

Monthly newspaper covering faith in action throughout the Inland Northwest

The Fig Tree
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Awareness can curb genocide

By Mary Stamp

To personalize the reality of contemporary genocide, the Spokane Community Observance of the Holocaust on Sunday, April 15, at Temple Beth Shalom will include survivors of genocides in Sudan, Rwanda and Bosnia who will light one candle.

The theme, "Making 'Never Again' a Reality" arose as the planners reflected on the importance of remembrance.

The observance known as Yom Hashoah is at 7 p.m. at Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 East 30th Ave. Yom Hashoah is the international day of remembrance of the Holocaust, in which 6 million Jews in Eastern Europe and 5 million others were killed.

"Nazi genocide was directed towards the Jews and others considered a threat to their goal of a pure Aryan society. Many survivors vowed that future generations should remember the Holocaust so that we could ensure that it never happen again, to anyone in our world. We have, however, fallen far short of achieving that goal," said Mary Noble of the planning committee.

Genocide and other crimes
Continued on page 4



Immaculee Mukakalisa of Rwanda will light a candle to say, "Never Again!"

Fig Tree seeks volunteer help for various tasks

Along with writing and editing, The Fig Tree seeks the assistance of more people with delivery, mailings, phoning, displays, archives, translation, the directory, the website and the office.

Because of those who expressed interest in writing at the benefit breakfast on March 14, Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp will offer a Writers' Training Session at 7 p.m., Tuesday, April 10, at Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington.

Those who signed up to "tell The Fig Tree story" in their congregations may join the writers' training to learn more about The Fig Tree. Five-minute DVDs and other resources are available.

For the Directory of Congregations and Community Resources, there is need for volunteers to help verify the entries and proofread. Mark Westbrook is contacting advertisers to invite them to renew advertising or become new advertisers.

Planning for a fall dialogue begins at 7:45 a.m., Tuesday, April 17, at Unity House, 709 E. Desmet.

For information, call 535-1813.

Inspiration from missionary visits ingrains global vision, commitment

Visits by missionaries to childhood churches of three area women instilled their commitment to their church and their faith, nourishing a global awareness of bonds with God's children everywhere, a vision that permeates their involvement today.

As a result of participating in a two-week trip to the companion diocese of their Lutheran synod, the women are now visiting area congregations to inspire others.

The missionaries stirred their interest in being part of the global community, building relationships with all God's children and understanding what it is to be the body of Christ working together, aware that the church is so much more than one congregation.

These women joined 10 other people from the Eastern Washington Idaho Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), on a fall visit to the Tumaini Lutheran Seminary, a secondary school in Malinyi, Tanzania.

They shared in the community's life and work, which included

completing a brick duplex to house school staff, joining daily worship and celebrating the graduation of a class of 80 of the 400 students.

For Margie Fiedler, who is now vice president for marketing, investment and gift planning with the national ELCA out of Coeur d'Alene, it was one of several direct contacts with the partnership. She gave the commencement address.

For Marj Nishek and her husband, Wayne, of Trinity Lutheran Church in Bonners Ferry, it was a time to renew ties with Tanzania, where they served three years as missionaries and four years in an appropriate technology project, developing windmills, water pumps and biogas technology.

For the Rev. Ann Frerks of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Cheney, the experience was part of her three-month sabbatical. She preached at several morning and evening outdoor worship services students attended.

Since 1989, the synod has had exchanges with the Ulanga Ki-

lombero Diocese of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania—hosting guests, receiving and sending exchange teachers and visitation teams. In 1988, the national ELCA matched about 20 U.S. synods with dioceses in Tanzania.

"Companionship changed us from the model of sending missionaries to help people financially and to bring Jesus to them. As partners, we learn from each other," said Margie, who is also on the national Global Ministries Committee and participated in two consultations with Tanzanian dioceses while she was the associate to the bishop of the Eastern Washington Idaho Synod from 1996 to 2004.

She said being partners means the diocese in Tanzania might send evangelists to help the church in the Northwest grow, sharing its resources for creating the fast growth in Tanzania.

"We can understand what it means to be God's children. We can extend beyond our usual idea of 'helping' only by building a
Continued on page 6

Most indigenous traditions teach sustainable lifestyles

Given the commitment of indigenous cultures to sustainable living, two educators recently shared traditional insights on the value of meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

An environmental activist for 38 years, Mark Thompson of Otter Be Fun Productions said that between 1955 and 1960 he watched from his home outside Los Angeles as 200,000 acres of wilderness became tract homes, malls and interstate highways, destroying the ecosystem of the valley and Santa Monica mountains.

Martina Whelshula, president of the Spokane Tribal College in Wellpinit, grew up going to a Catholic school in Browns Mills, N.J., a rural area with dirt roads and wildlife, like the Colville reservation, where she visited and later moved.

As part of a series of discussions on sustainable development, Mark and Martina spoke recently on "Indigenous Cultures and Sacred Earth Sustainability" for KYRS-Thin Air Radio, presented by the Inland Northwest Earth and People's Sustainability Forum.

Mark, a former lecturer on Native American studies at California State University in Hayward and other California colleges, has more than 25 years of experience in public education from grade schools through universities.

He is one of 15 founding elders of the Otter Clan, a multinational tribe of professionals, artists, producers, crafters, therapists and inventors who model intentional community.

Martina, a member of the Arrow Lakes Nation in the Colville Reservation, has been an organizational consultant and re-

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Religion News Around the World

World Council of Churches News Release
Additional information: Juan Michel
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Plans begin for world peace convocation

Plans for a worldwide mobilization of churches for peace were approved by the World Council of Churches (WCC) executive committee in early March. The mobilization will culminate with an International Ecumenical Peace Convocation May 4 to 11, 2011, and an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace.

Between 2007 and 2011, the plan includes having 50 ecumenical "living letters" teams visit churches in areas around the world that face situations of violence. The teams will express solidarity, share insights and learn from each other. At least three visits will take place in 2007, and about 15 visits a year planned between 2008 and 2010.

The mobilization will include expert consultations in partnership with research institutes, non-governmental organizations, theological faculties and seminaries to help draft the declaration. A goal is to involve action groups and church-based peace organizations, which offer experience and commitment.

"The aim is to invite contributions of church groups to the declaration in texts, prayers, songs, pictures," says Geiko Mueller-Fahrenholz, a German theologian who is coordinating the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC).

The theme for the convocation, which will mark the end of the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace 2001-2010, will be "Glory to God and peace on earth." About 2,000 participants from churches, organizations, networks and representatives from other faiths will attend. The WCC executive committee will decide the venue of the event in September 2007.

The request for the convocation and declaration came from the WCC's 9th Assembly in February 2006 in Brazil.

Central to the mobilizing strategy, the "living letters" proposal follows recent ecumenical experiences, like pastoral visits to U.S. churches after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and to Lebanese churches during the Israeli attacks in the summer of 2006, and the campaign of church-to-church visits during the 1988-98 Decade of "Churches in Solidarity with Women."

"Because churches face various forms of violence such as civil wars, domestic violence, inter-religious strife, or environmental destruction, intensive encounter with women and men from other contexts with similar problems can help find new approaches," the planners said.

They hope that through these visits, churches will engage in the process leading up to the convocation and contribute to developing the declaration.

The Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace will not be a "consensus statement," said Geiko, but "an act of public witness and an affirmation of enduring hope in a world torn apart by violence." Without claiming "to speak for everyone," it will attempt "to speak to everyone who cares to listen."

As a "theological and spiritual text," the declaration will address six areas of concern: human self-destruction, gender-related and intergenerational violence, the entertainment industry's fascination with violence, violence against nature, the violence inherent in economic injustice in its globalized ramifications and structural expressions, and the age-old scourge of war that continues to plague the lives of multitudes around the globe.

As an expression of the ecumenical witness to peace, the declaration must acknowledge that, over the centuries, Christian churches have exerted much violence, be it towards women or 'lower' classes, towards 'heretics' or 'heathens,' or in the justification of wars, racism, slavery, economic exploitation and other forms of oppression," Geiko stressed.

An effort will also be made to "engage with representatives of other faiths in the search for ministries of peace that enable us not only to overcome widespread—and growing—prejudice and mistrust, but also to struggle against recent trends that turn political conflicts into religious confrontations," he added.

Website of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation: <http://overcomingviolence.org/iepc>

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Online effort sparks U.S., regional rallies

Stepitup2007.org is the hub of organizing for National Climate Action Day, Saturday, April 14.

Ten of 1,112 actions planned across the nation as of March 29 will be in the Inland Northwest.

There will be rallies outside churches, along coasts, in cornfields, in forests and on statehouse steps. Each group will send the same message: "Step it up, Congress! Cut carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050."

Photos of gatherings will be shared electronically in what may be one of the largest demonstrations ever.

The following area one- to two-hour events are set on April 14:

- Cheney Climate Action Day is at 2:30 p.m. in the park by Cheney City Hall. Organizers ask people to come by bike or to walk, bringing signs, songs and instruments.

- The Sandpoint rally is at noon, at the City Beach, celebrating the lake, forests and mountains, raising awareness and planning action. It includes music and activities for children.

- The Step It Up Moscow! be-

gins at 9 a.m. at East City Park, with a bicycle procession through downtown to the 1912 Building outdoor plaza for photos. The Palouse Earth Day Association is planning this event and an Earth Day Concert on April 22 at the University of Idaho.

- Earth Fest '07 is set at noon, at the University of Idaho also in Moscow.

- At noon, Newport will hold a rally with signs, songs and a march through town beginning at the town park.

- "Turn the Heat Down" is the theme for the noon gathering at the Republic Elementary School Auditorium to discuss steps for individuals and the community to take to reduce carbon emissions. There will be speakers and opportunities to take action.

- "Step It Up! Walla Walla" at noon in the group shelter at Rooks Park is a chance to learn about local environmental groups, hear music and a speaker, and write letters.

- "Step It Up Ellensburg" from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. downtown will gather people to promote nearby

windmills, a solar farm, biofuel production, solar power, electric and hybrid vehicles, and consciousness of urgency.

- In Wenatchee, there will be a noon "Pledge to Change" gathering at Memorial Park with music, speakers and a march down Wenatchee Ave.

- "Get outta your car and combine errands" is the theme of the Tri-Cities event at 1 p.m. at Columbia Center Blvd. and Quinalt.

National Step It Up 2007 organizers say that to cut emissions 80 percent by 2050 would mean a two percent cut a year. They hope the event will be a wake-up call for Congress to make the changes needed to prevent catastrophic effects from global warming.

Bill McKibben, 46, an environmental writer and activist, five Middlebury College graduates and a student initiated the plans. In 1989, Bill raised the alarm about global warming in his book, *The End of Nature*. He is also author of the recently published *Deep Economy*.

Information is at StepItUp2007.org.

Speaker addresses human trafficking, peace

For Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April, several groups collaborating on human trafficking have invited the Rev. Eileen Lindner, a deputy general secretary of the National Council of Churches of Christ (NCCC) and former chair of the World Council of Churches' Commission on Human Trafficking.

She will speak on "Child Trafficking Victims: Global Crisis and a Spokane Reality" for a luncheon at noon, Friday, April 27, at the YWCA Comstock Room.

Faith Partners Working Against Family Violence, the YWCA,

the Western Regional Institute for Community Oriented Public Services and the new Inland Northwest Task Force on Human Trafficking are sponsoring the luncheon.

Eileen will tell how young trafficking victims live hidden, traumatic lives in cities across the globe and local experts will provide insights into the reality of child trafficking in the Inland Northwest, as well as emerging regional efforts to address this assault on children.

From 5 p.m., Friday, to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 27 and 28, she

will lead a Peacemaking Retreat on "War Is Not A Family Value: Raising Our Voices in Support of the Children," at Bethany Presbyterian Church, 301 S. Freya.

In addition to editing the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, Eileen, a Presbyterian minister, is the former director of the NCCC's Child Advocacy Office, founder of the Ecumenical Child Care Network and former co-director of the NCCC's Child and Family Justice Project.

For information on the lunch, call 358-7949, and on the retreat, call 953-8249.

Event considers media's 'deadly persuasion'

Jean Kilbourne, who has challenged advertising practices related to tobacco, alcohol and images of women, will discuss "Surviving and Thriving" as part of a conference on "Deadly Persuasion: Advertising and Addiction" from 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 18, at Spokane Community College.

The Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media, a regional center for media literacy at Gonzaga University, and the Women's Leadership Conference of the Inland Northwest are sponsors.

Jean's book, *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*, won the distinguished publication award of the Association for Women in Psychology in 2000. She is also known for the documentaries, *Killing us Softly*, *Slim Hopes* and *Calling the Shots*.

Sessions will show the relationship of media images to such societal problems as violence, child abuse, rape, harassment, pornography, censorship, teen pregnancy, addiction and eating disorders. Participants will discover how

media affect their attitudes and actions that inadvertently perpetuate sexism and violence.

For information, call 323-3578 or visit www.gonzaga.edu/ce.

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Jo Hendricks' editorials in The Fig Tree 1984-2006



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Spring Into Composting ...

Compost Fair

Saturday, April 28th
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
John A. Finch Arboretum



Spokane County residents who complete this event may take home a new plastic compost bin. Bring proof of residency & arrive by 1:30 p.m. to complete all of the activities. Limit 1 bin per household. The Compost Fair is presented by the Spokane Master Composter Volunteers.

Recycling Hotline, 625-6800
www.solidwaste.org



Earth Day events set in region

'Sustain Earth' is Spokane theme

"Sustain Our Earth, Our Choices Make a World of Difference" is the theme for the 2007 Earth Day in Spokane from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, April 21, at the Gondola Meadows in Riverfront Park. There will be music, dance, a "Bioneers" Film Festival in the City Hall Council Chambers, the Procession of the Species and more than 40 informational booths, children's activities and food booths. The film festival includes a live satellite conference with specialists presenting solutions.

Other plans include a Not-So-Trivial-Pursuit Challenge, a Tread Lightly Bike Ride, a Reuse-A-Shoe collection, cell-phone recycling and a Flying Irish Running Club run.

"The goal is to increase awareness of the need to protect the earth and its resources," said Mike Peterson, director of The Lands Council. For information, call 744-3370.

Chewelah fair celebrates growing season

The Chewelah Food Bank and Senior Center, and St. Paul Lutheran Church are organizing an Earth Day Fair, "Celebrate Spring and the Growing Season," from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, April 21, creek-side at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Chewelah.

Master Gardeners will be there to demonstrate new gardening techniques. There will be demonstrations of composting, worm raising, recycling, spinning and weaving; garden-seed and tree-seeding giveaways, and an auction to benefit the Chewelah Food Bank.

Exhibits include information on bees and honey, lambs and wool, flax seed, Native American music, and beaded jewelry.

The event provides an opportunity to network with Rural Resources, Stevens County Solid Waste Management, Stevens County Washington State University Extension, 4H and Thrivent Builds/Habitat for Humanity.

"Participants can learn to live more "in sync with the planet," said the Rev. Ed Pace, pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church.

In addition, there will be a food distribution from 10 a.m. to noon, Friday, April 20, at the food bank.

For information, call 935-6311 or 935-6204.

Coeur d'Alene plans several events

A wolf and a Honda hybrid car will both be featured as part of Earth Day events on Friday and Saturday, April 20 and 21 in Coeur d'Alene.

The events open with an address on climate change at a noon luncheon on Friday in the Student Union Building at North Idaho College.

At 1:30 p.m., Friday, there will be a tree-planting ceremony on the NIC campus. Members of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe will bless the tree. Representatives of local schools and community organizations will bring soil from their locations to put around the roots. The tree will be a symbol of unity and cooperation in the area.

On Saturday, the Earth Day Fair will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Harding Family Center at 411 N. 15th St. It is an educational event, presenting the work of local, regional and national organizations to protect natural resources and actions people can take to be stewards of the earth.

For information, call (208) 666-6755.

CROP Hunger Walks

Walkers turn dollars into food, water

As a tangible way CROP Hunger Walk recruiters experience how funds are used, Church World Service (CWS) regional director Lynn Magnuson of Seattle opened a presentation at Mission Community Presbyterian Church in Spokane as if she were teaching a literacy class in Angola.

She not only taught letters, words and sentences, but also taught words and phrases related to CWS projects to improve water quality, control floods and secure a renewable food supply.

The 2007 walk will be Spokane's 28th and Cheney's 20th.

In 2006, the Spokane-Cheney walk raised the most ever, \$31,033.

The walk begins with registration and pre-walk activities from noon to 1:30 p.m., Sunday, April 29, at Martin Center at Gonzaga University. Pre-walk activities include a Methodist tailgate party and entertainment by the Voices of the Homeless Choir, directed by the Rev. Redhawk Rice-Sauer of Covenant Christian Church.

There will also be a spring CROP Hunger Walk, starting at 9 a.m., Saturday, April 21, at Chief Kamiakin School in Sunnyside. The ministerial association is helping organize the walk.

Through CWS, 35 denominations reach out to people in 80 countries, providing long-term disaster recovery, training people for disaster, developing self sufficiency, serving refugee communities and offering micro-loans to help people earn a living.

Walkers turn dollars into education, advocacy, human rights, immigration policies and international laws that assist people's health, survival and wellbeing.

When CROP started 60 years ago as a program to gather grain crops from farmers, the acronym meant Christian Rural Overseas Program. Now CROP refers to Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty.

"Our goal is to fuel hope for impoverished people everywhere. It's amazing what can happen when people work together to

champion peace, justice and self-sufficiency around the world," Lynn said.

She said that \$100 provides clean water for 50 families in Cambodia; the cost of an iPod could buy a water buffalo in Asia and the cost of a video game could provide blankets for a family of five displaced from their village.

Twenty-five percent of the funds raised by Spokane walkers will go to Second Harvest, Spokane Valley Meals on Wheels, Mid-City Concerns and Interfaith Hospitality. That percent of Cheney walkers' funds will go to the Cheney Food Bank.

"People who cannot walk that day can find sponsors and walk on their own or with friends another day. Youth might walk a mall during an overnight retreat and raise funds for CROP," Lynn said.

Overall funds are increasing, paying for indigenous staff abroad and reaching more people.

Catholic walkers may designate for Catholic Relief Services.

For information, call 326-5656.

Nuclear non-proliferation is theme for program

Tom Jeannot will speak to the United Nations Association on "The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: Its Honorable Past and Precarious Future" at 7 p.m., Monday, April 9, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr.

Tom, professor of philosophy at Gonzaga University, will discuss questions related to Iran, NATO,

Israel, India, Pakistan, South Africa and Libya.

For information, call 456-2382.

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CROP Hunger Walk '07

SUNDAY, April 29



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Yom Hashoah organizers connect people with current genocides

Continued from page 1
 against humanity have continued to occur since World War II ended 61 years ago.

Mary knew from the experience of Immaculee Mukakalisa from Rwanda and from her own family experience that simply reading about crimes against humanity is not the same as seeing, meeting and knowing someone who experienced genocide.

"In this time of Holocaust denial, it is important to put a real face on current situations," Mary said. "We thought having survivors of contemporary genocide be part of the candle-lighting ceremony would be a first step."

The planning committee also decided to look to youth for inspiration, and sponsored a creative-writing contest on the theme, "Making 'Never Again' a Reality." Holocaust survivor Eva Lassman will introduce the winner, Katie Rolli from University High School, who will read her composition at the observance. Steve Smith of the Spokesman-Review will respond to her.

Two of the three who will light candles on Yom Hashoah shared their stories with The Fig Tree.

From experiences of war as a child in Southeast Sudan and the struggle to survive each day during school years in Addis Ababa, Golan Khotdiang understands that genocide—like that in Darfur—must end. The war of North against South Sudan began in 1955. The war grew worse in 1983, and the world became aware of it.

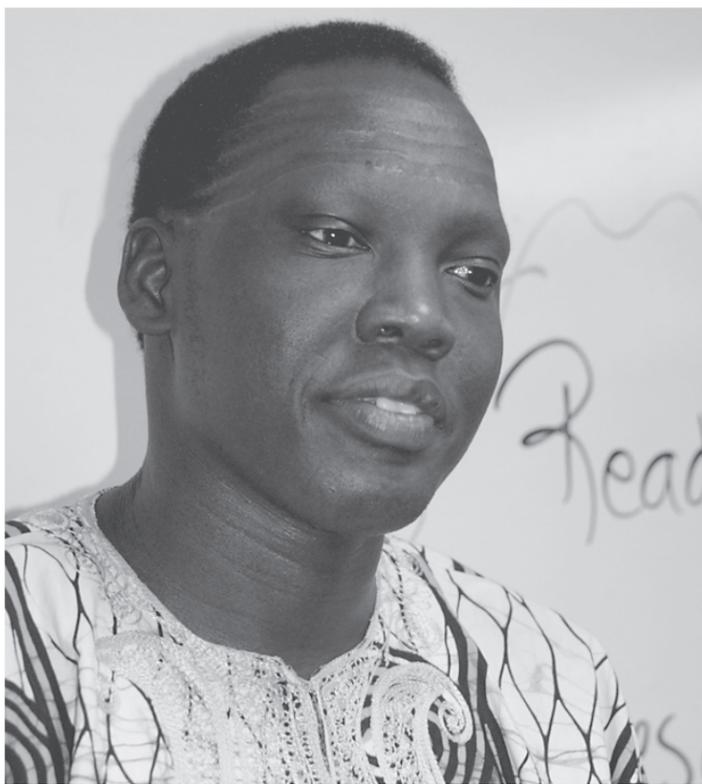
His parents died because war cut access to health care they needed when they were ill. In 1983, when he was 10, he fled from Sudan to find a safe place to stay and opportunity for education in Ethiopia.

During the war between North and South Sudan, children lost parents, wives lost husbands, people lost homes, and families scattered, he said.

In Ethiopia, life was also hard. Golan lived with a group of students who shared whatever they found to eat with each other.

"Many people in South Sudan still live in refugee camps," said Golan, whose sister is still in a refugee camp. His niece now lives in Nebraska and his brother in Canada.

In 1994, Golan found his 14-year-old niece in Gambella, Ethiopia, and went with her to Kenya. They came to the United States in 1995 as refugees. He worked in a hotel and a warehouse in Atlanta. In 1999, he moved to Omaha, Neb., and worked there until 2004 when he came to Seattle to try



Golan Khotdiang seeks an education to help people who suffer.

fishing. He spent a year there and two years in the Tri Cities.

Golan decided to study international relations so he could make a difference for people who suffer. He wants to prevent people from experiencing what he experienced as a child.

He came to Spokane in January 2007 and is studying at the Institute for Extended Learning of Community Colleges of Spokane to improve his English so he can enter college.

Golan grew up in the Presbyterian Church and now attends First Presbyterian in Spokane.

"Church has helped me deal with the bad situation," Golan said. "God took care of me and brought me to America. My life is safe here," he said.

He wonders why people in other parts of the world did not help Sudanese people when they were suffering mistreatment from their government.

"Now that I am in America, I hope Americans can do something for us. While some Sudanese here want to forget the struggle, I want to let Americans know what is going on in Sudan," Golan said, concerned about Sudanese people who are still in refugee camps in Kenya, Ethiopia and Darfur.

"I don't know why people feel they can kill people," he said, thinking also of the suffering of the Jewish people and others in the Holocaust.

Immaculee Mukakalisa, who lost her father, brothers, extended family and friends in the three months of genocide in 1994 in Rwanda, will light one of the candles during the Yom Hashoah

to say, "Never Again!"

"The genocide wiped out families. Some have no one left. I am thankful that my mother is alive and I am alive," said Immaculee, who hid during the genocide.

She came to the United States 10 years ago to join her husband, who was studying in Idaho. After they divorced, she came to Spokane to study nursing and in 2004, she completed her degree at Washington State University.

"I wanted to be a nurse because of the suffering and killing I saw," she said. "I want to help care for people."

"When I was asked to light the candle, I saw it as a way to remember all victims and survivors of genocide," she said. "In April, Rwanda commemorates the genocide there."

"I see it as a way to help open people's eyes and the eyes of the world, to help people understand what genocide is, what its consequences are and how to prevent it," she said, aware that genocide continues.

"What can we do to stop it? How can we come to the point that 'Never Again!' will be real? It's important that we never forget and that we see genocide wherever it happens today."

Immaculee said too often genocide is kept secret so people don't know about it or if they do, they don't understand what happened.

She grew up in a Catholic family, in which prayer, God and going to church were important. She now attends St. Augustine parish in Spokane.

While hiding, she said she sur-

vived day by day, praying each day, "God, please let me live today and tomorrow."

"Praying helped," she said.

Immaculee has told friends of her experience and, on a few occasions, she has spoken to groups.

"It helps to talk about it, to help people understand more than what they saw on TV," she said. "My country is now known for genocide. Most people did not know about Rwanda before that. Few know what happened."

"It's good to tell why it happened and exchange ideas on how to prevent genocide. People often ask why they did not know. They know it was terrible and are sorry no one did anything to stop it," Immaculee said.

She said that tensions and animosity between the minority Tutsis and majority Hutus grew after colonial times.

Hutus and Tutsis spoke the same language, lived in the same area, followed the same traditions and intermarried.

Belgian colonists who came in 1916 produced identity cards and gave Tutsis better education and jobs. After independence in 1962, Hutus took power and denied education and jobs to Tutsis.

When Tutsis sought to share

power in the 1990s, some in the government secretly prepared to kill them, despite the peace process that was underway. Youth were trained, and media played on stereotypes and fears, creating the climate that led to the mass killings.

"Not all Hutus accepted or participated in the genocide. Some died fighting it. Some helped and hid Tutsis," she said.

The new government includes both Tutsis and Hutus, and there is a reconciliation process.

Some witnesses, Immaculee said, are still in danger, because they testify about what they saw. People accused of killing people are confronted. If they accept responsibility and apologize, they are released.

"What I experienced changed my life, opened my eyes to want to care about people," she said. "I believe I survived for a reason."

She still wonders why people lose their humanity.

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Center seeks to help congregations heal organizational and personal pain

Knowing that issues of clergy misconduct and sexual abuse leave crisis and pain in their wake in any faith, the Center for Organizational Reform (COR) has been concerned for some time that congregations and individuals in them need to deal with their pain and to make sense of what happened.

While the anger and hurt of primary victims of abuse is evident, the center finds that family, friends and colleagues of both victims and perpetrators—even congregational members who are not closely affiliated—have experienced side-effects of the abuse but have been overlooked. They lack channels to deal with their reactions, said Nancy Isaacson, executive director of COR.

“Without attention to healing these people, their unprocessed pain and anger may fester over time, undermining a congregation’s ability to live its mission fully,” she said.

“There is need for public healing, because the widespread nature of the events has had impact on many of us, not just Catholics,” she explained.

At a recent meeting of the Catholic Diocesan Pastoral Council, COR was invited to present information about what is involved in planning a healing process to address such pain in parishes.

COR, an independent non-profit organization, is offering training on the healing process to address the need not only in the Catholic Church but also in other denominations, all faiths and the wider community.

COR began in Gonzaga University’s doctoral program in leadership studies in the early 1990s. As part of its mission to facilitate organizational health in organizations of all kinds, COR formalized its work with religious organizations by establishing the Institute for Congregational Leadership (ICL) in 2006.

Through the institute, COR offers workshops and programs to “facilitate healthy relationships, address conflict and crises, and strengthen congregations’ leadership resources,” Nancy said.

The ICL shares principles from its research on repairing and healing betrayals of trust. It then supports congregations as they translate these principles into rituals, sacraments and liturgies of their faith tradition.

Nancy, whose background was in public education before teaching at the graduate level 13 years at Gonzaga University, said the healing process is described in the center’s 37-page paper, “How, Then, Do We Heal?”

Resources of the center also

include a workshop series called “Coming to the Table,” which includes four types of workshops for individuals, Catholic parishes and other congregations to address different needs and interests. Workshops will begin in May.

In addition, COR is conducting narrative research projects on the experiences and spiritual pain of individuals affected by congregational crises.

It is also promoting a community initiative, “Compassion Across the Fences” to develop support and education for all faiths.

“The Catholic Church now is center stage for something that happens in many churches. It also happens in schools, businesses, human services, health care, mental health, government and media,” said Nancy, who earned a doctoral degree in organizational development and education at the University of Oregon in Eugene in 1981.

“We need to come together to challenge abuses of power in our society, recognizing the harm to victims, organizations and society itself,” she asserted.

Speaking on the pain she believes many Catholics in the Spokane Diocese face, Nancy said: “Their trust was betrayed on many levels. People have to name that betrayal, acknowledge that others may have had different experiences and work through what that means before their parishes can be whole again.”

Aware that the organizational healing process is complex and that some people are tired of hearing about the issues, she realizes some may prefer to “put it behind them and move on.”

“Emotions and reactions vary to the point that whatever the choice—doing something or nothing—will upset someone,” she said.

Because faiths advocate compassion for people who suffer, Nancy said that many are open to explore how their pain in this situation deserves compassion and can be a “powerful part” of their faith journey.

She pointed out that applying the word “healing” to an organization may seem counter to a culture that considers organizations are mechanisms to manage or fix, not living organisms needing and capable of healing.

COR identifies three stages to healing—be it a cut knee, a relationship, a congregation, a community, a nation or a planet. They are: 1) cleansing to remove toxins, 2) recuperation through waiting, resting and therapy, and 3) re-adjustment with renewed health, a time that can include “transformative action.”



Nancy Isaacson

Nancy said an injured organization needs a cultural version of these phases to address instability in or after a crisis.

She has observed from research that sweeping aside what happened may result in more inward focus, boundary violations, role confusion, poor communication or difficulty finding purpose.

Four faith-based responses to suffering are compassion, forgiveness, reconciliation and the pursuit of justice, interwoven with tools of truth telling, lamentation, prayer and dialogue, she said.

Because, for some, clergy abuse and some hierarchies’ responses violated a sense of “internal sanctuary” or safety people expect in their churches, Nancy explained, congregational healing begins with individuals sharing their experiences—truth telling—in “a setting of compassion and safety, that can bring individual and collective clarity to what has happened.”

For example, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission became a vehicle for truth-telling after apartheid—naming the people’s pain as a way to cleanse the nation’s wounds.

Nancy pointed out that such a public, large-scale process is not appropriate in congregations, but it is possible for people to tell their personal truth in one-to-one or small group settings, based on their needs and religious rituals.

The listening does not involve debate, evidence, disagreement or agreement, she said, but compassionate listening that honors the truth or pain a speaker shares. Because of strong feelings involved, she advises safeguards for speakers and listeners by using trained facilitators.

“Silence may further damage trust in an institution, making it seem to be in collusion with a perpetrator of abuse,” said Nancy, recognizing that talking about pain is not easy.

Validating the value of healing, despite the anguish, she referred to theologian Walter Brueggeman’s belief that truth telling can transform societies and “is the only way to confront evil and oppression in order to heal the world itself.”

Along with truth telling, Nancy said, people also need to grieve because “things are not right.”

“Fully experiencing the grieving process goes against the grain of our culture,” she said. “We must be with the grief, rather than rushing to do something.”

“Lamentation, which can be part of liturgy, empties and cleanses with the cry, ‘My God, what happened!’” she said. “It allows people to stay in conversation with God and each other as they recuperate, engaging in communal contemplation and dialogue. Prayer and time can incubate new awareness, spontaneously emerging into renewed life and readiness to act.”

Nancy differentiated restorative justice from retributive justice, which punishes people who break laws, but does not heal victims or restore community.

She emphasized that the process of restorative justice is complex, but can offer what primary victims of clergy abuse say they need for healing: to be believed by the church, to hear it’s not their fault, to know others won’t be hurt, to hear an apology, to have justice,

to be considered courageous and to be accepted in the community.

COR knows that legal issues make it hard for an organization to enter fully into the theological requirement of repentance and contrition, because of fear about legal and financial implications. So corporate apologies often tend to be ambiguous rather than clear, further upsetting people who want to see that an organization cares, she said.

“Planned healing processes in organizations are not for the timid,” said Nancy, because there are few prescriptive road maps and because of the potentially large number of people hurt.

COR’s paper on healing notes that some people fear that the process may take too long and public disclosure may raise more problems, such as opening a Pandora’s box of reactions that make things worse or feeding “civil wars” among those of different factions who may hijack the process to promote their arguments.

“There is a place for disagreement and debate about the best course of action, but in the third phase of healing, not the first two phases,” Nancy said.

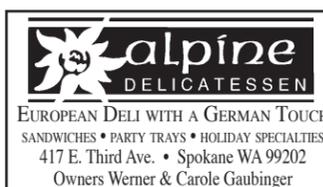
COR believes organizational healing is important, because despite “devastating problems,” Nancy knows of congregations recovering and thriving as they see they can come together again.

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Mission companions receive love, hospitality, ideas, evangelism

Continued from page 1
building. It's about building relationships, so we can bring peace and justice to the world."

The companionship makes the world smaller, said Margie, who also promoted global ties by hiring international staff as director of Camp Lutherhaven and then of six Lutheran camps in Ohio.

"Now, instead of sending missionaries, we send funds to educate people there to be doctors, nurses, teachers and pastors among their own people," she said.

To prepare the team before going, organizers suggested they go with their hearts and minds open to receive love, hospitality, ideas and evangelism.

The group will report at the 2007 Synod Assembly April 27 to 29 at the Doubletree Hotel in Boise. Sharing their experience with synod churches is part of their responsibility.

"Our role was first to be with the people there and then to make people here aware of the companionship, not just of the problems," said Marj, who led the group with her husband. "The Tanzanians opened our eyes to life there."

Their experience started with being greeted by hundreds of smiling and singing students in yellow T-shirts lining the road.

"There's no way to understand what life is like in Tanzania without on-the-ground experience there, working and worshipping side-by-side," said Marj, who serves on the Synod's Global Mission Companion Task Force and helped plan the trip.

For her, companionship is learning from, living and socializing with people, learning to appreciate the beauty of the land and people as part of God's gift.

"People in Malinyi wear their faith on their sleeves, expressing their dependence on God every day. Their expression is natural and clear in their faces," she said. "We learned from them, so I am better able to relax, knowing God is guiding us, not asking us to do more than we can, but giving us the capabilities to do more."

Ann learned where mission dollars go and what it means to be a companion, working side-by-side and sharing in people's lives. While some may question spending money on travel, she knows the power of building relationships and returning changed by them.

She has a new understanding of the Beatitude "blessed are the poor" after two weeks with the poor. She returned wondering "if we really are rich," because for Tanzanians she met, life is more than materialism.



Marj Nishek greets the children of a teacher.

"They value relationships, not what people have," said Ann. "Every day the pastor at the school says: 'God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good.'"

"In the midst of hardship and difficulties, God is constant," Ann said, appreciating the connection through the national church with the global church. "God helps us walk with people halfway across the world."

Marj and Ann shared the backgrounds they brought.

While Marj and Wayne have a tree nursery in Bonners Ferry, they have lived there only on and off for 30 years. Their older son, a forester, managed the nursery while they were away.

Growing up in North Dakota, the Nisheks started life together overseas in the Peace Corps. They worked two years as volunteers in Bolivia and then in India.

Before going as missionaries to Tanzania in 1974, they settled in Bonners Ferry. Wayne worked a year with the Kootenai Tribe.

In 1986, the University of Arizona invited them to a four-year project at Lesotho Agricultural College. Wayne then went on the Peace Corps staff, and they stayed there three more years, followed by five years in The Gambia, where he was director of the Peace Corps and Marj worked with the American Embassy. In 1999, they came home.

Ann, the pastor at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Cheney since 2000, grew up in the Midwest and graduated in 1999 from Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. An internship in Wenatchee led her to move to Cheney, which was possible because her husband, David, is a self-employed contractor and can work anywhere.

Married after high school, she reared family and worked 12 years as a nurse in a long-term care facility. She earned a bachelor's degree in human services in 1993

at the University of Wisconsin in Oshkosh.

Her first mission trip was in 2001 to help rebuild after Hurricane Mitch in North Carolina.

Ann was on sabbatical, caring for her father in August and September. He died Sept. 16. She left for Tanzania the week after he was buried.

"It was important for me to go because Lutherans there do not ordain women. They hoped a woman pastor would come," she said.

Ann spoke slowly when she preached, because students understand just a little English. Others in the group helped dramatize Bible stories to communicate.

"Life, work and worship there is physical. They dance, sing and stand, involving their whole bodies," she observed. "The communal presence is powerful. They know they need each other. They know they are dependent on one another for survival."

Marj contrasted the short-term experience of accompaniment—seeing the best of a situation with hosts making a special effort to be sure everyone feels comfortable—with living in a situation for several years and experiencing the highs and lows of life, becoming part of what is happening, learning the language and being better able to communicate.

She values both opportunities, knowing that some people can go for only a short time, while others might volunteer to teach there for two years or more.

Synod churches raise funds to help pay teachers, carpenters and students' tuition. In addition to supporting education, the synod also helps support a hospital.

The companionship team joined students and the community to do projects the companions chose—to finish building a house by helping carry and set bricks and sheets of roofing, and by par-



The Rev. Moses, Margie Fiedler and the Rev. Ann Frerks lead the closing worship service.

Photos provided by Marj Nishek

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Students, community harvest fruit for Town Orchard Project

By Carol Price Spurling

Volunteers with the Town Orchard Project in Moscow and Pullman have created a way for people with fruit trees, grape vines and berry bushes to turn fruit and berries that might otherwise rot on the ground into food for people in need.

Like many volunteer-staffed organizations, the Town Orchard is a collaborative effort, connecting the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute (PCEI) Backyard Harvest program, the Pullman Presbyterian Church Mission and Washington State University's Common Ministry.

It connects volunteer harvesters—or "gleaners"—with people who have fruit and berries to give away. Fruit gathered through the program is distributed to local food banks and nutrition programs to supplement their non-perishable offerings.

Some volunteers are students involved with the Common Ministry at Washington State University.

They have assisted the Palouse Food Project for several years by preparing gardens in the spring and harvesting throughout the summer and fall, so it was "natural" for them to help expand the Backyard Harvest and Town Orchard programs from Moscow to Pullman, said Gail Stearns, director of the Common Ministry at WSU.

"Our students are involved in growing in their faith. Reaching out in service is as important to our spiritual lives as programs and worship," she said. "We see



Austin Verhasselt, Marnie Miller-Keas, Becky Corbett and Rob Swearingen are among the students who helped pick fruit.

Photo provided by The Common Ministry

providing fresh foods to those who could not otherwise afford them as a huge service. Helping people locally to live healthy lives is a great step for our students."

Amy Grey, coordinator of the Backyard Harvest program, has found that involvement in the Town Orchard fosters healthy living in more than just the physical sense.

"While I was initially driven by a desire to offer fresh produce to people in need, it led me to consider how the growing and sharing of food can help build a sense of community," Amy said.

"For instance, many of the trees that I personally harvested last summer were owned by seniors who no longer wanted to risk climbing up on ladders, but wanted to contribute to the project in some way," she said.

Amy would visit with them for a while before picking their apples, pears or grapes. Some-

times they would ask that she take some over to the next door neighbor. Sometimes they would give her a favorite recipe for apple crisp or tell her the best way to put up grape preserves.

"In the end, these gleaned experiences would end up being not just about the fruit," she said, "but about talking with people and learning who my neighbors were."

The program fulfills a need that became obvious to Amy last year.

"The inspiration for the Town Orchard project came from my experiences running Backyard Harvest last summer, where we pick up people's extra produce and distribute it to the food banks. Some people would say that they did not garden, but had an old fruit tree in their backyard that I was welcome to pick," she said.

"By the end of the summer, offers such as this led Backyard

Harvest volunteers to glean more than 300 pounds of apples, pears, plums, cherries and grapes from backyards in Moscow and Pullman."

Amy said that the gleaned fruit was popular, both with seniors who were able to take it home after their weekly lunch and for families visiting local food banks.

"Our efforts to harvest fruit last year were stop-gap," she said.

When she received a call in July from Moscow resident Marilyn Johnson, wondering whether they would like to harvest some cherries before the heat got to them, Amy and her family went straight over to harvest that afternoon.

"We arrived at the hillside just south of town and there before us stood more than 30 beautiful Bing, Lambert and Queen Anne cherry trees laden with fruit. Needless to say we made only a dent as the sun crept below the horizon," she said.

"I asked the woman if I could call her again next season and this time bring enough people to harvest all the fruit. She graciously agreed, and so the tree directory that is the basis for the Town Orchard project was started."

Amy did some research and found that in the past, town orchards were common. Communities would plant some fruit trees, from which all residents could harvest. So this program just adds a new-fangled twist to an old idea.

Currently, the Town Orchard

project has 51 trees in Moscow and Pullman on its database, and they are ready to register more.

People who register their trees or bushes will be called about a week before the fruit is ready to confirm that the fruit will still be available for gleaning.

Then, the volunteers arrive to harvest the fruit, leaving some for the donor's use.

Martha Klontz, a long-time Moscow resident, heard about the program through her work with the PCEI. She picked apples from her own tree until she had all she needed, then let volunteers harvest the rest.

"I was tired of picking apples and then throwing them away," Martha said. "It was wonderful to have them come. If everyone that had extra fruit would register with the database that would be great."

Kim Cole, also of Moscow, was impressed with how quickly Amy was able to respond to her call last summer.

"We had two Bing cherry trees ready, and if you don't pick them quickly the birds will. They dropped everything and came right over and were so cheerful and accommodating. We'll definitely be participating again this year," Kim said.

Bill Johnston is recording names of volunteer gleaners, fruit donors and garden-produce donors.

For information, call 334-5717 in Pullman or 669-2259 in Moscow or visit www.backyardharvest.org.

Choir gives concert

The Spokane Falls Community College Gospel Choir presents its first concert, "A Journey through Time," at 7 p.m., Thursday, April 12, in the Music and Performing Arts Building auditorium.

The performance reflects a history of anthem, spiritual and gospel music from early slavery to the mid-20th century. Gospel music blends African and Western rhythms, and informs, educates, excites, and inspires with spiritual messages, said Sharon Jones, director.

The choir, as a continuing education course, includes seasoned and novice singers, music majors and people from the community.

For information, call 533-3140.

Our Place plans dramatic benefit

Our Place Community Ministries will hold a fund raiser, featuring a reader's theater presentation of "Everybody Loves Opal."

The performance will be held at 2 p.m., Sunday, April 22, at Salem Lutheran Church, 1428 W. Broadway.

The play tells the story of Opal, an eccentric woman who lives in a dilapidated mansion next to the city dump. She never met a piece of junk she couldn't use. When three cons enter her life, trouble ensues. In the end, she proves that she is rich in more ways than one.

Proceeds benefit Our Place, which provides food, clothing and hygiene products to low income

people in Spokane's West Central neighborhood.

Area pastors and religious leaders playing key roles include Sister Sheila McEvoy, SNJM, the Rev. Tom Soeldner of Salem Lutheran Church, the Rev. Todd Scranton of St. Paul's United Methodist, Sister Irene Knopes of St. Joseph's Catholic Church and the Rev. Champ Singletery of Central Baptist.

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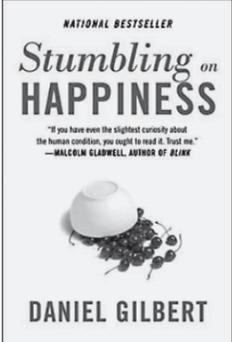
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'Sounds of the Eternal'

J. Philip Newell is writer-theologian for the Scottish Cathedral of the Isles and companion theologian for the American Spirituality Center of Casa del Sol in New Mexico. Former warden of Iona Abbey in Scotland, he is acclaimed for work in Celtic spirituality and books *Listening for the Heartbeat of God* and *Sounds of the Eternal*. He is a Church of Scotland minister with a passion for ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.

Contact St. John's Cathedral at (509) 838-4277 or Karen Robbins at robbins.k@att.net for more information and registration forms

Teachings about sustainability stem from everyone's tribal roots

Continued from page 1

searcher, a mental health, alcohol and substance abuse counselor, and an educator from early childhood to graduate education.

Martina promotes preserving and perpetuating tribal languages and cultures, plus advocacy through education, organizational change and transformational healing. She believes indigenous languages offer social change strategies to heal the planet.

Mark, who remembers going to a nearby produce stand, a dairy, a butcher, a grocery store and an egg farm for food as a child, said he "watched the destruction of the wilderness day after day, week after week, year after year with development similar to what is happening in Spokane Valley."

Working summers as an ocean beach lifeguard, he watched as machines swept debris into a huge pile, which a bulldozer pushed from the beach into the ocean.

"We are converting the planet away from sustainable wellness by using energy that destroys the earth while a few make money off the backs of others," he said.

To establish core values, Mark calls for re-establishing relationships with tribes that model sustainability.

For example, he believes "institutionalizing" children in schools at an early age interferes with their learning to live in balance with nature. Often those frustrated with the institution's limits are labeled as having attention deficit disorder or being juvenile delinquents, as if they are waste, he said.

"If we hope to sustain life, we need to teach children to live in sustainable, balanced ways," he said. "Indigenous cultures teach people to pool wisdom and live in relationship with other species."

Indigenous languages convey that wisdom.

"When we lose those languages, we lose critical information about how people survived in America tens of thousands of years, information critical to our grandchildren," Mark said.

Martina's mother and grandmother grew up in Catholic boarding schools. They believed if her mother married a non-Indian, her children would have a better chance. She did, living with her husband in Japan and other Air Force bases until they divorced, and she settled in New Jersey.

When Martina was 14, she moved with her mother and sister—as well as aunts and cousins—to Inchelium to her grandparents' three-bedroom house with no indoor plumbing.

As an example of the power of language, Martina said "Inchelium" refers to the "singing waters" her grandmother told of hearing where three creeks hit the river before the dam flooded them.

"I learned vocabulary and phrases but never understood the language," Martina said with re-



Mark Thompson and Martina Whelshula

gret. "I traveled the world to learn how tribal people live and what they know. I realize indigenous languages are a different way to see reality, portals to the past that allow people to experience the world in alternative ways.

"Languages set our world views," she said. "My language is descriptive and participatory."

"A full moon in English is an object. When we objectify life, we can exploit it. A verb-based language invites us to participate. We call it 'makes itself round,' inviting awareness of moon's phases. A frog is 'croaking feet,' a rabbit, 'growing ears,' and a deer, 'looking for food.'

"We refer to ourselves as 'people of the gray mist as far as we can see.' 'Nespelem' refers to 'people of the flat prairie place.' How I orient myself in the world is based on where my home and heart are," she said.

"There is a deep sense of ecology in our language. It frames how we experience life as instinctive and instructive for ethical living and core values," said Martina, who identifies as one of the "salmon people," even though there are no longer salmon in the river, and as one of the "root-and-berry people."

"Our story of creation sets a context for a deep relationship with creation, telling of animals preparing for people, who were created from mud," she said.

Animals and plants prepared for humans' coming by being ready to lay down their lives to feed, sustain, nurture and protect them, because they loved humans so much. Aware of that, she said, "people would sing and dance over an animal's body in gratitude that the animal gave the ultimate sacrifice for them.

"Similarly, as we teach children to dig roots, we teach them to treat the roots with respect, taking only what they need, and leaving the rest to grow again," Martina said.

"We use or take care of all parts of animals or plants.

"Language sustains our sacred commitment to care for all creation for seven generations," Martina said.

Colonization interrupted that connection, and since then, indigenous people have watched the exploitation of the earth.

Martina shares her traditional wisdom, hoping it can be a catalyst for society to change.

Mark, who grew up in the Episcopal Church, also spent time as a child with his father and half-Santee grandfather in South Dakota, learning Lakota teachings and stories. From his mother's family were stories of many generations of Methodist ministers.

In college and graduate school at the University of California in Los Angeles, he studied history of religions. As part of his studies, he did field work from 1973 to 1978, spending half the year in South Dakota on Lakota reservations. Then he switched to ethno-history and Native American Studies.

Settling in Spokane since retirement, he is on the Faith and Environment Network Board.

On language, Mark commented that English capitalization of the first person pronoun implies "I act on and control the world." He said that denies the reality that "we cannot survive without relationship with the plethora of species that sacrifice for us."

Trained in Lakota use of passive voice, he experiences the world acting on and with him.

"Our attempts to manipulate the planet's wealth harm it," he said. "Everything on the planet is inter-related. We need to honor that. If we do not change our ways, we will destroy all species.

"We must pay attention to what is happening around us. We don't need scientific studies to say there is global warming. Wherever we go, we need to listen to the local

indigenous stories so we know and live what is ethically and sustainably appropriate."

Martina's spiritual search began at 11 when she rejected the shame and fear she experienced in school. After she moved to Inchelium, she began learning the traditional path from elders and later learned about different philosophies—separating the positive from the negative in each.

Now her spirituality is her way of being—perceiving the world and living everyday life with respect for all life.

Martina learned early not to kill even species such as bugs or ants: "I was told to talk to them. Once when ants entered our house, I said, 'We live here. This is our home. Respect our home and we will respect yours.' They left."

She said people miss an intimate relationship with life in the culture of schedules and meetings.

"Our culture is about slowing down, being mindful and remembering our relationship with significant others," Martina said. "We do not gather or prepare food when we are angry or that energy will go into the food."

Asked about the impact of technology, Mark told of a video taken through a TV screen of children watching it with vacant, hypnotic stares, devoid of their human spirit.

However, he knows video can also be a tool to reconnect mainstream U.S. culture with the First Nations indigenous people to promote care of the earth.

Martina expressed her suspicion that new technology would change her culture. She told of a child in her family sitting in front of TV, unhappy.

"It is addictive. It's escapism from life," she said, contrasting it

with her spending time outside as a child connecting with the spiritual, what's important in life.

Similarly, she added, a computer does not provide real communication. It replaces real human relationships.

Asked what people can do, Mark said he sold his car two years ago and now walks and rides a bus. He connects with local farmers and seeks to reduce his footprint on the planet.

He suggests that people "reconnect with their tribes," recognizing that most have their own indigenous, tribal roots outside the United States.

He also said: "Walk, turn off lights, start sustainable behaviors, care for other species and vote."

Martina commented that spirituality is about self-knowledge: "The more we understand ourselves, the more we understand life. Self-awareness is not about self-centeredness, but about challenging our motives and our assumptions. It is about deep reflection that leads to healing the universe, realizing our needs do not come first."

For information, call 624-4712.



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For teaching future journalists

Mixed media diet supplements an interdisciplinary approach

Jim McPherson's media diet includes liberal and conservative radio, blogs and news sources.

It supplements his interdisciplinary approach to teaching future journalists at Whitworth College, complementing training in professional skills with background in history, political science and faith.

Jim weaves those threads into his classes, which also include media history, media criticism or literacy, and alternative media.

He believes journalists need to understand who has power and who benefits from wars, so they report what matters rather than being caught in pressures to entertain and play to fears to create an addictive interest in news.

"For too many young journalists, if something did not happen in the last year, it never happened, and whatever happened in the past year is a trend," Jim observed. "If journalists do not know about history and political science, we end up in unnecessary wars."

"Today, many mainstream media support big business, big government and the two big parties," he said. "Concerned about making a living, many journalists do not want to offend anyone."

In reality, they offend anyway, so "they might as well do their job," he said, and explore issues important to people's personal and public lives.

If mainstream media do not inform people adequately, internet and computers now make it possible for alternative media to address concerns that matter, he said, cautioning that some people read and hear news just from those who share their views.

"I listen to both liberal and conservative talk radio and blogs. Both are important," said Jim, who finds mainstream media increasingly conservative, contrary to the myth of "liberal" media.

"Much daily reporting reinforces conservatism by promoting fear," he said, for example, repeatedly telling stories that make consumers feel crime is rampant, heightening fear, even though they report statistics about the decline of crime.

He captures those concerns in two books, *The History of Journalism at the End of the American Century: 1965 to the Present*, published in 2006 and *The Press and the Conservative Resurgence: Getting the News Right*, set for publication in 2007.

"In America, the closest we came to liberal media was in the 1960s and 1970s, when reporters and editors challenged systems," he said, noting that concepts of "liberal" and "conservative" to-



Interested in media history, Jim McPherson has a 1953 TV set with a poster over the screen.

day are distorted.

He defines liberal as open to change, concerned about justice and equality, and conservative as reaffirming the status quo of existing power structures.

As he makes students aware of what happens when big press aligns with big government and big business, Jim appreciates that Whitworth encourages bringing faith discussions into classes.

However, faith was not always part of his life.

Believing early he could never meet expectations his childhood church set for entering heaven, he decided to "have fun" in high school and college. While excelling in sports and studies, he developed a drinking problem.

The son of a principal in Weippe, Idaho, Jim left the logging town and went to Idaho State University in Pocatello, where he earned a degree in journalism, advertising and public relations in 1980. His goal then was to run a small weekly paper.

Jim reported and edited for weekly papers in Mesa, Ariz., and Sun Valley. Then he and his wife, Joanna, decided to take a year's break, living in a bus near Brookings, Ore., where he produced a weekly shopper.

While there, he decided to quit drinking, and joined Alcoholics Anonymous, which reintroduced him to God. One day, when he

was tempted to go out to buy a six-pack, he received a letter from a friend of his father, who was also a recovering alcoholic.

"He described what I was going through," said Jim, who knelt and genuinely prayed for God's help. "I felt lighter and never desired a drink again."

He and Joanna began attending church regularly.

Jim noted that after the year of not reading media, he found little had changed when he returned to reading news: "There was still strife in the Middle East, people still killed people and local government still focused on petty matters."

In 1989, they went to Phoenix, where he did public relations and then they moved to Moscow to be near Joanna's three children.

Jim did freelance writing and editing until he was accepted into the interdisciplinary communications graduate program at Washington State University. He earned a master's degree in 1993 and a doctorate in 1998.

Wanting to teach in a small liberal arts college with a religious base, he taught two years at Peace College in Raleigh, N.C., before moving to Spokane in 2000 to teach at Whitworth.

In Spokane, they have attended Knox Presbyterian and the Spokane Friends Church.

As volunteers for feeding and

shelter programs and as anti-war activists, Jim and Joanna connect faith and politics.

In those activities, they often met Quakers, who led to their connection with the Friends church.

Jim appreciates Whitworth's dual focus of teaching "on the narrow ridge between the heart and the mind," and finds a stimulating intellectual community there for engaging in conversations with colleagues of differing political perspectives in mutual challenges that engage each in further research and thought.

Finding that the Quaker tradition of silence meets his personal needs, he incorporates silence into his life and teaching.

To invite a layout class to consider creativity, he encouraged them to turn off their computers, turn their chairs away from each other and take 10 minutes in silence to "reflect, meditate or nap," thinking about creativity. Then they talked about their experience.

Jim also takes five to 10 minutes for silence before classes, sitting and doing nothing. Sometimes it changes what he teaches.

He finds that balancing quiet time, community action and work tasks gives him perspective.

"The day the war in Iraq started, I put on a black armband and wore it until Memorial Day. It prompted conversations with students who didn't know that wearing a black armband represented opposition to war," Jim said.

Even in his searching years, Jim said he believed that, if Jesus was real, Jesus would be concerned about making life better for the downtrodden. In line with that, he believes the major purpose of politics is to serve people.

"Politics is a way to practice faith. It's great to think we'll have a reward in heaven, but I believe we are here to make life better for others and to learn what we can about God and ourselves," he said. "I believe the Bible calls us to speak out against war, to shelter the homeless and to educate."

For information, call 777-4429.

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Do hot-button questions foster constructive solutions for society?

What do you think? In the spirit of giving people an opportunity to voice their opinions, a local TV station started asking a daily question on hot-button issues. They report sound-byte replies on air and online under the anonymity of first names.

Responses indicate the questions invite replies of impatient, angry people more than moderate, thoughtful people. Few would lead to dialogue or solutions.

Does such sounding off add to the public discourse? Does it bring the community together on common concerns? Does it help the public better understand the issues? Do the remarks silence some? Why do some respond and others not?

Some recent questions have touched into prejudices affecting Hispanic citizens, immigrants and workers. They were about the Idaho legislature's establishing English as the official language, on "illegal aliens" receiving social security or credit cards, and on a Florida legislator wanting to ban the use of the term "illegal aliens."

While "alien" is a term on documents of immigrants and "illegal" refers to those who come without documents, the responses indicated that the term, "illegal aliens,"

stirs intolerance, anger and animosity.

The questions asked give little context that would encourage people to share new ways to think about issues related to people who come to work in our fields, factories and orchards for low wages. In contrast, the term "undocumented workers" speaks of people who play a role in our economy, providing low-cost food and allowing employers to make more profit. Would that help us see real people filling a much needed economic roles that benefit U.S. consumers and employers?

While pondering "illegal," I wondered how many people who immigrated to this country did so legally. Did ancestors who came on the Mayflower come legally? History makes them sound legitimate. They were welcomed by people who had lived here tens of thousands of years and didn't operate by a tradition of property, greed or suspicion of strangers. What does our faith say about welcoming strangers?

Would use of "undocumented workers" point us to the need for a guest-worker policy or changes in immigration policies so people would not risk their lives to add to our economy and their livelihoods?

Calling neighbors who come to work here "workers" might also preclude the question of eligibility for Social Security. Employers of undocumented workers may or may not pay into Social Security for them. Even if they do, those workers are not eligible for benefits. *More* people openly paying into Social Security will give a boost to the whole system.

Of 50 responses to the TV question on the Florida legislator proposing outlawing use of the words "illegal alien" as offensive, only a few offered constructive ideas.

The impatience expressed was also toward anyone who might care or have another opinion: One said to call "them" anything else is "ludicrous," another said we should "stop worrying about offending people," and another taunted "bleeding heart liberal cry babies."

Of what value is it to give a means to vent division? Why are there few reasonable responses? Does the way the questions are phrased invite inflammatory response?

As we approach the annual remembrance of the Holocaust, we might remember the role popular media plays, as in Rwanda, feeding fears and animosity so the general

public accepted and even participated in genocide.

While reflecting on these concerns, I received a chain email petition that points to how easy it is for people to generalize from specific incidents. The writer tells of the pain of her newly widowed mother, eking by on a limited income, buying unbranded food while someone Hispanic—she assumed to be an "illegal alien"—was at the next counter buying name-brand foods.

The petition writer feared that a bill the Senate passed in September would make undocumented workers eligible for Social Security, depleting funds for those "who paid into it by working all their lives." The email gave no information on the bill, which was designed to increase the number of legal immigrants and provide a path to legalize undocumented workers, increasing the workforce with immigrants working openly and *paying taxes*. The bill would reduce long-term general budget and Social Security deficits.

As journalists our role is to inform people about real people, real needs, full proposals and positive options.

Mary Stamp - Editor

Polar bears' plight makes global warming evident and concerns children

Maybe it was the polar bears.

For a few years now, we've been seeing articles and calendars with those cuddly-looking polar bears in poses that looked human as they frolicked.

During those same years, the polar ice caps have been melting. They've been melting extensively.

One reason we have reliable evidence of the melting is that we have sent our nuclear submarines under the ice regularly and their crews have noticed the difference.

The polar bears have noticed, too.

Their principal occupation is hunting their food, usually from the vantage point of an ice floe. Lately, fewer ice floes are strong enough to hold the weight of a polar bear, and many of them are drowning.

Many tourists go to Churchill, Manitoba, to see the polar bears, and every year they are seeing skinnier ones. When there is no ice there is no hunting, and soon there could be no polar bears.

Do you know anyone who wants to explain that to a five-year-old?

The reluctance to break the news to grandchildren may be behind the suggestion by one global warming denier that we put the polar bear on the Endangered Species List. Other people, however, seem to be more sobered by the news. The bears are evidence of something immediate, a mental picture we don't want to think about, but a situation we know we must face.

God gave us dominion over the earth and its creatures, but nowhere is there mention that this gives us freedom to trash creation with strip mining, industrialized farming, belching smokestacks, land mines, armaments with depleted uranium casings and self-indulgent means of transportation, all of which depend on the use of fossil fuels.

Even when they are not mentioned in a story about global warming, fossil fuels are there, under the surface, in the background. They are the invisible thread running through all of our industrialized economy.

There is no way to use fossil fuels

without releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and CO₂ traps the greenhouse gasses that cause global warming. Even the chemical fertilizers that contain petroleum products contribute, because as temperatures go up, the ground warms, and carbon is released.

Before the industrial revolution, the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere was 275 parts per million. Currently, it is about 385 ppm. Before 2050, it will be more than 500 ppm unless significant measures are taken.

In 1989, Bill McKibben published the first book on global warming for laymen, *The End of Nature*. At that time, global warming didn't have the great body of evidence behind it that it has now, but Bill made what there was understandable.

Scientists spending most of their research time on it could be numbered in the dozens then, but when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published its report in January 2001, 1,500 climatologists, from all parts of the world, were on the panel.

Everything is connected. That is a bare-bones definition of a system. Our global system is not in good condition.

As he has continued to study and write about global warming, Bill has reached some conclusions about what has happened and what needs to be done, which are presented in *Deep Economy: the Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*, published last month.

The pileup of evidence leading to grimmer and grimmer conclusions is behind StepItUp2007 on April 14.

It is being organized by Bill and a group of Middlebury College graduates and students to demonstrate to Congress and other policy makers that there is widespread concern about global warming and support for direct and indirect measures that would attack it. There is information on page 2 about rallies in this area.

What we can do as individuals may seem insignificant. Stewardship—what we can do together—can make the difference.

Nancy Minard - editorial team

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

Understanding ourselves as stewards will influence every aspect of our lives and will bring about a greater sense of unity and peace. Why? Because it allows us to place all we are and all we have—a great diversity with abundance of gifts—at the service of a common vision, a common mission: the mission of the Body of Christ.

The Rev. Daniel Barnett
St. Patrick's Catholic - Spokane

In many ways, a church family is like an orchestra. Some of us are soloists. Some of us are the strings, French horns, bassoons, or percussion. Some of us simply move the music stands and risers to prepare for the performances. We all have differing abilities and gifts. We all have different voices, yet, if we want to play beautiful music, we must use our voices and our movements together, in tune with each other, harmonious and unified.

The Rev. Lauri Strait
Opportunity Christian

To live in true community is perhaps the most important of Christian practices. Community is where we help our fellow human beings no matter what! It's where we seek to understand and are unwilling to judge others. True community requires knowing others, not just knowing

about them—to connect and empathize, to feel compassion and to suffer with. This kind of knowing is much harder to do with those who are different from us.

Community is the embodiment of agape love—eloquently described in 1 Cor. 13. It is not a romantic, idealized form of love, not reserved for one special person, but expanded to all humanity. Such love is not easy, because the beloved are often not easy to love. Thus, the requirements of patience, forbearance, endurance, displacing arrogance, rudeness, irritability and resentment. Such is the love that Jesus brought to us. Such is the love that discipleship calls us to. Love is not that easy, but is very rewarding.

Love is the only thing that will endure forever. Love completes us as individuals and communities. Love brings us full understanding—connection, empathy, compassion.

The Rev. Kathleen Youde
Newport United Church of Christ

With tithing a core value for my wife and me, we sought to instill it in our daughter. When she was three, we taught Margaret that one dime from her one-dollar allowance belonged to God through the church. She could spend 50 cents and save 40 cents, but the first 10 cents were not for her to use. The dime may have

been small, but the proportion was what mattered. So we did not give her money to put in the plate. Her dime, faithfully given, was enough.

The Rev. Forrest Claassen
First Presbyterian - Clarkston

We have forgotten the deep demands of justice—that we are not just to invite others to believe what we do, but also we are to offer them our love and care, regardless of who they are, just as Jesus did. That's uncomfortable. Jesus did not come just for me. Jesus came for us, for the world, for those who did not have the safe homes or access to technology that we have today. Rather, Jesus came for those to whom hope meant and still means real food, real shelter, real love, real justice, real access and real community.

The Rev. Gail Stearns
The Common Ministry - Pullman

It is a balancing act to live the Christian faith, a balancing act between two important but distinct parts of our faith journey. We naturally lean to one side or the other. The two parts are the inward journey of heart and mind, and the other is living out our faith in daily life.

Taking time each day for prayer and meditation is essential to develop our faith life. For some, it comes easily. For others,

it is difficult and unnatural. Time spent in quiet listening to God, reading, meditation and in intentional prayer leaves us open to new insights into God's way for our lives. Being in touch with the Holy, having a calm heart and mind that is receptive to the Spirit, and being ready to listen to the voice of God are important tasks that deepen the relationship with God.

Putting into practice what we hear and read when we listen to God translates our prayer time into a different mind set or actions. A deep spiritual journey with Jesus means nothing if it doesn't open our eyes to the injustices and the inequities that are around us. Torn lives and families, homelessness, poverty, inadequate housing and medical care, insensitivity to the injustice for minority groups, war that devastates lives—all of these—are spiritual issues. How can we say we love God when we do not have compassion for human beings living around us in our own community and world?

The Christian life involves not only a deep spiritual journey of the heart and mind but also acting on those values of Jesus in doing something to change lives or right the wrongs of injustice.

The Rev. David Helseth
Englewood Christian - Yakima

Women model new leadership

At the Women's Leadership Revival Tour Thursday and Friday, April 12 and 13, at Gonzaga University, Margaret Wheatley will lead several presentations on new forms of leadership influenced by women.

An organizational consultant and researcher since 1973, she is president emerita of the Berkana Institute, which formed in 1991 to explore leadership processes.

She will speak from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, April 12, at the Cataldo Globe Room at Gonzaga on how women offer their leadership through service.

From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Friday, April 13, she will lead sessions on "Finding Our Way: Leadership for Uncertain Times," discussing leadership modeled on hospitality rather than heroism.

She will lecture on "Fostering Leadership in the Community" at 4 p.m., Friday, at the Gonzaga Law School Room 226.

For information, visit www.gonzaga.edu/ce or call

Editor Jim Wallis speaks on April 30

Sojourners editor Jim Wallis will speak on "Building Common Ground" at 7:30 p.m., Monday, April 30, in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University as part of the effort of Coexist to foster respect among diverse student groups.

Coexist has held events to increase understanding among students who are politically active to end bitter divisions, said organizer Anna Gonzales.

On April 17, students who have been involved in one-to-one discussions will meet for a dialogue to pursue unresolved questions.

In the 2007-08 school year, the program will continue with a focus on commonalities, human rights, human dignity and poverty.

For information, call 323-4069.

Team recruits volunteers

The Educational Service District 101 Spokane Service Team is recruiting volunteers for "Rebuilding Together Spokane" with shifts from 8 a.m. to noon or from noon to 4 p.m., Saturday, April 28, to help with repairs, painting or yard work at six homes.

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Calendar of Events

- Apr 8** • **Community Easter Sunrise Service**, Interfaith Council, Greenwood Memorial Terrace, 211 W. Government Way, 6:30 a.m. - 329-1410
- Apr 9** • **United Nations Association**, "The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty," Tom Jeannot, Gonzaga professor, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr., 7 p.m. - 456-2382
- Apr 10** • **Fig Tree Writers' Training**, 411 S. Washington, 7 p.m. - 535-1813
- Apr 12** • **Spokane Falls Community College Gospel Choir**, Music and Performing Arts Auditorium, 7 p.m. - 533-3140
- Apr 12-13** • **Women's Leadership Revival Tour** - visit gonzaga.edu/ce
- Apr 13** • **The Lands Council Dinner and Auction**, Northern Quest Casino, 100 N. Hayford Rd., Airway Heights, 4 to 9:30 p.m. - 838-4912
- Apr 14** • **Step It Up rallies** - see stepitup2007.org
- Apr 15** • **Spokane Observance of Yom Hashoah**, Temple Beth Shalom, 1322 E. 30th Ave., 7 p.m. - 747-3304
- Apr 16** • **Physics and the God of Abraham**, "Cosmology and Creation," Gonzaga President Robert Spitzer, S.J., Weyerhaeuser at Whitworth, 7 p.m. - 777-3275.
- Apr 16** • **Men's Ministry Forum**, "Why Men Hate Going to Church," Valley Fourth Memorial, 2303 S. Bowdich, 9:30 a.m. - 487-7429
- Apr 16-18** • **Greater Spokane Association of Evangelicals Solitude Retreat** for pastors and elders, Riverview Bible Camp - 487-7429
- Apr 17** • **Fig Tree Dialogue Planning**, Unity House, 709 E. Desmet, 7:45 a.m.
- **Physics and the God of Abraham**, "Medieval Views of Creation," Steven Baldner, St. Francis Xavier University, Jepson Center at Gonzaga University, 7 p.m. - 777-3275
- Apr 18** • **"Deadly Persuasion: Advertising & Addiction"**, Jean Kilbourne, Women's Leadership Conference & North West Alliance for Responsible Media, Spokane Community College Lair, 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. - 323-3578
- **"From Ruin to Renewal: Religious Institutions and Genocide"**, psychology professor James Waller, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m. - 777-4738.
- **Physics and the God of Abraham**, "Divine Agency and Modern Physics," William Carroll, Oxford University, Jepson at Gonzaga, 7 p.m. - 777-3275
- **Fair Housing Conference**, "The Changing Faces of Discrimination," Mukogawa Commons, 4000 W. Randolph, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. - 535-1018
- **Spokane City Forum** with Gary Livingston of Community Colleges of Spokane, "Investing in Children Today Means a Better Spokane in the Future," First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar, 11:45 a.m. - 777-1555
- **"Is the U.S. Government Sustainable?"** panel discussion, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 7:30 p.m. - 455-2552.
- Apr 19** • **Peer Mentors Network**, Clare Center, 4624 E. Jamieson, 6:30 p.m.
- Apr 21** • **Spokane Earth Day**, Riverfront Park, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. - 744-3370
- **Chewelah Earth Day**, St. Paul Lutheran, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. - 935-6311
- **Coeur d'Alene Earth Day**, Harding Family Center, 411 N. 15th St.
- **The Common Ministry Annual Dinner and Auction**, St. James Episcopal Church, 1410 NE Stadium Way, Pullman 5:30 p.m.
- **"Keys to Diversity"**, Youth Leadership Summit, Riverpoint Campus Academic Center, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. - 358-7636
- CROP Hunger Walk, Kamiakin School, Sunnyside, 9 a.m.
- Apr 21-28** • **Japan Week** - information at www.gonzaga.edu/isp/japanweek
- Apr 22** • **Multi-faith Worship**, Bethany Presbyterian, 301 S. Freya, 10 a.m.
- **"Everybody Loves Opal"**, Our Place Benefit, Salem Lutheran, 1428 E. Broadway, 2 p.m. - 336-7267
- Apr 23** • **Faith & Environment Network**, "The Great Warming," Garland Theatre, 7 p.m. - faithandenvironment@gmail.com
- Apr 23-24** • **Earth Week Fair**, Spokane Community College, Lair, 9 a.m. to noon
- Apr 26** • **Simpson-Duvall Lecture**, "Freedom's Frontier: African Americans and the Growth of the Pacific Northwest, 1860-1970," Quintard Taylor, Jr., Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth, 7:30 p.m. - 777-3270
- **"Challenges and Opportunities in Education in Africa"**, Mike Schultheis, S.J. founder, Catholic University College of Ghana, Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga, 7:30 p.m. - 323-6715
- Apr 27** • **"Children and Human Trafficking"**, Eileen Lindner, YWCA, noon - 358-7949
- Apr 27-28** • **"War Is Not a Family Value"**, Eileen Lindner, Bethany Presbyterian, 301 S. Freya, 9:30 a.m. - 953-8279
- **"If This is Love, Why Do I Feel So Crazy?"** Abuse Recovery Ministry & Services, Hillyard Baptist, 21221 E. Wabash, Leaders Training noon, Friday, Community Brunch, 9:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m., Saturday - 484-0600
- Apr 27-29** • **A Weekend with J. Philip Newell**, Episcopal Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., Friday 7:30 p.m., Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. - 455-6795
- Apr 29** • **Spokane-Cheney CROP Hunger Walk**, Martin Centre, Gonzaga University, noon register, 1:30 p.m. walk - 326-5656
- **Taize Service**, Cathedral of St. John, 127 E. 12th Ave., 7 p.m.
- Apr 30** • **Jim Wallis**, Cataldo Hall, Gonzaga University, 7:30 p.m. - 323-4069
- May 2** • **Fig Tree Distribution**, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th, 9 a.m.
- May 3** • **Fig Tree Board**, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 1 p.m.
- May 5** • **La Fiesta Cinco de Mayo** and Feria de Education (education seminars) the Lair at Spokane Community College, 1 p.m. - 483-2523
- Mons** • **"Perspectives on the World Christian Movement"**, Fourth Memorial, 2000 N. Standard, 6:30 p.m.
- Suns** • **"Perspectives"**, Real Life Ministries, 1866 Cecil Rd., Post Falls, 5:30 p.m.
- Tues** • **Need to Know**, Emmanuel Lutheran, 314 S. Spruce - 848-4409
- Tues-Sats** • **Habitat-Spokane work days** - 534-2552
- Fris** • **Colville Peace Vigil** - 675-4554 **3rd Mon** • **NAACP** - 467-9793
- 1st Sat** • **Ministers' Fellowship Union** - 624-0522
- 2nd, 4th Weds** • **Pax Christi**, St. Joseph's Catholic, 1503 W. Dean, noon - 844-4480

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Group continues effort to promote a living wage as way to justice

Concerned that average workers earn in one year what executives of the companies they work for earn in one day or less, Joni Brown is working with the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (PJALS) to promote a new expression of the Living Wage Campaign.

PJALS will launch its drive for Initiative 2006-1 from 5 to 8 p.m., Tuesday, April 17, at the Community Building, 35 W. Main.

The initiative would create a Spokane City ordinance requiring retail stores larger than 95,000 square feet to pay employees \$10.71 per hour with health benefits or \$13.08 without benefits.

Growing up in a military family in a "relatively privileged" environment, living in Germany, Oklahoma, Spokane and Missoula, Joni finds working on this economic justice project a positive opportunity to make change and talk about what poverty means in the community.

In 2003 she earned a bachelor's degree in social work at Eastern



Joni Brown

Washington University and now is working on a master's degree along with her part-time work with PJALS on economic justice. She also spent two years tutoring children and a year working at a domestic violence shelter in Bellingham.

She started with PJALS in

September after the City Council tabled an ordinance calling for a living wage in city contracts.

So organizers decided to pursue the new initiative campaign, gathering signatures to support a living wage for retail and service workers, the largest segment of working poor.

"It has the potential to move thousands from poverty into economic stability," Joni said.

Organizers seek to gather 6,000 signatures by June 10, to assure they will have 2,300 valid signatures needed for the initiative to be put on the fall ballot. PJALS seeks volunteers to gather signatures and educate the public.

Joni said her background in non-denominational churches gave a clear call for economic justice, just as there is in most faiths.

"We are called to share what we have and use the power we have to help other people access power," she said.

"The rate of poverty in Spokane

is 14.5 percent, which is greater than state and federal levels," she said. "Federal poverty guidelines reflect the poorest of the poor, not those with jobs and families who are not making it because of low wages and dead-end jobs in which they are easily replaced.

"A living wage," she explained, "benefits businesses, individuals and the community because it reduces welfare expenses, crime, emergency services and employee

turnover. It increases morale, productivity and economic stability for working families.

"It's hard to maintain dignity in the face of poverty," said Joni, who is available to speak at congregations and other community groups.

Living Wage Campaign meetings are at 5 p.m., first and third Tuesdays at the Community Building, 35 W. Main.

For information, call 838-7870.

Rally challenges war in Iraq

About 300 gathered March 17 at Franklin Park in Spokane in opposition to the war in Iraq and its potential expansion into Iran.

"It's a shame to have this war of aggression by the most powerful country against a country full of human beings who are not our enemies, people we ought to befriend and work in partnership with to bring enlightenment to the world," said Rusty Nelson, co-director of the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane.

Mike Kress, Desert Storm veteran, urged people to sign a pledge of resistance against war in Iran: "Write letters, challenge media disinformation, encourage people to refuse serving in the military, organize anti-war demonstrations, engage in non violent civil disobedience, find other citizens to join opposition until the soldiers come home."

Former Mayor Sheri Barnard said that many people have worked many years for a better America and world.

"We are frustrated that we feel we have not achieved that goal," she said. "We want federal funds to go for education not war in Iraq."

"I'm here to say I want peace and will work for peace," she said, telling of conversing with a 17-year-old grocery store clerk earlier in the day.

"When she asked what I was doing today, I told her I was going to speak at a peace rally. She said, 'Speak for me. We should not spend billions on the war.'

"Our children do not want this war," Sheri said.

A veteran of the war in Iraq, who served five years in the Navy

until he was wounded, said that troops are not communicating that they are there to liberate Iraq when they kick down doors of homes.

"Our presence in Iraq is stirring violence. It's worse than Vietnam," said this member of Iraqi Veterans Against the War. "There's a lot of anger in the military, because those fighting know we are not fighting for democracy."

For information, call 838-7870.

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