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By Mary Stamp

Felipe Gonzales weaves his business skills with nonprofit know-how to connect Guatemalan weavers and artisans with American consumers.

“My faith values of respecting human life and believing everyone has the right to live in dignity are part of my philosophy of creating a win-win-win business environment for producers in Guatemala, people in between and consumers in the United States,” he said in a recent interview about Moonflower Enterprises.

“Everyone needs to benefit and reach their goals socially, economically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally,” said Felipe, who attends the Hispanic church at St. Joseph Catholic in Spokane.

From his Catholic heritage and his study of other faiths, he believes all religions promote self-realization.

Born in Anchorage, Alaska, when his father was in the Air Force, Felipe settled near his grandfather’s ranch in Austin, Texas, when he was in his early 20s in order to become familiar with his family roots.



Felipe Gonzales promotes fair trade and sells Guatemalan artisans handcrafts.

## Readers can foster fruitbearing by gifts to The Fig Tree

The season of National Public Radio appeals for funds has just passed. The Fig Tree likens its funding approach to that of public broadcasting: We are available free and ask that readers help us by sending donations to support publishing the content they appreciate.

Building on the rationale offered by public broadcasting, we urge to join those who already are sponsors and to renew their support during May.

If each reader who does not yet sponsor gives even a small gift to start them on the donation path, we would welcome that. We invite each church and nonprofit to give at least a nominal amount. We are a seed-based nonprofit, and can grow with even the slightest feeding.

To our ongoing church, nonprofit and individual sponsors, we say, “Thanks!” and remind you to renew your support at the same level or—considering rising prices—a bit higher level.

Join in making it possible to share the stories that are the fruits of faithfulness and that in turn inspire others to live the values they profess. Send in the form on page 2.

## Colville pastor facilitates a ministry that values and uses gifts of all members

Tammy Bell returned last year to minister in her home church, First Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC) in Colville, where at 16 she preached her first sermon.

There she facilitates a ministry that values each member’s gifts and dreams as it reaches out to partners in Germany, children in foster homes, peace activists, high school youth and domestic violence victims.

“We are more than a church at the corner of Maple and Second. We are interconnected. All we do here ripples outside our walls into the world,” she said.

For example, she wove insight from her recent visit with people in Tegel Prison in Berlin into use of Matthew 25 as a theme for outreach last Advent.

Traveling to Berlin in November with Janet Kovalchik, church moderator, Tammy represented the Pacific Northwest UCC Conference at the 25th anniversary of the national UCC’s partnership with the Union of Evangelical

Churches in Germany.

At Tegel, she asked three English-speaking prisoners about their lives. They told how they miss their families and work to send money to them. When she returned, she received a letter from a prisoner.

Inspired by that contact, she invited her church “to be Christ to their community.” Using Matthew 25’s call to see Christ in vulnerable people, members set up five action centers:

- Beneath a tree with gingerbread-children ornament tags—specifying items for overnight bags for local foster children—people put such gifts as pajamas, socks, school supplies and diapers. A red poster by it read: “I was homeless, and you took care of me.”

- By a tree with tags picturing items for the food bank, people left food. A poster said, “I was hungry, and you gave me food.”

- Blanket tags on another tree invited fleece blanket donations

to be distributed through a local agency, Youth.com, which works with homeless and runaway youth. The poster read, “I was cold, and you gave a blanket to keep me warm.”

Children who made eight fleece blankets at a slumber party brought them forward as an offering one Sunday, setting them in a life-size manger surrounded by bales of hay.

- A center marked, “I was lonely, and you visited me,” was the collection point for baskets of gifts for home-bound members.

- The fifth center was a bulletin board on a room divider. On purple stars, people wrote prayers for “self, community and God’s world,” including blessings in letters to Tegel prisoners. The prayers were read at the candlelight Christmas Eve service.

Connecting activities inside church walls with life outside is central to Tammy’s ministry.

For her installation in April 2005, composer, performer and storyteller Ken Medema of San Francisco wove the congrega-

### Ministry connects with community and world

### Religion News Briefs

## Around the World

Ecumenical News International, PO Box 2100  
CH - 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland Tel: +41-22 791 6111  
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## REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

On April 5, 42 national religious leaders announced in Washington, D.C., their endorsement of the National Declaration by Religious Leaders to Address Violence Against Women, prepared by the FaithTrust Institute in Seattle.

The declaration is being distributed to battered-women's programs, so women accessing services will know that their faith community supports them in seeking safety for themselves and their children.

"When people of faith join other community leaders to address domestic violence, we will see ancient roadblocks turn into resources that save lives and bring

healing," said the Rev. Marie Fortune, founder of the institute, formerly the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence.

The declaration proclaims that "violence against women exists in all communities" and "is morally, spiritually and universally intolerable." It states that the leaders acknowledge that "our sacred texts, traditions and values have too often been misused to perpetuate and condone abuse."

Signers commit to work "toward a day when all women will be safe and abuse will be no more." They call for drawing!

Signers commit to work "toward

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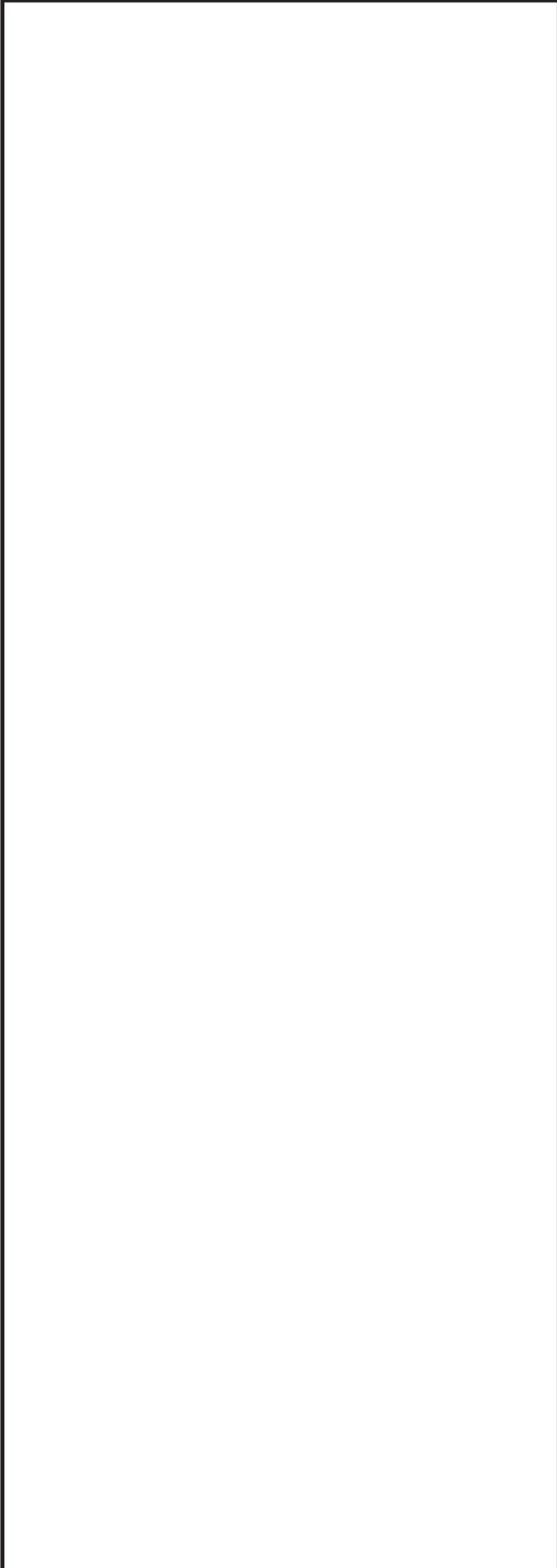


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**June 26—July 7, 2006**  
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After earning a bachelor's degree in business administration at the University of Texas at Austin—the same day his grandfather was buried—he met family members from Mexico he could not speak with, because he didn't know Spanish fluently.

So he traveled down the Pacific Coast in 1985 to learn Spanish, and wound up in Guatemala, where he learned the language and culture, and started volunteering with a Mayan nonprofit development organization, the Association for Economic, Educational and Cultural Development.

He worked with the organization from 1986 to 2001, doing rural development. When he sought financial partners in Spain, Canada and the United States, he would make sure they were "on the same wavelength" with values of the Mayan culture.

"It was clear we could not address the people's economic problems without also addressing health, education, legal, credit, religious and infrastructure needs," Felipe said.

**Befriending weavers** and artisans through this work, he would take their products to sell wholesale when he went to Austin once a year.

Finding it hard to market the goods while remaining in Guatemala and finding the market in Texas saturated, Felipe moved to Spokane, where his brother lives.

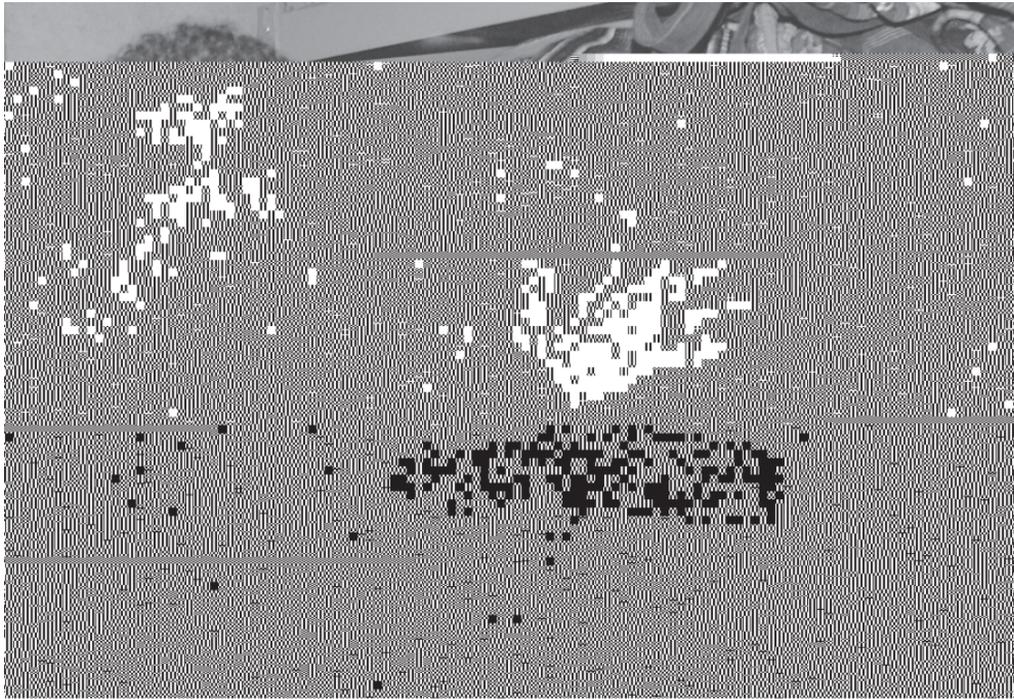
In 2001, he legally established Moonflower Enterprises to import products from Guatemalan friends. As part of sales, he educates people about Guatemalan culture, arts, history and humility.

"In turn, North Americans share their economic resources by purchasing products and learning about fair trade," he said.

**Through selling items** at shows, Felipe learned about the Fair Trade Federation and joined it in 2004.

Moonflower Enterprises is also a member of Weavers for Real Peace (WARP), the Asian, Hispanic, African and Native American Business Association (AHANA) and the Hispanic Business Professional Association. It is a founding member of the Northwest Fair Trade Network with five others in Eastern Washington and North Idaho.

"I run the business like a non-



**Felipe Gonzales keeps a supply of woven, carved and other Guatemalan handicrafts in stock.**

profit, channeling 80 to 90 percent of the proceeds back to the artisans," he said.

Felipe is able to do that because he is not dependent on the sales for his income. He writes and manages grants for the Kalispel Tribe to earn a living, and does the shows evenings and weekends.

**He finds similarities** between the histories of the Kalispel and the Mayans, and the issues they face in the globalized economy.

Spanish conquistadors in Latin America had the same effect that English and French traders and settlers had in this region. Both tried to destroy the indigenous people's cultures.

"Indians were subjected to poverty in remote areas on the worst land. Since the tribes established casinos, they have gained a way to generate income and have gained power to maintain their sovereignty and culture," he explained.

**About 70 percent** of the people in Guatemala live in poverty, many of them in extreme poverty, Felipe said. Fair trade helps them gain power and maintain their culture.

"As with poor people around the world, they can be educated and given things, but without a source of income, they will remain poor, unable to become self sufficient. Having a source of income gives them the dignity of using what they earn as they choose," he said.

The match with North America's consumer society means

Guatemalans can earn an income, and people in the United States can enjoy products that reflect Guatemalan culture, he added.

As orders and sales have increased, Felipe has created a catalogue and website, which he uses for retail and wholesale sales.

He recently launched an educational quarterly newsletter, El Petate. A "petate" is a mat for sitting or sleeping, symbolizing the matriarchal way of Mayan life, grounding a woman to the earth, her family and her community.

"The petate represents the rich, collective knowledge and norms guiding Mayan women and families," he said, pointing out that the newsletter is a means to connect North Americans with the Mayan culture.

**Felipe finds that poor** people in Guatemala oppose the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)—an extension of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), started 10 years ago for Mexico, the United States and Canada. Guatemala adopted CAFTA in 2005.

"The policies benefit large, multinational corporations, freeing them from paying taxes and complying with labor and environmental laws in host countries," he pointed out.

"The corporations pay low, slave wages in maquiladoras—factories. North American and other countries send materials to factories and use the cheap labor to produce products to sell at cheap prices in discount stores," Felipe said.

**The extensive poverty** means people will take any job, even one with "subhuman wages," he said. They work long shifts without overtime pay in conditions that would not be accepted in the United States.

Because the maquiladoras draw young workers and women in Guatemala, fewer learn to weave.

"The people are losing their skills in traditional arts, because they have no time to weave with the long hours at the factories," Felipe said.

"Recent protests against the U.S. immigration law proposals relate to this exploitation," he said. "The only options for the extremely poor are to work

at maquiladoras or come to the United States seeking better lives for their families."

Felipe added that some Latin American countries, tired of human rights abuses and poor working conditions, have elected leaders on the left, because of "seeing the destructive results of neo-liberal policies—which are considered neo-conservative in U.S. politics—policies that make the rich richer.

"Latin Americans' trying something new is spreading fear among U.S. politicians whose policies to control are wreaking havoc in Latin America," he said.

**Moonflower Enterprises** plays a small role in the cycle, working with artisans and organizing coffee growers, Felipe said.

"I believe in taking teachings of faith and practicing them to find if they are valid," he commented.

"Moonflower Enterprises' philosophy is based on peace, justice and equality, believing that resources are to be shared," he said. "So we supported victims of Hurricane Stan through a \$1,220 donation to 35 families in Santiago Atitlan whose homes were destroyed."

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# Call to peacemaking leads local young man to Guatemala, Colombia

**By Stephanie Blumhagen**

The path Jon Phillips walks as he follows his faith-inspired call to peacemaking has led him to Central America, South America and home again.

Active in local peacemaking, he joined the Presbyterian Guatemala Task Force on two trips and participated in a recent travel seminar to Colombia.

Jon feels he has always been a peacemaker.

"I've always tried to stop conflicts. Even as a child I didn't like to see my friends fighting. I'd say, 'You guys, you shouldn't do that,'" he said.

In elementary school, he was an acolyte at Manito Methodist Church. Later his family began attending Manito Presbyterian Church. After high school, he studied architecture at Montana State University in Bozeman.

"In my fourth year of architecture school, I did a travel-study semester in Europe," Jon said.

Visiting Geneva and Edinburgh, he reflected on Presbyterian history and his own faith.

"Praying in a side chapel at the cathedral in Geneva where John Calvin preached, I understood for the first time the connection between my individualistic faith and the saints who preceded me since the time of Christ," he said.

Back in the United States, Jon became involved in campus ministries, and his calling became clearer.

"In 2004, I felt God calling me into peacemaking. Now, it's not really a choice," he said. "I can either follow God's leading and accept the call or lose my faith."

In choosing God, Jon chooses what comes with the calling, knowing "Christianity isn't safe, easy or always fun."

After graduating from college and returning to Spokane, he attended the 2003 missions fair at First Presbyterian Church, where he learned about the Guatemala Task Force from Ron and Marianne Frase, missionaries and members of Manito Presbyterian. They told about the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest's partnership with the Asociacion Presbyterios Maya K'ekchi in Guatemala.

Their description of it as a relational ministry and a ministry of presence—as opposed to a mission of going to do something for people—intrigued Jon, who had not seen what poverty looked like in two-thirds of the world.

With the Frases' encouragement, Jon signed on for the trip and participated in three training sessions before going to Guatemala with a delegation of 12.

"A U.S. Presbyterian mission



**Jon Phillips with two Guatemalan men**

co-worker and a young adult volunteer there traveled with us and translated," he said.

Jon returned to Guatemala in 2004 as one of two Inland Northwest Presbytery delegates for a partnership-networking meeting between the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the National Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Guatemala (IENPG) on Lake Amatitlan just south of the capital, Guatemala City.

Jon was taken by the contrast between the beauty and the sadness he encountered there.

"An incredibly beautiful setting, with amazing people and incredible hospitality were juxtaposed with the horrors of their history of genocide and the violence that continued until the war ended in 1996. Parts of Guatemala are still run by mob violence," he said.

The poverty Jon had seen in Spokane was nothing compared to the poverty of people who live on less than a dollar a day in shacks with dirt floors and chickens running around.

"Children who are starving and have a glazed look grow up without any shoes," he said. "I'd never seen that before. I'd also never seen people with massive physical defects that could have been picked up early and treated."

Jon recalls a shy young man who had severe facial and bodily disfigurement and a young woman who, at the age of 22, looked like an eight-year-old. A doctor traveled with their group and performed medical checkups.

The delegation also distributed reading glasses donated by a Spokane Lions Club.

"For as many people as we helped see just a bit when they read, we turned away many people we couldn't help, people who probably have vision problems worse than mine. There aren't any services there. We take medical services for granted here in the United States," he said.

Jon planned to go to Guatemala again in February 2006, but in October 2005 he received a letter. The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program and Jean Marie Peacock, vice moderator of the 216th Presbyterian General Assembly invited him to participate in the 2006 Presbyterian Church Young Adult Peacemaking Travel Seminar to Colombia on the theme, "Rebuilding the Household of God – Understanding Globalization, Peacemaking and Nonviolence in Colombia."

"I had less than two weeks before the deadline to apply. It was rushed, but I had the sense I should go," Jon said.

Although he knew about Plan Colombia and knew people working for human rights were being persecuted and assassinated, he didn't know the scope.

Jon went to Colombia with 10 others, including Jean Marie. They

met with human rights workers and young adults from the Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia who are working for justice.

He learned that Colombia is in a state of turmoil because guerilla groups, such as FARC—Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia guerrilla organization—paramilitary forces and Colombian military forces are continually at war.

The group spoke with Presbyterian peacemaking companions, U.S. citizens who live among Colombian people and accompany human rights workers when Colombian government officials question them.

One man, Mauricio, particularly inspired Jon. As a law student in Baranquilla, Mauricio had been involved in human rights work. The second brigade of the Colombian Army accused him of being third in command of FARC. Imprisoned for four months, he couldn't leave his cell for fear of being assassinated. His grades and law school records had been erased by the paramilitaries who infiltrated the university faculty and administration.

After being released from prison, Mauricio was forced into exile in Geneva, Switzerland. There he had a comfortable life, more schooling and a good job, but he knew that wasn't his place, Jon said. So Mauricio went home and continued to work for human rights despite persecution.

He told the young adults that many people don't have the choice whether they will live under violence.

"Every day there is fighting around them. Mauricio had the choice, but knew if he was going to follow God, he had to choose to be among his people. That struck

me deeply," Jon said.

Young adults on the trip stayed with host families. On the second-to-last day they left their host families and flew from Baranquilla back to Bogota.

"As we arrived in the airport, we found that Mauricio was trying to get a friend, who had been in prison with him, out of the country. After his friend had been released from prison, two human rights workers accompanying him were assassinated," Jon said.

Reflecting on the poverty he encountered in Guatemala and Colombia, Jon said: "If we as a society wanted to, we could do something about that poverty, but we choose not to, because of how our political structure and economy work.

"Too many simply say, 'We can't turn back now,'" he said.

It's hard for Jon "as a good taxpayer" to realize he is part of that mindset.

"When I buy a shirt I now know how that affects people elsewhere. I have seen the people it affects," he said. "I don't know how to deal with it. I struggle with it every day and may struggle with it for the rest of my life."

Jon meets regularly with the Guatemala Task Force and the Presbytery's Peacemaking Network. He has given presentations on his experience in Colombia at some Presbyterian churches and at the Eastern Washington Legislative Conference.

He is still discerning where his calling to peacemaking will take him next.

"I don't know if I'm waiting for God, or if God is waiting for me, but I trust that God will lead me to where I'm supposed to be," Jon said.

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## Tax lawyer puts his skills to use with partner church in Romania

After years of using his legal skills helping the Internal Revenue Service collect taxes, Mark Bohe decided to use those skills in Christian outreach.

He first found work-related outlets—providing legal services for Native Americans, representing poor people on tax problems and helping middle-class people file bankruptcy because of medical costs.

He then found a way that connects two Spokane congregations with Hungarian Unitarian and Reformed churches in Romania.

Now he is back into tax work with the State of Washington Department of Revenue, which encourages him to continue his outreach activities outside work. He commutes between Olympia and Spokane to keep up the local- and partner-church connections.

For Mark, the ties with Hungarian Unitarian and Reformed churches touch his family roots. His father's family were Hungarian Unitarian Christians.

Because his father taught at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Mark attended the Air Force Chapel growing up. He met his wife, Louise, at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Both graduated in history in 1979. He then earned a juris doctorate in law in 1981 and a master of law in taxation in 1992 at the University of Denver. He became an attorney for the Internal Revenue Service District Counsel's Office, eventually transferring to the Seattle district.

The Bohes, who also have Methodist roots, dropped out of the church in college. They began to reconnect with their faith when they were older.

Louise was a social security adjudicator for Oklahoma before they moved to Seattle in 1989. Now she manages disability determination services with the Department of Social and Health Services. Her job made it possible for him to step aside from employment for a while to focus on outreach.

After moving to Spokane three years ago, they began attending the Unitarian Universalist Church. That church has a partnership with a Unitarian church in the 95-percent Unitarian village of Felsorakos, Transylvania, in Romania.

As Mark and Louise realized they were more Unitarian Christians, they joined Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ (UCC), but continued to work on the partnership.

After a September 2004 two-week visit to Felsorakos with Julie and Jerry Jose, they became involved with the Universalist Partner Church Council, formed



Mark Bohe

in Bedford, Mass., in 1992 to reach churches repressed under the communist dictatorship.

Mark found during a one-week homestay with the Kiss family in Felsorakos that the customs of the people there were identical with those of his family.

Mark and Louise went to Romania again for two weeks in July before his 30-day fall visit.

When Mark learned his legal skills might help secure clean water for the village, he began helping them secure a grant from the European Union.

He contacted the U.S. embassy and State Department and communicated with Istvan Nagy, the mayor of the city of Barot and five nearby villages, including Felsorakos.

Mark worked in Barot and Felsorakos for 30 days last November to draft English documents and facilitate a community-based needs assessment to develop a plan of action to help the village organize a community plan and re-establish their tradition of meeting and making decisions.

While the mayor had met stumbling blocks, Mark's letters helped those blocks disappear.

In November, the mayor of Barot gave him an office and the school principal gave him access to a computer system.

Mark learned enough Hungarian to talk with villagers without a translator. They could understand him, because he learned Hungarian from them and had their accent.

"I contacted water experts and checked the springs. Under the communist government, coal miners and factories dumped chemicals into the ground, and the

government diverted the river.

"Felsorakos" means "upper crayfish." Water there once was pristine and full of crayfish.

"The communist government destroyed the water table while in power 30 years," Mark said.

After World War II, Transylvania, which had been part of Hungary, was given to Romania. The communist government allowed open-pit coal mines in the area to produce low-grade coal that needed to be refined to be more usable. Factories that refined poured effluents into the groundwater.

Mark found that to develop a spring five kilometers from Felsorakos, to pipe the water there and develop the water system would cost \$275,000. A European Union grant will pay 80 percent, and the community can pick up 20 percent.

Because the spring is on land that had been nationalized and then returned to the village, Mark helped deal with legalities related to the land ownership.

The next stumbling block was to test the water. While it met Romanian standards, the EU required western biological analysis, purity tests and volume assessment to determine if there was enough for the 2,200 villagers. The test cost \$2,500.

Westminster Congregational UCC collected that amount.

The UU Partner Church Council then asked Mark to chair the Standing Committee for the North American Assessment Process for partner churches in Romania and the Philippines. In addition, he was the attorney for the council for a while, reviewing their bylaws. He still serves as their

registered agent, but no longer does legal work for them since starting work with the State of Washington.

In Spokane, he is forging connections between Westminster's Outreach Committee and the local Unitarian Partner Church Committee.

Mark hopes to see among churches here what he saw in Transylvania.

When the government tried to force people to turn against religion, it made them turn more to traditional Christian values, and Christians worked together.

"The government arrested Unitarian ministers and anyone meeting in groups of more than three. Instead of the church being wiped out, people became more devout. The effort to squelch faith backfired," Mark learned.

"The only thing that sustained people under repression was their faith in Jesus Christ and in the one God. It gave their lives meaning and hope. It kept people together," he said.

"In Transylvania, I came in touch with my belief in the resurrected Jesus. Every day, there are reasons to turn from Jesus to fit in. Realizing how Jesus lived his life, I decided to follow his footsteps, even if it meant earning less income," Mark said.

One reason the Unitarians survived was their protection by the Hungarian Reformed Church and Catholic priests. Later, when Reformed Christians were persecuted, Unitarians protected them, he said.

Two kilometers from Felsorakos, the village of Olasztelek is 95 percent Reformed Church of Hungary, as is most of Barot. That church relates to the Reformed roots of the United Church of Christ.

Reformed Church people in Barot have asked him to help them connect with Dutch and German Reformed churches and the United Church of Christ.

Before the repression, churches fought each other, but they stood up for each other under repression.

"The only institutions that can stand up for crumbling American values are the churches. In American affluence, we can lose our values," Mark said.

So awareness from his tax work that laws are not designed to help the poor or middle class also motivates Mark's outreach.

"Tax laws tend to concentrate wealth, hurting family values and sustainable jobs, transferring jobs overseas," he said, "counter to Christian values, middle-class job stability and caring for the poor. In my work with the IRS, I saw few people with tax problems able to rise out of being paupers.

"It's hard for attorneys to serve poor or middle-class people, because few can afford an attorney," he said.

Living in a neighborhood with many women rearing children in poverty—working at more than one job but not earning enough to make ends meet or have time with their families—Mark finds few options for resolution of those issues in either political party.

"Poverty is a religious issue. Christ's teachings are about accountability," he continued. "Jesus reached out to the outcasts and associated with tax collectors, like me. Jesus accepted all and made a place for all in society. People need decent housing and medical benefits. Too often medical emergencies erode people's assets so they lose everything.

"Christian values tie us to an expectation of civility and caring about each other, a commitment to others," he added. "Civilized society is based on our commitment to care for the welfare of others. We are now losing social structures that once assured that.

"If to maximize profits we reduce people to 32 hours per week to deny them benefits, the short-term savings have a greater cost in quality of life and for civilized society. Jesus poured himself out to the point he lost his life. We need that commitment to maintain U.S. society," Mark said.

For information, call 624-0658 or email mark.bohe@comcast.net.



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# Indigenous young people recognize need for internet communication

a 2004 training program of Third World Majority, an Oakland-based media organization.

From that program, Twa-le became sensitive to how profound an effect the information society and global revolution in economics, technology and social development have on indigenous cultures and communities, most of whom live in poverty without basics of adequate food, water, shelter, electricity and infrastructure.

Using resources from the program in Oakland, Twa-le helped teach a winter-quarter class at the Spokane Tribal College on "Native Americans and Film," reviewing the portrayal of Native Americans in films and on TV.

She taught how media depict ethnic communities and women, and how that affects young people.

"The program seeks to turn inner-city African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and women from self hate," she said. "On the reservation, while many have TV, few have satellites, so most have limited access other than viewing videos.

"Regardless, media, including videos, have power to mold who we think we are and what others think of us. Will we accept what is presented? Or will we stand up and change what is presented?"

"If young people do not see people like themselves in media, they feel invisible. Racism today is subtle. Overt stereotypes may be gone against Native Americans, African Americans and Latinos," Twa-le said. "Many feel racism does not exist if it does not target them. Now it targets Muslims. We need to be in solidarity with who suffers.

"We need to be aware of majority-culture assumptions that are accepted as the norm," she said.

Those influence through subtle censorship and the invasion of privacy.

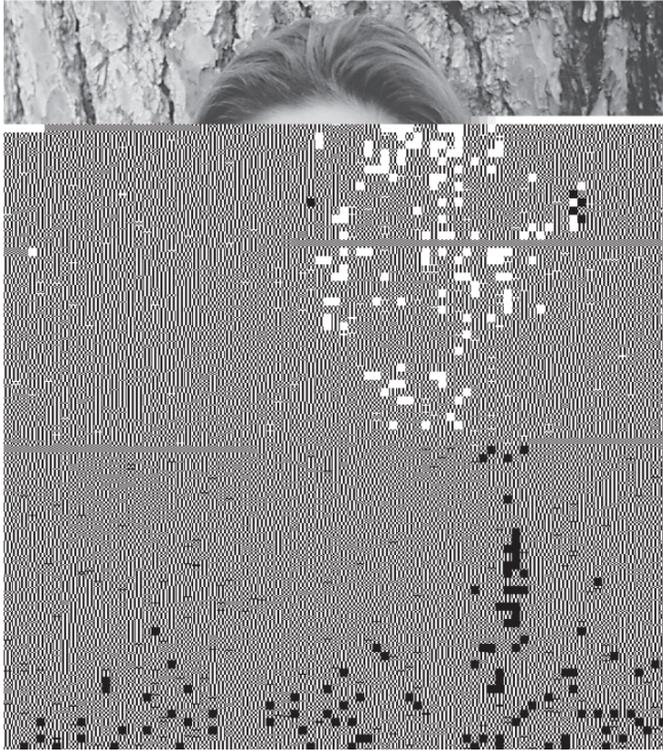
Twa-le now realizes how daily war coverage is presented in a way that desensitizes people to the destruction and death of war.

In addition, she has now knows that people receive internet ads geared to their interests, based on scanning of words they use in searches and emails.

Despite the potential negative impact of media, Twa-le is committed to the youth media project because she knows what a lack of knowledge means for people.

"Media used right provide us with new ways to learn about each other," she said.

"Our people have been kept from information on issues," Twa-le said. "In my studies at the University of Washington, I



Twa-le Abrahamson

gained access to many sources. Most who stay on the reservation believe only what history books say. They do not have full access to information about native history, our own tribal history or even effects of uranium mine contamination on the reservation."

Twa-le grew up on the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene reservations and in Tacoma as her mother, Deb Abrahamson, moved for 20 years with jobs in social work.

After graduating in 1997 from Rogers High School in Spokane, Twa-le began studies at Spokane Community College, transferring in 1999 to the University of Washington, graduating in 2002.

She studied environmental research, focusing on reservation streams, developing skills to deal with cleaning up uranium mines on the reservation to assist with work her mother has been doing for 12 years, first through Dawn Watch and since 2002 through the SHAWL Society.

"Environmental and health research has been done for other mines, but we were off the radar of researchers," she said.

Commitment to that research and because her grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, her mother, sister, brother and father live on the reservation, she moved back to the reservation with her eight-year-old daughter, Maliah.

Twa-le said that even though both of her grandparents were fluent in their languages, she does not even know the Spokane language.

"They did not teach my mother, because of their experiences in boarding schools," Twa-le said. "They did not want their children to go through what they did.

As a result, there are fewer than 15 fluent speakers left. The tribe is scrambling to preserve the language, using technology to preserve the speakers' stories in formats young people can access. Reduced life span from mining also contributed to the loss of elders and language."

Three years ago, Washington signed an agreement with 10 tribes so native speakers could gain credentials to teach in high school and colleges. Five in the Spokane tribe now have credentials, and four are teaching from Headstart to college classes.

"There is intensive effort in our schools to teach the language. In the second grade, my daughter studies Salish and Spanish three days a week," she said.

Some want to teach only Salish—the common language from Montana into mid-Washington. Despite speaking different dialects of Salish, Coeur d'Alenes, Spokanes and Colvilles can understand each other, Twa-le said. The Spokane tribe is using software, CD's and interactive computer programs to do that.

Because people who know the language are not adept at computers, students in the tribal school language program are learning both technology and language, so they can develop software to preserve the language.

Twa-le affirmed the need to balance technology with traditions when contacts at the Third World Majority program in Oakland led to her selection as one of 30 young leaders in the North American Media Justice delegation to the Indigenous Peoples Forum at the World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS) in November in Tunis, Tunisia.

Organizers of the forum included the WSIS International Indigenous Committee, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, UNESCO and other partners.

From sharing their experiences and challenges, the indigenous young people there realized the need to increase international indigenous connectivity. So they explored the viability of a portal, a web presence and other channels for exchanging information and resources on an ongoing basis.

"Some government leaders were open to the proposal for an international portal," Twa-le said. "In Canada and Australia, the governments run such portals.

"In our report to the WSIS, we called for an international indigenous portal to close the information gap, urging use of technology to help indigenous communities revitalize languages and cultures, and to increase communication among indigenous peoples on human rights, education, health, social and economic development, governance, women's issues, youth and elder services, disability issues, security and public safety, conflict resolution and peace building.

"People need more say on content and more access," Twa-le said.

"Our reservation has good access, compared to others that still have areas without power. Those with phones have dial-up connections, and schools have high-speed internet," she said. "Alaskan tribes who have no phones use radio programs in their

own languages."

At a session on intellectual property rights, Twa-le realized the need for less copyright and more access to software. A technology expo showed high-tech security devices like retinal scanning and bicycle-powered computers to spread access to areas without electricity.

"Internet access determines access to markets and opportunities, but we must ask: What do we give up to gain access? What if we have to go into debt to gain access? What do we have to sacrifice to connect?" Twa-le asked.

"Technology tools are key to economic improvement, efficient communication, helping small organizations connect with people on the national and international levels. We have to find ways to strengthen our organization with minimal funding," she said.

Some question the necessity and worth of access, because indigenous communities have to learn new languages unless the technologies can be adapted to their languages.

"If it's not in our languages, technology may take too much from our lives," Twa-le said. "For indigenous people worldwide, loss of language is the most pressing issue next to poverty."

Technology can be a tool to preserve language, provide economic opportunities, record stories and traditions, and give people a voice.

So Twa-le, who grew up Catholic, focuses on traditional spirituality to sustain her motivation to do the media project.

"I believe my ancestors, who fought for our right to be here, guide me to go where I need to be, so we can do the work even with inadequate funding," she said.

Twa-le gives up material desires to do what needs to be done, trusting the project's needs will be met because it is crucial.

For information, call 258-4313 or email shawlsociety@yahoo.com.

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Removing the contents and gutting a hurricane-damaged house in New Orleans to its frame, a team of 13 students and five adult leaders from Koinonia House in Pullman experienced Lent in a tangible way during spring break in March.

"We saw first hand the consequences of pollution, poverty, incompetence, greed and the violence of neglect," said the Rev. Walt Miller, a retired Presbyterian minister and Hospice chaplain who accompanied them. "All around there was evidence of crucifixion."

The students saw also signs of resurrection as they joined thousands of students on spring break from colleges and universities around the country—including Whitworth College and Gonzaga University—church groups and relief agencies "becoming the hands, arms, legs and eyes of Christ," he said.

"Amid the mold, dust and debris, we experienced the Spirit of the living Christ, and were blessed in so many ways," continued Walt, for whom this was the first experience of doing disaster relief in the United States. He has previously gone on mission trips to Central America.

The group worked with a program set up by Presbyterian Disaster Relief to help with Gulf Coast relief. They lived in a camp in Luling, La., and worked on the home of Connie and Ronald Andry in the Mid City part of New Orleans, a diverse, middle-class neighborhood.

"Their family had evacuated the day before Katrina hit and breached levees, flooding their neighborhood with 10 feet of water for two weeks," Walt said. "The house had been declared salvageable, and the owner decided to rebuild, which meant removing all contents and gutting it to the frame."

Students and sponsors returned feeling they made a small difference and that they were "ministered to," said Walt, who is on the Common Ministry Council and serves as a resident theologian for students.

They experienced the koinonia—community—that Koinonia House is about as the Common Ministry at Washington State University.

"They experienced koinonia as hard work, commitment, fellowship and caring, humor, conversation and common cause that bonded the group in ways only mission trips with a purpose can do," he added. "We learned to love each other and we became family."

They also experienced koinonia with and felt blessed by their connection with the family who owned the house.

"They were present each day and spent quality time in conversation with us," Walt said. "They helped us sort through stuff to save, told us stories, shared their grief and shared their love and deep appreciation."

Connie's brother Greg lived in Uptown, unroofed and less affected by Katrina. After evacuating to Baton Rouge, Con-

nie now has a FEMA trailer in Greg's driveway.

Greg is now an unemployed elementary school teacher—his school has yet to re-open—and a professional jazz musician. He was with us part of every day, and spent one day riding with three van loads to the 9th Ward.

"Dropping off I-10 we entered a wasteland of wreckage, house after house, block after block, mile after mile of devastation," Walt said. "Houses were on top of houses on top of cars—houses in the streets, water lines to the roofs."

"As we drove through what looked like a war zone, our van became silent. We were speechless. These were not merely houses, they were homes. Families had lived and loved and died here. Now they were gone in the great post Katrina diaspora that has scattered them all around the United States," he said.

"The witness of this family God had given us—Connie, Ronald and Greg—ministered to us. We received the greatest blessing. On the last day, after we finished sweeping, cleaning and final details of our de-construction work, we gathered in a circle inside the gutted house.

One student led a reflection and a prayer of blessing. Then Connie spoke.

Walt said her eloquent and profound words left everyone in tears. She spoke of depression and indecision about what to do with the house the first time she saw it when she returned.

"She spoke of the despair of seeing her home filled with mold and debris broken into a thousand pieces. Then, she said, there was a transformation. On the second and third day she began to see the possibilities. She turned a corner. She began to be filled with hope and gratitude. She said that God had sent us to her. Now the house was blessed from the ground up, just as it had been blessed when it was finished the first time," Walt recounted.

Connie said: "You're all family now. This is your home, too. You all have to come back and spend some time here."

"We will," Walt said. "Whenever you meet the living Christ in the love and suffering of his people, you have to go back and meet him again."

WSU nursing student Marnie Miller-keas said she discovered that "although we are all living in the same country, the devastation in the lives of people we met robbed them of so much privilege that the rest of the country still enjoys."

Dustin Nieman, another student, said being there challenged his "boundaries of comfort" and has opened him up more to other people.

The experience helped student Robbie Schott realize "the goodness in others" and "my own potential to help others."

Immediately after Hurricane Katrina last fall, students at K-House had collected donations to send through the United Methodist Committee on Relief.

For information, call 332-2611.

## Whitworth class ties art and psychology to re-roofing hurricane-damaged houses

Whitworth College offered a Jan Term service-learning class that combined art and psychology as a framework for 18 students to spend two weeks helping re-roof homes in Gulfport and Biloxi, Miss., and learn about an intentional community in Jackson, Miss.

Gordon Wilson, chair of the art department, taught the course with Andrea Donahoe, professor of psychology. The Rev. Stephanie Noble-Beans of the chaplain's office joined them on the trip.

"I taught about art of the South, African-American and self-taught artists. I also worked to improve students' visual observation skills, so they could absorb more from the experience," Gordon said.

Andrea encouraged students to look at how people respond to crises, their resilience and the social and family ties that help support them.

The group stayed with 100 other volunteers at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Gulfport and accepted assignments given each day by the Presbyterian Disaster Response Assistance organizer there. Local churches informed the organizer of needs—people with no insurance or not enough insurance.

"I have never participated in any disaster relief like this, so

I had never seen anything like the destruction we saw," Gordon said. "Along the coast, all that was left of some homes was a concrete slab.

"We could clearly see the difference between the haves and the have-nots, in that the have-nots experienced more damage and had less means to recover," said Gordon, a member of Covenant United Methodist Church.

He was also frustrated to see in Jackson an ingrained segregated education system with whites in private church schools and blacks in public schools, rather than hav-

ing them grow up together.

Three of his art students who went to Mississippi are in his spring class and working on art relating to their experience. He is working on his fourth drawing related to the experience and has a summer grant to do mixed-media art related to the experience of the disaster and the social issues.

After some of the students who went during Jan Term returned, they recruited other students to return there to work with them on disaster rebuilding during spring break, he said.

For information, call 777-4568.

### Speaker tells of Timbuktu

The Rev. Nuh Yattara from the Kel Tamasheq ethnic group in Mali West Africa, will speak at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 2, at The Service Station, 9315 N. Nevada St., giving an historical and religious overview of Timbuktu, how he became a Christian and describing his ministry of bringing humanitarian aid through Spokane-based mission agency Partners International.

For information, call 343-4071.

Clark Carlton, a scholar on early Christianity and the Eastern Orthodox Church, will speak on Eastern Orthodox Christianity at 4 p.m., Thursday, May 4, at Seeley Mudd Chapel at Whitworth College.

He will also speak at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, in Spokane and at Christ the Savior Antiochian Orthodox Church in Spokane Valley. For information, call 535-7532.



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## Meetings, respect and action can bridge Christian diversity

Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in February at Porto Alegre, Brazil, expressed a much needed solidarity with Protestant and Orthodox Christians in the WCC for deepening engagement to serve the poor. They said it well.

Michael Ntumu of Ghana, a leader of the World Pentecostal Council, suggested that if the full body of Christ—Orthodox, Catholics, Protestants, Evangelicals and Pentecostals—were together, “we would be a spiritual colossus in the hands of God. Nothing could hinder what we could accomplish!”

The Rev. Geoff Tunnicliffe, a Canadian leader of the World Evangelical Alliance, said, “If we ignore the world, we betray God’s Word. In a world of pain, hate and struggle, we affirm that the only solution is God’s transforming grace.”

While ecclesiastical structures and a history of divisions keep the WEA and WCC separate, he believes they can work together

on common concerns, such as genocide in Northern Uganda, social justice and the United Nations’ Millennium Goals.

Based on Luke 35’s reference to disciples catching many fish, Michael observed: “Even though we fish in boats—churches—with different labels, we are still partners. We belong to one family on the same path.

“That Christians are split by distrust is sad,” he said, describing divisions between younger and older churches. “Now 100 years have passed. The children have matured. Pentecostal churches are the fastest growing in the world. It’s time for churches to extend their hands to each other and drop our acrimony and bitterness.”

Believing that Pentecostals need the social gospel and ecumenical Christians need the Pentecostal emphasis on proclaiming the gospel, he urges Pentecostal and WCC-related churches to meet at the world, national, regional and local levels to bring that vision into reality.

The Rev. Norberto Saracco, pastor of the Good News Evangelical Church in Buenos Aires, said as Evangelical and Pentecostal churches have been meeting to deepen unity in Latin America and act on behalf of people who are struggling, they are gaining appreciation for Christians in the ecumenical movement.

He calls for walking hand and hand, recognizing common belief but not glossing over real divisions. He is concerned that diversity and plurality, values from Protestant history, “drift us toward fragmentation and polarization. For Evangelical churches, unity comes from their faithfulness to God’s Word and mission.”

Norberto hopes Latin American ecumenism of God’s people walking together will break mainstream ecumenism out of its inertia, because millions of Christians have no understanding of the divisions.

Norberto offers some ways for evangelical and WCC churches to relate:

- Regard each other with respect;

- Recognize how ecumenical brothers and sisters have risked their lives as witnesses to Jesus Christ’s justice and truth;

- Break down the prejudice of treating others as sects or a threat;

- Realize the religious shift from the Northern to the Southern Hemisphere.

- See the common challenges as impoverished people, pillaged lands and societies in bondage to sin;

- Accept diversity as an expression of God’s grace, recognizing that there are different ways of being church, and

- Accept one another without reservation, without dividing churches into first- and second-class churches.

He concluded with questions: “Suppose we give the Spirit a chance? Is this not time for a new Pentecost?”

Norberto believes “only a Spirit-filled church will see racial, sexual, economic and ecclesiastical barriers come down.”

May we meet, respect and act.

**Mary Stamp - editor**

## Myths surrounding the culture of war become a type of religion

Why is it that on Sundays many people celebrate the Prince of Peace and then pursue actively or inactively the drumbeat of war the moment they leave the sanctuary and descend the church steps?

What hypocrisy has enveloped our minds and actions?

War is hell, and we know it. Our gut feelings come from the grim horror of carnage and destruction perpetrated on behalf of the “war god” whose worship demands continual human sacrifice and unparalleled human suffering.

In a new publication, “War Is a Force that Gives Meaning,” author Chris Hedges cites what some believe with passion: “Although war is evil, it makes the world understandable. It gives life meaning and a reason for living. The suffering is a human necessity.”

Some people think that only in conflict

do many people find a purpose in life.

Chris, however, dispels this analysis, which feeds the growing war culture. He says it is a myth generated and perpetuated by those in society who gain most from war.

The myth becomes a type of religion of its own, although the war culture is quick to deny that. Government and military leaders often seek to align themselves with churches and individuals who proclaim messianic certitude to fortify the myth.

Seeking the blessings of churches, the appeal to patriotism and the accompanying hype become necessary to the war culture’s effort to override revulsion to the carnage and horrors of war.

Regarding the current war in Iraq, it has become apparent that we have acted on flawed information.

Hubris can easily leads leaders to be

obsessed with war options as the solution to most conflicts.

The failure of intelligence to break through the “blame game” about weapons of mass destruction and nascent nuclear activities led to the invasion. Saddam Hussein’s removal, once completed, should have quelled the invasion.

The three competing factions—Shiites, Sunnis and Kurds—may yet bring Iraq together with a parliament and nation status without needing us.

A growing number of anti-war critics protest our continued occupation of Iraq. Rep. John Murtha’s plea to bring the troops home makes a hard sell for those in government determined to obtain “a win.”

Human life continues to be expendable, as if human slaughter is a rite of passage. The death toll of our forces is well over 2,300, with thousands more disabled by

loss of limbs and other wounds. The count of Iraqi civilians is in the tens to hundreds of thousands, and still rising.

Media have been asked to report only the approved news about the war. Truth cannot be silenced as we see the painful photos of soldiers lost each day.

Now Iran rises as a new focus with reports of enriched uranium development. Iran insists it is pursuing only energy needs. Our government insists that “all options are on the table.” The possibility of another war area is untenable.

Has the war culture no end in sight?

With the terrorists of Sept. 11 spread in every nation, we need to consider an approach other than to “win one.”

Vietnam might be a valuable learning experience for us at this juncture.

**Jo Hendricks  
Contributing editor**

Letter to the Editor

## Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

**Once a year a national magazine** devotes an issue to “What People Earn.” The lead article displays photos of celebrities and laborers with their annual incomes—from an actress who earns \$30 million to a housewife who earns \$0.

It makes me feel angry and poor because of the misalignment of our culture’s values. There is something radically wrong when a registered nurse earns \$45,000 and a football player, \$14 million. I feel poor because my income is considerably less than most listed.

Therein lies the problem. Wealth and poverty are relative and depend on the way a person feels rather than on any objective measurement.

Earning power says nothing about happiness, power or success in life. It is wrong to make a value judgment by the number of digits in a salary figure. The sales clerk in Hoboken may feel more fulfilled and joyous than a rock star. The Swedish statesman Dag Hammarskjöld said, “Never let success hide its emptiness from you.”

I am intrigued by a prayer in Proverbs 30:8-9: “Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me, lest I be full and deny thee . . . or lest I be poor and steal.” There are temptations connected with both poverty and wealth.

Compared to most of those listed in the magazine, I am dirt poor. Compared to most people in the world, I am fabulously rich. My prayer, then, must be: “Feed me with the food that is needful for me.”

**Wilbur Rees  
Shalom United Church of Christ  
—Richland**

**Boxes—wood, cardboard** or metal boxes—boxes for shoes, paper, dishwash-

ers, apples, books and paperclips come in all sizes and weights to carry all kinds of things. A building at Claremont School of Theology is sometimes referred to as “the God Box.”

Could we ever build a box large enough to contain God? I believe that is what we often do, whether we realize it. It’s only natural to think of God in terms we can grasp and comprehend. It’s also natural to want to think of God as believing exactly what we believe.

We want God to agree with us, whether the topic is the environment, abortion, homosexuality, war in Iraq, sex offenders living in our neighborhood or whatever other issue. We want God on our side because we want to believe we are right.

If God is not on our side, we are wrong and need to change. Change is not easy. So the tendency is to want to put God in a box we can define and carry around with us.

The growing edge of my faith journey is to realize that God is much bigger than any box I can imagine or control.

Therefore, I cannot and must not limit God to only what I can grasp or handle. My human, finite mind and heart are limited in their capacity. God is not.

Just because I can’t love someone doesn’t mean God can’t. Who defines salvation? Who decides who is inside and outside God’s grace? Who will or won’t go to heaven? I have stopped trying to put God in a box.

**The Rev. David Helseth  
Englewood Christian Church  
—Yakima**

**Laments are not the same thing** as complaints.

Complaints pitch their tents in the camp-

ground of self-concern. They are about not getting our way or putting up with people who are not nearly as charming, thoughtful or smart as we are. Complaints grate on the ears and weigh heavily on the heart of anyone who has to listen to them.

Complaints are dishonest because they disguise the real problem. After remedying one complaint, a new one pops up right behind the remedy. Complaints are annoying because there is little truth in them.

Laments, on the other hand, bring to expression the needs of the heart, the grief of the soul, a longing that will not be easily removed. Naming what ails us is powerful medicine. Naming what ails us before God allows the truth about us to be fully known, fully revealed.

Telling God the truth is always an act of faith and dependence. Lamenting is centered on deep trust in God to hear, to care and to restore. Lamenting is faithful because through it we are our truest selves.

**The Rev. Deb Allen  
Newport United Church of Christ**

**What splendor in fields** spring rain has brought! The wildflowers are exquisite! Everywhere you look you see Life!

As I drive home, I see calves scampering in the field while their mothers graze lazily. Birds call from tree-top perches. Frogs sing evening prayer from the meadow, while the old hoot owl keeps rhythm. The air smells clean, wet and green. What a wonderful time of year! Everything is fresh and new!

What a wonderful season for the church year! Flowers again adorn our sanctuary. The smell of lilies wafts through the building. People have more lilt to their step. Minor-key hymns are replaced with joyful

tunes and Alleluias! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

While Easter is the culmination of Lent and events of Holy Week, Easter is also a season. Let the celebration continue! Every Sunday is “a little Easter,” as Martin Luther said. When we gather to worship, we gather in the name of the risen Lord who gives life in word and sacrament.

Good weather provides opportunities for outdoor recreation. Consider how to balance time while tending to matters of faith: Make worship a family event. Plan a picnic after worship and take a walk. Ride your bikes to church. Walk along a beach or on a trail. Make a day of it. While you go about your days and nights, talk about where you experience God. When you hear birds sing, think of God’s providence and how God cares for you.

When you see a field of flowers, think of how precious you are to God and how precious God is to you. When trees sway in a breeze, think of how the Holy Spirit is silently at work for you and listen in silence to God. When you see garbage on the side of the road, think of your role in caring for creation and pick it up. When you backpack in the hinterlands, think of ancestors in the Bible and their journey of faith.

When you see stars in heaven, think of the vastness of the cosmos as well as the intimate love God has for you.

Keys for nurturing faith are caring conversations, daily devotions, traditions and rituals and service to others. In this season of Easter, let us prolong our celebration and carry it into our homes and work places, rejoicing in the gift of love and life given each day.

**The Rev Ann Frerks  
Emmanuel Lutheran — Cheney**

## Calendar of Events



**We don't**

**We put it back together.**



Washington State University architecture design students recently helped Habitat for Humanity-Spokane draw plans for a straw-bale house. Then architecture construction students began working with volunteers to build that house at 1915 N. Waldo St. in Spokane.

Habitat's vision is that the house will be environmentally compatible with the surrounding community and economically viable for the homeowner.

It is their first venture into that form of construction as part of their move toward green, non-toxic, energy-efficient building, said Kelly Lerner of One-World Design Architecture.

Kelly is teaching a WSU class on advanced construction for architecture and interior architecture students. Last term, Matt Melcher's design studio class designed the house.

Before the 18-inch straw bales began to be placed for the exterior walls on April 22, the home's post-and-beam wood frame and the roof were completed. In addition to bales' serving as insulation, hot-water tubes run under the floor to heat each room. A passive solar design will let sunshine in during the winter and keep it out in the summer.

Stacked like huge bricks, straw-bale wall systems can be built quickly, said Michone Preston, director of Habitat-Spokane, cutting back on both time and tools.

The bales are covered with chicken wire and stucco is applied to the surface, sealing out moisture to prevent rotting.

Although not yet common to the Spokane area, straw-bale home construction is not a new concept, Michone said. Builders have been using straw bales in homes for hundreds of years, because of the structural advantages inherent in straw construction.

Straw bales, she said, provide superior insulation, reduce outside noise and are a cheap, quick, volunteer-friendly, non-toxic, breathable construction material.

Because Kelly specializes in energy-efficient construction techniques, much of her work has been with straw bale.

"It has two to three times the insulation value of a stud-frame wall and can save a homeowner 25 to 50 percent on energy costs," she said.

"In addition, straw is a waste product in the Inland Northwest where farmers might otherwise

burn fields of barley or wheat straw. It's a waste product waiting to be used, which makes a nice synergy.

"Use of energy-efficient materials for Habitat houses is especially important because the owners are low-income and rising energy prices impact them more than those in higher income brackets. Energy is a larger chunk of their budget," she said.

Kelly, who grew up influenced by Mennonite teachings on stewardship of the community, the planet and the natural world, has helped build 50 houses in the United States.

She has worked with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency in China, Mongolia and Argentina to introduce energy-efficient straw-bale house technology, beginning in 1997 in Mongolia. Since then, she has spent a few months each year overseas.

She has built 600 homes in China, saving homeowners about 65 percent on energy costs where high-sulfur coal is used to run energy plants. For her work in China, she received the 2005 World Habitat Award.

After graduating in 1985 in Spanish, sociology and women's studies from Goshen College, a Mennonite liberal arts college in northern Indiana, Kelly wanted to go into international development.

"The school's motto, 'Culture for Service,' is what architecture is about for me," said Kelly, who moved to San Francisco to work as an apprentice and then as a potter for several years, followed by a few years in social services.

Soon she realized her passion was in building—influenced by working with her parents on remodeling and building family homes in her growing years.

After earning a master's degree in architecture at the University of Oregon in 1994, she worked in the San Francisco Bay area until moving to Spokane nearly three years ago.

"For me, architecture is a way of being a good steward of the earth and helping other people be good stewards of the earth," Kelly said.

"Conventional building techniques are not earth friendly, not good stewardship of resources, because they use large quantities of fossil fuels, made from sunlight stored for millions of years. The supply of fossil fuels will come to an end. We squander them by



Kelly Lerner demonstrates how to bend the chicken-wire cover, which will be stapled in place around the window frames of the straw-bale house.

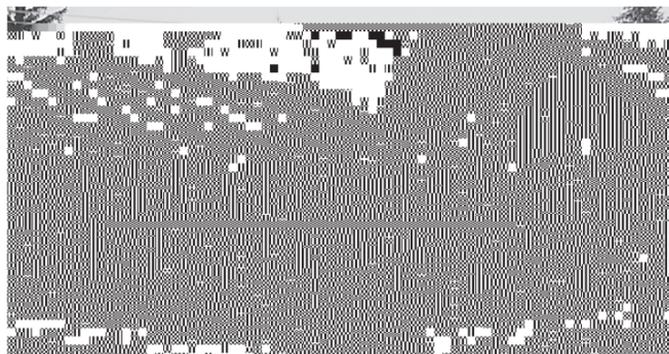
building buildings that are not energy efficient."

Kelly seeks to build houses that are not only energy efficient but also supply their own energy with solar heat, a wood stove, solar hot

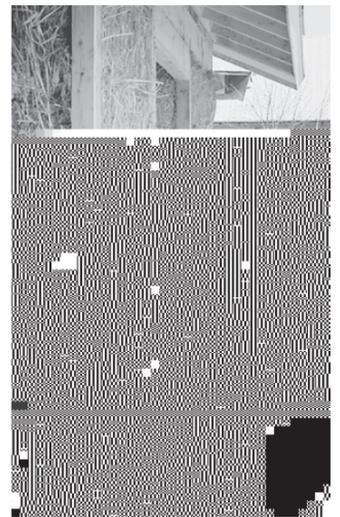
water and a wind generator.

Since 1987, Habitat for Humanity-Spokane has built 157 simple, decent, affordable homes for low-income families in Spokane.

For information, call 534-2552.



Habitat for Humanity-Spokane's first straw-bale house



Volunteer from Wellpinit learns about straw-bale construction.

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2006 Season

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**Builders Blitz 2006**

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- General construction volunteers
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For more information, call Kelly at  
534-2552 ext. 21

**Spokane Children's Theatre**

60th

Music By Alan Menken  
Lyrics By Howard Ashman & Tim Rice  
Book By Linda Woolverton

Performs at Spokane Community College • Mission & Greene  
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**'The Inward-Outward Journey to Peace'**



Friday evening/Saturday May 19-20  
Zephyr Lodge on Liberty Lake

To register contact Kerri Rodkey  
509-299-6515

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Presbytery of the Inland Northwest