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Education opens doors

By Mary Stamp

Two "Rev. Drs." who came to serve as interim pastors at Morning Star Baptist Church in Spokane have decided after their 14 months there that they will stay on a bit.

The Revs. Arthur (Art) and Leotta Jarrett decided to do the interim ministry after serving churches in San Mateo, Calif., Pilgrim Baptist and Trinity Baptist, the latter a new church based on a new concept.

Art retired two years ago from the church and Leotta from her work in education.

"Our concept is that a Christian never retires. There is always a need. We just pray to ask God to enlarge our territory," Leotta said. "The idea to remain in Spokane emerged as people asked us to stay."

Art and Leotta were in Spokane awaiting their next assignment, even offered three opportunities, but they turned them down—at first thinking they would return to their home in California.

Leotta is now involved with the education committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Spokane chapter.

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The Rev. Drs. Art and Leotta Jarrett came to Spokane for an interim ministry and decided to stay and become involved with the community and issues.

Age and health lead two editors to cut back time

As two of the Fig Tree founders are now in their 90s, they are opening their editorial niches for others to assist The Fig Tree, while they continue to contribute.

"We rejoice in the gifts and long service associate editor Sister Bernadine Casey, SNJM, and contributing editor Jo Hendricks have given to our venture as professional colleagues, friends and mentors," said editor Mary Stamp.

Holy Names Sister Bernadine has been associate editor since the start in 1984. Several years ago she cut back on writing articles and selling ads, but has regularly assisted with editing three days a month—reading, rereading, revising and rereading each issue. As she cuts back because of health, we are seeking others to help. Deidre Jacobson and Mary Mackay assisted for this issue.

Jo has been offering her editorial slot to others in recent years, but continues to write on occasion. The Fig Tree has compiled her editorials in a book, *One Woman's Words of Wisdom*, which will be published in a spiral bound edition on request. For a copy, email figtree@thefigtree.org or call 535-1813.

Dialogue participants to experience taste of insights from ecumenical encounters

Sensitivity to symbolism, inuendos, people and new approaches have refreshed and deepened Marion Best's faith as she worked with the World Council of Churches from 1991 to 2006.

Marion will provide an opportunity for those who attend The Fig Tree's 2006 Faith in Action Dialogue at Whitworth College in Spokane to experience a taste of the power of worship, decisions, dialogue and perspectives from the WCC's ongoing work and its 2006 assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

At 7 p.m., Friday, Nov. 10, she will share elements of the recent assembly's worship, music, symbolism, encounters, discussions and decisions in the Seeley G. Mudd Chapel at Whitworth College, 300 W. Hawthorne.

In a workshop from 9 a.m. to noon, Saturday, Nov. 11, in room 206 of Dixon Hall at Whitworth, she will engage participants in small groups to experience dialogue as they take turns being storytellers and listeners.

Marion's inter-religious family life, local ecumenical church

involvement and leadership in the national United Church of Canada led to her representing her denomination at the World Council of Churches' (WCC) 1991 assembly in Canberra, Australia. There she was elected to its Central Committee and Executive Committee.

The WCC's eighth assembly in 1998 at Harare re-elected her to the Central Committee and elected her as one of two vice moderators—one of the WCC's four officers along with the general secretary and moderator.

They met every three months from 1998 to 2006. Officers met twice a year at the Ecumenical Center in Geneva in addition to the meetings held in conjunction with the 25-member Executive Committee every six months. The Central Committee meets every 12 to 18 months between assemblies.

"The general secretary looks to the officers for guidance between sessions," she said.

In that role, Marion was part of the WCC's journey with the Orthodox churches, several of which were on the verge of leav-

ing the WCC in 1998. A special commission with 30 Orthodox and 30 Protestants and Anglicans worked through a number of issues as they met over a three-year period. The Central Committee accepted their recommendations, resulting in changes at the Porto Alegre assembly.

"That journey was illuminating for me," Marion said, noting that it resulted in a change from voting to consensus decision-making, use of the term "common prayer" rather than "worship"—which for Orthodox includes Eucharist—and a revision in the membership process.

"In the 'common prayer' at the assembly, what we did was no different from what we had previously called worship, but the change in terms showed respect for the Orthodox, because we do not yet celebrate Eucharist together," she said.

"It took a long time and much listening to understand why these issues were important," she said.

In the WCC setting, Marion learned to hear how differences matter to people.

Continued on page 3

YWCA, Faith Partners remember abuse victims

About 60 people from churches and the community gathered Oct. 3, at the YWCA in Spokane and marched, stopping at City Hall, to the steps of Our Lady of Lourdes Cathedral, where they released 50 purple balloons, representing each of the women in Washington state who lost their lives last year because of domestic violence.

They also released 50 white balloons representing women who overcame domestic violence in that same period.

"In Guatemala, we consider violence against women to be violence against God," said Betty Carrera, of the Center for Evangelical Pastoral Studies' women's program. She was visiting Presbyterian partners in Spokane.

A local woman told of early memories of hiding in her basement while family fought upstairs. She chose to stop the cycle so her children would not have those memories.

City Councilwoman Nancy McLaughlin said she knew the heartache of abuse in family life and was pleased to hear that the faith community was gathering to free women from that violence.

Welcoming marchers at the cathedral, Deacon Chalo Martinez recalled that it took clergy to help "get the civil rights movement rolling so action happened. I'm glad the faith community is becoming involved with domestic violence. We can stop it."

Mabel Dunbar, president of Polly's Place shelter and women's life director at Upper Columbia Academy, said that abuse is a problem because of evil: "We need to help women on the road back to safety and healing through education and awareness."

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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*

Lutheran wants Palestinian children in school

Jerusalem (ENI). Upset to see school children begging by the roadside, Bishop Munib Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land pleaded for Palestinians, Israelis and the international community to help more than 70,000 Palestinian students return to school. Schools remain closed because of an international boycott of aid to the Palestinian Authority's Hamas-led government.

Future church leaders study at Ecumenical Institute

Bossey, Switzerland (ENI). Quiet vineyards overlooking Lake Geneva seem an unlikely setting for preparing future church leaders. At the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, an international center for Christian dialogue and learning since 1946, the latest group of nearly 40 young leaders from different countries has begun a five-month intensive graduate school, sharing their diverse assumptions and traditions.

Priest offers Namibian prostitutes assistance

Windhoek (ENI). A Roman Catholic priest who founded Namibia's only day-care center for prostitutes is working to improve their lot in the face of high rates of HIV and abhorrence of the sex trade by society by giving them food, shelter and condoms. He tries to give them dignity and knowledge that there is life after the streets through the Stand Together day-care center in Katutura, a Windhoek suburb once a black township.

Christian values support Asian higher education

Hong Kong (ENI). Integrating Christian values into higher education in Asia helps safeguard academic integrity, says Jun Xing, the new vice-president of programs for the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia: "Asia's economy is booming, but there is a great need for spirituality."

Quake victims in Pakistan face harsh winter

New Delhi (ENI). A year since the devastating earthquake in Pakistan, most of the 3 million victims are without proper shelter and face another harsh winter. "There is a small window of time before winter," said Mervan Pervez, Afghanisan and Pakistan director of Church World Service.

Religious leaders often misconstrue media

Geneva (ENI). Lacking understanding of each other, church leaders and secular media are often suspicious of each other, says Portuguese journalist Antonio Marujo, 2006 winner of the John Templeton Prize for the European Religion Writer. "In the eyes of many church leaders, media are just a modern form of pulpit. This is one of the biggest misunderstandings," said the religion writer for a Portuguese daily newspaper. "Secular media show ignorance of and suspicion towards religion. Religious institutions lack confidence in media, and misunderstand fundamentals of journalism and challenges of modern information technology."

Malawi churches join anti-poverty effort

Blantyre (ENI). Churches in Malawi are fighting poverty by forming a local section of the Micah Challenge, a global network of Christian relief, development and justice agencies. The Micah Challenge was launched in October 2004 by South African Anglican Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane to mobilize Christian support for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, including cutting the poverty rate by 2015.

World awash with firearms

Cape Town (ENI). Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu has joined the Dalai Lama, a Muslim leader and other religious leaders, calling governments to bring the "global horror story" of the arms trade under control. "The world is awash with weapons—an estimated 640 million firearms or one gun for every 10 people on the planet," they said in a letter in London's The Times newspaper ahead of a vote on an international arms trade treaty at the UN General Assembly in New York.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Thanksgiving service part of volunteer approach

The Interfaith Council of the Inland Northwest, now a volunteer-run organization, is planning the annual Interfaith Thanksgiving service on "Being Grateful" at 10 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 23, at St. Aloysius Church, 330 E. Boone.

Mamdouh El-Aarag, president of the Spokane Islamic Center, is the keynote speaker.

Second Harvest of the Inland Northwest will provide four donation barrels at church entrances for food. The offering will benefit both Second Harvest and the Interfaith Council.

The service will celebrate unity in diversity with inclusion of traditional Chinese line dancing, flute music by Charlie Rising Run, a Sufi poem and interfaith blessings by representatives of such faith communities as Hindu, Sikh, Native Spirituality, Jewish, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Baha'i in

languages of presenters.

A subcommittee of the council, led by Joe Urlacher, council secretary, is planning the service.

"When we live up to the highest standards of each of our faith's wonderful teachings, there is hope," he said.

In its move to be volunteer run, Joe said the council plans to end programs such as the Circle of Caring domestic violence program and to spin off the Faith and Environment Network.

The Interfaith Council will focus on continuing some of its traditional events plus offer opportunities for dialogue among the different faiths on topics that affect the community.

Board members include Elliot Fabric from the Jewish community; Steve Rorie, Buddhist; Joe, Baha'i; Erin Bartlett, Catholic; Sonny Ybarra, Gonzaga Prep;

Percy Watkins, Baptist; Prahash Bhuta, Hindu; Rowena Pineda, United Methodist, and Aabidar Dar, Muslim.

Richard Schoen of the Baha'i community is the volunteer director and administrator in the office from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Mondays through Thursdays.

The council plans to continue the Legislative Conference in January, Camp PEACE, the Easter Sunrise service, CROP Walk, the Sept. 21 International Peace Day, the Thanksgiving service and providing church mailing lists. Committees will be responsible for planning those events.

The council's goal is to have an event or a dialogue each month.

Jason Duba of the Faith and Environment Network plans to continue that program, operating out of Central Lutheran Church.

For information, call 329-1410.

Christ Kitchen relocates to North Monroe

With a grant from the Presbyterian Women USA for a commercial kitchen, Christ Kitchen and Christ Clinic bought a former Taco Time at 2410 N. Monroe.

Christ Kitchen, which started in 1998, is holding open houses from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., with a light lunch, and from 4 to 8 p.m., with hors d'oeuvres on Friday, Nov. 3, and from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 5.

The ministries have been housed at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Christ Clinic, which started in 1991, will stay at the church until enough funds are

raised to build a new clinic.

The commercial kitchen makes it possible to employ more women more often and enable them to make a wage they can live on, said director Jan Martinez. At first, women worked one day a week. Now they work three days a week for this business and ministry.

"Eventually, we hope to support Christ Clinic with increased profits, helping them expand medical services to more uninsured patients," Jan said.

Christ Kitchen, a nonprofit Christian ministry providing work, job training and fellowship for women in poverty, plans a capital campaign, too.

In addition to selling products—dried food products such as bean soups, cookie mixes, cocoa, brownie mixes, teas and corn bread mixes—on site, the program will develop hot take-out meals, box lunches and catered meals for business, church and nonprofit meetings.

Christ Kitchen is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays. The program helps women gain employment skills for so they can support themselves without government programs or destructive relationships, Jan said.

For information, call 325-4343 or email janbow@msn.com.

Editor will speak on UN reform

Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp will report to the Spokane Chapter of the United Nations Association on the "Statement for United Nations' Reform" approve in February at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Brazil, which she attended.

Her presentation will be at 7 p.m., Monday, Nov. 13, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 Ft. Wright Dr.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is one of the original non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that has provided insights, collaboration and challenges to the United Nations throughout its 61 years.

For information, call 624-3608.

Speaker urges dialogue in polarized church

Nancy Sylvester, founder of the Institute for Contemplation and Dialogue will discuss how people can have meaningful dialogue in a polarized church and world at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 9, in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga University.

Her talk on "Engaging Impasse: Circles of Contemplation and Dialogue" is sponsored by Catholicism for a New Millennium and Sisters of the Holy Names.

"Ways we know to effect change don't seem to work," she says.

"Division marks our relationships. It's hard to be Gospel people at a time of global paradigm shift."

She is a past president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and past vice-president of her community the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Monroe, Mich. From 1977 to 1992, she was on the staff of NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobby.

For information, call 928-0216.

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For information, call 329-1410

Marion Best has helped frame tone of World Council of Churches' Assembly

Continued from page 1

A concern she has heard from people of the Southern Hemisphere is a desire for the WCC to move away from the European paper-driven sessions with long speeches.

"People in the South are interested in relationships, telling stories and doing Bible studies together," she noted. "They are less interested in dealing with documents."

As a tangible way to begin to express the shift, the WCC began using round tables for the Central Committee and assembly dialogue sessions to encourage conversation. Marion said that seating people in rows tends to limit conversation and "the sense that we were sitting with people from the whole world."

"It made a difference," she observed. "The tone changed."

The WCC was a pioneer in inter-religious dialogue in the 1960s, and recently has put even greater emphasis on that.

Awareness of issues for indigenous people, stirred at assemblies in 1983 at Vancouver and in 1991 at Canberra, brought action.

Marion likes the approach of the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV), serving as facilitator and communicator, encouraging people to "do their own thing where they are and letting the WCC know about it to share with others."

"Initiatives come from people's contexts, based on decade's goals," she said. "DOV explores how to bring peace in our communities,



Marion Best, left, and Omega Bula, also in the United Church of Canada, at the assembly in Brazil

churches and families, too.

"My involvement gave me a chance to stand back from my own church to listen to where others are coming from. I have grown in understanding how life experiences impact faith."

She is sensitive to the role of different theologies and terminologies in people's faith lives.

For example, even within the United Church of Canada she knows there is a range of comfort from those who find it meaningful to refer to God as "father/mother" and those who would refer to God

only as Father, as in the triune understanding of God as "Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Through Bible studies in the context of the WCC, she learned to see scripture through the eyes, life situations and contexts of others to know how the same verses can mean something quite different for different people.

In addition, she has valued the use of silence, symbols and music from different cultures.

She was particularly moved

by the symbol of a large empty chalice placed on the altar and covered with a cloth at the last assembly.

"It spoke to me of waiting to be filled," Marion said, "for the day we can share the Eucharist together."

"It's so moving to hear 4,000 people saying the Lord's Prayer together in their languages. It conveys a sense that we are one despite whatever disagreements we may have," she said.

Marion will share glimpses...

of dialogue and issues



of consensus and decisions



of worship and faith



of symbols and senses



of music and cultures



2006 Faith in Action Dialogue

'God, in your grace, transform the world'

featuring

Marion Best

- 15 years on World Council of Churches Executive Committee
- vice-moderator at the 9th Assembly in February in Brazil
- former moderator of the United Church of Canada from Naramata, B.C.



with

Marc & Judy Hafso

Marc is director of choral & vocal activities at Whitworth.
Judy teaches elementary music at St. George's School.
Music resource leaders at Naramata Centre

Friday & Saturday, Nov. 10-11

7 - 9 p.m. - Friday

A Glimpse of the WCC Assembly:

Music, Worship, Dialogue, Process and Decisions
Seeley G. Mudd Chapel - Whitworth College

9 a.m. to noon - Saturday workshop

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Dixon Hall Room 206 - Whitworth College

PLEASE RSVP

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Panelists outline reasons for concern about climate, global warming

With time scales, maps, photos and scientific data, Tom Ackerman, professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Washington, gave a picture of global warming as he opened a panel presentation on climate change in September at Whitworth College.

"The global greenhouse effect is real and will grow as we add carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. It's a problem for us, our children and our children's children. It will affect society, water resources, agriculture, energy usage, weather damage and sea levels, so we need coherent policies to reduce global warming," said Tom, one of three speakers on "A Christian Response to Climate Change," presented by the Interfaith Council's Faith and Environment Network.

Bill Robinson, president of Whitworth, shared 10 reasons he signed the Evangelical Climate Initiative, saying he wanted to depoliticize the issue, because it's about everyone's wellbeing.

Peter Illyn, an evangelical Christian with Restoring Eden in La Center, Wash., works with students in 40 colleges. He calls them to treasure the earth and see that caring for the environment—loving, serving and protecting God's creation—is the "ultimate pro-life issue."

"We are to give our minds and hands—made in God's image from the earth—to break the apathy and disconnection that overwhelms this generation and culture," Peter said.

Tom, a member of the Christian Reformed Church and graduate of Calvin College, is affiliated with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. He said while weather forecasting is about tomorrow, the next day or week, climate is about atmospheric conditions over a year or more.

Projections into the future are developed from the past and current conditions.

For example, he showed data on surface air temperatures increasing in the last 100 years, with a rapid acceleration in the last 30 years, using a map with U.S. temperature trends from 1901 to 1998. Dots of different colors represented increases of one, two or three degrees, visibly depicting that the West and Northeast have warmed, and the Southeast is colder.

Tom contrasted photos of glaciers in Argentina in 1928 and Austria in 1875 with 2004 photos showing less or no ice.

From tree rings, coral reefs, lake sediment and sample cores from the earth's crust and ice in Greenland and Antarctica, he said, scientists have concluded that this



Bill Robinson



Peter Illyn



Tom Ackerman

period is warmer than any other in the last 1,000 years.

"Carbon dioxide, a minor component of the atmosphere is now at 375 parts per million (ppm) compared to a pre-Industrial Revolution level of 285 ppm. That increase is primarily from burning fossil fuels," Tom said. "It will rise to 550 ppm by about 2050 if we keep on the present course. It has the potential to increase much higher than that in the next few hundred years depending on what we do about energy usage."

Higher temperatures and carbon dioxide levels feed the greenhouse effect, trapping solar radiation, warming the earth's surface and increasing the amount of water in the atmosphere, he explained.

Tom said the United States has been "the big dog in emissions since 1950. Americans produce five metric tons of carbon dioxide a year per capita, in contrast with one metric ton average per capita for the world."

Based on scenarios about energy production, emissions and carbon cycles, scientists have developed models of climate changes and the economic and sociological impact.

"Increasing temperature even one degree matters. The last glacial period was only five degrees different from today. Warmer temperatures mean more rain in some areas and less in others, rising sea levels, melting ice and more intense storms," he said.

Tom summarized: The climate is warming partly from a continual increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide.

The 1992 United Nations Convention on Climate Change calls for "stabilizing carbon dioxide at the present level to prevent dangerous, anthropological interference with the climate system."

"We can prevent warming by

using alternative and more efficient energy sources—solar, wind, biomass and nuclear—and developing coherent policies," Tom said.

"The people least responsible will face the greatest losses. Will we take responsibility? Who will pay for the losses? What will immigration policies be?" he asked. "We must act now."

Tom said Christians are to be involved in all aspects of life, not limited by a false split between science and church.

"We can be scientists and Christians," he said.

"Every-day simple choices—such as using paper rather than Styrofoam cups—have a cumulative effect. Students need to understand issues so they can talk intelligently to relatives and write Congress," he said.

Speaking next, Bill listed 10 reasons why he signed the Evangelical Climate Initiative, though he rarely signs such documents:

- As a boy, his parents taught him Bible verses, particularly a passage in Revelations that says God created everything for God's pleasure. "So I have a duty to take care of it," he said.

- As a teen tempted to smoke, he saw tobacco industry studies saying that smoking really was not unhealthy. Claims that global warming isn't really a problem remind him of propaganda from the tobacco companies.

- He is friends with a potato farmer and an apple farmer. He asked them if they believed in global warming. They concurred that it's dramatically warmer.

- Scientific findings make it clear global warming will be destructive and the poorest people will be hit the hardest.

- The culture and political realms "focus on the wrong questions," he said. "Instead of asking

if humans caused it, we should ask if human actions can arrest it."

- Students need to deal with this issue.

- The potential for exponential growth in global warming "is frightening."

- "I got sunburned in Australia."

- "The issue is politicized. I want to depoliticize it. It's not about being Republican or Democrat, but about our wellbeing."

- The most powerful reason is the consequences of being wrong. "If we follow the prophets of global warming and they are wrong, we've reduced emissions, cleaned up our air and conserved fossil fuel," he said. "If we take the advice of those who tell us not to worry about global warming and they are wrong, we could be looking at a world catastrophe."

- "We need to use our influence to reduce emissions to reduce the consequences. The harshest

effects will be on the poor, and we have responsibility to care for them," Bill said, adding Whitworth College has explored green building for new buildings. "I believe the college can meet significant criteria on use of energy, resources and recycling."

He suggests developing a mentality of being conservers, rather than consumers.

Peter said Restoring Eden makes it theologically and culturally safe for Christians to love nature as a "pro-life issue."

When he thought he was dying from eye cancer, he took time to relish nature, wondering: "Are we so cavalier with life that we would squander it?"

"We need to love, serve and protect God's creation," he said. "If you love the Creator, you need to take care of creation, not worship money and stuff."

He calls Christians to love God, neighbors and creation, too.

"We should be like little children in awe of creation as sacred and beautiful. We should help people move from limited arguments of owls vs. jobs. We need to recognize that we are dependent on the rest of creation."

Peter knows that young Christians concerned about the degradation of creation are pursuing solutions, and some corporations find they can make a profit using sustainable practices.

Believing global warming is real and that it will be deadly, he calls for prophetic leadership of Christians to challenge elected leaders to adopt policies that will reduce global warming.

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

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Habitat for Humanity-Spokane is an ecumenical non-profit Christian ministry dedicated to bringing the community together to build decent, affordable homes for all God's people in need.

Diocese of Yakima mirrors diversity of its area in its outreach

For nearly 10 years, Bishop Carlos Sevilla, SJ, of the Catholic Diocese of Yakima has responded to emerging ministry needs in an area where four French missionaries brought the Gospel in 1847 at the request of Chief Owhi of the Yakama people.

The missionaries, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, founded St. Joseph Mission at the Ahtanum and taught Indians agricultural skills, including the planting of the first orchard in the Yakima Valley.

Although many Yakamas were Catholic, a U.S. government policy made the reservation a Methodist domain, but Catholic influence continued. In 1871, Jesuits assumed responsibility for the Mission.

Today's Diocese of Yakima, the seven counties of Central Washington, mirrors the diversity of the area and includes outreach to Native American, Hispanic, Anglo and Asian populations. Of about 500,000 people in those counties, 15 percent are Catholic and about 70 percent of the Catholic community in Central Washington is Hispanic.

"In the Diocese of Yakima, we seek to draw people close to Christ, to be Christ's body," Bishop Sevilla said. "Part of drawing people to Christ is to serve their spiritual needs."



The Right Rev. Carlos Sevilla, S.J.

He tries to foster a collaborative pastoral approach, encouraging the participation of the lay Catholic community in the life of the church and society.

"My role is to promote Catholic

faith here in a way that the Catholic community will engage itself in shaping peace through justice and forgiveness," he said.

Many parishes offer Masses in both Spanish and English, and

host events to help English- and Spanish-speaking parishioners come to know one another.

Most of the diocese's priests are bilingual. The 25 Hispanic priests speak English, and many of the native English-speaking priests are fluent in Spanish. Of 27 deacons, six are Hispanic and most also speak English.

Some priests serve two communities, because the parishes are too small to support a full-time priest.

To help people in the diocese "be Christ's body," the bishop works with a pastoral team that includes priests, deacons, diocesan leaders and members of religious communities to coordinate diocesan ministries.

Those ministries include outreach to Hispanics, youth, young adults and youth gangs, as well as offices focused on respect for life, social justice and catechesis, plus support for prayer groups and the Cursillo movement.

After attending Catholic schools in San Francisco, Bishop Sevilla entered the Jesuit Novitiate in Los Gatos in 1953 when he was 18. He was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1966 in San Francisco, after earning master's degrees in philosophy at Gonzaga University in Spokane in 1960 and then in theology at Santa Clara University

in California in 1967.

International experience studying in Austria and France, and visiting El Salvador and Uruguay in the 1980s deepened the bishop's concerns about justice and intercultural relations.

While teaching theology at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles from 1972 to 1980, Bishop Sevilla was assigned to work involving the spiritual formation of members of the California Province of the Society of Jesus.

He was ordained an Auxiliary Bishop of San Francisco in 1989 and appointed Bishop of Yakima in 1997.

The bishop has also served the national Catholic community through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Nationally, he has offered leadership in the areas of Hispanic affairs, marriage and family life, religious life and ministry, social development and world peace domestic policy, the Campaign for Human Development, translation of liturgical texts into Spanish, the West Coast dialogue of Catholics and Muslims, and dialogue on ecumenical and inter-religious affairs.

The motto Bishop Sevilla chose as bishop is: "To love and to serve."

For information, call 965-7117.

Groups co-sponsor event on area human trafficking

A Conference on Stopping Slavery in the 21st Century will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 16, at Whitworth Presbyterian Church, 312 W. Hawthorne Rd.

Faith Partners Working Against Family Violence, the YWCA Alternatives to Domestic Violence and the Western Regional Institute for Community Oriented Public Safety at Washington State University are co-sponsoring the event on "Searching for a Faith-Based Response to Trafficking Human Beings."

The conference will feature presentations by the Rev. Thelma Burgonio-Watson, program director of the Faith Trust Institute; the Rev. Ken Fredericks on "The Church Addressing Violence Against Women"; Lila Lama Ghising on the Nepalese Trafficking Refuge, and a panel of Whitworth College students on

"Real Efforts You Can Do."

Participants will learn about the plight of hundreds of thousands of women and children sold into slavery each year to work in sweatshops and brothels—promised a better life only to become victims of assaults, living in degrading conditions. Hundreds are victimized in this region, according to conference planners.

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Sisters of Providence complete year of celebrating their 150 years

While the Sisters of Providence in Mother Joseph Province have celebrated their 150th year in 2006, the Bernarda Morin Province in Chile celebrated its 150th in 2003, said Sister Myrta Iturriaga, SP, a native of Chile who serves in ministry in Spokane.

The first group of Sisters of Providence sent from Montreal to the West left in 1852 and arrived in Oregon City, Ore. They had landed in the wrong place. In the midst of confusion because there were no preparations for their arrival and there was no one to tell them where to go, they stayed only two months, say the archives.

On the way back to Montreal by ship, they were unable to cross Panama, so they headed around the tip of South America.

After an anguished voyage of 83 days, they arrived in Valparaiso, Chile, she said. There, the bishop and government invited them to stay and care for orphans, at least until they received authorization from Montreal.

The General Administration in Montreal approved of this mission and sent additional sisters. However, several years later, a disagreement arose about the community's governance.

Some sisters returned to Montreal, but Mother Bernarda Morin, then 31, decided to stay and was put in charge of the community.

Today, there are 240 Sisters of Providence in 24 houses from northern to southern Chile and one in Argentina. In addition to Sister Myrta, another Chilean sister was assigned to the Diocese of Yakima in 1992.

On Dec. 8, 1856, a group of five sisters headed by Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart arrived at Fort Vancouver in the Washington Territory, responding to Bishop A.M.A. Blanchet's request for sisters to care for orphans and fill other unmet needs "of God's people on the frontier."

In 1858, they opened St. Joseph Hospital in Vancouver, the first permanent hospital in the Northwest.

They incorporated in 1859 as the Sisters of Charity of the House of Providence in the Territory of



At an August Mass in Spokane celebrating the 150th anniversary, General Superior Kathryn "Kitsy" Rutan processed with a Native American peace pipe given to Sister Michelle Holland when she was provincial superior in the 1970s.

Photo provided by the Sisters of Providence

Washington, one of the oldest existing corporations in the state of Washington.

In 1891, the missions in the West divided into three provinces—Sacred Heart in Vancouver, Wash., St. Ignatius in Missoula and St. Vincent de Paul in Portland.

The Sacred Heart Province moved its headquarters to Seattle in 1924, and the St. Ignatius Province moved its headquarters to Spokane in 1926.

The two provinces merged as Mother Joseph Province in 2000, with about 185 sisters, one in temporary vows and two novices. There are about 250 Providence Associates, women and men of various faiths who share the Providence charism without vowed membership.

Under the leadership of Mother Joseph, who died in 1902, the Sisters of Providence opened more than 30 hospitals, schools and homes for orphans, the elderly and the sick in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and southern British Columbia.

The sisters had gone on "begging tours" in the region to raise money for their work.

Sister Myrta told a story of Mother Joseph being poorly received when she went to miners seeking money for ministries.

"One miner spit in her hand. She said, 'Thank you. This is for

me.' Then she held out her other hand and said, 'Now, this is for the orphans,'" Sister Myrta said, noting that both Mother Joseph and Mother Bernardo were "strong personalities."

"From these beginnings, the sisters and lay collaborators have built an extensive network of health, education and human services," said Sister Margaret Botch, provincial and leadership team coordinator for the Mother Joseph Province.

On Dec. 8, the Sisters of Providence conclude a year of celebration of not only the 150 years in the Northwest but also the sisters and their ministries over those years in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, California and El Salvador, which comprise Mother Joseph Province today.

According to their vocation brochure, sisters in the province "respond to needs of the poor and vulnerable through education, parish ministry, health care, community service and support, housing, prison ministry, pastoral care, spiritual direction and retreats, and foreign missions."

Mother Emilie Gamelin, foundress of the religious community in Montreal, made a private vow to serve the poor in 1842 and in 1843 founded the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor.

She and six others professed religious vows as the first Sisters

of Providence in 1844.

A pamphlet on the community's history includes, along with various administrative milestones, a flavor of changes in the community:

- In the 1960s, religious dress changed first to a contemporary habit and then to civilian wear.

- In the 1970s, the province boycotted lettuce and grapes to support farm workers' efforts for justice.

- In the 1980s, the Providence Associate program began for lay people professing and living the Providence charism.

- In the 1990s, the provinces co-sponsored the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center in Seattle.

- In 2002, General Superior Kathryn "Kitsy" Rutan, a native of Great Falls, Mont., and former member of the Mother Joseph Province Leadership Team, became the second U.S. citizen to lead the international commu-

nity in Canada, the United States, Chile, El Salvador, Argentina, Egypt, the Philippines, Haiti and Cameroon.

Celebrations are planned on Dec. 8—the actual anniversary—in Burbank, Calif., Great Falls, Mont., and Portland, Ore., as well as in Spokane, Walla Walla, Yakima and Seattle.

In Spokane, there will be a closing event at 6 p.m., during vespers in the chapel at Mount St. Joseph, 9 E. Ninth Ave.

In Yakima, there will be a renewal of sisters' vows and Providence Associates' commitments at the 5:30 p.m. Mass at St. Joseph Church.

Sister Helen Mason and area Providence Associates are planning a liturgy for the 5:30 p.m. Mass at St. Patrick Church in Walla Walla.

The Seattle event will be at the 6:30 p.m. Mass at St. Joseph Residence, 4800 37th Ave. SW.

For information, call 474-2306.



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Acting on AIDS leader speaks on epidemic's effects, options

Jyl Hall, manager of Acting on AIDS, will give a lecture, "Global AIDS: What is God's heart for orphans and widows in their distress?" at 7 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 9, in Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth College.

She will speak on the how the AIDS epidemic affects children, a faith-driven response and the need

for being an advocate at the event sponsored by the Speakers and Artists Series at Whitworth.

Acting on AIDS is a college advocacy program affiliated with World Vision, a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization. Started in 2003 by Christian college students at Seattle Pacific University, the

program creates awareness about AIDS and provides advocacy for people affected by the global AIDS pandemic.

Jyl recently received her master's degree at Asbury Theological Seminary, where she focused on the theology of care for the poor in the gospel.

For information, call 777-3707.

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Sister Myrta Iturriaga involves parishioners in prison ministry

Sister Myrta Iturriaga's prison ministry is one of the many ways that the Sisters of Providence have provided education, health care and human services in the region over their-150 year history in the West.

Because parishioners know little about people in prison and because prisoners feel forgotten, Sister of Providence Myrta Iturriaga recruits people from parishes of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane to visit prisoners and their families.

She hopes that as parishioners care about prisoners and families, they will learn about the prison system.

She also hopes they will begin to raise the questions she has about building more prison facilities while cutting funds for education programs, drug treatment, career training and job skills. Such support can lead prisoners from repeating criminal activity so they can become productive citizens, she said.

"More prisoners in overcrowded conditions with no retraining invites recidivism," she said, adding that just building new prisons is not the answer.

Sister Myrta is concerned that many of the Hispanics and others she visits in prisons may actually be innocent.

"Many people are in jail because of drug abuse, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and lack of job skills," she said. "More women are in prison for drug abuse, meaning more children are put in foster care."

Sister Myrta first came to Washington from Chile in 1988 as a Sisters of Providence missionary to minister to Hispanic people near Connell.

When her community asked her to be a missionary to the United States, she was surprised, thinking missionaries went to poor countries and the United States did not need missionaries.

When she arrived in Connell, she found poor people with no Spanish-speaking priest. She served Spanish-speaking field workers, providing catechism, baptism, first communion, formation and pastoral care for teens and families.

Sister Myrta finds it takes adult migrants 15 to 20 years to learn English. Children learn it in school and may lose connection with parents and grandparents who find it hard to learn English.

"I fell in love with Hispanic people here and did not want to go back," she said.

In 1990, she asked to stay and



Sister Myrta Iturriaga

study English at Gonzaga University so she could communicate with people in the surrounding community and the house where she lived with other sisters.

"I understood the isolation Hispanics feel," she said.

Bishop William Skylstad invited her to work part time with the diocesan Renewal program and part time with Hispanics.

She began volunteering to visit Hispanics among 430 prisoners at Pine Lodge in Medical Lake, and 1,800 at the Geiger Correctional Facility and its transitional program in Airway Heights, both filled beyond capacity, she said.

As more Hispanic priests were ordained and serve parishes in Pasco, Walla Walla, Othello and Brewster, there was less need for her in parish work and more need in pastoral care with prisoners.

Sister Myrta also helps with translation for patients at Sacred Heart and Deaconess Medical Centers, with Spanish retreats for women in the parish, and with Cursillo, formation and catechism.

From her visits with Hispanic prisoners, she became volunteer coordinator of visitors for all prisoners, appealing for people in Catholic parishes to connect with prisoners and their families. She

continued to visit, lead Bible studies, pray with people, help with worship and teach catechism.

When she came to lead worship and teach, she said, some Anglo prisoners asked her to serve them, too. So she offered a bilingual service.

"I arrange for priests to offer Mass, reconciliation, confirmation, formation, baptisms and first communion, everything except perform marriages," Sister Myrta said. "We encourage prisoners to wait until they are out to marry."

The Spokane County Jail, where most stay only two to four days, is also in the visitation program.

Sister Myrta also visits Martin Hall, a school in Medical Lake holding immigrant children from nine- to 16-years old. While some had ties to gangs, most were in prison even though they did nothing criminal, she said.

"They should be in foster care, not jail," she said. "They are in jail, because the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) does not want them to leave the area."

Three years ago, cancer and chemotherapy reduced Sister Myrta's energy, so she on recruiting and training volunteers from parishes to help. She seeks to have someone in each parish help recruit and coordinate activities

for the volunteers.

Each volunteer needs the pastor's recommendation, so there are skilled people involved in formation.

Now she goes to Pine Lodge once a month and to Airway Heights once a week.

Sister Myrta, who grew up in southern Chile the oldest of 13 children, was a teacher and then principal for five years in a boarding school in a poor area of Ovalle in northern Chile.

In Catholic schools run by Sisters of Providence, her interest in teaching faith began early. She prayed Jesus would call her to be a sister.

After high school, Sister Myrta entered the Sisters of Providence, took vows as a novice and entered university studies to be a primary school math teacher.

She made her final vows in 1968 and taught math in several high schools for 25 years in Chile.

When Augusto Pinochet took power, ousting and killing Salvador Allende, the Catholic Church suffered, she said. Vocal priests fled. She was principal at Santa Clara School in Santiago.

When tanks filled the streets, she sent students home.

The military closed the area, taking men 15 and older. Some never came back, leaving mothers and children without support.

Sister Myrta said.

The military tore through buildings breaking furniture and throwing clothes, looking for weapons. Families were terrified, she described.

People in Allende's government, including parents of many students, had no work. It was dangerous to walk even a few blocks. So the school closed. Many innocent people, including priests and sisters in poor areas, were killed, she continued.

In the Chile she left, people stayed in their homes as if they were in prison with limits to meetings, curfews, food rationing, book burnings and control over what was taught in schools and what was preached in pulpits.

Now when she visits Chile about every three years, she finds that life has become much like life in the United States.

In all aspects of her life, Sister Myrta is amazed how God's providence goes where needs are and prepares people to meet those needs.

"I'm impressed with our sisters' faith and simplicity of life," she said. "We trust in God's providence, even as there are fewer sisters and many are aging."

"We do not know what God knows or how God will change what work we do. Providence guides the community from day to day," Sister Myrta said.

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Couple consider it a blessing and an opportunity to serve the area

Continued from page 1

The committee addresses injustices and inequities in the Spokane school system, helping families of students of color gain voice for their concerns about harassment, textbook choices, student treatment, WASL tests and accessibility of times for parent-teacher association meetings.

"I want to be involved where I can affect change to promote mercy, justice, understanding and tolerance," Leotta said.

She will introduce resources from the NAACP's national Back to School and Stay in School programs.

In addition to that involvement, Leotta is teaching a course, "My Voice Is Important: Let Me Speak," at Spokane Falls Community College.

"Some people tend to be introverts, so there is not a chance their voices will be heard in family, church or the community," she said. "Their voices are quelled on issues of truth, identity or cultural needs."

Her goal is for people to let fear slip away, so they can be empowered and heard.

Leotta also leads workshops for American Baptist women and preaches on Sundays when invited.

In April, she started the Inland Northwest Ministers' Wives and Ministers' Widows Fellowship (MWMW). Now 15 women meet at 10 a.m., second Saturdays.

She is involved with the International MWMW, Inc., regional conferences, state association and local chapter in California. It is part of an international body of 4,500 women of many races from the Caribbean, Africa, Canada, Central America and the United States.

"There's much we can all do in the community if we go beyond the four walls of the church," Leotta said.

Art is developing Full Proof Ministries, interdenominational training for church leaders and workers in Spokane. His vision is to strengthen the biblical foundation for ministries of leadership, administration and service in the churches and the community.

By "full proof" he means for people to be fully prepared, equipped and informed so they will be effective in building churches and God's kingdom, "earnestly striving for excellence in glorifying God," Art said.

The program includes Old and New Testament, Christian theology, sermon preparation, Christian education, leadership development, church history, ethics, discipleship, worship and church management.

The Ministers Fellowship Union plans to sponsor this program, Art said.

Art's and Leotta's English is accented by their roots in Nassau, Bahamas.

Art left at 17 to study at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Ga., American Baptist Seminary in Nashville, Tenn., and Wayne State University in Detroit, Mich., and received his doctoral degree in religion from California Graduate School of Theology in Glendale, Calif. At Morehouse, one classmate was Martin Luther King, Jr., who led the civil rights movement in which the Jarretts later participated.

Art returned to Nassau and became pastor of the church Leotta attended in 1948. They were married in 1950.

At a Cambridge University extension program, Leotta studied to be an elementary teacher. Eventually, she served as assistant principal to Art at a school in Andros, the largest island in the Bahamas.

She joined him for his first assignment as a pastor in Chattanooga, Tenn., where he started a school for church workers and pastors with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and the National Baptist Association.

After 11 years, he taught with the Oklahoma Baptist School of Religion at Langston University, until he was called to Pilgrim Baptist in San Mateo in 1965, during the height of the civil rights movement.

In Chattanooga and in San Mateo, they participated in the civil rights movement and marches, including being present for King's 1963 speech in Washington, D.C. They helped calm black students in San Mateo schools after King's assassination in 1968 and helped integrate San Mateo schools.

While in Chattanooga, Leotta studied at Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State University in Nashville.

When she first came to the United States in 1953, she had been shocked by racial barriers with whites-only and coloreds-only signs for drinking fountains

and other public places.

"I knew I needed to work for change," she said.

In California, she continued to pursue her dream, earning a lifetime teaching certificate at the College of Notre Dame, and a bachelor's degree in sociology at the University of California at Hayward, a master's degree in education and administration in 1974, a master's degree in counseling in 1992 and a doctor of education degree in international and multicultural education at the University of San Francisco in 2000.

While she pursued the degrees and reared three daughters and a son, Leotta taught for 32 years in San Mateo public schools.

In San Mateo, Art, tired of church politics that kept him from leading a congregation to explore new ideas, started a new church so he could make changes as simple as holding worship at 9 a.m. before Sunday school classes and opening worship leadership to women—including serving

as deacons and ordained ministers.

In 1999, Leotta was ordained, empowering her to serve churches as a pastor with Art. Her ordination was granted based on her studies and service, Art's mentoring, studies with theologians in the Bahamas, and attending workshops and schools for training ministers in the United States.

"While we have had the privilege of many opportunities for education and work, we identify with the needs of those who have not had those opportunities," she said.

Their roots inspire that humility.

Art and Leotta visit family in the Bahamas twice a year.

On visits while working on her doctoral studies, Leotta interviewed family and friends to share their stories in her dissertation, "African Bahamian American Perspectives on Caribbean Bahamian Families: A Descriptive Study."

She interviewed her 96-year-old great-grandmother's sister, a relative who is also Sidney Portier's uncle, a distant cousin who was a seaman, and a great-great-great-granddaughter of Pompei LaFleur, a distant cousin of Art.

"I gave voice to my people, aware that much Caribbean and North American

literature have been derogatory about them," Leotta said.

"The history we learned in school was not the history of our people, but British colonial history," Art said.

Both trace their family roots to Yoruba people in Nigeria.

On Art's mother's side, Pompei LaFleur escaped from slavery in the Carolinas in a dinky boat and came to Andros Island, where he started the Conch Sound community. He was proud he was Yoruba.

Ships often traveled from the U.S. South to South America to the Yucatan, providing an escape route for some U.S. slaves, because Caribbean plantations freed slaves 27 years before they were freed in the United States.

About 85 percent of Bahamians are of African descent, Art said.

"We grew up in colonial times. Before independence in 1962, we had no power," he said. "Our leaders were British. Only a privileged few had the chance to leave Bahamas and go to school. Most went to England, a few to Canada, and fewer to the United States."

Art's father, a minister, opened his opportunity for study in the United States.

Leotta's father was a naturalized U.S. citizen because he served in the American military in World War I.

"He wanted us to be educated in the United States," she said. "It was instilled in us to take advantage of any privileges we were given—to honor and respect them."

The Jarretts took that attitude into churches they served, coming "to comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable," he said.

"Churches can be set in their ways," Art said. "Even domestics think they are elite, but slowly we encouraged people in our churches to go to school, earn GED diplomas, go to junior colleges and become certified in early childhood education or as a dental assistant."

For example, one man worked from the kitchen into a top office at a hospital, and a woman who scrubbed hospital halls, became supervisor of maintenance.

The couple set up a career guidance program, so young people could begin to dream and succeed in careers.

"It's a privilege and blessing to serve others," Leotta said, with Art completing the thought: "It's also an obligation."

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Peacemaking Program connects people in Sandpoint, St. Petersburg

From Sandpoint, Idaho, where Gary Payton lives and works as a mission co-worker for the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), he connects U.S. churches with Orthodox, Baptist, Lutheran and Reformed churches and ecumenical church partners in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Poland.

In St. Petersburg, Russia, Marina Shishova is one of those partners, working with both the Interchurch Partnership and the Orthodox Institute for Missiology and Ecumenism (PIMEN).

She recently was the guest of the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest, visiting congregations in Sandpoint, Coeur d'Alene and Spokane, tangibly representing the partners for people in this region. She came as one of 14 participants in the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, who dispersed through the United States.

Gary's role as bridge includes managing a web page, keeping Presbyterians aware of 13 PCUSA mission personnel—also called "mission co-workers"—and visiting the partner churches and agencies twice a year.

With the 1997 Formula of Agreement of the United Church of Christ, Evangelical Church, Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (USA), Gary also works in partnership with those U.S. denominations to avoid overlapping ministries or investment in duplicative infrastructures.

"Every day is about communication and networking, sharing information and connecting people," he said.

Until his wife, the Rev. Nancy Copeland Payton, accepted a call to be pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Sandpoint seven years ago, Gary served on the national PCUSA staff in Louisville, Ky., as coordinator of the Presbyterian Peacemaker Program.

Now he is one of 20 mission co-workers in the United States, responsible for sharing with national staff the workload for a particular geographic region. Gary said it follows the business model of sub-contracting.

Gary began studying Russian in the eighth grade in Independence, Mo., an outgrowth of fear in the United States then because of the Russian success in space. The U.S. government funded teaching Russian language—as it now funds teaching Arabic.



Gary Payton and Marina Shishova

"Fearing the Soviet Union as an enemy, I sensed a need for more people to understand the culture, politics and history of that nation," he said. "That decision shaped my life."

For 24 years, he served as a Soviet area specialist in the Air Force, after graduating from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1972 in Russian studies and earning a master's degree in that area in 1976 at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

The PCUSA has a long-term relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church and the Interchurch Partnership in St. Petersburg. Marina is president of the Interchurch Partnership, which brings together Orthodox, Lutherans and Catholics in St. Petersburg for common social ministry.

Marina said PIMEN, founded in 1994 by her professor, friend and co-worker, Father Vladimir Federov, builds ecumenical cooperation among confessions in Russia and links them ecumenically around the world.

"The Orthodox church has grown since the end of the Soviet period of militant atheism. For 70 years, the church was forced underground, allowed to do no mission, education or social work," she said. "Our priests could only conduct prayer services, knowing that among the worshipers would be KGB observers."

With the religious revival, church buildings destroyed or converted for other uses by the government are being restored. With a shortage of priests, each priest serves several parishes. They also need Sunday school resources. Social projects once silenced, now communicate in

language the people understand.

"In the 1990s, the patriarchy began devoting more resources to the church's role in society," Marina said. "For the first time in its thousand years of history the church has a position and voice on challenges of the time, such as the spread of HIV and AIDS."

There has also been energy in recent years to restore churches, nonprofits and individual involvement. A cathedral in Moscow was rebuilt on the site where it had been destroyed and replaced by a swimming pool. Parishes have Sunday schools, orphanages, homeless shelters, education programs and summer camps.

PIMEN focuses on research and analysis, mission and peacemaking, and projects with other religious, educational, scientific, social and public organizations.

Since 2000, its Irenicon Peacemaking Center, an affiliate of Pax Christi, has worked for ecumenical dialogue and cooperation, and peaceful co-existence. It also sponsors International Peace Routes for young adults and the Week of Peace in St. Petersburg.

Through International Peace Routes, 50 to 60 young people from 14 to 17 countries met in 2001 and 2002, respectively, and visited several cities to learn about human rights, religious life, autonomous republics or agriculture.

The Week of Peace organized six universities and churches for dialogue on current challenges such as ethnic, inter-religious and interdenominational conflicts arising from migration from former Soviet republics.

A summer Young Adult Peace Camp, "Overcoming

Borders of the Past," explored churches' roles in reconciliation after World War II, focusing on the German army's 900-day Siege of Leningrad in which 250,000 Russians and 113,000 Germans died.

For three weeks, six volunteers from the Netherlands, Germany and the United States worked with six Russian and Kazakhstan volunteers to build Nevsky Peace Park, which includes the largest cemetery for German soldiers in Europe with 85,000 graves.

An Orthodox priest convinced his parish to care for the cemetery and developed a museum in the church crypt and established a center for reconciliation and understanding among nations, Marina said.

Digging in the area, the young adults found remnants of the war—helmets, mines, face-masks and bones. They spoke with veterans who lived through the war and now seek reconciliation.

"They listened and reflected to improve understanding, form friendships and establish a culture of peace and nonviolence they can take into their communities and into their futures," Marina said.

Marina and Gary also recently helped coordinate a young adult travel study seminar on "Terrorism in the World."

The Interchurch Partnership also promotes the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January. Initiated by the Roman Catholic Church, it began to fade in Russia. So they tied Jan. 27, 2006, the Day of Remembrance for the Siege of Leningrad, to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

In St. Petersburg's historic Nevsky district, where many ethnic groups have settled, representatives of denominations processed from a presentation on tolerance at the Swedish Lutheran Church to hear the Roman Catholic archbishop, a leader of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and a Russian Orthodox archpriest engage in dialogue at St. Catherine's Church.

They then went to St. Peter's Lutheran, where there was a public concert of the Russian Requiem, a cultural event with religious content. The day closed with agape refreshment at the

Finnish Lutheran Church.

To foster global and ecumenical understanding, Gary "twins" congregations.

The PCUSA has 45 relationships between Baptist, Orthodox, Catholic and Reformed Churches in Russia and Belarus.

In Sandpoint, he has matched First Presbyterian Church with a Russian Orthodox Church in Klin and First Lutheran with a Lutheran church in Novgorod.

In these relationships, partners gain sensitivity to understand their differing experiences and church traditions.

For people reared under the U.S. view of communist state-sponsored atheism from 1970 to 1991, he finds the twinning can open people to new perceptions.

Marina was an electrical engineer before perestroika—the rebuilding of society. During perestroika, she began theological education at the Russian Academy for Women's Theological Education. Father Vladimir Federov, dean of the theological department, taught his students in an ecumenical atmosphere.

After she graduated, she was among several students who came on the PIMEN staff.

Seeds of ecumenism were nurtured when Orthodox and Baptists suffered in prisons, where they read the Bible, prayed and tried to survive together.

"Church and state are separate under our law of religious freedom that recognizes four traditional religions—Orthodox, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism," she said. "State support includes reconstruction of some buildings of well-attended city churches."

"In the countryside, churches are poor and attended mostly by older women. Parishioners give priests eggs, bread, milk and other goods instead of salaries," Marina reported.

Gary said thousands of church buildings were converted in communist times into secular uses for museums, factories, vegetable stores, clinics and libraries because they were sound structures. The government is returning those buildings, as parishioners have the capacity to maintain them.

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Numbers represent people, losses, heartbreaks that stir anger

By some expectations it seems that instead of praying the grace my family prayed, "Thank you, God, for milk and bread and other things so good," we hear in society, "Thank you, god, for guns and bombs, and other arms *so good*."

The number is more than 600,000—with more than 1,000 added in October—in retaliation for 3,000. Would that we at least limited our retaliation in *defense* to the eye-for-an-eye proportion!

An estimated 600,000 people have lost their lives in three years of war in Iraq, and it's downplayed in media, with confirmation of the validity of the estimate following disclaimers.

More than 600,000 people killed, including hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians "in the way," accepted as "collateral damage" in attempts to catch the bad guys, the insurgents, terrorists embedded in the civilian population. The enemy wears no uniforms. They are primarily identified as young males.

More than 600,000 men, women and children have been killed to stop "terrorism," which has become "the enemy" in the terror spread about *them* by media that are unwittingly complicit with propaganda machines of the war machine, the political machine and the weapons-making machines.

More than 600,000 people and we can't figure a better way to fight terror than to be tough.

Are we people of faith with no recourse, clueless to alternatives?

What about offering carrots—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, quenching the thirst of the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, welcoming the stranger, loving our neighbors, and even more, loving our enemies. Are we willing to have those faith teachings dismissed in the political realm as appeasement?

We seem to have turned aside teachings of most faiths about healing relationships and reconciling conflicts. When we join

the rest of the world in considering those teachings weak or naïve, whose way are we espousing? What is our response to learning that we, our coalition, insurgents and internal factions in Iraq have killed 600,000 human beings created by God? Some of the growing number of the terrorist enemies may be among the dead, but it seems that more terrorists arise.

I remember when U.S. ghettos were burning in the 1960s and 1970s, burning because people felt so hopeless because they were left out of the society, economy, opportunities, education and government power structures.

"Terror" in the form of oppression by the rich and powerful breeds hopelessness that breeds "terrorist" violence by the poor. When those most blessed by the laws and opportunities of society take more than their fair share of the economy and devalue the work that makes their wealth possible, seeds of violence are planted in the hopelessness of people left out.

How many is enough? How many in our world of big numbers will be enough to assuage our anger for the loss of 3,000 lives on our soil? How many will be enough for us to declare victory against terrorism?

It's more than 600,000 and rising. How many will be enough? For those who believe killing is the only way, will any number be enough? Will we wait to be bankrupted as a nation, unable to care for the "general welfare" our Constitution says is part of our government's role?

How can we care about the "general welfare" of our neighbors when we pour so many resources into warfare?

Jesus cried over Jerusalem because God's people didn't understand the gift of faith as "things that make for peace."

How many is enough to bring us to our senses?

What does God want us to do? What value do we really place on human life based on our faith?

Mary Stamp - Editor

Many people are conservative on some issues and liberal on others

Conservative or liberal? Liberal or conservative?

Reading or listening media the last few years could have given the impression that being conservative or liberal is an all or nothing situation.

For Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, however, it isn't a question of either-or. When the president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Tex., spoke in Spokane, he went beyond the current political and religious polarization to consider the creative tension between these principles in both individuals and groups.

Listening to him has led to a variety of ruminations.

"Without a liberal component, life petrifies. Without a conservative component, relationships dissipate," he said.

An organization dedicated to working on issues of social justice may be regarded as liberal, but without some conservative components it is not going to stick together. Someone has to write the bylaws and set some deadlines.

"We are born with liberal or conservative temperaments, just as we are born with our gender," he said. Within one person, there are also liberal and conservative elements.

People in conservative jobs, such as law enforcement, sometimes show a completely different side by taking up a dare-devil hobby.

Any conscientious parent of a young child tends to be extremely conservative about child safety.

Our recent discourse has often obliterated

shades of meaning. We have been led to believe that there is *one* conservative stance on an issue and *one* liberal stance that is precisely opposite.

People interested in conservation of natural resources and stemming global warming are classified as liberals. Aren't they really conservatives when it comes to God's creation?

The National Rifle Association is regarded as one of the most conservative organizations on the national scene. Aren't they really liberal when it comes to firearms?

Father Ron recommends saying "Yes, but..." to much of society.

For example, he suggests accepting what is good about the Olympics, but letting our objections be known about what is bad, such as sponsors' labor practices.

Most of us haven't given up television completely, and we get semi-regular calls from cable company salespeople.

Instead of just saying no to buying more, we should explain our reasonable objections to paying for such a high percentage of junk.

When a store we patronize stocks clothing that encourages girls and young women to cheapen their bodies, we can explain our reasonable objections to a manager.

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

He also recommended giving up our need to be right.

Nancy Minard
Editorial team

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

St. Paul writing to the church in Colossae was concerned that Christians were "diluting" their faithfulness to Christ, blending conflicting or competing beliefs into their everyday lives.

The letter is as relevant today as 2,000 years ago. We often assume being a patriotic American and being a faithful Christian are one and the same, when often they are in conflict with each other.

We have simplified ideas of what God requires of us, of what it means to follow Jesus. We pick and choose which parts of the Bible to read and follow. To live in Christ Jesus is a life-long journey that insists upon deep reflection and study, accountability to fellow travelers, stretching, testing and growing.

It's not about being black and white in our understanding, but being clear that when we are rooted in Christ, when we are built up in him and strengthened in the faith, we will be able to travel through the complexity of life without straying from The Way, and we will overflow with thankfulness to God.

The Rev. Joanne Coleman Campbell
Cheney United Methodist Church

One way to talk about stewardship is to think of it as a sort of Rule of Life—a routine we purposely put in place—a framework from which we live our lives. The Benedictine Rule is one such rule. It is about how communities of monks were called to live together in community so that by their prayer and service they would be the Body of Christ in the world.

Stewardship includes all elements of the

Benedictine Rule of life—prayer, scriptural study, work, service, worship and giving talents, time and income for the benefit of the Body of Christ. Benedict believed a steady balanced diet of all these ingredients led to a healthy Christian and a healthy Christian community that lived the call of living the way of Christ in the world.

What are the values by which we make our decisions on how to give, what to give and to whom to give? How are we called to let go of and share our blessings?

The truth is that when we truly strive to give and when a community of faith does so all in the same way, God does greater things with our gifts than we alone can ever try to do ourselves. Stewardship is about blessing people and giving away gifts for the growth and enjoyment of others or for the church. Each of us have so much, and all that we have was given to us by God.

The Rev. Anne Barton
St. Paul's Episcopal - Kennewick

We know that the want and misery of others is sometimes the result of systems that privilege some at the expense of others. A system of slavery is one example.

Hardly ever will someone get angry at a person who does something to relieve the want or misery of another person. Charitable people often did kind deeds to alleviate the want and misery of slaves.

On the other hand, certain people become angry when someone mounts a serious challenge to a system that privileges some. The ferocity of the Civil War was, in part, an expression of anger against those who challenged slavery as a system.

There is a move beyond the charitable act that expresses the deeper concern of a follower of Christ. There is the articulated concern against systemic oppression.

When we speak and act as Christians against systemic oppression, the theological terms used by those whose privileges are at risk will not glorify God. Not everyone will say, "They're just really good Christian people."

The Rev. Dan Berg - Open Door
United Church of Christ - Deer Park

Jesus ups the ante in John's Gospel by suggesting (John 13:34) that loving our neighbor means loving our neighbor as Jesus has loved them, in self-sacrificial ways.

How shall we be Jesus' people in the midst of a world of violence, religious, ethnic and cultural? Family systems theory suggests that leaders can aid a system by being well-defined, meaning that we take a stand in the middle of an anxious system and thereby aid it in finding its own stability and calm.

In discerning how violence affects us, our families, our churches and our communities, we need to examine our own hearts for violence presence there. The work won't be easy. Apocalyptic images (Mark 13) and early lessons of Advent (Luke 21) can be manipulated by those who gain from violence.

What part of our mission is being called forth? If our compromising entanglement with empire is over and gone, shall we be open to the witness of the earliest church, a non-violent community for the first 300

years? The world may depend on us to take a stand for non-violence in order to stabilize itself. It may cost our lives. Can the church of the resurrection of Jesus face this and live? Is this the new mission we're called to?

The Rev. Martin Wells, Bishop
Eastern Washington Idaho Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

All 191 member states of the United Nations must take responsibility for the crisis it faces. The United States as the richest and most influential member is especially culpable. With an openly hostile attitude and as the largest debtor at \$675 million in arrears, we are not fulfilling the leadership role necessary for a healthy effective UN. It can only be as strong and effective as its strongest members allow it to be.

Why to so many Americans discredit the United Nations? It is our tendency to seeing ourselves as "rugged individuals," a nation which must be independent of any restraints on doing exactly what we want to do as a nation. This attitude puts us at odds with any international authority or restraint. It's like one member of a family insisting on always having his or her way. It does not enhance the wellbeing of a family or a global community.

More good could be accomplished in the world if the United States and United Nations worked together as partners for peace.

Jo Stowell
United Nations Association-Spokane

Institute sponsors 'Darfur through children's eyes' art

The Gonzaga University Institute for Action Against Hate and the Gonzaga student activities office will feature the art exhibit, "Smallest Witnesses: The Crisis in Darfur through Children's Eyes," in the Crosby Student Center from Friday, Nov. 10, to Sunday, Nov. 12.

The exhibit is a collection of drawings by refugee children of the Darfur region of western Sudan.

During a recent Human Rights Watch mission to refugee camps along the Darfur-Chad border, researchers gave children crayons and pens to draw while their families were interviewed.

Center plans benefit

The Martin Luther King, Jr., Family Outreach Center Benefit Luncheon will be held at noon, Thursday, Nov. 16, in the Grand Pennington Ballroom of the Davenport Hotel, 10 S. Post.

Proceeds will support the pre-school, outside-school and parent education programs.

The program, "Living the Legacy of Dr. King: Investing in Tomorrow's Leaders," will present the center's work in improving the quality of life for children, youth and families through culturally responsive educational and social service programs that embody respect, equal treatment and accessibility.

For information, call 455-8722.

Banquet features many cultures

"Seeking Shalom: To the Ends of the Earth" is the theme for the International Banquet at Whitworth College, starting at 5 p.m., Friday, Nov. 17 and followed by entertainment at 7 p.m. Both activities will be in the HUB dining hall.

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, France, Thailand, Spain, Mexico, Cambodia, Austria, Sweden, Chile, Honduras, the United States and other countries will be featured in food and entertainment.

Entertainment includes Middle Eastern dancing, Thai classical and folk dancing, flamenco-inspired music and dance, Exceptional Praise Gospel Choir and Native American storytelling.

For information, call 321-5048.

Without prompting from researchers, the children drew pictures of the atrocities they had witnessed: attacks by militias, aerial bombings, rapes, murders, the destruction of homes and villages and the refugees' flight to Chad. The children insisted that the drawings be shared with the rest of the world.

As part of the presentation, Whitworth College psychology

professor James Waller will speak on genocide in Darfur at 5 p.m., Friday, Nov. 10, in the Crosby Center, followed by a musical performance by the local group, Sidhe Duo.

At 3 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 11, actors Silvia Lazo and Selena Schoepfer will perform "Darfur Strikes Forward" in the Crosby Center.

For information, call 323-3665.

Calendar of Events

- Nov 3** • "The Power of Diversity through Education and Economics," NAACP Annual Banquet, Northern Quest Casino, 10 N. Hayford Rd., Airway Heights, 5 p.m. - 467-9793
- Nov 3,5** • Christ Kitchen Open House, 2410 N. Monroe, Fri 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m., 4-8 p.m., Sunday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. - 325-4343
- Nov 3-5** • "Simple Living and the Rekindling of Public Life," Sleeping Lady Mountain Retreat, Leavenworth
- Roger Williams Symposium, Matthew Fox, the Common Ministry at Washington State University, Pullman - 332-2611
- Nov 4** • Leaf Raking Blitz, Catholic Charities Volunteer Chore Services, O'Malley Hall, St. Aloysius Church, 330 E. Boone - 328-8400
- Nov 8** • Sisters of Providence closing 150th observances - 484-2306
- Nov 9** • "Good Works in Action Tour," Catholic Charities tour of House of Charity, St. Margaret's Shelter and St. Anne's Children and Family Center, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. - RSVP 358-4250
- "Deepening our Awareness of the Sacred," St. Pius X, Coeur d'Alene, 1 p.m.
- "Palestine the Forgotten People Series," Judith Kolohoff and two Israeli soldiers from Breaking the Silence, St. Ann Parish Hall, 2120 E. First, 7 p.m. - 838-7870
- "Acting on AIDS," Jyl Hall of World Vision's College Advocacy Program, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth College, 7 p.m.
- Nov 10** • America Recycles Kids' Activities, Mobius Kids, 1-3 p.m.
- Nov 10,11** • "God, in your grace, transform the world," Marion Best on the World Council of Churches Assembly, Fig Tree's Faith in Action Dialogue, Whitworth College, 7 p.m. Friday, 9 a.m.-noon, Sat - 535-1813
- Nov 10-12** • Exhibit: "Small Witnesses: Crisis in Darfur through Children's Eyes," Gonzaga University Crosby Student Center with James Waller lecture Fri 5 p.m., performance Sat at 3 p.m.
- Nov 11** • Family MacFest: People of the Rivers, Museum of Arts and Cultures, noon-3 p.m.
- Nov 13** • "United Nations Reform and the World Council of Churches," Mary Stamp, The Fig Tree editor, United Nations Association, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 Ft. Wright Dr., 7 p.m.
- Nov 16** • "Stopping Slavery in the 21st Century," Whitworth Presbyterian, 312 W. Hawthorne, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. - 358-7949
- "Finding Peace as We Age," St. Pius, Coeur d'Alene, 10 a.m.
- "Living the Legacy of Dr. King," Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center Benefit Luncheon, Davenport Hotel, noon - 455-8722
- Nov 17** • Whitworth College International Banquet, HUB, dinner 5 p.m., entertainment 7 p.m. - 777-4509
- Nov 18** • Inland Northwest Minister's Wives and Ministers' Widows Fellowship, Calvary Baptist, 203 E. Third, 4-6:30 p.m.
- Nov 23** • Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, Interfaith Council and Second Harvest, St. Aloysius Catholic Church, 330 E. Boone, 10 a.m.
- Nov 24-26** • Festival of Fair Trade, Community Building, 35 W. Main, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. - 448-6561
- Dec 6** • Fig Tree distribution, St. Mark's Lutheran, 316 E. 24th Ave., 9 a.m.
- Dec 7** • Fig Tree Board, Manito United Methodist, 3220 S. Grand, 9 a.m.
- Tues** • Need to Know, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 314 S. Spruce.
- Tues-Sat** • Habitat-Spokane work days - call 534-2552
- Fridays** • Colville Peace Vigil - call 675-4554
- 1st Sat** • Ministers' Fellowship Union - call 624-0522
- 2nd, 4th Weds** • Pax Christi, St. Joseph's Catholic, 1503 W. Dean, noon
- 3rd Mons** • NAACP - call 467-9793
- See page 3 for bazaars, festivals, gift fairs, international marketplaces, dinners

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Interim minister jumps into the heart of domestic violence outreach

Usually an interim ministry is shifting gears from one's predecessor, preparing for the successor and engaging in healing wounds.

The Rev. Bill Comfort finds little healing necessary and need for carrying on the work his predecessor the Rev. Nell Lindorff had begun at the Chewelah United Church of Christ.

So he picked up the community and church domestic violence education project Nell began with the Rev. Tammy Bell of First Congregational in Colville, the Family Support Center in Colville and Rural Resources

The church is part of a two-year grant for the churches to provide education.

The church began by placing signs in its restrooms, alerting women about finding help if they experience abuse. Organizers also want to place the signs in other churches and in businesses.

As part of Domestic Violence Month, they put information on domestic violence on a bulletin board that is used to promote justice and peace resources.

Through the month, Bill said he included content in each sermon and used little wooden people provided by the Family Support Center to create children's stories to help children identify abuse and find support.



Bill and Sheri Comfort with Billy Bob, Jesus and Billy Joe Bob

"We brought up themes of inclusion and safety, making it clear it's not okay to hurt anyone in the family setting," he said.

One Sunday, Bill introduced "Billy Bob," a wooden child figure experiencing violence at home, but finding a good experience at church. The next Sunday, he invited a friend, "Billy Joe Bob." Bill wove in scripture to say Jesus said to "love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, and love each other as

you love yourselves."

"Does that ever mean you can hit someone?" he asked.

"No," the children chorused.

The Chewelah and Colville UCC churches will have several members trained to help people experiencing domestic violence and will present community events to raise awareness.

"Traditionally, churches tended to encourage people to stay in abusive situations," Bill said.

Chewelah UCC's 10 youth

helped with another education effort, the youth clothesline project. They made T-shirts with slogans against domestic violence and put them on a clothesline for members of the church to see.

During worship one Sunday, a group presented "Janet's Story," a dramatization with a woman sitting on a chair and having people in the congregation place sheets over her, representing the cultural and church expectations that keep women in abusive situations. Then the people took off the sheets, sharing factors that can help free people from abuse.

Just out of seminary at Seattle University—after 21-years as a systems analyst with Boeing—Bill was ordained in August 2003 and served a church in Hardin, Mont., before coming to Chewelah.

Spiritual guidance led him to realize he had something to do beside building airplanes.

"I'm still figuring it out, but I know I want to be in parish ministry," he said, using the interim ministry to discern his next steps in ministry.

Unable to find work with a bachelor's degree in English, Bill found the job at Boeing.

He was Unitarian and his wife, Sheri, was in Unity Church, when they married in 1992. Neither church fit both, so they attended First Congregational United Church of Christ in Everett.

Coming from urban Western Washington, Bill has been surprised by life in the farming, logging, mining and recreation



A restroom sign

community of 2,500.

"Chewelah is almost self-contained," he said, "with drama, a ski area, restaurant, coffee house, hospital, long-term care facility, golf courses, casinos, nearby lakes and flowers on light posts."

Bill described the Chewelah UCC as "an oasis."

Its 1993 decision to be an open and affirming church—the only one in Northeast Washington—means the church extends a welcome to people, no matter where they are in life's journey.

In Chewelah, it has meant the church draws people suffering mental illnesses. So members need to be prepared to provide the welcome and care needed.

Sheri is forming a Care Team, modeled on the Multifaith AIDS Care Teams she helped start when they were in Everett. Team members are caregivers—meeting to share feelings or just go on a hike to prevent burnout.

While there for a few more months, the Comforts have found a niche and provide the support needed to carry on the congregation's outreach ministries between full-time, permanent pastors.

For information, call 935-8046.



About 60 people marched for ending domestic violence.

Clergy helped organize march to end violence

Continued from page 1

Harlan Dunbar, pastor of East Central Seventh-Day Adventist church, said, "Violence against one person is violence against everyone. Too many people live in betrayal and duplicity with hidden lives." We need to open our churches, synagogues, and mosques to be places that bring comfort, safety, trust and hope to victims of family and intimate violence. May we have the courage to stand together against domestic violence."

A member of Hamblen Park Presbyterian Church told how sharing her personal story of abuse at church was met with love and acceptance, not the rejection she had feared.

For information, call 534-2307.

Come to the Water

Listening for God's voice

in Prayer -- 11-4-06

in Silence -- 12-2-06

in Journaling -- 2-3-07

in Spiritual Direction -- 3-3-07

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