annual Conference with the Rev. George Abrams of Cheney

United Methodist Church.

"We encourage communities to form Community Organizations Active in Disasters—as Benton City did after a hail storm—to prepare people to respond in disasters such as forest fires, floods and wind in our area," Phyllis said. "With TV in our living rooms, people feel akin to those suffering, aware that what happened to them could happen to anyone."

The disaster brings together a mix of people to work on common efforts. Her Rotary Club will help Shaw Middle School collect items for Word of Faith Christian Center to send to a church in Baton Rouge.

Area United Methodist churches are helping a Volunteers in Ministry team from Blaine UMC go to Sager Brown, La., with a truck of health kits, school kits, blankets, air mattresses, heavy gloves, chain saws and diapers.

The drop-off is Spokane Highland Park UMC, 611 S. Garfield, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Oct. 12 to 15, and 17. The district office seeks volunteers to load the truck. For information, call 535-2687.

Churches join in Convoy of Hope

John Tusan of the Greater Spokane Association of Evangelicals is referring people to the Convoy of Hope at Valley Assembly of God. They collected goods and new clothing until Sept. 25 to fill a truck that joined a convoy from the West Coast to the Gulf Coast.

"This is an opportunity for residents to reach out by sending diapers, peanut butter, canned soup, tools to clear the debris and

pillows and air mattresses for those rebuilding," said organizer Michelle Busick.

She and her husband, Steve, at Fairchild Air Force Base, helped with a similar effort in 1996 in Sumter, S.C., after Hurricane Fran hit Virginia. The Convoy of Hope, now a national organization, has delivered nine million pounds of relief supplies to areas of Louisiana and Mississippi.

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- YFA Connections
- Camp Fire, Inland NW Council
- Children's Home Society of Washington
- Excelsior Youth Center
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Humor, music, wisdom, faith mix in the call to end all war

Coming and going over about four hours about 700 people—children to grannies, combat vets to pacifists, people of various races and faiths—joined the “Bring ‘Em Home” peace rally and march in Spokane in solidarity with the Sept. 24 rally in Washington, D.C.

Marchers, picnickers, speakers and singers expressed both their opposition to the War in Iraq and to all war. They voiced outrage that war makes money flow from the pockets of the poor to line profit-filled pockets of wealthy corporations and people in war industries, making their points with signs, humor and song.

“Raging Grannies,” about 10 women in their 50s to 70s dressed in colorfully stereotypical granny garb, made their debut singing ditties to familiar tunes to convey their wisdom as women elders:

“O, we’re gaggle of Grannies, urging you off of your fannies. We’re raising our voice. We want a new choice: No more war!”

• “We’re grannies working for peace, singing songs hoping to tame the beast.”

Bill and Kathy Kostelec of The Blue Ribbon Tea Co. composed tunes and lyrics to ask questions and musically advocate to end war. A few of their musical points were:

• “The patriotic ones waving their flags do not want their children to carry the guns.”

• “Hypocrite statesmen—manicured and tailored—speak grand words to preserve their egos while the brave ones die.”

Brad Read of the Spokane Human Rights Commission believes there’s a growing “critical mass” that is taking back communities and planning how to live into a sustainable future.

He urges protest beyond bringing troops home from Iraq and calls for “ending wars, which are a tool of empire.”

As a high school teacher, he calls for a “revolution of values” and banning access of military recruiters to high school students.

“Our country is caught in the death grip of military addiction,” Brad said. “We need to bring our troops back from every outpost in the world.”

Money used to pay the cost of wars could instead pay for scholarships, teachers, immunizations, housing and other services. He added that “2.4 percent of the cost of war would provide safe, clean drinking water for everyone on the planet.”

If justice is to “roll down like water,” he said, “we must build the plumbing to make it happen.”

Marianne Torres of the Peace



Signs some marchers carried expressed some faith perspectives for ending end war and seeking peace. Below are some of the “Raging Grannies.”



and Justice Action League of Spokane discussed the effect of war on women, saying, “Women and children are the primary victims of violence and war. They suffer higher casualty rates than men, but their sacrifices and brutalization are ignored as reporters hurry to report the latest battle.”

“Throughout history, women and girls have been routinely assaulted and raped as a weapon of war,” Marianne said. “Women and children have become more vulnerable as conflicts target civilians, so rape, forced pregnancy and sexual torture are now classified as war crimes.”

“The absence of women in decision-making roles cripples peacemaking, peacekeeping and reconciliation,” she said.

“The spread of HIV/AIDS is exacerbated by the breakdown of social structures during war, including the mass rape that often accompanies it.”

Marianne added that women who are refugees or displaced, “bear sole responsibility for feeding, clothing and sheltering their children in areas that have suffered complete economic collapse.”

She believes many Americans share her belief that no one should die, not one more man, woman or child, for oil or for empire.

Wil Elder of Thin-Air Radio KRY5 said that “the enemy”—meaning the war machine—is against “all that brings intrinsic value to human life. The enemy is willing to go all over the world and kill people for land. We want to think the enemy is redeemable, like Scrooge waking up to reason after encountering the ghosts of Christmas past, present and fu-

ture, but it’s not.”

He called for a “militant”—meaning organized, disciplined and non-violent—response to the war machine.

For lack of Cindy Sheehan—the mother of a fallen soldier who has reinvigorated the call for peace nationwide—Jim Sheehan of the Center for Justice in Spokane, said he agreed to speak.

“Sheehan” in Gaelic, he pointed out, means “the peaceful one.”

“What will we do about the in-

sanities, lies, injustice, violence destroying lives and bodies; with the torture of prisoners; with no-bid contracts making the rich richer on the blood of the less fortunate?” he asked.

Instead of having them stir more anger, despair, hatred and death, he proposed: “We must be the peace we desire, not passive, but understanding we are connected with people in Iraq, in Washington, D.C., and on corporate boards.

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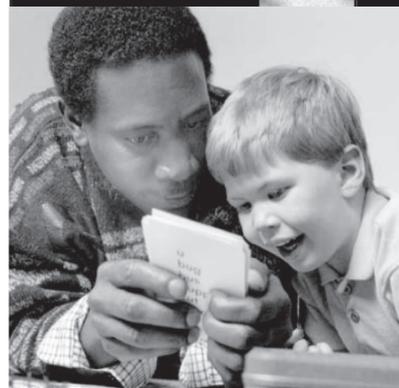
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More volunteers mean more people become homeowners

By Brandon Johnson

Michone Preston believes that decent, safe housing is a right, not a privilege. It stems from her faith. It's her work, too.

As Habitat for Humanity-Spokane director, she is committed to building homes as long as people need them.

Her desire to spread God's love to families in need sustains her for the ongoing tasks of raising funds and recruiting volunteers.

"Habitat makes life more comfortable for those who are less fortunate," she said.

In her 11 years with Habitat-Spokane, she has seen that some apartment complexes look good on the outside, but are not nice inside.

"Too many families who work every day are barely surviving. They live in low-income neighborhoods in constant fear of robbery and other crimes," said Michone, who moved to Spokane from Mansfield to attend Gonzaga University in 1988.

She started as the development director at Habitat for Humanity-Spokane in 1995. Four years later, this member of St. Aloysius Catholic Church became the director of Habitat-Spokane.

Believing the difference Hab-



Michone Preston at the construction site at Cochran and Dean.

itat makes around the world and in Spokane has a lasting effect, she urges more upper- and middle-income people who have decent homes to help "our community build more homes for those who are in need, to improve the lives of everyone in the community."

Michone sees Habitat as a vehicle for bringing together people

who might never meet and allowing them to care for each other in a way few do.

Since it began in 1976, Habitat has created awareness of poverty in the 100 countries, where it has built more than 175,000 houses for more than 750,000 people.

Habitat-Spokane achieves its mission through a partnership,

according to its mission statement: "Faith is the foundation. Volunteers are the walls. Donors are the roof. Families are the heart of the home."

The more volunteers there are, the more homes can be built, more funds can be generated and more people can become homeowners, Michone said.

Owners of completed homes now pay taxes and support city programs," she added.

Families qualify if they earn only 25 percent to 50 percent of the median income in Spokane, which is usually not enough to qualify for a conventional bank loan. They do have enough, however, to make monthly payments to Habitat, because the loan Habitat provides is for the cost of the home at no interest. Another qualifying factor is that a family must be living in substandard housing when they apply.

Along with working for Habitat-Spokane, Michone volunteers to help other organizations with public relations and fund raising.

She serves on the board of the Spokane Low Income Housing Consortium, which she said is "a key to Habitat's success."

"The consortium keeps its eye on legislative activity and funding sources," she said. "Many housing organizations partner to write grants and administer services. Habitat has used a revolving loan fund through the consortium to buy land and put in infrastructure."

For information, call 534-2552.

Written for The Fig Tree as part of a Whitworth College journalism class.

Habitat-Spokane, one of 20 affiliates in region, hammers on its 150th home

With construction on its 150th house underway, Habitat-Spokane has doubled its capacity to build homes since 1999.

During Building on Faith Week, for example, 25 volunteers from several churches and businesses worked each day on two duplexes at the corner of Cochran and Dean in Spokane. These houses are among 10 being built in the West Central neighborhood.

Habitat-Spokane has expanded its structure with more fund raising, expertise and people.

"We must keep nimble to take opportunities to raise awareness about Habitat, both reactively and proactively to create a multifaceted relationship with the community. Our speakers bureau increases our visibility and presence at community fairs," Michone said.

The rate of return among volunteers is high. A core of skilled volunteers are the "lifeblood of the building programs" along with a flow of new unskilled volunteers who gain skills, she added.

Habitat has volunteer opportunities for people with a range of



Mike Ohlsen hammers some nails into the frame of a duplex.

skills and interests, with as many in other phases as in building.

There are also Habitat affiliates in Bonners Ferry, Hayden, Kellogg, Moscow, Sandpoint, Lewiston-Clarkston, Colville, Ellensburg, Kennewick, Manson, Moses Lake, Newport, Othello, Quincy, Reardan, Tonasket, Walla Walla, Wenatchee and Yakima.

Some volunteers specialize. They paint, hang doors, do finishing work, provide support services, raise funds, select families, serve on a committee or speak about the program.

"Some churches partner with other churches, and others build homes as full sponsors. Most work in clusters based on denominations or neighborhoods," Michone said.

Speaking at a Building on Faith Week event, Dia Maurer, who has

served as an affiliate support manager with Habitat for Humanity International since 1999, said the Spokane affiliate has built the most homes in Washington state.

"Hundreds of people are homeless in Spokane and millions in the United States," she said, adding that Habitat is involved in relief and recovery from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. They are determining the best ways to respond.

"We are in the process of deciding how to help in a responsible manner. Right now, we pray for families, just as we pray every day for people around the globe who are voiceless, homeless and hopeless," Dia said.

Habitat's Disaster Response

Office is assessing the status of Habitat families and overall housing needs created by the hurricanes, she said, with information at www.habitat.org.

Many homeless people globally rely on affiliates' tithing through Habitat's Global Building Projects. Habitat-Spokane has contributed \$566,000 worldwide.

"It's an example of the church community loving neighbors, even enemies, bringing together rich and poor, liberal and conservative, skilled and unskilled, people of all faiths, colors and ages to show they care," Dia said.

Jerry Sittser, professor of religion at Whitworth and a member of the Habitat-Spokane Board of Directors, likened Habitat's approach to the father of the prodigal son who took his inheritance and lost it. Habitat goes out to find people and give them homes, believing no one deserves to be homeless.

"The longing for home is universal," he said. "Home is a psychological center, a place of community, as well as bricks and mortar. Habitat helps people build homes not just houses."

For information, call 534-2552.

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We have lessons to learn in the aftermath of recent hurricanes

If ever there was an occasion that gave us insight as to the consequences of federal and state public policy priorities, Hurricane Katrina is it. If ever there was an opportunity for us to re-grasp and reclaim some moral values, this is it.

Many of us are engaged in contributing money for the victims of the hurricanes, in acts of hospitality to receive these evacuees, in volunteering services for all aspects of the relief and recovery efforts, and in donating the material goods that will be necessary for people to rebuild their lives.

Beyond worthy acts of response to human disaster, we are left with the exposure of a racist and class-preoccupied culture that left too many people particularly vulnerable to the winds and waters of Katrina.

We have a heavy moral responsibility to grow deeper roots for our communities in times when the wind blows harder through the neighborhoods. We have moral obligations as a society to prevent the excessive

consequences that befall poor, low-income and vulnerable people in human-made aspects of natural disaster.

Catastrophes such as hurricanes and flooding will occur again and again, so governments at all levels need to face the poverty that made so many people in the path of the storms vulnerable to death and destruction.

Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches USA, said: "The real hurricane crisis began years ago, with the neglect of the levees in New Orleans and the neglect of poor people who live in the city and throughout the Gulf Coast."

We have seen the evidence through journalists who have endured the plight of these trapped people. Those who had the means to purchase gasoline and who had access to transportation and had places of refuge from the storm left the city. Those who could not afford to do so, stayed in harm's way and now we all bear witness

to the consequences.

The challenge to combat poverty is the moral response to this disaster.

Government budgets—national, state and local—are moral documents. They reveal our moral values.

What do we see in weeks following Katrina? Congress and the Administration are still preparing tax cuts. The Senate is still considering the repeal of estate taxes. Cuts to food stamps, Medicaid and public assistance to needy children and low-income families are moving forward in Congress. We are still under threat to gut the Social Security Program under the guise of presumed advantages of privatization.

In Washington State, billions of dollars are granted for corporate tax exemptions that are not disclosed or reviewed by state government, and we will reduce transportation funds if we repeal the gas tax.

Environmentally, we need to pass the Climate Stewardship Act that has one of the

few energy provisions reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Global warming plays a role in the Gulf hurricane disasters, and our lack of commitment to integrating our moral commitments with the knowledge of the environmental sciences has been catastrophic.

Every reader of the Bible should heed the lesson: The time to build the ark is before the flood begins.

Every time we tolerate racism and neglect those living in poverty, we create disasters that become visible after a storm.

As Bob reminds us, "the rising waters of human desperation may not be caught on camera, but the desperation is no less real for millions in our nation and abroad who live in 'the ground below zero'."

Let's all wake up to the moral issues exposed by the hurricanes—a very expensive lesson.

The Rev. John Boonstra
Washington Association of Churches

Will the children and the poor be lost again in the media shuffle?

The Hurricane Katrina disaster has many faces. The most cruel ones are the faces of poverty and the large number of missing children from Gulf Coast cities.

CNN was airing photos and information on children lost in the chaos of floods, separated from relatives or abandoned and presumed dead.

It breaks my heart to hear the parents' stories. In our community, one missing child brings out an army of rescuers. In New Orleans, there are 2,000 still missing.

CNN had 700 calls a day with some success and the unimaginable joy of reuniting parents and children.

In the aftermath of one of the largest natural disasters in our history, it's clear that we urgently need to assess both the poverty and the missing children.

Poverty needs to be addressed throughout the United States on the community, state and federal levels by being alert to legislation. We can share in that effort.

Related to poverty, we ask why so many

were left behind in the floods, while others were evacuated. We learned that many had no cars, no money, no resources and no place to go.

Some flood victims were too poor or disabled to go anywhere. Many died in their homes. Others rushed to the Convention Center or Superdome, waiting days with no food or water. Children were lost in the shuffle.

It is important for us to send funds, make calls and urge our congressional represen-

tatives to promote legislation to assist the most vulnerable and the children.

There has been a shift in the news now, so loss of life and missing children has been replaced with news focusing on property loss and quarrels about having no-bid or bid contracts for reconstruction.

God forgive us if such quarrels over materialist interests supersede issues of human life, so children and the poor are lost again in the media shuffle.

Jo Hendricks - Contributing editor

What happened to the public service that is to follow a political season?

Has the word, "politics," lost its once-primary meaning of electing people to office to conduct the affairs of government as public servants?

Recent person-in-the-street interviews seem rife with cynicism generated by political malaise from confusion between power politics and public service. Politics, at best, is about solving problems affecting large numbers of people, problems that can't be solved individually or by charity.

Lost in coverage of the noisiest argument or the latest cut-and-slash attack are the quieter stories of people who work behind the scenes and keep things moving smoothly.

Even in areas not immediately affected by Hurricanes Rita or Katrina, teams of police, fire and other emergency responders quietly make contingency plans for disas-

ters they would rather not think about.

Among those working behind the scenes as public servants are some whose stories are told in The Fig Tree, people putting their faith and hope to work for the common good.

It is easy to lose track of these quieter stories of service, both presently and in our history. Politics can dull memory.

A Stanford engineering graduate, who traveled the world as a mining engineer and made his fortune as a mining consultant, entered public service because his Quaker upbringing instilled a strong social conscience and personal code of ethics.

Little of this side of President Herbert Hoover is known. He was often blamed for the Great Depression even though it was worldwide.

His career and presidency reveal an understanding needed today: the differentiation between politics and public service.

When World War I started, he was in London. He arranged for the return of thousands of Americans stranded in Europe, but he stayed. During the war, he shipped clothes and food to devastated, starving Europeans. He returned home long enough to organize a voluntary food conservation program. After the war, he coordinated relief as director of the European Relief and Reconstruction Commission. When he returned to the United States in 1919, he continued that work. He took no pay for any of that work.

While Secretary of Commerce from 1921 to 1929, he directed relief and reconstruction after major floods in the South. When

he ran for President in 1928, he was the first Republican candidate since the Civil War to carry Florida. His salary as President went to charity.

In retirement, he lived quietly, not seeking public attention or publicizing his philanthropies and services. This self-made millionaire had a sense of public service.

In the next administration, President Franklin Roosevelt had "Dollar-A-Year" millionaires working for the government in various capacities for \$1 a year.

Our Senate has been known for years as a millionaires' club, and the House is approaching that category. Now millionaires working in government and billionaires heading corporations expect the further reward of tax cuts. Why?

Nancy Minard - editorial team

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

After the horror of Hurricane Katrina, everyone was paying closer attention to Rita as it seemed to be bearing down on Galveston and Houston, Tex. Surely many were praying that it would turn and spare those cities. Indeed, those prayers seemed answered. The hurricane turned slightly, and the worst force was aimed to the side. Then we began to hear about the devastation in Port Arthur and Beaumont.

Should we feel powerful, thinking God listened to us and redirected the storm? Should we feel guilty, because when the storm turned some lives were spared at the expense of others? Should we decide not to pray at all in face of disaster, for fear of exerting improper influence on God? God always does "the right thing," whether we pray. Would the storm have shifted naturally, whether we prayed? In that case, are our prayers meaningless?

While I was in seminary, my aunt asked me about a book she was reading. The author, a prominent Christian writer and lecturer told about driving to a meeting to speak. Suddenly, she was deluged by a Midwestern thunderstorm. She pulled to the side, prayed the rain would stop so she wouldn't be late. The rain stopped in a few minutes and she reached her destination on

time. The author cited this as evidence that God does answer prayer.

"What about the farmer," my aunt said, "who might have been praying for the rain? Would God have let his crop fail just so this woman could be on time? Did she have the right to pray for the rain to stop? Most thunderstorms aren't that wide. Wouldn't the rain have ended in a few minutes even if she didn't pray?"

After more than 30 years, I still don't have good answers for my aunt. I have had the same questions. I don't understand how prayer works, but Romans 8:26 helps: "Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words."

How can my prayers help but be ignorant, short-sighted and selfish? I can never know all the facts. I should never be trusted to decide who lives or dies. If my prayers were answered literally, they might make matters worse.

No matter, I think I should go on praying and shouldn't feel guilty if my prayers are "answered" in a frightening way, nor triumphant if I get what I wanted. Most definitely, I should never brag about how God always answers my prayers. When it

comes to praying, none of us really knows what we're doing. Fortunately, we have a Spirit translator. The Holy Spirit can take my stupid prayer and make something great of it.

So let's keep praying for victims of the hurricanes and the tsunami nine months ago, as they try to rebuild their lives. Let's send our offerings for relief and blood through the Red Cross. Maybe we don't know how to pray, but that doesn't mean we should stop. Maybe we ourselves will turn out to be the answers to the prayers.

The Rev. Don Hoffman
Creston Christian Church

In today's world, it seems nearly everything is instant. We have come to expect immediate results from everything we do. Isn't it funny that our human concepts of time mean nothing to God? We know the vast power of prayer and rely heavily on it. That premise reminds me of some country song lyrics: "Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayer." I believe God answers all prayers, in God's time frame, not ours and with the answer that is best for our souls, not necessarily what we want.

Don Miller - board chair
Opportunity Christian

Many country songs have some good points. Checking a radio at home recently, the first station I caught was a popular local country station.

I listened for a bit. In the first song, a male singer told of taking his wife to the home football game, where he ran into his old high school girlfriend.

He recalled he was so in love with this girl that he prayed that God would make her his wife, and if God did that, he wouldn't need to ask God for anything else.

The refrain thanks God for unanswered prayers. He was thankful for the wife he had.

Frequently, we pray for something with all honesty and sincerity, believing that is what we need, when, in fact, it may be the most harmful thing for us. Prayers are answered, but sometimes the answer is "no" or "I have something else for you."

From where we stand, we can only see one perspective and often we develop tunnel vision. Mature prayer will be honest with God and with ourselves as to what we desire, yet leaving ourselves open to the movement of the Spirit in ways we don't anticipate or expect.

The Rev. David Helseth
Englewood Christian - Yakima

El Centro celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

The second annual Hispanic Heritage Dinner will be held at 6:30 p.m., Friday, Oct. 7, at East Central Community Center, 500 S. Stone, as a benefit for El Centro, the Hispanic Latino Resource Center in Spokane.

It will also celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month with speakers and entertainment.

Other Side of War lecture series set

Gonzaga University College of Arts and Sciences faculty have developed a fall lecture series, "The Other Side of War," which began in September.

The second lecture at noon, Wednesday, Oct. 12, at the Jundt Art Center will be a panel discussion on "America's War on Terror: Effects on the Home Front." Panelists are Eileen Bell-Garrison, dean of library services; Patrick Mulick, psychology assistant professor, Sheri Engelken, associate professor of law, and James Vaché, law professor.

At 7 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 13, in the Globe Room of Cataldo Hall, social critic James Howard Kuntzler, author of *The Geography of Nowhere* and a contributor to *Rolling Stone* magazine, will discuss his book, *The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the 21st Century* on economic, political and social implications of the end of oil.

Another lecture is on Nov. 17. For information, call 323-6679.

Carter Heyward speaks in Pullman

The Common Ministry at Washington State University is planning the 28th Annual Roger Williams Symposium Nov. 6 to 7, with the Rev. Carter Heyward, the Howard Chandler Robins professor of theology emerita at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass. She will speak on "Peace Building in Times of Terror: Living in Many Dimensions."

Carter, a feminist Christian theologian, author and priest, focuses on gender, sexual and racial justice-making and wellbeing of animals and the earth. She will address Christian responses to living in the current climate of terror while honoring diversity.

The banquet and lecture at 6 p.m., Sunday, will be at Koinonia House, 720 NE Thatuna St., in Pullman. The program on Monday begins at 9 a.m. at St. James Episcopal Church, 1410 NE Stadium Way, Pullman.

For information, visit www.wsu.edu/~commin.

Those attending will have opportunity to contribute to the center's annual food drive and the National Red Cross relief for Hurricane Katrina.

El Centro assists area Spanish-speaking people with resource

information in Spanish on community educational, employment, health and social services.

Started in 2003, it provides a platform for community support and cultural awareness.

For information, call 483-2523.

Calendar of Events

- Oct 4, 11 • The Fig Tree Show, Westminster Presbyterian (4th), Health for All (11th), Comcast Cable Channel 14, 5:30 p.m.
- Oct 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, 26 • Sustainability Symposia with films, lectures, panel discussions and Sustainability Fair (11th), Spokane Falls Community College (SFCC) - call 533-3586
- Oct 6 • "Why Social Security Reform Will Hurt Women More," Doug Orr, 207 Monroe Hall, Eastern Washington University, Cheney, noon
- Oct 7 • "Human Trafficking in Eastern Washington: Working to Uncover Spokane's Hidden Slave Culture," Foley Library Teleconference Center, Gonzaga University, 8 a.m. to noon
- Hispanic Heritage Dinner, East Central Community Center, 500 S. Stone, 5:30 p.m.
- Raise the Roof Auction and Dance for Habitat for Humanity, Rendezvous Event Facility, 1003 E Trent, 5 p.m. - call 534-2552
- Oct 8 • CROP Walk in Wenatchee
- Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia 150th anniversary, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Oct 9 • CROP Walk in Pullman-Moscow
- Oct 10 • Fig Tree Interactive Website Advisory Team, Gonzaga Journalism Building, 205 E. Boone, 6 p.m.
- Oct 11 • VOICES, Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway, 5:30 p.m.
- Oct 11-18 • Common Ground Film Festival, Kennewick, p. 2
- Oct 12 • Day of Prayer, Mission Spokane, Korean Presbyterian Church, 1727 E. Pacific, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Other Side of War Panel, "War on Terror: Effects on the Home Front," Jundt Center, Gonzaga University, noon, p. 11
- "The Long Emergency," James Kuntzler, SFCC Music Auditorium, 11:30 a.m., Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth College, 7 p.m.
- Oct 13 • Panel on environment, Kuntzler, 11:30 a.m., Student Union SFCC
- Other Side of War, Kuntzler, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 7 p.m.
- Oct 15 • CROP Walk in Yakima Valley
- Physicians for Social Responsibility, "Preventing Toxic Threats to Children's Health, Phase 1 Auditorium, Riverpointe, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- Compost Fair, Finch Arboretum, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- Oct 17 • Paul Darileck, Living Waters in El Salvador, and Gary Proctor, 2004 visit in El Salvador, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m.
- Oct 18 • YWCA Women of Achievement Luncheon with actress Rita Moreno, Convention Center, noon
- Oct 19 • Faith in Action Dialogue 2006 Planning Committee, Women's Hearth, 906 W. 2nd Ave., 8 a.m. with breakfast
- Oct 20 • "Marriage as Sacrament: Can This Theology Speak to 21st-Century Families," Julie Hanla Rubio of St. Louis University, Catholicism for a New Millennium, Gonzaga Law School, 7:30 p.m.
- Oct 20, 25 • Interfaith Council and Catholic Charities Initiative Education Forums in Spokane and Pullman, p. 3
- Oct 23 • Taizé worship, St. Ann's Catholic, 2120 E. First, 7 p.m.
- Oct 24 • United Nations Day Dinner and Speaker, Mukogawa Commons, 4000 W. Randolph Rd., 5:30 p.m., p. 4
- Oct 26 • Pax Christi, St. Joseph's Catholic, 1503 W. Dean, noon
- "Election Reform and What It Means to the Spokane Community," Secretary of State Sam Reed, Spokane City Forum, First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar, 11:45 a.m. - call 777-1155
- Oct 27 • "Christians Engaging Culture," George Marsden, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth College, 7 p.m.
- Nov 1 • School of the Americas Issues in Colombia, Paddy Inman, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m.
- Nov 2 • Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark's Lutheran, 24th & Grand, 9 a.m.
- Nov 3 • Fig Tree Board, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 1 p.m.
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Stewardship is more than a new methodology: it's life

In his passion to promote life-permeating stewardship, the Rev. Hollis Bredeweg sees that fall pledge campaigns can become like business-model fund raisers that narrow the understanding of stewardship and impede results.

"Stewardship is about everything a person does all the time, he said recently at a leadership retreat at N-Sid-Sen on Lake Coeur d'Alene.

"It's about what we buy and how we live more than what goes in an offering plate," pointed out Hollis, associate conference minister for the Pacific Northwest United Church of Christ.

Given that stewardship was a top dinner-table discussion topic in his home as a child—the son of the Indiana Kentucky conference minister—he first chaired a stewardship committee at 20.

Later, he served as stewardship staff in the Nebraska Conference and as a volunteer on the national UCC Stewardship Council and the former United Church Board for World Ministries.

During a "Witnessing Stewards" fund-raising program in 1981, he invited church members to tell why they give.

"Tillie Jahn, the church's best known tither, was the first one to speak. This elderly woman of German heritage, formerly in the newspaper business, taught me a lesson," Hollis said.

"God is not all that interested in my 10 percent. God wants to know what I am doing with the other 90 percent that I do not give to the church," Tillie said, "and God wants to know how I got the bundle in the first place."

Hollis said scales fell from his eyes. He realized he had mistaken fund-raising programs for stewardship. Now he realizes fund raising and stewardship bring different yields.

Jesus' stewardship emphasis was not on 10 percent, but was on 100 percent: "What I think about and buy in a department store is a stewardship matter," he said.

"Jesus disagreed with the Pharisees' legalistic tithing. I'm not telling people to stop tithing," he clarified, explaining that "just" tithing, if it's a stopping point, does not "create 100 percent stewards, who see their covenant relationship with God."

If the basis for stewardship is Jesus' preaching, teaching, ministry, life, death and resurrection, then Hollis believes it should be integrated into the full life of a congregation and into all a pastor's preaching and teaching.

"Stewardship is a long-term education process to transform who we are in relationship to God, the



The Rev. Hollis Bredeweg

church, the world, others and ourselves," Hollis asserted. "Once we create stewards, they cannot be uncreated. They will give 10 percent, plus volunteer to do the newsletter and more."

In 1994, Hollis began following his wife Sally's career as an agricultural engineer. In Kansas, he was interim minister and did mental health work. Next in Mt. Vernon, Wash., he served Pilgrim Congregational UCC in Anacortes, where he successfully tested some of his ideas.

After they moved to Spokane, he served as interim pastor at North Hill Christian Church, until August.

The main Scriptures on stewardship for him are the Sermon on the Mount, reminders not to lay up treasures on earth but in heaven and that one cannot serve God and Mammon, and the admonition "do not be anxious."

As a pastor, he knows pastors become anxious because they earn

a living from the congregation.

Facing pressure from rising health insurance and utility rates, some congregations are tempted to hold back a salary increase or cut giving to the wider church, passing anxiety to the regional and national levels, which face the same health and energy increases.

Stewards are caretakers, not owners, but have power, being left in charge while the owner is away, Hollis said.

Some approaches to stewardship can create people who have power to make decisions beyond the level they choose to give.

Often the response to fall pledge campaigns is anxiety, because pledges usually fall short of the budget, he said. On a situation-by-situation basis, he seeks to learn what congregations do and suggest options that fit.

"A letter from the treasurer saying the church will have to close its doors in two years does not inspire giving or new membership," Hollis said.

There are various options in budget processes, listening canvasses, developing priorities, facilitating ownership and offering more ways to give,

Hollis encourages churches to relate their budget and pledge process to their ministries and mission—seeing it like advertising to provide vision.

His sermon on the ministry of the folding chair to make a point:

"We may think a folding chair is a squeaky piece of furniture, but those coming to 10 AA groups meeting in the church tell stories and put their lives together while sitting on folding chairs. The prayer group sits on folding chairs and lifts up joys and concerns. Children sitting on folding chairs hear about faith for the first time. Adults sit on them while talking about what to do in ministry. A folding chair is a place ministry happens.

"Imagine an airline sales person bringing out charts with the cost of the airplane parts, the cost of maintaining a modern fleet, the price of oil and the cost of collective bargaining. Would the salesperson say: 'You need to fund our airliner or we will fold'?"

"Instead, airline advertisements give a vision—showing Japan, South India or another destination. That vision makes people willing to pay the fare. Similarly, car sales people don't list the cost of car parts, but show their car zooming along the California coast," he said.

Hollis believes that when churches present their vision for ministry, mission and community, people gladly pay the fare, vol-

unteer, join committees and invite others to come along with them.

While spreadsheets and accounting are important, those in charge of them should not do the advertising, he said.

"Every church budget reflects every prayer said, hymn sung, Bible study, Christian education lesson, sermon, pastoral call—all on paper in a code," Hollis said. "We don't see it because numbers and lists do not describe mission or ministry. We need to break the code and translate numbers into our mission and ministry."

A narrative budget uses a slide show, with pictures of children and people to help members envision how the church would spend the budget amounts.

Pastors may hesitate to preach stewardship every Sunday, thinking it self-serving because a large percentage of the budget may be for their salaries. Congregations, however, do not mind being thanked and reminded what ministry they make possible.

Pastors' salaries provide hours of ministry in the intensive care unit with families and patients, meeting with committees to give them a vision of sharing in ministry and fostering awareness of the world that creates a covenant to care for it as an integral part of faith life, he said.

"Break the code, thank people and tell stories of mission and ministry all year, focusing on content over methodology," he summarized, "not which pledge card design is best."

Hollis believes pledges may also be seen as invitations for people to consider their commitments, goals and dreams, as a prayer dedicating their lives to God, and as an investment in creating the world they want to live in, a symbol of who they are.

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