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# Suffering fosters bonds

By Mary Stamp

People in the Palouse and Guatemala's Western Highlands are learning about and praying for each other. Both suffer—low wheat prices, affluenza and poverty in the Palouse and the legacy of repression, disaster recovery, illiteracy and poverty in Guatemala—and both care.

Licensed local pastors Patty and Mike Cooper have brought Guatemala to the Rosalia United Methodist Church through two sister-church relationships.

Fostering those ties connects people as they share their experiences of suffering, giving Palouse farmers perspective when wheat prices are low.

Now in their sixth year at the church founded in 1888, the Coopers took members for week visits to the area north of Coatepeque, Guatemala, in 2001, 2003 and this fall.

The Rosalia church sends \$25 a month—beyond its budget for local, regional and national church obligations—to each of two sister churches in the Primitive Methodist Church of Guatemala.

*Continued on page 4*



Patty and Mike Cooper socialize with folk at the Tuesday senior lunches.

## Fig Tree ads inform readers of resources

Advertisers, regular and new, not only provide The Fig Tree a portion of its income for production costs but also provide readers with services, opportunities and resources that supplement editorial content.

While some advertisers seek a specific response, some are present as consistent reminders, building name recognition for when someone needs services or for clergy and service providers to store in their mental data bank for making referrals.

Some advertise in The Fig Tree to say visibly, "We support what you are doing."

The Fig Tree will soon add the opportunity for advertisers to promote products, programs, events and services online when its new website is in place in early 2006.

Advertisers provide about 50 percent of the monetary income for the newspaper and website.

"For all our advertisers and supporters, we give thanks!" said editor Mary Stamp. "They each make possible this voice that plays a vital role in the lives of people in the Inland Northwest."

For information, call 535-1813.

Among Christians

## Attorney knows civil discourse is possible

A conservative, a liberal and a moderate spar each semester before a Gonzaga University political science class.

They respect each other and are friends after three years of exchanges. They have even found points of agreement.

For one, Tom Robinson, an attorney active in the Spokane Alliance, the experience models what he'd like to see conservative and liberal Christians do.

"In civil, professional discussions, we explore reasons for our perspectives and values that lead us to our opinions and beliefs," he said. "We expand the conversation and leave as friends."

Political science professor Jerry Hughes moderates the discussions with Tom, Mike Fitzsimmons and Jim Shively on issues ranging from abortion to the Middle East. Mike, a Gonzaga journalism professor, has a conservative talk radio show on KXLY and is on the St. Vincent de Paul board. Jim, a moderate, spent five years as a prisoner of war in Vietnam and served as U.S. attorney in Eastern Washington under Republican and Democratic presidents.

"Many students seem surprised that people could hold such different viewpoints but talk like we do and then agree to disagree," Tom said. "We all can do it if we understand that each of us has value and we are all children of God."

He believes Christians who differ should converse, listen, love each other, pray for each other and commune together rather than be swept into the political fray of prescribed ar-

*Continued on page 6*

**We are all  
children  
of God.**

Ukrainian pastor gives Thanksgiving reminder:

## 'People of faith need each other'

Calling people of faith to pull together, the Rev. Alexandr Kaprian, pastor of Pilgrim Slavic Baptist Church, told a story his family long kept secret.

With the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on Nov. 24 moved at the last minute from Temple Beth Shalom to St. Mark's Lutheran Church because of vandalism to security cameras, his story was a reminder why people of faith need each other.

Rather than canceling the service for security concerns, Dennis Twigg, vice president of the temple, said the community pulled together, changed locations and showed "that people of faith here stand together, despite different practices, and that they practice tolerance, acceptance and unity."

Fifteen years ago, Alexandr fled to the United States as a religious refugee from the Ukraine, after years of persecution as a Christian in the Soviet Union. Under perestroika in the 1980s, the state allowed Jewish people to emigrate. With the help of Jews, he and other Christians left posed as Jews.

The family story goes back to

his grandparents under German occupation in World War II. German soldiers built a concentration camp near his town for Russian soldiers and Jewish people.

"My grandparents felt they should help our Jewish 'cousins' in faith. German soldiers dug a big hole in the town's cemetery, brought Russian and Jewish captives there in the evenings, shot them and dropped into the hole.

"Christian families decided to save some of them. Women offered German soldiers food in trade for some captives. Some were angry and threatened to kill them, too. Sometimes, some released Jews. The women took them home," he said.

In addition, people returned after the Germans left to look for places where the thin layer of dirt over the bodies was moving. They found wounded people and brought them home to hide, too. His grandparents hid people in an underground tunnel.

"One day, Germans found that neighbors were hiding Jews in their home and killed everyone," he said. "My grandmother was scared. She knew the price. She prayed hard."

Over the years, his grandparents saved several Jews and Russian officers. They kept the story secret after the war under the Soviet Union, which persecuted both Jews and Christians, Alexandr said. So Jews and Christians continued to help each other.

"We see a r o u n d the world that people who do not understand each other may hurt each other. When hard times come we are brothers and sisters, and we help one another. In the good times, we must not forget the hard times," he reminded.

"Now I am here and thankful I can celebrate in freedom and joy," Alexandr said.

"We must look to the past time and remember," he said. "Then we must be filled with God's love for each other. We must never fight or hurt each other. We are all God's children."

Visit [www.thefigtree.org](http://www.thefigtree.org) for Bishop Martin Wells' address.



Alexandr Kaprian

## Religion News Briefs Around the World

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

### Jews most targeted by religious hate crimes

Oxford, Ohio (ENI). Jews remained the greatest target of religious-based hate crimes in the United States in 2004, according to a recent report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The FBI recorded 1,374 incidents of religion-oriented hate crimes during the year, and 954 of those were directed at Jews.

### WCC looks to new ways to work with Catholics

Geneva (ENI). Moderator of the World Council of Churches central committee, Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Apostolic Church challenges the WCC and the Roman Catholic Churches to find new ways to bring the various expressions of Christianity—including the growing charismatic, Pentecostal and evangelical Christian groups—into the framework of a global forum.

### Churches want to help stem Africa strife

Nairobi (ENI). Faith based organizations from the United States and Africa are choosing 10 to 15 people to be part of an Eminent Persons Ecumenical Program for Africa. They will employ their moral authority to stem the widespread conflict in the continent. In the pool of 25 names are Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, former South African president Nelson Mandela, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Kenyan environmental and ecological campaigner Professor Wangari Maathai.

### Church leaders denounce attacks on Christians

New Delhi (ENI). Church leaders in Pakistan have denounced an arson attack on churches and Christian settlements in the rural town of Sangla Hill in the Punjab province of Pakistan. "The ferocity of the attacks has left us stunned," leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Pakistan, the Presbyterian Church, the Salvation Army and the National Council of Churches in Pakistan wrote to President Pervez Musharraf.

### Zimbabweans seek divine intervention

Harare (ENI). This year Zimbabweans have been confronted with unemployment at 80 percent, inflation soaring to 411 percent, fuel supplies drying up, tens of thousands of poor people having their houses torn down by the police and freedom of expression whittled away. So thousands of citizens from all over the country converged on the Harare International Conference Centre for a prayer meeting to end their woes.

### Ensure access to water, churches urge

Machakos, Kenya (ENI). A group of church agencies urges governments to put in place regulations and standards for water provision to ensure that groups driven by profit maximization do not lock out poor communities by commercializing water access. "If we let the government off the hook and allow non-government actors to take control of the resources, we are paving way for privatization," said Stein Villumstad of Norwegian Church Aid, at an international meeting on "Water for Life" in Machakos, in eastern Kenya.

The head of the All Africa Conference of Churches urged churches to make the right of access to water a core part of their work, against a background of diminishing global supplies of fresh water for human consumption. "Lack of water is as destructive as poverty, and indeed it is true that poverty cannot be rolled back if the scarcity of water is not resolved," said the Rev. Mvume Dandala, general secretary of the African church grouping, opening the inaugural meeting of the Ecumenical Water Network in Machakos, eastern Kenya.

### Christian factory launches cheaper AIDS drugs

New Delhi (ENI). A non-profit, Christian-owned pharmaceutical factory in India has launched production of cheaper AIDS treatment drugs that can prolong lives of the burgeoning number of HIV-positive people in the world's second most populous country. The Comprehensive Medical Services India, the pharmaceutical unit of the Inter-Church Service Association, has released the first batch of the anti-retro-viral drugs.

## REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

### Legislative Conference planned for Jan. 21

Interfaith Council is planning the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 21, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr.

The Conference theme, "Valuing Families," will address values that support families and acknowl-

edge the right of everyone to live with dignity and self-sufficiency.

The Conference will feature a keynote address by the Right Rev. James Waggoner, Jr., Episcopal bishop of the Diocese of Spokane.

There will also be policy briefings on both state and

federal legislation that has impact on low-income people and vulnerable communities, and workshops discussing issues related to health care, tax fairness, mental health, human trafficking in the Northwest, the Sudan and WorkFirst.

For information, call 329-1410.

### Kootenai County Task Force does PBS special

The Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations has helped create a PBS-TV series and an exhibit on its 25 years.

The PBS special, a 10-week series with Tony Stewart as program producer of the North Idaho College TV Public Forum, is on "Celebrating the 25-Year History of the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations."

It will air on PBS-TV stations from Jan. 7 to March 12, opening with a discussion on the civil rights movement in the South in the 1960s, which led groups like the Aryan Nations to look for new locations with few minori-

ties. The Aryan Nations came to the Inland Northwest in 1973, settling near Hayden.

Eight programs look at the task force's work from 1980 to 2005.

The final program features journalists Bill Morlin and Dave Oliveria reviewing coverage of the task force and the Aryan Nation.

The programs air at 6:30 p.m., Saturdays on Channel 12 and at 10 a.m., Sundays on Channel 7.

In addition, Tony and Norm Gissel of the task force have created an exhibit, "The Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations: Triumph of Human

Rights over Hate."

It includes 100 photos, posters, items and documents from the struggle against the Aryan Nation and hate in the region. It begins with a German concentration camp and the words, "Coming Face-to-Face with Hate: A Search for a World Beyond Hate."

The task force's annual meeting is at 7 p.m., Monday, Dec. 5, at St. Pius X Catholic Church, 624 E. Haycraft in Coeur d'Alene.

Its Annual Gala Event Fund Raiser and Auction will be at 5 p.m., Monday, Jan. 16, at 4365 Inverness Dr., in Post Falls.

For information, call 765-3932.

### Bethel AME plans Gospel-Jazz Christmas concert

The Music Department of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church will present "A Gospel-Jazz Christmas—Traditional Favorites Re-Wrapped" at 6:30 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 4, at the Met Theatre, 901 W. Sprague.

The concert is a benefit for the construction of Emmanuel Fam-

ily Life Center, which will house neighborhood programs through Richard Allen Enterprises—GED/High School Diploma classes with Spokane Community Colleges, an After-School Homework Center, Richard Allen Youth Academy Childcare Center, All-Day Summer Youth and Teen Programs, Food Bank Distribution and the Neighborhood Computer Center.

The event features remakes of traditional and contemporary carols in a fusion of two American music genres, gospel and jazz.

Led by Elisha Mitchell, music

director at Bethel and Gospel Music Ambassador, the Bethel Basic Choir will perform with 2005 "Gimme the Mike" winner Kenny Andrews, Rick Inman and Grace Harvest Fellowship Brass, guitarist-singer Aaron Richner, saxophonist Jermaine Carlton, jazz artist Joseph Alexander of San Francisco, keyboardist Nicholas Pierce and the Unspeakable Joy Fellowship and Fairchild Air Force Base Gospel choirs.

For information, call 325-SEAT or visit [www.ticketswest.com](http://www.ticketswest.com).

### King Day plans are underway

Plans for the 2006 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration include a commemoration on Sunday, Jan. 15, with guest speaker and choir, and the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Unity March in downtown Spokane on Monday, Jan. 16.

These have been annual events in Spokane since 1982, sponsored by the African-American and community churches, the local business community and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Outreach Center.

In the past, there have been as many as 2,000 people who have attended the Sunday service and Monday march. In January 2005, more than 70 nonprofit agencies and businesses participated.

For information, call 455-8722.



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**Sat Nov 26**  
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**Sat Dec 3**  
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**Sun Dec 4**  
7 pm

**Sat Dec 10**  
10 am, 1 pm

**Sun Dec 11**  
7 pm

**Sat Dec 17**  
10 am, 1 pm

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## Nonprofits remind donors of daily disasters people face

**A similar story rings through area nonprofits that serve hungry, homeless and hopeless people: Cuts from government and grantors may cut into their ability to serve people in need.**

House fires, car accidents, job loss, divorces, domestic violence, deaths, illness, disability, broken pipes, power outages, exclusion and inability to pay for heat, housing, food or health care are among the myriad of everyday disasters.

"Media effectively elicited generosity for major disasters. Now nonprofits wonder if donors will come through in December for daily, local disasters," said Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp, proposing: "Donors can stretch usual giving with seed gifts."

If 100,000 people each give \$5 more than usual to each of their top 10 nonprofit recipients—churches, faiths, ministries, services, agencies, advocacy networks and nonprofit media—it would generate \$50 more per person, a \$5 million boost overall.

"It would not solve problems of injustice, but would flow more cash into the area's 'caring economy' beyond the Christmas Fund," she said. "Some can stretch to \$6, \$10 or more per nonprofit."

## Cuts pass through layers of agencies

Federal funding cuts passed through the state level and layers of agencies mean reduced funding for MidCity Concerns programs.

The level of need remains the same. MidCity serves 350 Meals on Wheels and 100 people at the Spokane Senior Center each day.

Volunteers, though dropping initially with rising fuel costs, remain steady.

Cheri Mataya, director, said when the programs started 90

percent of funds came from churches. Now churches provide three percent of funds, and grants are limited.

So they raise 50 percent of funds from the community through an auction and the March for Meals in Northtown.

"We made staff cuts, so we need a volunteer to answer phones in the morning to save staff time for other tasks," Cheri said.

For information, call 456-6597.

## New, small costs affect programs

Reimbursing volunteers six cents more a mile is one more cost affecting Senior Nutrition, Foster Grandparents, Housing Social Services, Volunteer Chore Services and Bernatte Place, said Monique Kolonko, director of senior services with Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Spokane.

She sees "daily disasters" people experience being affected by giving to the big disasters.

Another small cost being passed on to Senior Nutrition is \$100 for the Regional Health District to inspect it for its permit, a service they previously absorbed.

When Spokane Valley Foundation lost funding, Volunteer Chore Services picked up 40 more clients, so it needs more volunteers for driving and light housekeeping.

For information, call 328-8400.

## Cuts compound, eliminating basic safety nets

Cuts at every level to partner agencies affect services through the various Volunteers of America programs, said Marilee Roloff, director.

Mental health cuts also mean that the triage program no longer receive walk-in clients at night. So Hope House is now taking in more women needing psychological care, rather than just shelter.

"Cuts are compounding on

all levels—child welfare, mental health and the education system—hurting all programs," Marilee said.

"The proposed cuts in Medicaid and food stamps are unconscionable. They eliminate the most basic safety nets."

VOA programs have lost direct

## Agencies hope for year-end generosity

November and December will help community service agencies know how deep people's pockets are, said Ann Price, director of donor and community relations at Second Harvest of the Inland Northwest.

Many have given generously for disaster relief in the fall, but those funds left the community.

In addition, this fall, Jason Clark, director, responded personally, helping staff the America Second Harvest Warehouse in Baker, La., distributing relief food to Gulf Coast food banks.

"We raise a third of our food supplies and funds in November and December. If we are short, then we are short through the winter, affecting how much food we can provide to agencies distributing food—agencies also slammed by other cuts," Ann explained.

"If ever there was a year for the faith community and general community to give generously, this is the year. The community needs to help us put food on people's tables here, too," she said.

Regional needs are up a little for 2005—not the double digits of two years ago but there have been no reductions in numbers.

"Those struggling in poverty are unable to move out of it," she said. "There are more seniors and disabled people, as well as families with children."

Cuts in food stamps and the commodities program managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture—the nation's largest hunger relief program—would create more need.

"Already food stamps and commodities do not supply enough so people do not need a supplemental

bag of food from food banks and agencies we serve," she said.

Added to that are the impact of the prices of gas, heating fuel, health care and housing. Some days, seasons and years, it does not grow easier," Ann said, "but we keep doing our work because some days, seasons and years, there is light."

With the help of its food industry partners—growers, wholesalers, manufacturers, brokers and retailers—Second Harvest has received 5,002,957 pounds of food since July 1, an increase of 1.4 percent.

While near the 2005 goal of more than 16 million pounds, the level of need has risen dramatically because of hurricane relief, rising fuel costs and challenges in the food industry.

For information, call 534-6678.

## Truth Ministries finds miracles overcome obstacles

Facing a struggle to find funding and space to house homeless people who might be left out of other shelters, Julie McKinney, co-director of Truth Ministries with her husband, Marty, said they have relied on miracles.

Since August, the outreach of Mending Fences Fellowship offered food and shelter at the former Playfair site in East Spokane. That closed Nov. 15.

They expect to move into a

permanent shelter on Dec. 17 in a 14,000-square-foot former supermarket at 1910 E. Sprague.

"Despite no funding, the miracle is that when we have a need, it is met. We needed a sprinkler system to qualify with the fire marshal," said Julie.

A sprinkler company is providing a \$30,000 system and a union is providing \$15,000 to pipe water into the system, she said.

Truth Ministries has served

about 50 people. Those in the shelter may not have drugs, alcohol or weapons.

The McKinneys started Truth Ministries in July 2003, serving sandwiches at their church, which was then in the Spokane Valley. They moved in and out of several valley and downtown locations before going to Playfair. Now they own their own building and serve a new neighborhood.

For information, call 456-2576.

## Mental health cuts crimp counseling services

Federal and state Medicaid cuts translate into \$87,000 a month less to Lutheran Community Services for counseling and mental health services, said Adam Shipman, development director.

"Our reduction of Spokane staff

by 29 percent crimps our ability to deliver services. We pay for those cuts somewhere else in the system," he said.

In addition to cuts in professional staff, cuts in support staff mean therapists must absorb more tasks, adding to their workload.

"Our clients are children experiencing a life-altering trauma, usually related to sexual abuse," Adam said.

"The victims' rights response team director said there is a dramatic increase in people calling the 24-hour crisis line and visiting

hospital emergency rooms. People whose mental health needs are not met may act out in the community," he pointed out.

Passage of the mental health tax proposition does not restore the \$87,000 loss, and those funds will not be available until July 1.

"Congress in debating \$50 billion more in cuts to Medicaid programs for the poor and disabled. So we are turning from depending on government funds to individuals, fund raising and other sources," Adam said.

For information, call 747-8224.

### Bazaars & Sales

#### Youth Christmas Bake Sale

Dec. 11 & 18 • noon-1 pm  
North Hill Christian Church  
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Westminster Congregational hosts 2nd annual

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*Traditional Favorites Re-Wrapped*

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# Guatemalan ties give perspective to local struggles

*Continued from page 1*

That supplies enough to pay Pastor Daniel Miranda of Iglesia Araco d'Noa and Pastor Augustin Aguilar of Iglesia Emanuel to minister full-time.

"It's a small amount for us, just \$600 a year. Their role in our covenantal relationship is to pray for us," Patty said. "Learning that people there attend church regularly and believe in Christ empowers us to be bold."

**Communication and personal contacts** increase understanding of each other's lives.

In 2001, the Coopers went in a medical team, taking Arlene Morgan, a nurse who always wanted to be a missionary.

In 2003, they took Tom Crowley, Rosalia school superintendent, and his wife, Polly, superintendent of the West Spokane Valley School District, for the first face-to-face visit their sister churches, which have 70 to 100 people in villages of 250 people.

For the first week, from Oct. 29 to Nov. 13, Patty and Mike visited the sister churches with Tom, and his daughter, Lora Jackson, a Medical Lake school counselor.

Then the Coopers joined 12 other clergy and spouses from the Inland District—District Superintendent Joey and Ole Olson; Deb Conklin of Davenport; parishioner Patti Richardson, and Darryn and Lisa Hewson of Sandpoint; Jeff and Aimee Wallace of Lacrosse and EWU campus ministry; Todd Scranton of St. Paul's in Spokane; Brenda Tudor who is on sabbatical, and Mark and Roberta Randall of Central United Methodist in Spokane—to do lay training at a retreat center with 40 pastors and wives.

**While the sister-church** villages were affected some by the hurricane with the direct road was cut off, provisions had been flown in. The Rosalia team also bought \$100 of food for each church.

"Despite limited resources and illiteracy, the hope there was astounding," said Patty, impressed by the people's resilience.

They left names of people in Rosalia and returned with names of people in the sister churches so they can personalize prayers.

Patty described the power of simple encounters and funds:

"In 2003, we were with Pastor Daniel one day for worship, a meal, laughing and singing beyond language barriers," she said, "We learned his wife had taken their daughter, who suffered a stroke during pregnancy, for medical care, using \$150 Rosalia sent. That \$150 meant the baby was born healthy.



**Patty Cooper in the Rosalia Methodist Church's sanctuary**

"We were humbled by his servant ministry of worship, Bible study and education on the economic and political issues from 36 years of suffering.

"Those who go with us open our congregation to human ties and possibilities for healing," she said. "The ties are a mission to our congregation's generations, past, present and future.

**"People understand** that their suffering here is different from the suffering in Guatemala but feel a solidarity with the suffering there," she said.

"We both experience Christ in the rubble of our lives. There, homes and villages may be buried by rocks and mud, and here farmers struggle to make a living."

Patty finds the Guatemalan ties opportunities to awaken people from the "affluenza" of U.S. society.

She saw the United States sliding back into it until hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Stan and Wilma, and the earthquake in Pakistan.

"God wants us to be awake, more than just alerted by media. There are disasters every day we don't hear about. In those big and little disasters are stories that help us make connections," she said.

"Mike and I feel called to these difficult times for mainline churches—times profound with possibilities. As we hear stories, we are awakening," she asserted.

**Church was a constant** in Patty's upbringing—in six Lutheran churches in Spokane—but she said she somehow missed "the message of God's redeeming love and grace for me as an individual person." So she separated from church for a while, until at 32, she realized that love and returned to church.

The Rogers High graduate joined the Army in 1965 when

the Vietnam War was escalating. Serving as a medic in San Antonio at 19, she saw "the horrendous toll of war on the lives of soldiers coming to the burn center."

She became a licensed practical nurse (LPN) and moved to Denver to work in the emergency room at Fitzsimmons Hospital, where Mike, a Vietnam vet, drove ambulances and busses.

After their marriage in 1968, they spent two years in Oakland near Mike's family. Patty worked in a nursing home and Mike for the phone company.

**They relocated to Spokane** in 1970. Patty worked at Holy Family Hospital five years as a LPN, and at Deaconess Medical Center three years as an LPN and seven years as a registered nurse. Mike was a lineman with Qwest.

Seeking spiritual ties, they began attending Audubon Park United Methodist Church in 1979. In 1984, participation in a Walk to Emmaus, which Patty described as "a short course in Christianity that helped us see Christ in the hands, faces and feet of the body of Christ," moved them into local and global mission.

Mike began to feel called into ministry beyond bringing Christ's presence into his line crew. Patty was then a nurse with Hospice of Spokane. Their pastors encouraged them to discern if they had a call into ministry.

**While continuing their jobs,** Patty and Mike followed the United Methodists' alternate route to ministry, its Licensed Local Pastor program.

For five summers, they attended St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Mo., which emphasized rural ministry. From 1994 to 1997, they served Westview United Church of Christ, still continuing their jobs with Hospice and Qwest.

Mike retired and Patty left Hospice to serve Rockford United Methodist for two years. Next they served Clark Fork, Ida., a three-point charge with Heron and Noxon, Mont., for a year.

In 2000, they were called to Rosalia. Each serves half-time, sharing preaching, visitation and other tasks based on their skills.

The congregation, founded in 1888, draws from Rosalia's 600 residents, Thornton's 200 residents and nearby wheat farmers.

"Wheat prices impact the community. They are so low this year that some younger farmers are considering leaving farming. Older farmers know the fluctuations but are committed to farming as an art form," Patty said. "We connect old and young farmers, so they can pass on the wisdom and blessings of farming. Low prices are an age-old story."

**Although many of the 115** members have moved, the 50 in town are joined by 40 others, who are not members but are active.

The Methodist church also draws new people—young, working poor families who moved to Rosalia for affordable housing.

When the Christian Church, the former distribution site for food commodities, closed three years ago, Evelyn Morgan, who ran it, joined the Methodist church and continued to run it. It serves 75 people in 40 families one Wednesday a month.

Tuesday senior lunches through the Whitman County Council of Aging bring about 30 people to the church for socializing, education and a low-cost meal.

The old Christian Church now houses the North Whitman County Food Pantry, run by volunteers from the Assembly of God and Methodist churches one Tuesday a month.

"Many people in the area are poor, with about 60 percent of children on free and reduced-cost lunches, up from 20 percent 10 years ago," Patty said.

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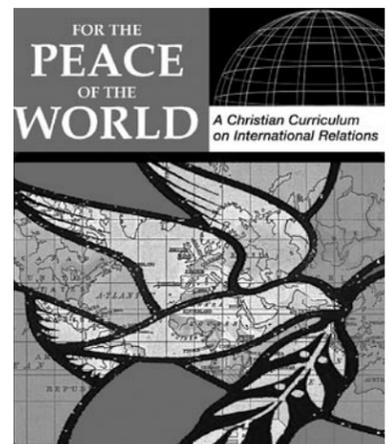
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# AHANA leader helps minorities attain American dream

By Philip Culbertson

Ben Cabildo came to the United States from the Philippines in the early 1960s in hopes of attaining the American dream.

Applying what he learned in 30 years as a financial counselor, he established the African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American (AHANA) business and professional association to help others achieve their dreams, too.

Ben settled in Seattle in 1963. After high school, he joined the army and served two years in Vietnam. After Vietnam, he became a financial advisor.

In 1999, he developed the idea of AHANA for the minorities—the main, but not exclusive, demographic the organization serves. It is now spreading across the state to Seattle.

“We help everybody, not just minorities,” Ben remarked.

At first, he worked on his project from a home office. He paid his 13-year-old niece \$20 to set up the first AHANA website.

After two years with funding and office space from Sacred Heart Medical Center, AHANA expanded its services and started a business incubation center.

AHANA supports people who lack access to resources for economic development.



Ben Cabildo

In 2002, it started a business incubation center for “small businesses on the fast track,” Ben said.

An AHANA monthly workshop series gives growth strategies to

assist a business’ needs to develop “an innovative competitive edge in the global market,” to learn marketing and other concepts for starting a small business.

Last spring, AHANA was ap-

proved to manage a micro-lending program that loans small businesses up to \$12,000, adding to the options it offers. In such ways, this organization gives business opportunities to minorities.

By “building a stronger business community through diversity”—AHANA’s motto—Ben said “it contributes to our country.”

From their first meetings at the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, which Ben attends, the program has moved into an office at Fifth and Browne, then to downtown Spokane in the Regional Business Center and now back to Fifth and Browne.

AHANA expresses Ben’s commitment to follow the Christian calling to help those who are oppressed and to focus on and empower marginalized people, economically and politically.

One goal is to “be involved in the stewardship the Lord has given us,” he said. His involvement with AHANA has also helped shape his faith, “I’ve grown spiritually. Without guidance spiritually AHANA would not be successful.”

Faith is important for others involved in the program. With so many different ethnicities involved, their faiths differ, but

many rely on their faith to keep them strong, he said.

AHANA maintains relationships it has built with the businesses that participate, staying in contact with them from the conception of the business into ongoing operations, growth and development, in order to increase their long-term success.

“Our country is evolving. For us not to realize this would be ignorance,” said Ben.

He understands that, as the nation’s diversity continues to increase, commitment must continue to help those in need, especially minorities.

When walls stand in the way of minorities, AHANA helps break them down, he explained.

Ben believes in the empowerment of all people, that “we all have something to contribute to society. The trick is tapping into that resource and learning how to make that contribution.”

Through dedication to building a stronger business community through diversity, Ben and those involved with AHANA help structure the Spokane region ethnically and help bridge gaps between mainstream businesses and small minority businesses.

For information, call 838-1881 or

## AHANA capitalizes on the global community in the area

Grassroots organizer Ben Cabildo fights discrimination because he wants people to be able to respect the American model.

That means Americans need to look beyond their back yards to realize that even in this region, “we live side-by-side with people from around the globe.

“Do we capitalize on having that global community in our back yard? Do we appreciate this asset?” he asked. “Too often people talk of immigrants or indigenous people as a liability and do not treat our global neighbors well in the United States. Too often they are marginalized, underutilized and violated, rather than welcomed.”

To unite the community to make the environment safe and welcoming to global neighbors, the AHANA—African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American—business and professional organization announced in November the Youth Leadership and Entrepreneurial Program to mentor and train youth to suc-



Meng Xiong

ceed in business.

Launched with a \$25,000 grant from the Comcast Foundation, the program will identify and enroll motivated youth and young adults from 16 to 30 to give them a start in being self-sufficient and successful in business.

The Youth Leadership and

Entrepreneurial Program will continue AHANA’s approach.

Meng Xiong, a graduate student at Gonzaga University involved in this program, said many youth do not realize there is life outside the pop culture of sports icons and superstars, whose success is impossible for most to achieve.

“Many see no future, so we want to give youth focus and vision to see another way. What is not in front of youth does not exist for them,” he said.

Kitara McClure, a 27-year-old

mother of four, left gang life in the Midwest and found through AHANA the opportunity to start a hair salon.

Ben said the youth program will draw young people into AHANA’s process of helping them network with each other and the mainstream business community.

AHANA announced the program at an open house on Nov. 17 in its new office. Ben expects that in three years AHANA will be in its own building.

In addition, Ben plans a state

conference in May to draw people from other areas of Washington.

“We need to have ethnic members in decision-making bodies,” he said, pointing out that there are many educated and professional minority people, but “we fail to tap their unique creativity. Historically, we used immigrants as cheap labor in sweatshops and fields, failing to build on their enthusiasm and hard work.”

As an immigrant who bought into the American dream, Ben

*Continued on page 7*



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# Alliance produces opportunities to agree despite differences

*Continued from page 1*  
 guments for politically expedient "solutions" that fall short of addressing real issues and Christian values.

"Arguing is in my blood," Tom said, "arguing to resolve differences."

He values meeting with a group of mostly conservative Christians in an interdenominational Bible study he has attended since participating in a Walk to Emmaus retreat in 1997.

"I'm involved, because I believe we need to share our diverse perspectives and be in community," he said. "It fine-tunes for me how important faith and sharing views are in the political arena."

Tom also finds a niche to foster dialogue through the Spokane Alliance, a nonprofit organization representing about 30,000 Spokane area people.

He and its other leaders offer listening seasons, leadership training and assemblies for people in congregations, education, labor and other organizations to discern common values and develop public action to advance the common good.

After training in broad-based community organizing in 1998 in San Antonio, Tex., he set aside his early dream of running for political office. He knew he had found an avenue to express his love of political science and his desire to make a difference through the political action involved in community organizing.

Since the 2004 election, Tom has been frustrated, believing the influence of a segment of the religious community on the political process "has affected the integrity of both the political and religious communities."

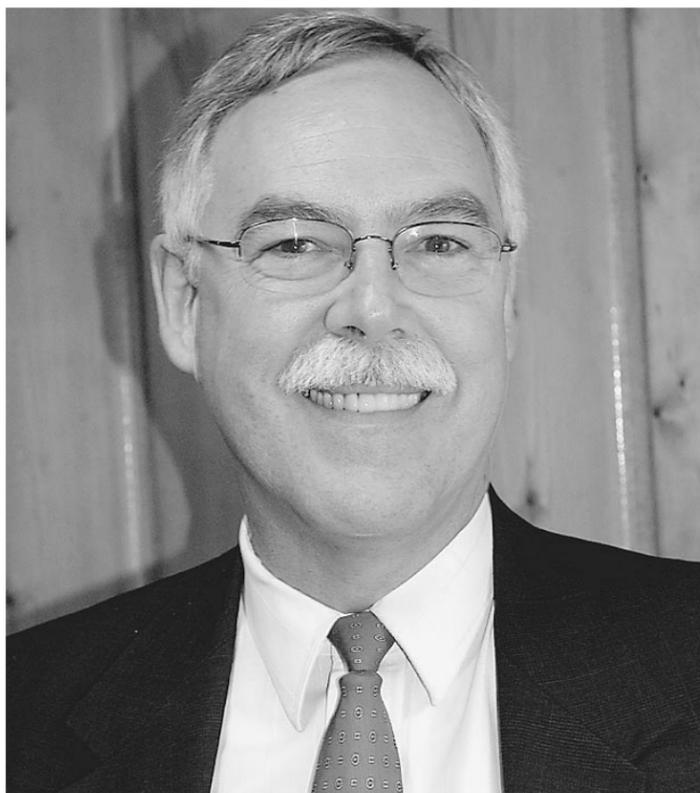
He is learning he is not alone. "People today are tired of partisan bickering. I hope that means we will see more people sitting down and conversing," he said.

A committed Catholic in his early years, Tom initially studied for three years to be a priest. Until he was 15 and entered Mater Cleri Seminary in Colbert, he shared caretaking responsibilities with his siblings for his father, who was paralyzed by polio.

He has lived in Spokane, except for studies in 1975 through Gonzaga University in Florence, Italy, and a year in graduate school at Arizona State University. He graduated from Gonzaga in political science in 1976 and earned his law degree there in 1980.

Tom began attending Grace Baptist Church after he married Debra, a Baptist. When they moved to the North side, they attended Northview Bible Church, and for the last 13 years, they have been at Covenant United Methodist Church, through which he became involved with the alliance.

He also switched from practicing law that emphasized retribu-



Tom Robinson

tion in favor of guardianship law for seniors, which he finds more in line with his goal of fostering reconciliation. He prefers caregiving to litigating, working to see that his clients have appropriate care as they age.

From his experiences as a college debater and then as an attorney, he knows the fine points of remaining civil while arguing.

In debate, he learned to argue both sides of each issue, so he understands the importance of thinking through arguments to make them convincing—even passionate—but still civil.

"Jesus' command was that we love one another. That trumps our judging others," he said.

While he challenges judgmental "stepping on toes," he believes "stepping on toes" in open, honest debate is a critical need today.

Tom observes how media and politicians help create polarization, limit discussion and promote single-issue voters.

"Media seem more concerned with selling papers or attracting viewers than digging to the bottom of issues. Too often, media let non-answers go, abrogating their role of challenging viewpoints," he said.

"Sound bytes afford no accountability, leaving the press a mouthpiece for elected officials, instead of their watchdog. If journalists are doing their job, they help hold officials accountable by creating

greater transparency."

For example, when media buy into labeling anything unpopular as "liberal," they confuse the term and make it a slur, so those in power stay in power, he said, implying that to do the same to conservatives is no better.

Tom is concerned that people are setting aside Christian values, particularly their obligation to the poor, and supporting limited agendas for secular political gain.

"Both liberals and conservatives compromise in politics," he recognizes.

Too often, he said, Christians act like some secular social groups, splitting when they don't agree. He believes that makes them prey for political manipulation.

From his understanding of political science, he sees secular forces encouraging divisions among Christians over issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage and judges.

"Many politicians seek to split the Christian community, so they avoid talking about shared values on poverty," Tom said, "and focus on a narrow agenda that alienates, inviting extremism or apathy."

These forces facilitate a "cultural war" between conservatives and liberals, focusing on sexual morality instead of human rights, he said, and diverting attention from the Christian obligation to care for the vulnerable and the environment, he said.

"Christian values lose ground with each tax cut that transfers more wealth to people who have the most. About \$700 billion has been transferred to the upper five percent, while millions more children and families fall into poverty and lose access to food, housing and health care," said Tom, appalled that so many Christians support values contrary to Jesus' emphases in exchange for political gain for just the anti-abortion and anti-gay agendas.

For him, the call of Christian faith is to love people irrespective how they live and to love outcasts as Jesus did.

Tom knows that conservative Christians also have misgivings about liberal Christians straying from the Bible and embracing "unacceptable" secular forces.

For example, he believes conservative Christians need to challenge liberal Christians when they take separation of church and state too far or support politicians whose concern for the poor is a sham designed to win elections.

Both liberal and conservative Christians also need to challenge people they elect to pursue policies that represent the wide range of their faith values, instead of single issues, he said.

"We need to hold politicians accountable—as stewards of our resources—to balance the budget," he said. "If we form coalitions and stay together, we can effect change that represents common values."

He urges both communities to follow Jesus' command "to love one another" by finding a place where they can spend time together and dive into the issues that divide them.

He suggests they gather for joint Bible studies and challenge each other face-to-face, passionately, forcefully, lovingly and respectfully. When differences stir anger, they can pray and listen.

"I may strongly disagree with some people, but I hope I can challenge them and they can challenge me, so we can hash out our differences without the anger that typifies much public discussion,"

Tom asserted.

He knows it is possible, because last spring his Bible study group held a special meeting to hear his concerns. He talked. They listened. Everyone shared. It opened doors to discussion.

"We need to talk with each other to remind ourselves of our obligations as people of faith and to be mutually accountable for our actions," he said.

What Tom promotes is like the liberal-moderate-conservative presentations for Gonzaga University and Mead High School classes.

He urges Christian communities to become catalysts for discussion of larger issues to help people understand each other and their different opinions.

"Valuing people with whom we disagree helps us move from debate to understanding," he said.

Through the Spokane Alliance, Tom can also help people examine different views before taking an issue to the community.

He believes the alliance would benefit from more diversity, too, because issues come from within member groups. With more groups involved, it will be more representative of the community when it brings issues to elected officials and corporate leaders.

In October and November, the Spokane Alliance facilitated bipartisan meetings with state legislators from the third and sixth districts—Republicans and Democrats—to discuss health care, sustainable jobs, green building, and the state's regressive taxes.

Representatives will meet at 7 p.m., Monday, Dec. 12, Highland Park United Methodist Church, 611 S. Garfield, to discern issues for common action in the next legislative session.

Tom sees the alliance's strength as being nonpartisan and bipartisan, bringing people together to converse so it can help change the culture now dominated by partisan bickering that inhibits finding community-based and legal solutions to issues when people really do share values.

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## Used automobiles become source of support for community agencies

By Phil Ryan

The adage that one person's junk is another person's treasure has become reality for a Spokane organization of nonprofits that turns used cars into financial support for charities.

The sale of donated vehicles provides social, health and human services in Spokane and the Inland Northwest.

In 1996, several United Way agencies in Spokane and Pull and Save Auto Parts realized there might be a way to capitalize on people's unused cars.

Cars for Charity turns "metal into gold" and promotes teamwork among 14 area nonprofit agencies. It supports them by selling donated used cars and using the proceeds to meet needs in the community and region.

For 10 years, donors have contributed more than 3,000 vehicles, ranging from those sold for parts to fully operable motor homes, cars, trucks and boats.

It started out of interest by Max Spalding of Spalding Auto Parts in supporting work United Way agencies do in the community.

Cars for Charity still works with United Way agencies, including the American Red Cross, Camp Fire USA, Children's Home Center of Washington, the Martin

Luther King, Jr., Family Outreach Center, Spokane Guild's School, Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs and others.

Each member agency leads the charity on a one-year rotating basis. Austin DePaolo of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center, is the current chair.

He explained that some of the cars are running or salvageable when donated and can be sold for more money. Others are unsalvageable and sold just for parts.

It might not seem like much money when we sell parts for \$50," Austin said, "but since its inception, more than \$1 million has been raised for agencies."

He said that most who donate cars do so because they can no longer use the car and see this as a way to help the people nonprofit agencies serve.

When a potential donor calls the Cars for Charity number, Pull and Save Auto Parts answers the call.

Tammy Zastoupil and Russ Spalding of Pull and Save help handle the paperwork and organize the vehicle towing. Once the necessary forms are completed and the title is released, the car is either sold

for parts or salvaged.

Spalding Auto Parts donates \$25 per vehicle for towing and, with the exception of a small amount of administrative costs, all the money received goes directly to the organizations with little strain on the donor.

Donors have the choice of sending proceeds to one agency or splitting the income among the group of agencies.

"Most donors give the profits to the agencies," Austin said, "so one car can help 14 agencies."

One car donor, Joe Chrastil, a founder of the Spokane Alliance who recently moved to Seattle to start an alliance there, decided he did not need an extra vehicle he inherited from his mother, so he donated it.

When considering what to do with it, Joe decided selling it to someone or sending it to a junkyard would not do.

"I wanted to make sure I found the best value for it," he said.

"Value is an interesting concept in our society. Often when people think of value, they immediately think of financial benefit or expense," he said.

Joe realized that by selling his car through Cars for Charity, its value would go through agencies to people in need.

Cars for Charity represents a principle Joe learned from his parents: there is value in people working together to make larger changes.

The Spokane Alliance brings churches and nonprofits together for education, discourse and advocacy that benefit the community.

"I grew up in a family that occasionally had tough times making ends meet, but my parents taught me that there were people who had it tougher than we did," Joe explained. "Cars for Charity funds reach people who have a tough time making ends meet."

"My dad would stop to help people on the side of the road if their car had broken down. He tried to pass that on to us," he said.

Joe decided to donate proceeds from the sale of the car to the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center, because it is in his neighborhood and he supports its efforts "to engage people to improve their own lives."

For information, call 928-1900.

Written for *The Fig Tree* as part of a public relations class at Whitworth College

### Metal in cars becomes gold for nonprofits

## AHANA urges socializing with people of differing power

*Continued from page 5*  
found little support to help him fulfill that dream. His mother left the Philippines in 1957 and came to the United States. By working seven years in a Chinese laundry, she earned enough money to bring her children to Seattle when Ben was 14.

"If we practice indifference to our global neighbors here, how can we have a liberating agenda abroad? If we don't treat people well, how can people in their home countries trust us?"

"It is to our advantage to understand the world population. Americans are just five percent of the world. If we don't do business overseas, we will go bankrupt. We need to do more than complain about losing manufacturing and technology jobs by outsourcing to India."

Ben is optimistic that if Americans change what they do in this country and use the presence of the global population here, they can develop global connections that will improve their competitive edge and innovation.

He calls for understanding that equal relationships would mean there would not be haves and have nots, powerful and weak.

"We celebrate our generosity in volunteering, providing homeless shelters, serving street kids and giving disaster relief, but

we need to do more than help the poor," Ben said. "We need to socialize with them. When we socialize with someone we consider of lesser power or who does not look like us, we lose power over that person and find opportunity to learn from people different from us."

"I rode water buffalo as a child in the Philippines. At seven, I was an entrepreneur selling things in the street," he said. "Here, I have learned from other people."

On that philosophy, he founded AHANA to bring people together as equal partners of equal value to build a healthy, prosperous Spokane. AHANA brings more dollars to the region and has created jobs for people of all races, not just people of color.

"We must address economic inequities and provide tools for people to change the balance of

power and the way people see people of color," Ben said. "For economic development, we need a robust minority business community."

AHANA urges members to reach out to build friendships with each other and mainstream businesses. Ben sees it as a temporary organization to bring people together until they are fully integrated into the business community.

So he helps struggling businesses write business plans, evaluate

strategies, develop marketing strategies, find loan packages and address other issues.

AHANA also recruits members of the minority workforce for major corporations and promotes government contracts among minority businesses.

Ben takes the adage from development ministries, a step further: "If you give someone a fish, you feed one person for a day. If you teach people to fish, they can feed themselves. If you own the pond you decide what fish to stock and

control how it is run."

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# Toy builders and others build PET carts for people without legs

In a small barn behind his home on Little Spokane River Dr. north of Spokane, Dick Carpenter has tires, wood pieces and other parts to make Personal Energy Transportation (PET) vehicles to give mobility to people who have lost legs to land mines, polio, leprosy, birth defects or animal bites in impoverished countries.

In February, he read an article on PET vehicles and called Dave Noble, who promotes them locally at CROP Walks.

Then Dick, a commissioned lay pastor in the Presbyterian Church and a member of Whitworth Community Presbyterian, visited Penney Farms, Fla., a community for retired pastors and missionaries that makes up to five PETs a month.

The idea started when Larry and Laura Hiels, missionaries for 42 years in Zambia and Zimbabwe, requested a hand-pedal vehicle for people without legs, who would otherwise have to drag themselves in the dirt to go somewhere.

They contacted Mel West, a retired pastor, and Earl Miner, a retired design engineer, who built four pilot carts in 1995 and sent them to Africa.

Larry put the carts through their paces and shipped them back. Based on wear and tear, Mel and Earl modified them. Realizing the need, they developed the PET Project, which has headquarters in Columbia, Mo. Now retired, the Hiels live at Penney Farms.

Dick, who became aware of the damage land mines do while in the military in Vietnam and whose family includes foster children from Kosovo, Germany, Kazakstan and Russia, found this project a natural way to expand the work some men at his church do. They make 50 wooden trucks and 50 doll cradles for Catholic Charities to give to needy children at Christmas each year.

So Spokane is now one of 10 PET building sites in the United States—in Texas, Tennessee, Kansas, New York and Florida.

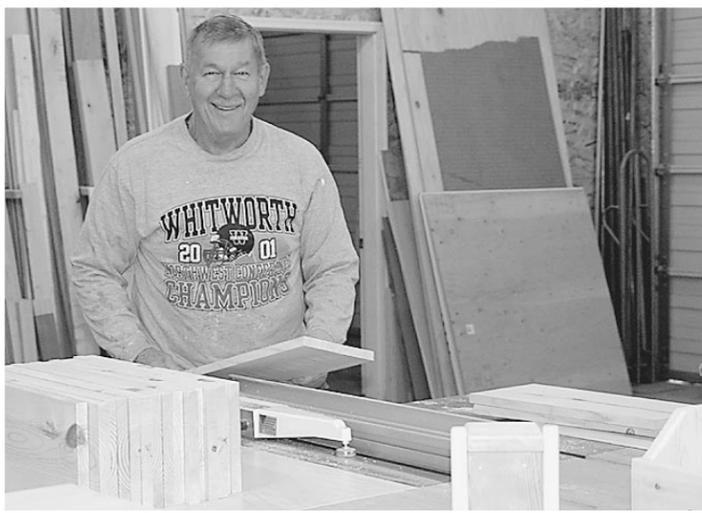
“With 200 million land mines in the ground and more still being planted it’s hard to keep up,” Dick said. “The 2004 tsunami in South Asia uncovered and randomly scattered land mines, endangering people in their gardens or walking to school,” Dick said.

In Sierra Leone, a counter insurgency group kidnaps people, cuts off their limbs and pokes their eyes out.

Such stories motivate commitment to this project.

Dick involves more than 60 people—painters, welders, metal fabricators, assemblers and donors—in making 10 PET carts. He hopes to make 100 a year.

The project spills over from his barn into a shed and a carport for storage, plus into a shop for cutting the pieces for the wooden toys. It was built about 10 years ago by a neighbor, Lyle Crecelius,



Cliff Goss builds toy trucks and cradles.

three miles up the road. Men and women come evenings and Saturday mornings to assemble toys.

There is space in Lyle’s building to store parts, assemble carts, disassemble them and pack them for shipment with socks, clothes, stuffed animals, balls, purses and items that might be needed or fun for the recipient and family.

With every PET, they send a tire pump and four tools to assemble and repair the vehicles.

Dick, a retired lawyer, describes himself as “chief PET logistician,” recruiting people, money and material gifts.

He listed some of the many people and companies that make the project possible:

Several volunteers and businesses pick up raw materials to make parts. For example, Carlson Sheet Metal turns metal into chain guards. R.W. Fabricators have made 50 yokes and Intermountain Fabricators made 50 PET pedal assemblies, which connect to the painted wooden bodies.

Members of Jefferson United Methodist Church in Medford, Okla., make acrolite handles.

Chains come from a company in New York, and donors provide funds for shipping.

A friend recovering from several illnesses makes seats and seat belts.

Eight people cut wood pieces in their home shops or at the barn.

Other men, women, youth and children paint the wood pieces or metal pedal posts at home or with church groups. A Portland firm donates the metal paint.

Various stores and companies donate fasteners—nuts, bolts and screws—reflective tape and items packed with the carts.

Spokane Packaging donates shipping boxes.

Dick has invited friends to join both the toy and PET ventures:

A designer near Coeur d’Alene made shop drawings.

A retired high school shop teacher helps at home with com-

puter design and welding frames.

A high school friend in Maine sends prayer shawls and makes quilts for the cradles, as do women at Whitworth Community Presbyterian Church.

A high school friend in Tennessee knits children’s hats.

A teacher at Libby School involved her children in painting and let them put polka dots and racing stripes on boards.

World Vision, Hope Haven, Mercy Ships and Northwest Medical Teams ship the PET carts to areas where they are needed.

A volunteer in Florida designed ThePETSpokaneProject.org site.

Other congregations involved include Fourth Memorial, Spokane Valley United Methodist men and East Valley Presbyterian Church, plus Kiwanis and Lions clubs.

Dick had been a missionary to Brazil, South Africa, Kazakstan, Russia, China and Nicaragua for 10 years, teaching law, business and government management, constitutional law and the Bible.

He and his wife, Lois, have lived on Little Spokane River Dr., for 31 years, settling here after Dick’s early years in Maine, and Colorado, and their years after marriage in Europe, California and Pennsylvania.

Dick also volunteers with the Truth Ministries shelter and helped start the New Start Furniture Warehouse to support the Interfaith Hospitality Network.

Pulling together the parts and



Harvey Lochhead and Dick Carpenter discuss a PET part.

people to make the project possible, Dick noted: “If God wants this to go, it will go. No one could do it alone. It’s amazing how many little pieces a PET includes and the logistics of putting those pieces together.”

The work here means somewhere in the world a woman without legs no longer has to drag herself with her children on

her back to go out. “It gives people life, dignity and mobility—the possibility to take care of their families,” said Dick, whose motivation is Matt. 25 and the theology of being blessed to be a blessing to others.

For information, call 466-3425.

More photos are online at [www.thefigtree.org](http://www.thefigtree.org)

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# Musicians plan Gospel Extravaganza to draw Christians together

A visit to the House of Blues in Chicago gave Kenny Andrews the vision for Christians coming together, eating and enjoying gospel music at the Big Easy in Spokane.

His vision is for a musical outreach ministry to transform lives and restore communities to reach unsaved people and energize believers through the gift of song.

At 1:45 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 11, that dream becomes a reality in the Gospel Extravaganza Sunday Brunch featuring the Anointed Calvary Praise Team and Voices of Calvary at the Big Easy Concert House, 919 W. Sprague.

Northwest recording artist Angela Hunt is guest vocalist. Elisha Mitchell, vocalist, recording artist and musician at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church will perform a tribute in song for Tony and Pam McCloud, who have contributed to community and Calvary choirs while he has been stationed at Fairchild. He has been reassigned to Florida. The McClouds will be ordained at Calvary on Sunday, Dec. 4.

"We both sing and love the Lord," Kenny said of Elisha. "We both believe worship calls people to go out of church walls to serve."

Both also have contacts with top gospel singers in the nation. Their goal is to bring those singers to one event each month and have local talent perform, too.

"Religion and praising God are not about color or denomination," he said, hoping to draw together the Christian community and people who love gospel music.

Kenny, who is the son of the Rev. C. W. Andrews of Calvary Baptist Church, won a new car in the KHQ "Gimme the Mike" contest in May. He cashed it in and is using those funds to launch the first Gospel Extravaganza Sunday Brunch.

Kenny founded A'KAJ Productions, a nonprofit organization named after his children—Ashley, Kenny, Ariana and Jasmin. In conjunction with Troy Jella, who has formed Whitestone, they are presenting the first event.

After 17 years away from Spokane, working as executive caterer



Elisha Mitchell, Kenny Andrews and Troy Jella combine efforts for the first brunch.

with the Convention Center in New Orleans, Kenny has returned to be near his parents.

"I was singing from the age of four. My father was a quartet singer in Yakima, and I went with him for performances in Portland and Pasco," he said.

Kenny also likens his compassion to his father's. At six, he was taking the trash out on Thanksgiving Day and found a man digging in the garbage can for food. He told his father and they invited the man to join them for dinner—and gave him a shower and a suit.

So for Kenny, faith and music are about outreach, sharing the Gospel and breaking bread.

In 1985, he left for New Or-

leans, to be near the family of his wife Paula. He found a job as a kitchen manager, and in a year, was caterer at the Convention Center there.

"I was overwhelmed when I first arrived, seeing so many black people. Blacks are about 85 percent of the population there, in contrast with about two percent here."

As caterer, he served presidents, sports leaders, movie stars and gospel singers.

"God sent me there to see that these people—celebrities—are just people, no matter how famous they are," he said. "So I was able to serve them with a sense of calmness, treating them

as human beings."

While there, Kenny sang solos

at major events at the Superdome and at Mardi Gras.

He and his family returned to Spokane in 2001. He worked for more than three years as catering manager at Whitworth College. He is the new music minister at Calvary Baptist.

He began building a relationship with Greg Marchant at the Big Easy, known for its local rock 'n roll concerts, and helped with five events, including the 2005 Gospel Mothers' Day Brunch for 250 people.

Kenny hopes to fill the 900-seats at the Big Easy, which he said will become "the Lord's house" for these events.

In January, Angela Hunt and Door of Hope will be the featured singers and in February, Black History and Bethel AME will be performing.

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### Program Costs

Due to a generous grant from the Presbyterian Church (USA), we are able to offer this program at the reduced price of \$175, which includes books, materials, and lunch. All sessions are held at Whitworth College. A \$50 deposit is required to register.

Half of the remaining balance is due February 2 and the other half is due March 30. A 10% discount is offered to those who make payment in full by February 2. Scholarships are available.



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# Lisa Ogle finds more than 'just a job' at fair trade shop

Rather than dreading another day at work, Lisa Ogle now wakes up each day excited to go to work as manager of Global Folk Art.

She knows that every time a shopper buys something there, the purchase helps someone else.

That's the simple story of fair trade. Global Folk Art is a non-profit, volunteer-run fair trade shop in the Community Building at 35 W. Main in Spokane.

When Triumph bought Boeing in 2002, Lisa lost her union job as a fabricator of plane parts. While drawing unemployment, she did some volunteering, putting to use her Boeing seamstress skills by stitching 60 pairs of curtains for her church, Dream Center.

As she began to seek new employment, Career Path Services placed her last January as a volunteer at Global Folk Art. When Stacy Ott left as manager in June, the board offered her the job.

"It's not us, as Americans,



Lisa Ogle is the new manager at Global Folk Art.

against everyone else competing in a global economy, which is what I thought growing up

in a union home," she said. "I resented other countries taking jobs away."

Now Lisa knows jobs are not guaranteed for life and there's more than financial comfort. Although she has had to re-arrange her financial expectations, she said she is happier.

People shopping in the store are interested in knowing where products come from and about the conditions and people there.

"I meet many compassionate people, people who want their shopping to make a difference for someone," Lisa said.

Along with promoting fair production and trade in low-income and disadvantaged regions of the world, Global Folk Art fosters appreciation of global cultural diversity and traditional folk arts, providing the region with fair-trade alternative gifts, imports and education.

In addition to hand crafts, it offers jewelry, clothing, cards, coffees, chocolates, baskets, textiles, masks, musical instruments,

household accessories, toys, collectibles and books.

"Fair trade is growing. We are bringing in new vendors, using internet for shopping rather than catalogues," Lisa said. "More people are registering with fair trade, even more local people."

About 15 volunteers help with sales, window displays, community networking and special events. Some also share their perspectives to help her make the buying decisions.

"We include a balance of different cultures," she said.

Lisa does both management and education on fair trade.

Part of the education is in interactions with people who come to the shop, and part is in church and community events.

Global Folk Art also does off-site sales for special events like Pig-Out at the Park, the Fall Folk Fest and alternative gift sales.

For information, call 838-0664.

# Charles Steele seeks to ignite an ongoing passion for civil rights

Charles Steele responded when God called, leaving the Alabama State Senate to go to Atlanta to revive the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Even knowing it was on the verge of collapse and he would not be paid enough to support his family, he responded.

"I felt called to rebuild the organization started by Martin Luther King, Jr., and to carry on his dreams for it," Charles recently told those gathered for the Freedom Fund Banquet of the Spokane Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). "I couldn't let it die."

The businessman, politician and civil rights leader was the first African American elected to the City Council of Tuscaloosa and one of the first African Americans elected to the Alabama State Senate.

He grew up in the Jim Crow and segregation era of the 1950s and 1960s, involved in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, working up the ranks to be come its national president.

"We have come a long way, but have a long way to go. Now many have amnesia about where we have come from," he said, asserting the need to remember and to know that economics, education and empowerment are inseparable.

"Most college graduates today can't find a job. I know. I'm a parent. My daughter works for me. Today, even if you get education, you still can't get a job," Charles said.

He challenged those who treat Rosa Parks as a celebrity in her death, while ignoring that a year and a half ago, she was going to be evicted from her home. He raised



Charles Steele

money to take care of her while she was alive.

"Don't play with the civil rights movement. The question is what will we do now her funeral is over," he said.

"When I took over the SCLC there was no money. Lights and phone were cut off. In eight months, the organization will be in its own \$3-million building."

Charles also seeks to follow through on King's vision for peace in the Middle East, identifying with Jews who had a holocaust because, Charles said, "African Americans in slavery and since experienced a hell-ocaust."

"We both need to tell our stories

to the next generation."

Charles calls educators, parents, preachers, teachers and leaders to go global for the future.

"We can't survive just going to church, going home, watching TV and getting a soda. Soon the #1 auto manufacturer will be China, which I just visited," he said.

"We must build relationships in the global market. No matter how good a product is, if you do not know your clients, they will not buy. People must trust you."

Charles said many blacks think they have arrived and do not need to know about, to hear or tell the story of the past.

"We have not arrived. We need to get back on the civil rights train so blacks, whites and all folk will live in freedom," he said.

"The Klu Klux Klan and whites are no longer our only problem. Sometimes black faces in white places build buffers so other black people do not win contracts or jobs," he finds. "They are carrying out the discrimination."

"Because we refuse to admit where we came from and misrepresent our history, we are bleeding internally," he said. "Blacks and whites need to be re-educated, because the education system is still enslaved."

Charles raises his critique because he loves America so much

he wants to correct it. He wants America to lead the way in economics and education.

"If ever there was a time that we needed God and the civil rights movement it is now. What kind of

society would we have if we said we do not need the organization that gave us the Civil Rights Bill and the Voters Rights Bill? We still need direct action today," Charles challenged.

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## Hospice chaplains create space for dying people to reflect spiritually

As chaplain manager with Hospice of Spokane, Ann Hurst blends skills from nursing, law and spiritual care as she encourages volunteer chaplains to identify clients' needs, so they can focus on living as they progress towards death.

Ann's nursing background attunes her to physical changes in clients and to sensing how close to death they are.

Her legal skills help in her management role, planning policies for the organization as a whole.

Catholic all her life, she finds her faith and training as a chaplain help in how she views suffering.

About a third of Hospice's clients sign up for spiritual care with a chaplain. Some have support from their own churches. Hospice of Spokane has 14 volunteer chaplains from various faiths and denominations. Some are retired and some have other jobs.

Ann works full time and has two part-time staff members, Maggie Albo of St. Mary's Catholic Church and Sheryll Shepard of St. Stephen's Episcopal.

**Visiting at a mutually agreed** frequency, each chaplain follows a client and family until the person's death, which may be in two weeks or up to two years.

Chaplains connect clients who have a faith community to their clergy. About half claim a denominational tie. Even though they may not have been active for years, about half of them want to reconnect with their tradition.

Some people are reticent to give a religious preference or see a chaplain, fearing they may be preached at or feeling guilty they don't attend church, Ann finds.

"We're not church police, checking on those who have not attended in years," she said.

**To dispel myths**, she provides a booklet on spiritual care, pointing out, for example, that a chaplain's presence does not mean death is imminent. It also distinguishes between religion and spirituality.

"All people have a spiritual side affected by and affecting life-threatening illnesses," Ann explained. "The earlier people call us, the better they work through issues so they come to a sense of peace and can have quality time with family."

She believes people need time to express love, forgive, ask for forgiveness and say thank you. Accomplishing those steps gives people peace.

"Physical symptoms and spiritual issues often go hand-in-hand, so the better the pain is addressed, the easier it is to deal with spiritual and relationship issues," she said.

While pain medicine can make people sleepy, Ann said, there are now many medicines and variations so people can have the wakefulness they want.

"Sometimes spiritual distress causes physical suffering, so relieving spiritual suffering also relieves pain," she added.

Starting her career as a nurse in Connecticut, she served as an Air Force nurse in California, where she met her husband, Charles Latimer.

After leaving the service, she went to McGeorge School of Law and earned her degree in 1982. She and her husband lived in Denver, the Philippines, Shreveport, Omaha and at Travis AFB in California before he was assigned to Fairchild AFB in 1990. He retired in 1995.

From a home office, Ann worked with a federal union for teachers of military children in the Philippines, South Korea, Japan and Okinawa, traveling overseas for hearings.

A health concern in 1992, a seminar on "Conscious Living and Conscious Dying" and a book about a near-death experience led her to rethink her travel.

At St. Charles Catholic Church Ann became religious education coordinator there and organized Eucharistic ministry for the homebound. Then she was parish associate at St. Patrick's and now attends St. Aloysius.

**While training volunteer** pastoral companions to visit homebound people, she decided chaplaincy training would help.

She began studies for a master's degree in spirituality in 1999 at Gonzaga University and took a year of training Gonzaga then offered in clinical pastoral education (CPE)—a satellite of the Tri Cities Chaplaincy CPE program.

She worked three years in pastoral care and two as manager of pastoral care at Deaconess Medical Center. As a chaplain, she dealt with life and death—even in neonatal intensive care and pediatrics. Eventually, she realized she wanted to do hospice care.

**Like hospital chaplains**, hospice chaplains relate with the spectrum of life—currently from infants to a 103-year-old.

"Spiritual issues at the end of life, when there is no hope of recovery, are different, but the emotions are the same," she said.

Because suffering is not just physical, but a cumulative result from people's lives, Ann knows that some pain cannot and should not be medicated away.

"Some people value suffering and are open to being changed by suffering," Ann said. "Some



Ann Hurst

do not want to be medicated or unconscious to avoid pain. For some, a certain amount of suffering helps them grow spiritually.

"In suffering, people examine their beliefs and values in a way that may transform their understandings of what is important in life and relationships," she said.

**When people are dying**, many want relationships healed—especially if they are estranged from a family member, like a child.

"People suffer because of unreconciled relationships," she said, adding that there are ways in an inward process for people to be reconciled, even if the estranged person is far away or dead.

"Do all have a peaceful death? No. Do all have an ideal death? No. Do all reach a sense of inner wellbeing? No! Some struggle to the point of death about things left undone," Ann said.

Chaplains are companions on clients' journeys, creating a sacred space, even for those who do not believe in God, so they can do the interior work.

**Chaplains first must establish** trust, so clients will talk about feelings and find inner strength.

"Then they share their suffering and hopes. Their struggles

are theirs, not ours. We do not fix anything," Ann explained. "We merely mirror what they tell us about their lives and feelings. In their busy lives, people rarely verbalize feelings or think about their spiritual lives or relationship with God."

While some clients in faith communities have thought about dying, chaplains find even some of them have not considered the meaning of their lives or their relationship with God.

"People have head knowledge about afterlife based on what they learned as children, but many do not consider it at a heart level until they face death with their fears and doubts," Ann said.

She finds people tend to look back and judge their lives as good or bad, critical about what they have done or not done. When they tell a chaplain, they may be speaking and hearing it from themselves for the first time.

"As a mirror, we help them connect with their spiritual world and sort things out," she said. "We create space for them to talk about their emotions."

"We help individuals express their needs and hopes as they die, so they can focus on living as

they want to live the rest of their lives—at home with the people they want around them," she said, adding that to accommodate those who need more care, Hospice of Spokane is raising funds for a 12-bed, inpatient hospice house with private rooms.

**Volunteer chaplains need** nurture, so they meet quarterly for training and sharing experiences.

When enough people volunteer, Ann offers a chaplains' training. Ann and volunteers speak to congregations on end-of-life care.

Chaplains also consult with her or raise concerns in care-team meetings with a client's nurse, social worker, chaplain, nurses' aides and volunteers.

More than 200 volunteers help clients with grooming, music therapy, massage, household chores, yard work, transportation, companionship, pet therapy and respite for caregivers.

**To address grief**, Hospice offers rituals to honor those who died each month to help staff and volunteers grieve. In November and May, it holds memorial services for families and survivors.

Hospice also provides grief and support groups and counseling for families, and a free grief camp for children, regardless of whether their loved ones were clients, to give them a chance to talk with peers about their loss.

In addition, Ann is starting a spiritual support group for people interested in talking about the impact of their loss on their faith.

Hospice also arranges education programs for clergy on spiritual care issues at the end of life.

A session will be held at noon, Friday, Dec. 16, at Hospice of Spokane, 121 S. Arthur.

Hospice of Spokane covers from Liberty Lake and Newman Lake, into Idaho, south to Fairfield and Rosalia, into Stevens and Lincoln Counties, west to Cheney and Sprague, and north to Elk and Deer Park. In addition, there are 21 hospice and palliative care programs serving other communities in Central and Eastern Washington and North Idaho.

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# Patience and faith keep therapist working with troubled teens

By Brandon Pyle

Beyond a formidable gate and tall fences, the white-washed buildings of Excelsior Youth Center resemble a prison compound.

It's tucked in the forest off Indian Trail Road, an out-of-the-way location that resembles many of its clients' positions in society.

The in-patient treatment center for youth houses 50 offenders with criminal records and chemical dependencies, desperate children who have experienced rejection, said Bryan Stanfill, a therapist who also has a part-time private practice.

"These teens are society's throwaways," he said. "Most have failed in other settings."

Bryan has spent almost 10 years in a job he was not sure he wanted and planned to be temporary.

After finishing a bachelor's degree in English at Whitworth College in 1995, he took a job as a youth director at East Valley Presbyterian for a year.

Realizing that was not his calling, he applied to work at Excelsior—to pay his bills.

He began in 1996 as a group living counselor, which meant helping a group of 10 to 15 teens "just get through the day."

After two years, Bryan became a case manager, working primarily with the other organizations associated with Excelsior. In 2000, he became a therapist, still thinking he would leave.

Eventually, he decided he needed to study counseling and completed a master's at Whitworth in 2002.

"Many people would have left," he said. "The young people at Excelsior are not glamorous clients for a social worker, not the kind to thank or hug someone who helps them. I don't think anyone can really understand these youth."

Excelsior deals primarily with dependents of the state—orphans—from 12 to 17 years old.



Bryan Stanfill

Most have no family. Many have been through 27 or more foster homes. Excelsior specializes in "dual-diagnosis" cases, youths with a chemical dependency and depression, for example.

Bryan understands the difficulties they have, but does not necessarily endorse the labels they have: "My philosophy is there's always a deeper issue underneath chemical dependency."

So why does he stay?

"I used to think that a sense of calling was trumpets, banners and angels, and if you're lucky, Jesus," recalled Bryan, who grew up in Presbyterian youth groups and camps and now attends New Community Church.

"The reality is that I can do this work, and many people can't, so I think this is where God wants me," he said. "I can't walk away from these youth, even though the tragedy of the abuse and neglect they have experienced could make me want to. I feel committed to these teens.

"Regardless of their reason for being here, their basic needs are for security, belonging and safe relationships with adults who are emotionally available to them," he

said. "Their chemical dependency is secondary to those issues."

His sense of calling doesn't mean day-to-day fulfillment.

Bryan admits there are days when he wishes his personality, characteristics and experience did not enable him to do his job.

"These teens are a messy mission," said Bryan, who puts his own agenda aside to continue to care for and love teens who usually avoid opening up.

He is willing to be patient.

Belief in the idea of planting seeds sustains him. He becomes satisfied with small steps, like someone sitting in a room and having a conversation with him about life experiences, anger or considering healthier decisions.

Considering the broken condition of youth when they come to him, Bryan focuses on small steps that he said would often be overlooked.

"You have to adjust what success means," he said. "It is not always realistic to think that every youth will graduate from college and go on to have a healthy, well-adjusted life."

Bryan knows his "work" leaves Excelsior grounds unfinished as the youth leave, but he hopes that down the road, something may click for the young people he now devotes his life to.

He knows a child needs God, but the client must initiate such a discussion, because Excelsior is a nonprofit that works closely with the Department of Social and Health Services, so he is not free to voice his convictions.

Excelsior's roots, however, are in the Catholic Church. The Sisters of the Good Shepherd built the facility in 1963 and transferred operations in 1982 to the nonprofit.

In frustration, Bryan wonders "why we as a society or church don't take care of these kids."

Knowing the teens are some of

the most needy in society, he sees it as a natural place for outreach.

"If Jesus were walking around in the flesh, this is where he would be, because these are the lepers, the prostitutes—sometimes literally," Bryan said.

"If I didn't have the sense of hope and redemption from my faith I couldn't tolerate doing what I do. My belief in God and God's desires for our lives and relationships is the inspiration for what I do and the model for how I try to do it," he said.

Bryan sees his work as "incarnational ministry." By that he means it's about relationships and accepting and loving the teens even though there are no guaranteed results.

So he takes the small victories as they come.

"For one teen, it could be simply keeping him alive for a couple more years," said Bryan, who has learned to accept that, and always to hope for more.

For information, call 328-7041. Written for *The Fig Tree* as part of a public relations class at Whitworth College

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**2005 United Nations Human Rights Day**

*'Human Rights: The Foundation for Building a Multicultural Democracy'*

**Raymond Reyes**  
associate vice president for diversity - Gonzaga University

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## Christmas family 'photo op' creates a live nativity

First Lutheran Church in Kennewick gave members of their church and community an opportunity on Nov. 4 to take turns being in a live nativity on the lawn outside the church.

They arranged for a professional photographer to photograph families in a manger setting with a two-hump camel named Joe, a donkey, two cows and some bales of hay, according to Helga Jansons, one of the pastors.

About 30 families took up the offer—with half from the church and half from the community.

Each family paid \$10 and put on costumes to be Mary and Joseph.



The Gowan family poses in live nativity setting. Photo by Matt Williams

Families can use the photos to send with Christmas letters.

Children dressed as angels, but one family with a baby, put the baby in the manger as Jesus.

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**Preaching Clinic**

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

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

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

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

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# Graduate student finds niche in tsunami recovery in Sri Lanka

By Carol Spurling

One Pullman congregation is pleased that they have not seen much of one member at church this year.

Steve Overfelt, a graduate student in political science at Washington State University (WSU), went to Sri Lanka in late April to do hands-on tsunami relief work.

He returned home to Moscow for several weeks in September, and then flew back to Galle, Sri Lanka, for three more months, until early January 2006.

Like many in the Inland Northwest, when he heard about the Dec. 26, 2004, tsunami that devastated coastal communities surrounding the Indian Ocean, Steve wondered what he could do to help.

Having spent Thanksgiving 2004 in Indonesia doing research on non-governmental organizations for his master's degree motivated him to go to tsunami-damaged areas and pitch in.

"I started contacting international and domestic organizations that were beefing up their presence there," he said. "Because my course work was complete, time wasn't a constraint, but no one wanted my physical labor. They only wanted the cash in my pocket. After many times of being told 'no,' I stopped wondering 'How can they not want me?'"

Determined to help, he and a friend, Joe Huseby, who is working on a PhD in political science at WSU, decided to create their own nonprofit organization, Tsunami Relief Boats. Their first impulse was to replace lost fishing boats for coastal fishermen.

"We found that you can't just walk in there and give someone a boat," Steve said. "The most important thing we've learned about disaster relief is not to come in with your own agenda but to work with the locals."

A member of Community Congregational United Church of Christ in Pullman, Steve cooperated first with an established Sri Lankan non-governmental organization called Sarvodaya and then with Project Galle, a trust established by British residents of the Galle district of Sri Lanka.

In the beginning, he helped prepare food packs, health packs and tents. Then he helped people in tent camps move into temporary housing.

Steve helped teach English, build housing and fill plastic bags with a corn-soy mix for distribution and attended meetings. Then he found his niche as a liaison officer with Project Galle.

"My job is to connect the



Steve Overfelt, left, when he was in Pullman in October.

Below is a 10-year-old Sri Lankan boy looking out from temporary wooden housing in a new camp.

dots, to move information from place to place. For instance, the reconnaissance teams brought back information that tents were flooding when it rained, so we needed to dig drainage ditches. I was responsible for calling the appropriate individuals to arrange it," he said. "There are multiple issues but no follow up with solutions—so this speeds up the process and makes peoples' lives easier."

Progress is slow, he said, but he copes, "along with the patient Sri Lankans."

"I have come to find that here, and perhaps in this line of work in general, you must be able to find victories in the smallest details," he said. "One day the only thing I did was to try to find a better way to bring a water tank into a camp. I didn't succeed, but maybe I will soon."

Steve believes the strong tug he felt to go and work in Sri Lanka, instead of just donating money to tsunami relief, was God's calling.

"Part of being open to an experience like this is personality and part of it is allowing God to work through you," he said. "When you have that openness, the right people, the right circumstances, will make themselves known."

Steve, who grew up in First United Methodist Church in Moscow, recalls a revival meeting that spurred him to give his life to Christ in the fall of 1973 when he was 12 years old. His brother did at that time as well, and his parents had done it earlier that same year.

"I remember it well because of the difference it made in our lives," he said. "It impressed on us the need to be involved."

Steve's family was already active in the international community associated with the University of Idaho and, as newly committed Christians, continued to have an "open-door policy."

"My mother is British, and she was involved in international women's groups at the university. She would invite them to church, or we'd visit people from other countries, and we regularly had house guests from overseas," he said.

"I remember Libyans, Egyptians, Japanese and Koreans. Our family always took people in, from all over. We also were always taking a pie to someone's house, and introducing people

to American customs like the 4th of July and Christmas. You can't grow up like that without developing an appreciation for other cultures. It was how we demonstrated God's love."

Steve was active in Young Life in high school and in Campus Crusade during college. He went on a Young Life summer mission trip to Southeast Alaska in 1978, and worked at the Young Life camp in Canada in the summer of 1979.

He moved to Moscow when he was nine, later going away to earn his undergraduate degree in political science at Boise State University.

For two years, he taught social studies in LaCrosse before going to Seattle for nine years to work in banking, politics and the travel industry. He married and has two children.

Steve returned to the Palouse in 1996 for studies and work. He started attending the Pullman church last year.

By sending letters to friends and family, and by speaking during a "social action moment" at the Community Congregational Church, he raised \$3,500 for Tsunami Relief Boats last winter.

In Sri Lanka, he pointed out, a dollar goes a long way.

"I pay about \$8 a night at a guest house. Meals are less. For breakfast one morning, I paid 150 rupees or about \$1.50 for two fried eggs, four pieces of toast, butter, jam, a small pot of coffee and two small, thin-skinned, sweet bananas.

"For dinner, I had rice and curry for 175 rupees—\$1.80," Steve said of his experience in Negombo, Sri Lanka, earlier this year.

Tsunami Relief Boats is still awaiting word on a grant.

In October before returning to Galle, Steve gave a slide presentation at the church on his work in Sri Lanka with Project Galle.

While the needs are still "huge" and rubble from the tsunami damage still sits awaiting cleanup, Steve said that in returning there, he felt he was going home. He has become friends with many Sri Lankans.

"I marvel at their lack of defeatism," he said. "They smile more often than not. They treat a stranger as a relative. They make it easy for me to want to help them."

For information, call 332-6411.



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## Sacrificial giving can make a difference in these times of disaster

When Caesar Augustus ordered a census of his world, people went to their hometowns to be registered, most traveling by foot and carrying necessities for the journey.

This is a picture of people being pushed around.

Caesar Augustus and the rest of the ruling elite had no idea what it meant for people to leave their livelihoods and walk to their destinations, carrying their belongings. The elite didn't walk. They and their belongings were carried.

From the earliest times we know about until the Middle Ages, the social and economic structures around towns were basically the same.

One to two percent of the population owned most of the property and controlled more than two-thirds of the wealth. They did no productive work. A bit more than 90 percent were farmers, fishermen, low-level artisans and servants. They did the hardest

work and owned little or nothing.

The remaining less than 10 percent were the support system for the wealthy and powerful: skilled workers and artisans, artists, managers of property and wealth, and the military and religious hierarchies.

Have we progressed from this inequality and injustice?

In this country, the wealthiest one-tenth of one percent have benefited the most from tax cuts enacted during the last four years.

The fate of the poor today, as throughout history, has been to be badly fed and constantly worked, to lose a high percentage of their babies, and to die early.

This is a picture of disposable people—of people who don't matter.

Today in this country, budget cuts on all levels of government are aimed at medical and nutritional programs that give some support to the poor. Increasingly, more and more of these are the working poor.

In our communities, disposable people are working for companies that have been given tax breaks from local governments for bringing in jobs that don't pay a living wage.

After Hurricane Katrina, we saw many pictures of desperate, poor people. Briefly the media decried the poverty.

What we saw was symbolic of the daily disasters in the lives of millions of people who have become disposable in a political system that transfers more and more of the wealth people create through their work to owners and investors who profit from that work.

Some commentators have described the world as suffering from "disaster fatigue," noting that contributions to agencies that help the poor and struggling are lagging.

We can't afford such heartlessness.

This Christmas season is a time for sacrificial giving that symbolizes a shelter along the way and some decent meals for those on

the trek to Bethlehem every day.

Without sacrificial giving—after so much giving to those whose plight has been publicized in reports of recent natural disasters—people who serve people who suffer from daily disasters may find their ability to respond inadequate to meet the needs.

With sacrificial giving, the generosity of our community and country will be revitalized and help people through their times of struggle. With the witness of sacrificial giving, we can challenge those caught up in the cycle of accumulation with the example of what happens when we share even in times of seeming scarcity.

Part of our sacrificial giving can also be in writing government leaders to say "no" to the transfer of wealth from those who have the least to those undeserving wealthy who have the most and do not let it trickle down to the rest of the society.

**Nancy Minard and Mary Stamp**  
Editorial team

## Much activity in today's society has become faceless and voiceless

Where is the human touch?

We are fast becoming a faceless and voiceless society. So much of our activity, with the exception of sports, is now "people-less."

No social encounter is necessary. The high tech, including the super high tech approach, has trumped the "human touch."

The sad commentary is that the response is often, "I don't care." The transaction is quick, easy and cheap, at least for the one in the driver's seat.

However, Americans do care. They know they have lost something. God cares, too—about us and about the human touch we are losing.

How many precious mornings do we sacrifice by hanging onto a "voice-less telephone," waiting for an answer to a simple, but important question?

So much of our communication is also

lost in the high-tech bonanza of computers, cell phones and a plethora of internet information unrelated to what we want.

High tech demands super performance on every level—no time for social exchange. It pays well and the profit margin is proof enough, but, as with so many good things, often an obfuscation confuses the picture.

Too often, "people-less" means also that joblessness accompanies the endeavor. We gain something and lose something else.

As the human touch is sacrificed on the altar of high-tech and joblessness results, low and middle-income American workers lose.

For example, in the Nov. 8 election, a County Advisory measure terminated voting at the polls, replacing them with all-mail balloting.

Savings are projected, although some states, including Oregon, found no sav-

ings in the change.

John Yoder, a professor at Whitworth College who recently monitored a new election in Liberia as part of a team from the Carter Center, commented on the all-mail ballot. "Disgusting!" was his response, as he reflected on the personal one-to-one joy of voting in the October 2005 election in Liberia. Crowds of people turned out to cast their precious ballots.

John feels that we are losing the important sociological aspect of greetings and neighborly exchanges at the polls.

Small children who accompany their parents learn by example that voting is important. Just being there at the polls is a prima facie demonstration of democracy in action.

He expressed in a Spokesman-Review interview on Nov. 5, that we could be losing something spiritual in human relationships

as people-to-people and neighbor-to-neighbor if we adopt the new process. All-mail voting may become another linch-pin in our ever increasing faceless society.

For more than 10 years, I have volunteered at the polls and personally feel what a loss the change will mean, losing one more opportunity for neighbor to meet neighbor, even to share just a few words.

Similarly, I recall the simplicity of the breakthrough between Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat and Israeli leader Menachem Begin when they met at Camp David with former President Jimmy Carter.

Their exercise of getting acquainted and showing each other photos of their grandchildren was among the first step for the nations to begin to work on peace accords.

**Jo Hendricks**  
Contributing editor

Letter to the Editor

## Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

**We are insatiable**, an overweight society with the attitude that there is always more to be had. Even then we can be anxious about our future.

These are troubling times. We do not know when the next wind will blow us over. Will this country be caught in the next wave of disaster? Even nature is crying out for us to stop. Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves, just as he rebuked his followers for their little faith: "Peace! Be still."

We are a covenant people. The rainbow given Noah was given to us at baptism, that we would see color when others see black and white. When others cry out in despair, we look for the light of the world. No matter how it flickers in the wind, we point to it and say there is hope. We are to tell the world, to tell everyone we know. This is God's world and all shall be well. Trust, believe and look around every corner for the blessing that you or someone else needs to see. Let them see with your vision, through your eyes of faith. Teach children big and small that there is more to life than meets the eye.

Faith is about awareness, far-sightedness and insight. It is about seeing what we have, not what we want. It is found in our living rooms as we look at the things we have had for years and remember why they are there and who gave them to us. Do we remember choosing the colors and fabric?

It is in looking at our families and thanking God that we have the honor of knowing them deeply and intimately.

Faith is attentiveness to God's grace. It is the ability to receive, not take.

We can only give thanks by being so full of thanks and gratitude that we stand

speechless before God, knowing that any word of ours is a speck on the earth's circumference.

**The Rev. Helga Jansons**  
First Lutheran – Kennewick

**A veterinary student's asking** how to debate creationism and evolution with someone whose views are adamant and unbending led to weekly theology discussions at K-House campus ministry at Washington State University.

The debate is so hot now that the cover of *Time* magazine asks: "Does God have a place in science class?" State legislatures and education boards are considering whether schools should teach evolution, intelligent design or some combination.

The debate raged in Darwin's time. Since the dawn of Christianity, there has been controversy on interpreting creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2.

If we read Genesis creation stories for their theological claim, we may discover that questions such as, "Do you believe in the Bible?" or "Do you believe in evolution?" lead us down a path of idolatry.

Both the Bible and evolution are fascinating to me, but I don't "believe" in them. I believe in God.

If either evolution or creationism could be disproved as historical fact, would that mean we no longer have faith or that God no longer exists?

I hope not. I hope we dare to look deeper and put our faith only in one place, in the one in whom and through whom we have our being.

**The Rev. Gail Stearns**  
The Common Ministry  
at Washington State University

**As headlines about Hurricane Katrina** and the disasters in Louisiana and Mississippi wind down, reporters have noticed that the victims have gone to various shelters. Who run those shelters? Mostly churches and Christian ministries run them. If we do a little digging into other disasters in our world this year—the tsunami, the earthquake in Pakistan or the hurricane in the Yucatan—we would find the same thing: Government agencies calling for help and blaming other government agencies while Christians quietly go to work, give to people in need and love people.

Within the first few hours after Katrina made landfall, thousands of churches gave hundreds of millions of dollars, untold numbers of volunteer hours, and space in their facilities or homes.

In history, we see that Christians opposed slavery, worked with lepers, established hospitals, passed child labor laws, taught people to read, established colleges and universities.

Since the time of our founder, Jesus, Christians have been passionate about human dignity. We believe all human beings are made in God's image. Love of God and love of neighbor flow from his great commandment. It's love for people made in God's image and likeness.

The first four of the 10 Commandments call us to have no other gods, make no idols, respect God's name and keep the Sabbath holy—to put God first in our lives.

That gives us the power, the desire, the passion to love those made in God's image. The other six commandments call us to love our neighbor by honoring parents and by not murdering, committing adultery, stealing, lying or coveting.

Those who first respond to the true God are then the first to respond to our neighbors who suffer. A homeless family from New Orleans, a woman dying of AIDS in Africa, a six-year-old sex slave in Thailand, a grieving Pakistani—wherever there are people who suffer, we find Christians.

Mission and outreach are not add-on programs for a church. When we truly love God and follow our Lord Jesus, we will be looking for ways of loving the people around us, those who share our world. Each human being has the image of God stamped on him or her. We must be about the business of loving people. We must respond. People are the image of God.

**The Rev. Ted Broadway**  
Davenport Presbyterian

**In our culture of fear and greed**, let us continue to strengthen our hope and faith, and live in joy and courage. In this world which runs so frantically and fast, and never seems to rest, let us model peace and calm attention to the heart of each thing, each day.

**The Rev. Andy CastroLang**  
Westminster Congregational United  
Church of Christ

**Faith is part of the way** we receive the Word, but it is also a way we live every day.

Faith is not something we tuck away for a rainy day, or practice only on Sunday. Rather faith is as Luther says, a way of life. So when someone says, "Get a life!" you can respond, "Thank you, I have one."

**The Rev. Ginny Johnson**  
St. Paul Lutheran - Quincy

## Speaker ties human rights to cultural competence

Raymond Reyes, associate vice president of diversity at Gonzaga University, is the speaker for the Human Rights Day Celebration at 7 p.m., Monday, Dec. 12, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr.

Speaking on "Human Rights: The Foundation for Building a Multicultural Democracy," he will give an overview of trends, new skills and knowledge for establishing an inclusive, multicultural democracy. He will use narratives and research to review competencies for intercultural fluency essential for human rights.

## Providence Sisters celebrate 150 years

The Sisters of Providence begin on Dec. 8 a yearlong celebration of their 150 years of contributions to education, health care and social services in the West.

On Dec. 8, 1856, Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart and four sister companions arrived in the Washington Territory at Vancouver, Wash.

Since then, hundreds of Sisters of Providence have acted in compassion, courage and caring, said Jennifer Roseman, director of communications for the sisters.

Under the leadership of Mother Joseph, more than 30 hospitals, schools and homes were opened in the Northwest and British Columbia for orphans, the elderly and the sick.

The Mother Joseph Province includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, California and El Salvador.

Providence sisters, associates and ministries in the province plan monthly prayer services until the anniversary date in December 2006. There will also be events April 22 in Seattle, Aug. 5 in Spokane and Sept. 23 in Vancouver.

For information see [www.sistersofprovidence.net](http://www.sistersofprovidence.net).

## Museum hosts AIDS Day vigil

The Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, 2326 W. First, will hold a World AIDS Day Candlelight Vigil at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 1.

Speakers from the museum, the Spokane AIDS Network, the Spokane Regional Health District and faith organizations will discuss, "Stop AIDS: Keep the Promise to Continue Education and Awareness, To Treat People with Respect and Dignity, and to Honor those Who Have Lost the Battle."

For information, call 241-4239.

Raymond, who has been at Gonzaga since 1988, focuses on diversity, human development learning and cultural pedagogy.

The day marks the anniversary of the United Nations' General Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on Dec. 10, 1948.

The event is sponsored by the United Nations Association

Spokane Chapter and the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane.

At their Nov. 14 Adopt-A-Minefield potluck, the Spokane Chapter of the United Nations Association raised \$1,052 for clearing land mines and helping victims, said Marion Moos, local chair.

For information, call 624-3608.

## Calendar of Events

- To Dec 11** • Tree of Sharing, KREM-TV and Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, 8,030 gift requests from 67 agencies, Riverpark Square, Northtown Mall and Valley Mall - call 928-6697
- Dec 1** • World AIDS Day Candlelight Vigil, Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture, 2326 W. First, 5:30 p.m.
- Dec 1-4** • Christmas Crèche Exhibit, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1620 E. 29th Ave, noon to 9 p.m., concerts at 3 and 7 p.m. - call 535-6632
- Dec 1, 8, 15** • "Christmas at Noon Concerts," Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington, noon
- Dec 1, 15** • Peace Vigil, Monroe and Spokane Falls Blvd., 4:30 p.m., PeaceWorks, 35 W. Main, 6 p.m.
- Dec 2-3** • "Messiah," Connoisseur Concerts, Gunther Schuller, First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar, 7:30 p.m. - call 800-325-SEAT
- Dec 4** • Sing-a-long "Messiah," First Presbyterian, 315 S. Cedar, 6 p.m.
- Dec 2-4** • Antique Sale, St. Vincent de Paul Store, 2824 N. Monroe; to Jan. 31 - Jewelry Drive - call 534-2824
- Dec 4** • Gospel-Jazz Christmas Concert, The Met, 901 W. Sprague, 6:30 p.m.
- Dec 5** • Spokane Citizens for a Living Wage, 35 W. Main, 5:30 p.m. • "Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Prices," 35 W. Main, 6:30 p.m. • Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations, St. Pius X Catholic Church, 624 E. Haycraft in Coeur d'Alene, 7 p.m. • School of the Americas report, 35 W. Main, 7 p.m.
- Dec 6** • Vigil for Peace, Main & Monroe, 4:30 p.m., PeaceWorks, 35 W. Main, 6 p.m.
- Dec 7** • The Fig Tree Show with Peter Storey, Comcast Channel 14, 6 p.m.: 8th - "Church and State in the U.S. and World" and 15th - "Truth and Reconciliation Commission"
- Dec 8, 15** • Whitworth Choir Christmas Festival Concerts, First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar, Friday, 8 p.m., Saturday, 3 and 7 p.m. - call 777-3280
- Dec 9, 10** • Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane War Toys Leafletting, in front of Riverpark Square, 11 a.m. - call 838-7870
- Dec 10** • Jubilation Sacred Dance, Cowles Auditorium, Whitworth, 1 p.m. • Grand Opening of the Human Rights Education Institute Center at Coeur d'Alene City Park on Human Rights Day, 11 a.m. • Family Macfest: Celebrations Around the World—music and stories of Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Chinese New Year and other holidays, Museum of Arts and Cultures, noon to 3 p.m. • Gospel Extravaganza Brunch, Big Easy, 919 W. Sprague, 1:45 p.m.
- Dec 11** • Human Rights Day Celebration, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr., 7 p.m.
- Dec 12** • Spokane Alliance Meeting of representatives to plan for upcoming legislative session, Highland Park United Methodist, 611 S. Garfield, 7 p.m. - call 532-1688
- Dec 12-14** • Singing Nuns, "Christmas in Our House," The Met, Monday at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday at 2 and 7:30 p.m., Wednesday at 2 p.m.
- Dec 14** • Faith in Action Dialogue Committee, 906 W. 2nd Ave., 8 a.m. • Pax Christi, St. Joseph's Catholic, 1503 W. Dean, noon
- Dec 15** • VOICES, Salem Lutheran, 1428 W. Broadway, 5:30 p.m.
- Dec 16** • "Spiritual Care for the End of Life," training for clergy, Hospice of Spokane, 121 S. Arthur, noon
- Dec 17** • A Concert for Peace in a Season for Peace, Bethany Presbyterian, 301 S. Freya, 7 p.m. - call 363-0144
- Dec 18** • Taizé worship, St. Ann's, 2120 E. First, 7 p.m.
- Jan 4** • Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark's Lutheran, 24th & Grand, 9 a.m.
- Jan 5** • Fig Tree Board, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 7:30 a.m.
- Tues-Sats** • Habitat-Spokane work days - call 534-2552
- Fridays** • Colville Peace Vigil - call 675-4554
- 1st Sats** • Ministers' Fellowship Union - call 624-0522
- Sundays** • Taizé worship, Community Congregational United Church of Christ, 525 NE Campus, Pullman, 7 p.m. - call 332-2611

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# Woman of the cloth stitches sparkly liturgical fabric art

In the beauty of the stained glass, arches and dome of a large Methodist church in Decatur, Ill., Deborah Rose came into faith.

"That awesome beauty shaped my understanding of God. At no time did I think of Christ without thinking of beauty and wonder," she said.

Now she lives and creates fabric art, nestled in the beauty of the Glenrose area of Spokane, overlooking countryside and the Spokane Valley.

Behind her home is the studio where she cuts and stitches fabric as a "woman of the cloth" making liturgical garb, altar cloths, giant puppets, banners and stoles with fabric that contains a glint of gold or sparkles to reflect the light of God. She opened her business, Material Witness, in the spring.

Deborah shared sketches of the flow of her life and her art, like pieces of cloth stitched as the fabric of her journey.

Adopted into a family who were pillars of the Decatur church, she later learned that her birth mother was a seamstress from the Greek island of Cephalonia, where she sewed for wealthy families until immigrating to Chicago.

Deborah learned she has a half sister, Mary in Bangor, Maine, who is active in the United Church of Christ, the church in which Deborah is an ordained pastor.

For her 60th birthday, Deborah visited Cephalonia to research her ancestry. She discovered an ancestor, Gerasimos Lucatos Razi, named after the island's patron saint. He left teaching secondary school to become an Orthodox priest—a story similar to hers. She wonders if some of the Orthodox love of beauty and inclusion of gold in icons runs in her veins.

"Ever since I was old enough to hold a needle and thread, I wanted to stitch scraps of fabrics," she said, "but despite my flair for sewing, I was known as a pianist."

After high school, where she took art classes, she earned a bachelor's degree in English at DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind., in 1966. She taught English for two years in a racially diverse high school in Waukegan, Ill., and then taught American literature and humanities for 11 years in Arlington Heights, Ill., designing a course that integrated philosophy, art appreciation, music, history, culture and poetry.

Marriage to a Canadian, Ian Rose, led her to Vancouver, B.C., where she began writing the biography of one of her high school students, who died in a gymnastics accident in 1974.

Volunteering at an arts center and writing articles to promote it led her into reviewing arts for a radio station and writing stories on great homes of Richmond, B.C., for a local magazine.

"I went to Canada as a teacher with art as a hobby and left Vancouver and the marriage, knowing I wanted to do arts," she said.

She settled in Evanston, Ill., as a textbook editor and began attending a Presbyterian church.



The Rev. Deborah Rose with three giant diversity puppets.

Unchurched for 15 years, she soon felt called into ministry.

In 1984, she began studies at Andover Newton Theological School and work for a textbook publisher in Newton, Mass. Despite promotions on the job, she decided to focus on studies and work as a youth pastor.

Graduating in 1989 and ordained in 1990, she was religious education director in Sherborn, associate pastor in Newtonville and minister of parish life in New Milford, Conn., before returning to Andover Newton to begin a doctorate on arts in ministry.

An eight-day visit in Haiti at that time "broke open my style to giant puppets and bold ethnic colors and fabrics," she said. "It led me to recognize creativity and the arts as vital to ministry, as ways to make the Word fresh—my dis-

sertation theme."

After graduating in 1995, she spent two years in religious education at Beneficent Congregational Church in Providence, working with a senior minister who loved arts, too, and gave her free rein to develop an art festival for the Sunday school.

Also affirming her artistic journey was a week during 1994 in the Cascades at the Grunewald Guild near Leavenworth.

Her next call was to serve Cheney United Church of Christ from 1995 to 2000, followed by an interim ministry at Admiral UCC in West Seattle, where she helped members enhance the sanctuary for Easter with "Glimpses of Glory" banners and light, sparkly ribbons filling the sanctuary.

While interim at Community Congregational in Tonasket in

2003, she helped repaint the kitchen and bathrooms, and painted a passage from Luke on the feeding of the 5000, "All who ate were satisfied." She surrounded the words with pieces of fruit grown in the Okanogan Valley.

Recognizing her artistic flair, the Pacific Northwest UCC Conference asked her to make an artistic backdrop for its Annual Meeting in 2002. She made five giant Haitian-style puppets representing different races.

"People began to take me seriously as an artist in ministry," she said. "I was becoming a 'woman of the cloth' in a different sense—as a seamstress."

The nine- and seven-foot puppets have traveled to 21 congregations to raise diversity awareness. Sometimes she was paid for her expenses of bringing them.

In February 2005, she announced at a clergy retreat that she planned to start a business, Material Witness.

Soon requests came for stoles, paraments and banners, including a 12-foot welcome banner for Pilgrim Firs, the regional UCC camp at Port Orchard.

Often hymns are starting points for pieces.

When the Rev. Tammy Bell was installed at Colville First Congregational Church, Deborah made banners representing the hymn, "De Colores," about singing of the colors of people and the earth.

For Westminster Congregational UCC, where she is a member, she made banners for its 125th anniversary, a sunburst representing "Morning Has Broken" and a nighttime one representing, "Now the Day Is Over."

For World Communion Sunday 2005, she delivered seven new paraments to the Newport UCC.

At Newport, the Rev. Deb Allen gave a blessing for the departing banners, which the church had used for 20 years, given as a memorial of a church member. The family agreed to pass them on to a mission church.

The new 18-by-24-inch paraments, which represent liturgical seasons, celebrate generations and include the denomination's symbol, were draped over chairs in the

chancel. The old ones were hanging from the communion table.

"I found my visual voice, a colorful, bold assertion of faith," Deborah said. "All I create springs from my faith, my understanding of church and my concern about human needs."

"One need is for beauty, gaiety and gladness—antidotes to sullenness and discouragement," said Deborah, who was surprised in Haiti that people so poor and oppressed had such a love for art.

"Despite limited resources, Haitians turned anything—hubcaps, rusted manhole covers and cathedral walls—into art. They took bits, pieces and shreds of their lives and made them wildly glad art to cheer their souls and sell to tourists to make a living."

Looking out the windows of her studio, Deborah prays as she sews, she said: "I feel drawn into the holy, a co-creator with God, open to the Spirit guiding the art."

"My prayer may not be as intentional as prayers of iconographers, but I think prayerfully of hurricane and earthquake victims and about people I know. The fabric pulls me into prayer, stitching things together," she said cognizant of the metaphor of God as a mender.

Deborah reflects on designs and colors, thinking in gratitude of cotton growing in the fields, the pickers, the dyes used and the people who made the material.

"I use fabrics that have what I call a spark of the divine. Some are dazzling, and others may just have a gold streak. In my razzle-dazzle box are sparkly holographic fabrics—not appropriate for a season like Lent."

"I hope that what I do provides glimpses of glory," she said.

A brush with mortality, surviving breast cancer while at Cheney, led her to reprioritize her ministry and calling.

"I gave my life to God with whatever energy would come back after chemotherapy. Life energy is precious. I was scattering my energy. Now I'm gathering my life energy around something I'm passionate about doing," she said.

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