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Women walk together

By Mary Stamp

On a flight home from a 1999 Presbyterian women's gathering, Sandi Thompson-Royer sat next to Betty Carrera, the leader of a women's program with the Center for Evangelical Pastoral Studies (CEDEPCA) in Guatemala.

Sandi was reading a document from the former Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. Betty knew about the organization.

Sandi did not speak Spanish. Betty did not speak English. So someone translated to help them discover their common concern about violence against women.

After email contact for two years, they developed a domestic violence training program for Central American church women to become advocates for victims. The program is called Women Walking Together.

When Sandi, who grew up Lutheran, returned to church in her 30s, she became Presbyterian. She took general studies courses at Western Washington University in Bellingham and a year of women's studies in the late 1970s at Evergreen College in Olympia.

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Sandi Thompson-Royer leads training teams to Central America.

Website is venue for translations of Fig Tree stories

To reach Spanish-speaking and Russian-speaking people in the region, The Fig Tree seeks volunteers to translate some articles for publication on its website.

With articles about the area Hispanic community and outreach in Central America, Fig Tree editor Mary Stamp said such a service will spread its effectiveness.

"The idea arose when Mark Bohe, whose outreach in Transylvania was covered in May 2006, sent a translation of the article in Hungarian to put online," Mary said. "With a few strokes on the keyboard, it was online ready for access."

"Translation will expand our outreach in communities of the Inland Northwest," she said.

"We have the computer equipment to move ahead on the website and develop ideas, such as translation," she added.

"Now we need more people to help make the vision of a website connecting the faith and nonprofit communities of the Northwest, sharing Fig Tree-style stories."

For information, call 535-1813 or email figtree@thefigtree.org.

Jewish Family Services director believes

People affect world one-by-one

Emergency assistance, referrals, senior meals, home visits, telephone reassurance, volunteer recruitment, domestic-violence outreach and food baskets are among ways the Spokane Area Jewish Family Services seeks to "heal" or "repair" life for people in Inland Northwest Jewish congregations—Temple Beth Shalom, Congregation Beth Chaverim and Congregation Ner Tamid in Spokane and the Jewish Community of the Palouse—and anyone in need of social services.

"While most who call are from the Jewish community, as a nonprofit we support anyone in need. As part of our Chanukiah of Sharing program last year, we provided a woman with a Christmas dinner and gifts for her children," said Deborah Taylor, director.

Six years ago, she and her family moved to Spokane from Teaneck, N.J., to be near her sister, who has lived here more than 25 years.

"Most religious faiths value the same things, such as working for

peace on earth and doing good deeds. Judaism is deed oriented," she said in a recent interview. "What counts is what you do on earth, the legacy of your deeds. That is your spiritual legacy for future generations."

Deborah says few people affect the world in grand ways, but most affect it "person-by-person or community-by-community" by doing good.

"If we change one person, we change the world. If we destroy one life, we destroy the world. If we save one life, we save the world," she said. "Often we do not know that or how we have helped someone."

She told of conversing several times on the phone with a woman, hearing her story and offering her support in her struggles. Later she met the woman at a gathering. The woman told Deborah that she had "helped put her on a new path with her family" and that her children became involved with the youth group and were growing in their Judaism.

"We do not know what will or

will not click, so it's important just to honor people we meet in our daily lives," Deborah said.

Her experience stuffing envelopes for the Congress of Racial Equality during junior high in New York City started her on the path of helping, followed by her being politically active during high school and college.

She studied at a French high school in Manhattan and earned a bachelor's degree in French at Syracuse University. After earning a degree in physical therapy, she worked first at Harlem Hospital and then at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Medical Center in Manhattan until 1986.

She married Lee Taylor in 1985 and lived in Teaneck, N.J., stopping work for a while to rear their two sons. She started doing physical therapy part time, providing home care for geriatric patients, many of whom were discharged from a hospital prematurely.

It was stressful work.

At the age of 44, when her sons were four and eight years old, she stopped work to recuperate from breast cancer. Within a few

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Passion for caring is contagious in church

By Derinda Moerer

Bob Runkle infects people with his contagious passion for hands-on ministry, which has created a pandemic at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Coeur d'Alene.

He and fellow parishioner Bob Peterson have expanded their zeal to more than 30 regular volunteers, who reach out to their local community and beyond—including hosting the Bishop's All-Star Youth at the church this summer. The youth volunteered 300 hours at St. Vincent de Paul one weekend—cleaning the playground, repairing housing and painting the store.

In addition to work at St. Vincent de Paul's transitional housing center and other local outreach ministries, the group sent two teams to an adopted Mississippi church that was devastated by Hurricane Katrina. They also have sent care packages to enlisted men and women stationed overseas.

Bob (Runkle), who was appointed in August as coordinator for outreach and social ministry for the Diocese of Spokane, has reached out since college when he worked with civil rights groups. After he moved to Idaho and joined St. Luke's outreach ministry team in 2004, his heart for people has stimulated the parish to reach out and make a difference in people's lives.

On Monday nights, he joins three to five other church volunteers to minister to a specific group—young children at St. Vincent de Paul's transitional housing facility.

The group interacts with 10 to 25 children under the age of eight while their parents attend life-skills classes. During the children's play time, Bob and the others strive to instill respect, manners and other common courtesies.

A year ago, he stretched his arms to a crying toddler, new to the facility, but to no avail. The child was not familiar with social interactions after living in a tent for six months with

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Most religious faiths value the same things.

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

Religious leaders spurn violence

Kyoto, Japan (ENI). All religions are vulnerable to being hijacked by extremists and unprincipled politicians, said the head of the World Conference of Religions for Peace in August. "Our religions are being hijacked by religious extremists, unscrupulous politicians and the sensationalist media," said William Vendley, a U.S. Roman Catholic theologian.

Americans unhappy with both 'left' and 'right'

New York (ENI). A new survey finds that nearly 60 percent of Americans believe religion's influence is declining. They also said they are unhappy with calls to action by people deemed to be religious conservatives or liberals. The survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found that most of those concerned about religion's declining influence are worried about it.

Czech church sells buildings

Warsaw (ENI). The Czech Republic's predominant Roman Catholic church is selling properties at cut prices to cope with plummeting congregations and donations. "We don't have money to keep them," said Martin Horalek of the Catholic Bishops' Conference in Prague. They hope some churches can be given to local municipalities for a symbolic payment to fund renovating them and that Catholic priests could celebrate occasional Masses.

Pakistan bishop protests 'hatred' of Christians

New Delhi (ENI). A Pakistani bishop renounced his nationality to protest discrimination and hatred he says the miniscule Christian minority suffers in the world's second largest Muslim nation. "Christians face extreme hate, discrimination and detestation by Muslims here. We are unwanted," Bishop Timotheus Nasir of the United Presbyterian Church wrote President Pervez Musharraf.

Churches want peacekeeping force in Darfur

Nairobi (ENI). Church leaders urge the Sudanese government to accept a UN peacekeeping force for Darfur, where about two million people have been displaced in a three-year-conflict over resources. Sudanese Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Presbyterian and Pentecostal leaders met in Nairobi as the Darfur conflict escalated with the aid workers becoming targets in the hostilities.

Canadian church forgoes Israel divestment

Thunder Bay, Canada (ENI). The United Church of Canada General Council meeting in Ontario dropped a proposal to divest from companies that contribute to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and adopted a resolution calling for "a pro-investment strategy with companies which engage in ethically responsible business" in Israel and in Palestinian areas.

Faiths in Middle East need more contacts

Geneva (ENI). A World Council of Churches delegation to the Middle East urges stepping up talks between Christians, Jews and Muslims to promote a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian issue it sees as the root of the violence in the region. "We need to speak truthfully with each other now," said the Rev. Jean-Arnold de Clermont of the Conference of European Churches.

U.S. fines Baptist group related to travel in Cuba

New York (ENI). Fined \$34,000 by the U.S. government for activity in Cuba from 2003 to 2005 deemed to violate travel regulations on religious activity there, the Alliance of Baptists is defending its actions as part of its religious itinerary. U.S. regulations require that such groups spend all of their trips engaged in religious, rather than tourist, activities.

World Evangelical Alliance opens Geneva office

Geneva (ENI). The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) has opened an office in Geneva, Switzerland, in partnership with the Swiss Evangelical Alliance to help influence the new United Nations Human Rights Council. "In a day of growing global complexities it is critical that WEA increase its impact on the global stage," said Geoff Tunnicliffe, international director of the group representing more than 400 million Evangelical Christians.

REGIONAL ECUMENICAL & INTERFAITH NEWS

Faith in Action Dialogue features Marion Best

The featured speaker for The Fig Tree's 2006 Faith in Action Dialogue on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 10 and 11, is Marion Best, a member of the World Council of Churches Executive Committee.

She will share an overview of the WCC's 9th Assembly in February at Porto Alegre, Brazil, where 4,000 Christians from around the world gathered.

At 7 p.m., Friday, she will give a presentation at Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth College, using the assembly's prayer-based theme, "God, in Your Grace,

Transform the World."

She will share the music, worship, dialogue, process and decisions made at the 9th Assembly, for which she served as one of the moderators of sessions using the moderators of sessions using consensus decision-making.

On Saturday morning, she will also share elements of the worship services and music, in conjunction with a workshop opportunity to dialogue with her and other participants.

"It will be a chance to learn and practice listening skills, and to discern the kernel of a person's

story," she said.

A nurse who became an adult educator, Marion used her skills in group process and conflict resolution to help the United Church of Canada grapple with divisive issues. For three years, she was moderator of the United Church of Canada.

Marion lives with her husband, Jack, in Naramata, B.C., in the Canadian Okanagan.

She moderated several sessions using consensus decision making at the assembly.

For information, call 535-1813.

Mennonite Country Fair and Auction is Oct. 7

Each fall for 29 years, Menno Mennonite Church has drawn people to the rolling wheat fields between Ritzville and Moses Lake for its Country Auction and Relief Sale, outdoor festivities that support relief and development programs of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

The 2006 fair begins at 7 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 7, with breakfast. About 10 a.m., other booths open and the auction starts at noon.

The MCC started in 1920 in response to hunger and human

needs resulting from war in Russia and the Ukraine. Today the MCC has 1,000 workers in 53 countries, including the United States, and it sends assistance to 70 countries.

The fair and auction have raised more than \$900,000 over the years for MCC programs.

"We hope our 2006 proceeds will take us over \$1 million," said Phyllis Franz, a member of the planning committee.

"Funds provide such material aid as wheat, beans, clothing and medical supplies for emergency

needs, plus support for agricultural development, water conservation projects, and school and maternity kits to improve life in communities around the globe," she explained.

There will be demonstrations of wheat weaving, antique stone mill grinding of wheat and corn into flour, apple butter making, and cider pressing. Food booths feature German delicacies, Amish cheese, Montana smoked sausage, and African peanut stew.

For information, call 659-0926.

Speaker explores 9/11 challenges

Mike Kress, an Air Force veteran and producer of a KYRS public affairs show, will speak on "9/11: What's Real and What's Not: Challenges of International Terrorism" at 7 p.m., Monday, Sept. 11, for the United Nations Association meeting at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 W. Fort Wright Dr.

His goal is to encourage people to question and search for the truth of events related to the Sept. 11, 2001, destruction of the World Trade towers and damage to the Pentagon.

Born in Pittsburgh, Penn., he entered the Air Force in 1987 at the age of 17 and worked as a Morse code intercept operator, was stationed in the Philippines two years and then with the NSA in Fort Meade, Maryland. He worked on a cargo aircraft and served two voluntary tours in the Persian Gulf region—in Iraq and Somalia.

As he moved to reserve duty in 1994, he said, his spiritual beliefs led him to question the role of the U.S. military in the world

and his role related to it. A year later, he applied for conscientious objector status. He was honorably discharged in 1998, holding many medals for his years of service.

Mike opposed bombing Baghdad in 1990-1991. He first publicly joined a war protest at the time of the bombing of Serbia and Kosovo.

He is former vice chair of the Spokane Human Rights Commission.

For information, call 624-3608.



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Church World Service marks 60th anniversary during October

Church World Service (CWS), which sponsors area CROP Hunger Walks, celebrates in October the 60th anniversary of its founding in 1946 during the aftermath of World War II.

"The world had never before experienced such a time," said John McCullough, executive director. "Cities in Europe, Asia and Africa lay in ruins. Millions of people were displaced and separated from families. Hunger and poverty threatened the survival of countless others. It was a desperate time that reflected a depth of inhumanity before-hand unimaginable.

"Earlier, people thought destruction of their communities had global consequences because their local reality was their global reality," he said.

Previously, they had no idea how large, diverse and complicated the world was. In that war, several nations tried to assert nationalistic, ethnic superiority, bringing devastating destruction, he said.

Millions of people were dispersed, often not knowing where family members were or if they survived. Homes and communities needed rebuilding.

John said the world is still healing from that war's social, economic and political impact.

"The recent war between Lebanon and Israel had the same devastation, as scores

of refugees huddled among the ruins, wrestling with their feelings of hatred and retribution for what happened," John said.

Last year, he saw the devastation of the tsunami on Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

"The absence of life made it too difficult to imagine the horror people experienced with the tidal waves. As I wound through debris of what once was a thriving community, I saw a man sitting in front of ruins of the only house.

"The other houses were destroyed, and his neighbors were swept away in the flood. Only the remnants of his house remained. Somehow only he survived. I could only imagine his anguish.

"How does one reconcile surviving a catastrophe when others don't? How does one rebuild, when there are no neighbors to lend a helping hand and offer encouragement?" John asked, wondering what might give him hope and convince him of the reality of God.

He said the challenge for Christians is "to reach into the lives of people during their nighttime of despair, to be signs of hope, to be present, to offer an embrace and to speak about restored purpose."

It's what people of faith did after World War II through CWS.

Through CWS people express the "fortitude of their faith," seeing people's

despair and, despite distance and circumstance, offering compassionate response to make a difference and "break the silence with a voice of hope," John said.

"Our founders were not confused by any need to cast blame or judgment, or to hold victims responsible because they did not observe the warning signs leading to their own despair. They saw the face of hunger and they fed it, they saw wandering spirits and gave them a place to call home," he said. "Yes, people often make bad decisions, but it doesn't mean they can't be redeemed, and it doesn't mean their hope should not be restored."

John believes the world is again in a state of chaos similar to that of 1946.

"Today we face a convergence of events that not only heightens our vulnerability but also threatens to leave no nation unscathed," he said.

The War on Terror in Afghanistan, Iraq and Indonesia, with prospects of war with Iran and the Middle East between Israel and Hezbollah, includes missiles flying back and forth, mothers buried under the rubble clinging to infants who never had a chance to live, play or dream," he said. "In addition, there is the inhumanity in Darfur, Sudan, the deteriorating situation in the Ivory Coast, the specter of a nuclear war in the Korean peninsula, and the march of HIV/AIDS

in Africa, China and Russia."

Beyond the international scene, he wonders why hunger is on the rise in America—with food pantries unable to keep up with needs of those who can no longer make their dollars stretch far enough to feed their families, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor in this and other countries.

"With the fury of nature we saw last year in hurricanes, typhoons, rains flooding the northeast United States, and drought spreading in this country and East Africa, do we need more convincing about global warming?" he asked.

John calls for collective responsibility to pull everyone back from the abyss.

"Prophetic witness calls us to realize the dangers inherent in life and to act. So many of our global family again huddle in fear of what has become of them or sit in despair, confused and wondering what happened, what went wrong and where their neighbors are," he said.

"Faith summons us to see the face of God in each other as persons of sacred worth, to value and honor each other's humanity even as we seek to resolve our differences, to make sure that no one is left without the necessities of life, and to be present, embracing, and purposeful in the living of our lives," John said.

For information, call 212-870-2676.

International Day of Prayer for Peace events organized worldwide

On Thursday, Sept. 21—or a Sunday near that date—congregations, ecumenical councils and interfaith groups around the world will gather to pray for peace.

"Praying for peace is an essential part of Christian worship and of human existence," said World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary the Rev. Samuel Kobia about the International Day of Prayer for Peace.

WCC member churches are asked to pray for peace. This initiative began two years ago as part of the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV).

United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan welcomed the idea, because it coincides with the United Nations' International Day of Peace.

The theme for this year, "... and still we seek peace," was chosen by churches from Latin Amer-

ica—the region of the DOV's annual focus in 2006.

Churches are asked "to be mindful of the violence in Latin America, but also of suffering children, elderly, women and men in the Middle East," and to pray for "cessation of all violence and for lasting peace," said Samuel.

The International Day of Prayer for Peace is an opportunity for church communities to pray and act together to nurture lasting peace in people and their families, communities and societies.

Ways to observe the day include art contests, educational and cultural events, prayers and reflections on peace in the community, workplace, school or home, and interfaith prayer vigils.

An International Day of Prayer for Peace brochure, prayers and other resources are available at <http://overcomingviolence.org/>

[en/about-the-dov/international-day-of-prayer-for-peace.html](http://about-the-dov/international-day-of-prayer-for-peace.html).

Some area events are planned:

- The Inland Northwest Chapter of Life Bliss Foundation plans a Maha Mantra group meditation at 6:45 p.m., Sept. 21, at the Washington State University Visitor's Center, 225 N. Grand in Pullman. For information, call 332-5020.

- The Community Coalition for Peace of Walla Walla plans a 7 p.m. gathering with music, drumming and meditation hosted by First Congregational United Church of Christ, 73 S. Palouse St. A 24-hour vigil begins at noon at the church. For information, call 535-8753.

- Eleven Days of Global Unity—Sept. 11 to the UN's International Day of Peace, Sept. 21—feature more than 200 concerts, festivals, webcasts and other events in more

than 60 countries on "Creating a Culture of Peace: Celebrating a Sustainable Future."

For information, visit www.wetheworld.org/11days2006.

Friend to Friend plans Fun Run

Friend to Friend will hold its annual 5K Fun Run beginning at 10 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 23, at Avista, 1411 E Mission.

Friend to Friend matches volunteers interested in visiting elderly people with lonely people in area long-term care facilities.

Started in 1979 through the then Spokane Christian Coalition, the

nonprofit organization now has about 50 volunteers who make a one-year commitment to visit someone at least twice a month, said Jan Kendrick, volunteer coordinator.

Jan works with activity directors at the homes to match volunteers and residents.

For information, call 483-1600.

MANNA 2006

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See our website for a complete retreat schedule!

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2006 Faith in Action Dialogue

'God, in your grace, transform the world'

featuring

Marion Best

- World Council of Churches (WCC) Executive Committee
- a moderator at the WCC's 9th Assembly in February in Brazil
- former moderator United Church of Canada from Naramata, B.C.

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7 - 9 p.m. - Friday

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Simple encounters nourish well of wisdom to apply in caring acts

Continued from page 1

months her father died and her husband was "downsized" from his company.

"After chemotherapy and recuperation, I decided to find a job I liked," said Deborah, who has had no recurrences. "Having cancer taught me about life. I became more grateful, thankful for every moment."

A job "fell into my lap" as outreach director for the New Jersey/West Hudson Valley Council of the Union for Reform Judaism.

She worked with intermarried couples, their parents and their grandparents; served people exploring Judaism, teens learning about their Jewish identity and conversion candidates, and led workshops nationally and in the district's 52 congregations.

Deborah said her husband was not Jewish when they married, but converted after nine years. Their sons are Jewish and respect his mother's commitment as a Christian.

Deborah was born into an ethnically and culturally Jewish family. They were not observant.

She investigated Judaism among other religions when she sought a spiritual community.

"When I chose Judaism, I knew I belonged," she said. "My children have gone to Hebrew school, Sunday school and synagogue, which I missed growing up."

Her respect and appreciation for aging people began with knowing her grandparents and some great grandparents. Her great grandfather died when she was six. She remembers her grandmother taking her to visit her great-grandmother in Brooklyn when she was eight.

"We walked into her house. I saw a petite, white-haired woman," Deborah recalled.

"Mom, it's me, Jenny," said her grandmother.

"Jenny, come in from playing," said her great-grandmother.

It was Deborah's first encounter with dementia, which she has met many times in physical therapy and work with elderly people through Jewish Family Services.

"It was weird, but didn't scare me. I was curious. My grand-



Deborah Taylor offers telephone reassurance and recruits volunteers to help, too.

mother explained it. They spoke Yiddish, and my grandmother translated," Deborah said.

She values the insight, wisdom and experience of older people.

"They have much to teach. We would not be in the messes we are in if we listened," she believes.

"Even people who lose short-term memory can give pearls of wisdom," she said, telling of meeting her husband after following the advice of a 92-year-old physical therapy patient.

Deborah also gained insight on the role of religion in healing.

When a colleague—who was trying to convince a blind, diabetic man at Harlem Hospital to be fitted for a prosthetic leg after his had been amputated—took a day off, Deborah took over. Using a walker was taxing his system.

"I asked him how he liked using the walker. He said it was better than nothing, but he knew that God would make his leg grow back," she said.

So Deborah, then 22, responded with respect for his faith: "Okay, God will make your leg grow back, but do you think God would be mad if in the interim you used a prosthetic leg?" He thought about it and decided to try one, so his life

was much more pleasant.

"Then the concept of faith was alien to me," she said, "I realized whether I agreed with his idea about God, I needed to respect his faith before I could help him gain a less stressful way to walk."

When the Taylors moved to Spokane, Lee found work in a startup company and now is director of Camp Fire USA. When Deborah began her job search, she wanted something in the nonprofit community, eventually finding a match just over a year ago with the Spokane Area Jewish Family Services (SAJFS).

The board recently decided to provide services for people suffering domestic violence, so Deborah took training with the FaithTrust Institute in Seattle and the Washington Office for Criminal and Victim Justice. SAJFS seeks to educate the Jewish community about domestic violence and work with Faith Partners Against Family Violence to help raise awareness in the community.

In April, Deborah also expanded her horizons, while building three cinder-block homes with Habitat for Humanity in Guatemala.

"It was a spiritual experience, doing everything together by hand—chiseling holes in the concrete blocks, bending rebar and mixing cement—from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., when it was 105 degrees.

"The poverty was overwhelming. The rudimentary houses we built fulfilled a family's dream," said Deborah, aware that simple services, such as SAJFS' monthly senior luncheon education pro-

gram, have a broader impact.

In July, she showed the seniors the film, "Paper Clips," about a small-town Tennessee school that helped a class comprehend the loss of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust by collecting 6 million paperclips.

"They wound up educating the community, which then created a Holocaust memorial," she said.

Along with serving people to meet immediate needs, she believes it is important to help people recognize and end prejudices "we all have."

There is always someone need-

ing help, she said, always someone with fewer privileges but of no less value.

"I see people as human beings—regardless of degrees, income or housing—seeing a glass half full, not half empty," she pointed out.

"My belief as a Jew is to respect other human beings and engage in social causes on their behalf," Deborah said.

SAJFS's vision is for every family to have a strong support system, each senior to thrive and be surrounded by friends, and people who struggle to have access to social services.

To do that, it provides information, education, assistance, advocacy, reassurance, visits, food, transportation, home-monitoring systems, referrals and follow-up.

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Need for domestic violence prevention training is universal

Continued from page 1

Her experience in a first marriage led her to understand women who suffer from emotional abuse. After she married Brian Royer, they made their home in Republic, a safe home for abused women.

Hearing stories of women experiencing domestic violence in rural communities, Sandi took training with the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence—now the FaithTrust Institute.

“It was transformative,” she said, leading to her commitment to educate religious communities to identify, respond to and work to end domestic violence.

Sandi directed the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Program of Ferry County in Republic from 1988 to 1999. She worked from 1998 to 2001 with the national Presbyterian Church (USA) to create the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network, moving to Spokane in 2000.

Now she leads a national Presbyterian network of clergy and domestic violence professionals, provides domestic violence education and advocacy for the Kalispel tribe, and leads Faith Partners, which works with the YWCA and other domestic violence groups to train clergy and lay leaders.

“Few seminaries teach pastors how to respond to domestic violence from a faith perspective,” she said. “There is also mistrust between secular programs and faith communities.”

With that background, her connection with Betty in Guatemala led her to develop a retreat-style training for Central America, based on the model she uses to educate U.S. religious leaders.

In February, she made her fourth trip—two to Guatemala, one to Costa Rica and this one to Nicaragua—with a team of U.S. women to build relationships, share stories and offer resources through translators to Central American women.

“As women share stories about abuse, change happens. Women need to talk with each other. Central American women are amazed that we have problems. We bring resources they do not have. As sisters, we struggle together,” said Sandi, who learned that Central American women pray for Afghani women, believing their lives are more difficult.

Accompanying Sandi to Nicaragua in February were Debbie Dupey of the Spokane County Domestic Violence Consortium; Twinflower Wilke of Republic, a domestic violence and sexual assault advocate in Ferry County who attends the Curlew Community Church; Cody Francis, an advocate with a domestic violence program in Newport; Catherine Campbell of Seattle, who is involved in Presbyterian Women regionally; Karen Summers, a Presbyterian pastor formerly involved with a domestic violence program in Bellingham, and Bonnie Orth, a Presbyterian pastor in Albany, N.Y., who is a survivor of domestic violence and co-moderator of the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network.

After a week of language study, they began the training. The Nicaraguan women’s hugs and hospitality soon had them relaxed.

The training includes activities that participants can replicate.

“Physical abuse is rampant



Bonnie Orth presents labyrinths to the Rev. Nora Montenegro of Nicaragua and Betty Carrera.

in Latin America,” Debbie said. “Three of five Nicaraguan women are victims, but the society has barriers to dealing with it.”

In 10 years of revolution in the 1980s, about 40 percent of the combatants were women. Many of their parents were killed or went into exile.

“There is a fierceness to the women who were soldiers. They are strong and look you in the eye. In contrast, many rural women seemed shy and beaten down,” Debbie said.

Unemployment is 70 percent, so many men leave to find jobs. Some send money. Some do not. Some return. Some do not.

“Women do most of the work,” Debbie continued. “Faith inspires them to go on despite oppression. Many are illiterate and have to rely on male pastors’ interpretations of scriptures.”

The team went to Chichigalpa, a rural community with diverse, literate women; to Maltagalpa, a hotbed of the revolution where there are more professional women, such as pastors, social workers and attorneys, and to Buena Vista, a rural area where many are illiterate. They were the first Americans some women had met.

About 30 women came to the first two workshops and 50 came to Buena Vista—two walking and taking the bus for about seven hours.

The two-day workshops included Bible study, worship with tortilla-and-grape-soda communion. Women returned to their communities filled with hope that

women’s lives can be different, Debbie said.

The team discussed the impact of domestic violence on children and how to advocate for victims. They used drama, art and story to build understanding of how to use faith in liberating ways.

For example, taking the story of Jesus meeting the woman at the well—accepting her even knowing that she had had five husbands, “we created a drama, portraying the woman as a victim of domestic violence. Cody acted out possible scenarios for her five husbands—one being violent, one lying, one fooling around, one physically abusive and one emotionally abusive,” Debbie said.

Cody, now 10 years on the staff of Family Crisis Network in Newport, previously managed a coffee house there. The director, who came there every day, hired Cody—who studied some journalism in college—to write grants and provide services to clients.

“Because there are fewer resources in Nicaragua, we encouraged women to support each other and provide safe places where women could go to talk without facing blame,” she said.

The team trained 90 women who, in turn, will train 500 advocates in their communities.

With women nursing babies, children running, and women talking during sessions, Debbie wondered if they would gain anything until an older woman said: “I have lived in violence all my life. Maybe this will help prevent the next generation from

experiencing it.”

Cody said the trip made the world a smaller place for her and established a sense of solidarity.

Another tool they used was a labyrinth Bonnie’s youth group made just before the trip. The group made two labyrinths, painting paths on four queen-size sheets for each labyrinth. Both were left for CEDEPCA to use.

“We set a candle in the center. Women walked toward the light, praying about their concerns and asking for God’s guidance. As they walked out, they let go of burdens. For some women, I imagine those burdens were memories of family members tortured, killed or missing,” Cody said.

“We used it to draw out stories of their faith journeys,” Sandi added. “Sometimes women feel alone. Coming to such events makes us realize we are in this to-

gether no matter where we live.”

Twinflower wrote in the group’s journal that “the labyrinth evoked feelings and stories. Women quickly related it to their own lives with stories of feeling they had lost their way, but later found meaning in Christ.”

She found the Bible study image of planting a small seed of thought helpful and valued realization that if women are created in God’s image, God must have some feminine qualities.

A mask-making exercise elicited feelings about wearing make-up—related to freedom to choose how to look, Twinflower said.

“Women need pastors and sisters in the church who understand,” she said.

Sandi said CEDEPCA will continue the work.

The FaithTrust Institute and Lutheran Community Services of the Northwest donated videos in Spanish and other resources. The trip was funded by friends, families, communities, churches and grants from the national Presbyterian Church and from the Alaska Northwest Synod’s Peacemaking funds.

Guatemalan woman visits U.S. programs

Betty Carrera of CEDEPCA in Guatemala will visit Spokane from Sept. 15 to Oct. 18 to learn about domestic violence here and improve her English.

She will attend the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Conference Sept. 18 to 20 in Wenatchee, and visit the FaithTrust Institute in Seattle and other area programs.

To invite her to speak, call 534-2307.

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Methow Valley food bank chose name 'COVE' for 'safe harbor'

The food bank serving the Methow Valley has a community-building twist.

Eight years ago, COVE—Churches of the Valley Extended—started as a food bank distributing food after neighbors, who are both clients and volunteers, share lunch.

They chose the name, COVE, because of its meaning as a safe harbor, a shelter from the storm.

It started as an extension of the United Methodist Church in Twisp, seeking to share God's love with the community through a charitable organization.

Now it involves 40 volunteers in various ministries. Volunteers come from nine churches and five communities in the valley.

Each Thursday, about 65 families come to the storefront food bank for lunch from 1 to 4 p.m. at Jaime's Place, a café setting on the main street in Twisp. Also COVE's office, it is open weekdays.

People sit at tables as a community and spend time meeting neighbors—both volunteers and people in need.

"A meal provides a core element for the gathering," said the director, Glenn Schmekel.

As they converse, volunteers interview families, learning what towns they are from, the number of people in their families, what help they need beyond food, their prayer requests and their physical needs such as for help with utilities, rent, car repairs, medical expenses or furniture.

People leave with one or two bags of supplemental food.

"We keep a list and try to match needs with those who can assist and by providing funds to pay vendors, not clients," Glenn said. "We also offer classes on banking and budgeting to help people with their financial difficulties."

Four years ago, COVE formed Faith in Action Guardian Angels, volunteer caregivers and friends for the elderly and shut-ins. Those volunteers contact and visit someone once a week to keep aware of their situation and network with



COVE food bank serves Methow Valley.

people in the community.

There are 25 angels.

"The idea is to help neighbors in need in five Methow Valley communities—Carlton, Mazama, Methow, Twisp and Winthrop," Glenn said. "We want to help people remain independent in their own homes if they can do it with a little help."

When COVE learned there was no adult care facility in the 50-mile stretch of the Methow Valley, the board decided to build an assisted-living nursing home for six people, so residents can stay in the area and remain connected with friends, family and children.

That building, funded by a bequest, will be finished soon.

Churches and social clubs provide ongoing support for the \$50,000 COVE budget.

Each church takes responsibility different weeks, sending volunteers to provide services.

Churches involved include the Church on the Rise Assembly of God, Methow Valley Baptist, Community Covenant, St. Genevieve's Catholic, Friendship Church of Winthrop, Christian Missionary Alliance, Methow Valley Calvary Chapel, Mazama Community Church and Twisp United Methodist. Many have 100 or fewer members.

Glenn, a transplant from California 34 years ago, came to the valley to escape city life and be part of an intentional Christian

community, called the Second Mile Branch.

Over the years, the community's land shifted from community to private ownership. Participants remain close friends, Glenn said.

About 7,500 people live in the Methow Valley, where the economy is based on tourism, the Forest Service, and real estate. It is a growing community for people with second homes, who are part-year residents. It is also a recreation area for cross-country skiing, biking, hiking, art, theatre, painting and music.

Glenn previously taught elementary grades in public schools and for seven years directed local home-school programs.

Involved about 10 years in the United Methodist Church, Glenn said he had "a divine revelation" while hiking and contemplating. It came in the form of a question: "Are you planting any seeds that will grow into harvest?"

Glenn met with his pastor and other people in the community. He proposed helping area people in need by starting a food bank based on friendship and fellowship, with neighbors meeting neighbors.

"People needed an organized way to connect with people in need," he said.

For example, now many people in the area who have gardens plant a row for the Food Bank, bringing extra produce in season.

"I had been oblivious to my neighbors' needs—people in low-income housing, people without cars, people who are disabled. I lived in my world of activities. This opened my eyes and heart to more of my neighbors, giving me more friends," Glenn said.

His involvement has given more meaning to scriptural calls to give a cup of water, to visit a neighbor and to provide food.

"I feel the Gospel is best lived out and demonstrated, rather than spoken," he said. "Many people in organized religion do not know what to do to help. This program helps volunteers share gifts of hospitality and caring with new friends, so they better understand that the community includes the poor and those in need."

"We could all be in need at any time, so we do not want to just give handouts, but to be neighbors helping neighbors," he said.

Many churches support through their budgets or funds they once used to help transients. Transients no longer go church-to-church, but each church has someone to

call to help meet the needs.

"It's a way to be involved outside our congregation. A circle of friends gives monthly, through fund raisers—a golf tournament and other events. We also have a food drive reaching every post-office boxholder in the Valley," Glenn said.

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The Pullman-Moscow CROP Hunger Walk will be held on Sunday, Oct. 1, following the trail between Pullman and Moscow. This is the 23rd annual walk.

For information, call 332-2216.

The Mid-Columbia CROP Hunger Walk set for Sunday, Oct. 8 is being called the "Heritage Walk: Bridge to Bridge."

This is the Tri Cities' first walk since 1995, with leadership under the Rev. Larry Hansmeier at First

Christian Church in Kennewick.

About 100 participants from six congregations will walk 3K meeting at the Blue Bridge and walking to the Cable Bridge, said Larry, who has done CROP Walks

in California and Nevada.

For information, call 586-2101.

The Yakima CROP Hunger Walk will be held on Saturday, Oct. 14.

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Andrew Holguin feeds a hunger for knowledge among Hispanics

Andrew Holguin sees and responds to a hunger for knowledge among Hispanic and Native American people in Spokane, Othello, Wenatchee and Tri Cities.

Three years ago when he met Shirley Williams, dean of the Gonzaga School of Education, he turned his energies toward responding to Indian and Hispanic children who were falling through the cracks in the education system.

He estimates that there are 17,000 Hispanic families in Spokane—many who do not read even Spanish.

With an office on campus, he agreed to organize a tutoring program to develop literacy skills of children from grades three to 12.

He has started a nonprofit called Inland Northwest Community Services, through which he invites others to join in this outreach.

This fall, students in Gonzaga's engineering school will join, tutoring children on math.

The program began with seven education students and grew to 60 students as tutors by spring 2006. Andrew recruits children and youth through churches, schools and word of mouth. Last spring, 127 children were on a waiting list.

Once tutors and children were acquainted, students would check in and then find a place—in the library, an empty classroom, hallways or a computer lab—to sit down and work one-to-one.

Gonzaga students tutor from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Saturdays, plus need time to prepare for tutoring based on the child's needs.

Afternoons he teaches Spanish, which he learned growing up in a traditional Mexican-Tarahumara Indian family in Los Angeles.

Living in the same household with aunts, uncles and grandparents, he did not speak English until he was seven years old. His family culture included food and indigenous religious stories, regular involvement in Catholic Mass and attending parochial school.

His mother worked as fuel buyer for Pan American Airways, making it possible for his family to travel the world.

Based in California, Andrew traveled and lived around the world during his career in global import-export business for major international companies and the Saudi Arabian government.

His travels also included the Navy Military Sea Transport Service during the Vietnam War and visiting Romania, East Bloc countries and Asia.

Because his son was at the University of Idaho in Moscow 20 years ago, Andrew and his wife



Andrew Holguin reaches out to area Hispanic people.

moved there, then to Sandpoint and Newport before settling in Spokane 17 years ago and starting a general contracting business.

Post-polio symptoms that came on 11 years ago gradually led him to set aside that business.

Since then, Andrew has found a variety of ways to work with the Hispanic community, which he said is primarily a mix of Cubans and Salvadorans in Spokane.

With Sr. Irene Knopes, SNJM, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Spokane, he has helped bring Spokane Community College students to the parish to teach English as a second language (ESL).

He brought 24 orphans from a Catholic Orphanage in Nicaragua to Spokane Valley United Methodist Church to perform and raise money for the orphanage.

"I was brought up to do as much as I can for as many people as I can," he said. "If we had difficulties living in another country, we would want to have help.

"Hispanics are giving people. It's not a 'me-me-me' culture, but an 'us-us-us' culture," he said.

"Many people think people are helpless because they are poor. They just need a hand to make the first step and then they have it in them to act on their own," Andrew

added, recognizing that prejudices may inhibit efforts to help.

So Andrew assists individuals—such as helping a Mexican man hurt in a fishing boat accident access basic health care—and helps hospitals and clinics find translators to assure more effective diagnoses and treatment for Spanish-speaking people. There is need for Russian-speaking people, too, he said.

"English is the language of success," he said. "It's not about immigrants not wanting to learn English, but realistically, it takes about 15 years for an immigrant to learn English and be successful. After seven years, the amount of Spanish spoken in a house generally falls dramatically."

"Because of language, some Hispanic women may fear leaving their houses and want to go back to Mexico, but their children consider this their home and do not want to go to Mexico," he said. "Their allegiance is to the United States, regardless of paperwork."

At ESL classes in Moses Lake, Andrew talks with Hispanic students with 4.0 GPAs about going

to college. They did not think they could go, because they are not here legally and thought they could not get student loans.

"I have found funds to help some go to school, even helping one through Harvard Law School. They are honor students. Without the money to go to school, we lose brain power, said Andrew, who did his college and graduate studies in business at the Pan American Management School in London.

In Othello, where 76 percent of students are Hispanic, the juvenile court administrator asked him to help Hispanic youth find alternatives to working in the fields.

Near Othello, there are about six migrant camps with about 2,600 Hispanics—including "Little Mexico," which has many Mexican Indians, who speak five Mestizo dialects.

"Conditions in Little Mexico are abysmal, with no running water or outhouses," he said. "Sometimes hunger is not just hunger for food, but also hunger for knowledge."

So he seeks computer and electronic equipment donations for children and teaches them to use them to emerge from poverty.

"Many outdated computers are thrown away. I could give them to children so they could learn skills," he said. "I also seek books in Spanish to give to children so they can learn to read."

Andrew brings Hispanic students to tour Gonzaga, so they might consider going to college.

He also helps people in the Yakama Nation and Wenatchee.

In contacts with people, he has learned about human trafficking in the region—people brought as sex slaves, girls brought illegally from Mexico to marry someone and then being forced into prostitution. If they tell, they will be deported and shamed.

"It's not visible—because the women are sold out of houses—but it's big. A man invites men at a bar to come to his house," Andrew said. "Women are enslaved,

threatened with being sent home where poverty is so extreme they couldn't afford to live, even if they work two to three jobs."

He opposes but understands illegal immigration—it's the draw of a plate of food sitting just over the threshold.

"People come here to feed their families. Most Americans don't understand, because they have never been as hungry. They send back about \$17 billion a year to Mexico," said Andrew, who often visits relatives in Mexico.

Surveying the Logan neighborhood near Gonzaga University, he sees people in need and projects the university could help do.

From his survey, he has found that Hispanics' major concern is accessing health care. He thinks that should also be a concern of the Regional Health District.

"If someone has TB and goes around coughing, it affects many people," he said.

So he has met with the Regional Health District to find ways to spread information to the Hispanic community in Eastern Washington not only about how to access basic health care to prevent spread of communicable diseases but also what to do in case of a pandemic like bird flu or what Hispanic women need to know about breast and cervical cancer.

He is preparing a Spanish DVD for health districts on what to do in case of a bird-flu pandemic. He is also distributing Spanish-language information to women.

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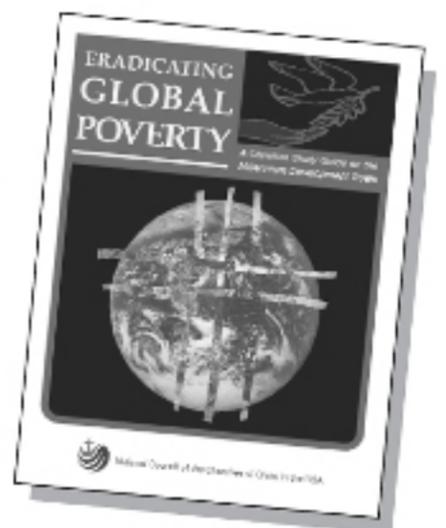
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Episcopalian ignites interest in volunteer projects in his church

Continued from page 1
her twin and four other siblings, which included another set of twins under 3-years-old, plus her parents.

Bob was not discouraged. He continued befriending the six children every Monday night until, six months later, the toddler sought him out and slipped her hand into his. That's the reward he seeks with each new child he meets.

"To see families be successful and to know we've had a part, that's success for us," Bob said. "One Monday night, the children's activity was to learn how to do place settings."

At the end of the parents' class, the children taught their parents how to set the table.

It's a family effort. Families without jobs, housing or food to eat often come to St. Vincent's.

"The transitional housing allows people to rebuild their lives, gain education, establish credit and do other activities necessary for achieving a reasonable standard of living," said Garry Loeffler, St. Vincent's board member, in a recent public statement.

Helping rebuild lives is Bob's passion. He sees people come off the streets and enter St. Vincent's with no hope. Then he watches them leave with a sense of pride and confidence, knowing they can contribute to society.

Members of St. Luke's Episcopal back him with volunteers and with monetary donations. Those gifts, added to a \$2,000 grant from Kootenai Electric and donations from local businesses, allowed St. Luke's workers to build a metal shed to store outside play equipment for the children—such as basketball hoops and balls, soccer equipment and tricycles.

They also purchased more than 1,000 library books for the children. When children leave, each may choose two or three favorite books to take, because the books are constantly being replenished.

A women's group, who can't come on Monday nights, makes blankets for children in the transitional housing. Other volunteers regularly transport adults to appointments, give job counseling and prepare the monthly meal for older children at St. Luke's.

Volunteers give more than 1,200 hours a month to help St. Vincent's transitional housing.

Often they take families on picnics or excursions, like a cruise on Lake Coeur d'Alene.

"Volunteers also take their own children," Bob said. "In the summer, we have more fun activities that create camaraderie among staff, volunteers and families."

Bob's work in North Idaho is



Bob Runkle's enthusiasm to serve draws others along.

just a piece of his lifelong pursuit of helping others.

"My passion developed during college in Atlanta," said Bob, who graduated from Georgia Institute of Technology in 1960 with a bachelor's degree in building construction. "I was involved in Canterbury, an Episcopal college organization. That experience and civil rights activities started my passion, which keeps growing."

He moved to Baltimore after graduating and was founding president of the board of directors for Transitional Services, Inc., a non-profit corporation providing transitional living for abused women and their children.

In the Chicago area, where he lived from 1992 to 2003, he taught English as a second language and helped lead a refugee ministry for people from Cuba, Somalia, Bosnia and Ukraine.

"My faith drives me. The baptismal covenant tells us that's what we should do," Bob said. "I'm recharged, recharged and reinvigorated when I receive communion on Sundays. That gives me the power."

His power to ignite people into action pushed people beyond Coeur d'Alene last year when, two weeks after Hurricane Katrina ravaged Louisiana and Missis-

issippi, St. Luke's was selected by the Diocese of Mississippi as one of 17 Adopting Parishes to assist Trinity Episcopal Church, Pass Christian, Miss., in their reconstruction efforts.

A team of three men left immediately to purchase and erect a storage building, meet the people and evaluate how they could best help. Two months later, after the parish raised \$12,000, another team of five left to help and encourage the 50 members still living in Pass Christian. The rest of the 170 attendees left the community after their homes were destroyed and have not rebuilt.

In addition to supplying building needs, "we gave scholarships to two children at a summer camp in Mississippi," Bob said. "The camp is geared for give children a safe place and counseling after the hurricanes."

Another team returned to Pass Christian in February. They continue to assist Trinity through contributions and prayer.

Bob and his wife moved to the Coeur d'Alene area when he retired in 2003, but neither really retired. His wife, Mary Beth Jorgensen, is communications officer and assistant to the bishop at the Episcopal Diocese in Spokane.

Meanwhile, Bob has his anten-

nae up for worthy projects, while still maintaining the St. Vincent and Hurricane Katrina projects.

Other projects include roadside cleanup four times a year, a Support Our Troops campaign to send packages to men and women in combat zones, and projects to support senior citizens through Coeur d'Alene Homes—nonprofit housing for seniors—and through St. Vincent de Paul's Senior Housing Facility in Post Falls, Idaho.

In addition, St. Luke's hosts about 17 weekly meetings for individuals suffering from addictions. These meetings cater to some 400-plus men and women.

St. Luke's outreach ministry offers caring to church members that has impact on the community.

Bob said blessings come to the community and the parish.

"We don't do this to find new Episcopalians," Bob said. "We

do it because Christ wants us to be out in our community, helping those less fortunate. We receive so many blessings."

So Bob continues to spread his passion to help others in his church, community and the world as Christ commanded his followers to do.

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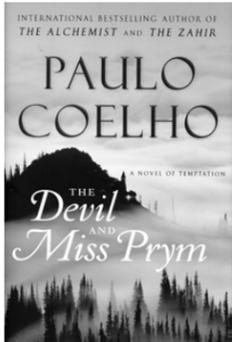


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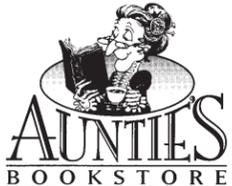
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Committee seeks people to 'shadow' their volunteer efforts

Having helped coordinate CROP Hunger Walks in Spokane for 12 years, Bonnie Churchwell and three others on the planning committee seek some new people to "shadow" them as they organize the 2007 walk.

With just a few people, the CROP Walk Committee plans and presents the annual fundraising event that assists with global hunger relief, disaster relief and development programs of Church World Service—or other designated global hunger relief programs—and several local hunger action and outreach programs.

In the April 2006 walk, walkers from Spokane and Cheney raised \$30,794, just slightly less than the record of \$31,345 raised in 2005 for the 25th annual walk. Two years ago, it raised \$27,000.

For many years, a team of five with the support of hundreds of other volunteers—recruiters, walkers, sponsors and one-day assistants—have made this hunger education and action event possible.

Church World Service, the relief, development and refugee assistance ministry of 35 U.S. Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican denominations, serves through indigenous organizations in more than 80 countries. It provides CROP Walk Committees with resources for planning walks and educating people.

The local committee has several regular supporters who do the tasks necessary to make the event possible.

In 1971, Bonnie moved to Spokane from Colfax when her husband, Disciples of Christ pastor the Rev. Jim Churchwell, came to serve the Jefferson St. Christian Church. Over the years, both Bonnie and Jim worked for the



Bonnie Churchwell

U.S. Postal Service in Spokane. She retired in 2001 after 24 years of service.

Their children had walked in CROP Walks and Bonnie, who grew up in Kansas, first learned about Church World Service when her farmer father was asked to contribute grain for trainloads sent abroad. She learned more about it in Enid, Okla., where she studied business at Philips University and met Jim, then a student at Philips Theological Seminary.

A 1992 trip to Ecuador to visit children she sponsored through

Compassion International gave her firsthand experiencing seeing the needs of people in a poor country.

"I began sponsoring children when I started work at the post office. At first, the children were the same ages as our children. Now we sponsor six children—in Haiti, Honduras, Ethiopia, Kenya and Indonesia—and a college student in Guatemala, contributing monthly support and letters," Bonnie said.

Now she follows and supports students through college or vocational training in their own countries, so they stay to improve lives of people there.

These connections fed the con-

cerns that tied to her commitment in recent years to make sure Spokane has a CROP Hunger Walk.

"It's an opportunity for all Christians and people of faith to gather around their common concern about hunger," she said, giving small churches an opportunity to participate in a large event.

The committee works with congregations to find volunteer recruiters to work a few weeks on education about hunger as part of recruiting walkers and sponsors in their congregations.

"We are growing older and need younger people to help carry on the work of recruiting, contacting churches and doing follow up from January through spring," Bonnie said.

"We want people to come alongside us, to learn what we do and offer new ideas," she said.

Garold Steed makes arrangements with Gonzaga University about meeting at Martin Centre and obtains permits needed.

Bev Blott, secretary, writes letters before and after the event.

Dave Noble arranges music the day of the walk and sets up the stage.

Elisa Pupo does publicity.

Polly McMahon, who teaches at Spokane Falls Community College, volunteers her class to give eight to 10 hours on the day of the walk.

Forty-seven churches sent walkers in 2006.

Several businesses, plus Catholic Charities, the Interfaith Council, Mid City Concerns, Valley Meals on Wheels, Interfaith Hospitality and Second Harvest provide support.

Because churches may cut mission first when budget crunches arise, she said CROP Walks are good ways for people to be involved and learn about the needs—even if it's just for one day a year.

"Throughout the Bible, we are charged to watch out for the widow, orphans and the poor.

Christians have that obligation along with converting people," Bonnie said. "We have so much here. God blesses Americans and has given more than expected. If we sit down to eat a meal and have clothes, how can we ignore with a clear conscience feeling obligated to share our love.

"The walk is an opportunity with low overhead to move some of what we have to places around the globe that suffer," she said.

"Denominations work together with a common goal to take care of those who do not have the wealth we have. If we were in need, we would want help.

"What compels me is the chance to share in Christ's name, because the gifts continue long term. We can make what we have bigger," Bonnie said.

"I would love to see more people involved. Even though Hurricanes Katrina and Rita drew many additional financial gifts last year, we maintained our giving level for the walk," Bonnie commented.

The tasks are "do-able," she said, with more required from January through April.

For information, call 326-5656.

Read articles and see color photos online at www.thefigtree.org

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Physician speaks on Middle East

Bill Dienst, a rural family and emergency room physician from Omak, will share photos and a report on his 2005 travel to Palestine and Israel as part of a delegation of Washington State Physicians for Social Responsibility at 7 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 14, at St. Ann's Catholic Church, 2120 E. First.

His delegation met with both prominent Palestinians and members of the Israeli peace movement. They traveled inside the Kiryat Arba'a settlement to hear from a member of the settler movement.

Bill also visited Israel and Palestine in November 2003,

including 10 days in Gaza, sponsored by Gaza Community Health Program, and in 1985, spent more than four months in Egypt, the West Bank and Gaza, sponsored by the Palestine Red Crescent Society.

The event is sponsored by the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, which is planning its annual garage sale from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 16, at 2807 S. Post.

From noon to 2 p.m., Sept. 11, several speakers will discuss the "Social Justice Lessons Learned from Sept. 11" at the Community Building, 35 W. Main.

For information, call 838-7870.

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Faith life and action go on even when some constituents take time off

In the midst of vacation or the grind of summer work—whichever we experienced—the war in the Middle East may have made us feel helpless and remote, unable to have much influence. The world went on through the summer and goes on into the fall with or without our comment as individuals.

Being part of congregations, churches, synagogues and other wider faith groups, however, our voices were expressed throughout the summer.

Behind the scenes only for lack of media coverage, ecumenical and interfaith leaders expressed concern on behalf of their constituents and many faith action networks offered individuals opportunities to express their opinions.

The work of challenging the powers and principalities continued and continues.

What was the role of those voices in bringing the cease fire between forces in Israel and Lebanon? That may never be recognized, but leaders in the faith com-

munity educated, advocated and acted to give witness to their global ecumenical and interfaith solidarity with faith groups, congregations and people affected by the conflict in the Middle East and around the world.

Now there is a ceasefire, Church World Service, Catholic Relief Services, Action of Churches Together International, Partners International and various other ecumenical, interfaith and denominational relief efforts are present working through people and organizations there to respond to the humanitarian crisis, to help civilians who suffered on all sides.

Websites for different groups outline details of ways people in the Inland Northwest can help.

The World Council of Churches Central Committee is calling for a comprehensive ecumenical and interfaith response to secure a lasting peace in the Middle East. Its Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel provides a channel

for dialogue and action.

The National Council of Churches in the United States started the Season of Prayer for Peace in the Middle East project. Its Interfaith Relations and Religious for Peace program established a new resource, focusing on the power of prayer to heal the holy land of three major religions. In August, they launched a website, www.seasonforprayer.org, which had 88,000 hits in the first two weeks.

The homepage contains an invitation to prayer from several faith leaders including the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Sayyid Syeed, Rabbi Michael Lerner and the Rev. Bob Edgar, general secretary of the NCC. Contributors from many faiths around the world posted more than 125 prayers on the website.

Anyone can visit it and pray for peace in the Middle East and around the world. Even without going to the website as a resource, we can stop wherever we are and offer a prayer for peace.

Other than vacation and work, some people of faith opted to join mission opportunities their faiths and churches organized to build houses in the Gulf Coast and Central America, to do vacation Bible schools, to lead camp programs or to visit faraway communities to build person-to-person relationships. Some sent people to teach language, academic and technical skills to improve people's lives.

Even though some in a faith community go off now and then to the lake, river, mountains, forests, coasts or favorite cities to relish the wonders of God's creation and be renewed, faith communities continue to worship and pray for peace and justice in families, communities, the nation and the world.

Awareness that the witness goes on can energize prompt or persistent action, like a relay runner, passing the baton for a time of still and a time for speech.

Mary Stamp
Editor

War priorities have an impact on earth's creative possibilities

*Let the heavens rejoice,
Let the earth be glad,
Let the ocean roar, the field exult
Let forests sing for joy." Ps. 96:11-13*

The earth is the Lord's—God's creation, not ours. God will judge with righteousness and truth. We are but stewards—"caretakers." Unfortunately the world has chosen to deny or ignore this truth. We must face this truth with personal awareness. Legislative action is imperative.

Today, we are living on an endangered planet. The preservation of the earth and its people should be our highest priority. It is a moral issue, a necessity for survival. Why are we ignoring the many warnings facing the world today?

We are becoming submerged in a "war culture." Iraq hovers on the verge of civil war, and the Middle East is in a state of crisis. Continued fighting in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and threats by Iran and Syria, coupled with our oil dependency perpetuate a state of fear, terrorist obsession and

security instability.

There is a natural order and symmetry in God's creative process. Often it occurs over time. However, two areas of deep concern impact our environment.

The most urgent is ozone depletion. CFCs—chlorofluorocarbons—greenhouse gases are the deadly agents, found in some paint, coolants, propellants and foam-blowing products. They account for 80 percent of ozone depletion.

Ozone, a form of oxygen spread thinly over the upper atmosphere, acts as a shield from excessive sun radiation. Regulation or withdrawal of products causing depletion has been mandated nationally and through requirements of the United Nations.

The second area of concern is global warming. Carbon dioxide is the largest component, along with methane and nitrous oxides. Without stringent measures, the earth's temperature could surge 8 to 10 degrees in less than a decade. A film produced by Al Gore has swept the country and

accentuated awareness. We are seeing the Arctic glaciers melting, the ocean warming and inland droughts. Hurricanes and storms are more prevalent and devastating in coastal areas.

In the past few years, the rising sea level has affected beach areas environmentally and economically.

Leadership in assessing both ozone depletion and global warming are essential for our future security. It may require adjustments in industry and new alternatives for consumers. It also may necessitate some lifestyle changes and restraint in our materialistic focus.

We are called to restore this endangered planet.

God in creative love and simultaneous judgment of this "wayward creation" calls us to repentance and a renewed relationship with the earth. God seeks a stable, equitable and sustained environment.

No longer should we use the earth for excessive consumerism with total disre-

gard for the needs of tomorrow—for our children and beyond.

The restoration may involve re-planting forests for the next generation. It may involve protective measures like the preservation of rain forests and ocean beaches. It may require legislation to halt offshore oil drilling and protection of Alaska's wild life habitat.

We will be judged for our recklessness and neglect of riverbeds and careless stewardship of the planet's huge forest treasures. Every summer, rampant fire consumes the trees and all forms of life.

The 21st century should not be overcrowded, over-developed and un-shared.

The earth is the Lord's. We are caretakers, but do we really care enough?

The moral issue of survival challenges all of us, as well as ecologists, environmentalists and organizations dedicated to "greening the planet."

Jo Hendricks
Contributing editor

Letter to the Editor

Sounding Board

Newsletter Excerpts

Are followers of Jesus looking for faith or for power?

By suggesting what they could do with faith the size of a mustard seed, Jesus makes his disciples realize how little they have in and of themselves. If anything comes of their mustard-seed-sized faith, it is the result of the power of God, not theirs. The man or woman of faith confesses total reliance on God and realizes that the miraculous is the handiwork of God, whose hand cannot be forced. Faith is a relationship of dependency, accepting God as the only and certain foundation of life and holiness.

Faith is a gift—God's gift of love. When we are weak, then God's presence can be—and is—powerfully manifest. When we realize that we carry only an insignificant mustard seed, then God's love and salvation can be seen and experienced. The miraculous happens, not at the snap of our fingers, but at God's command.

The Rev. Michael Savelesky
Assumption Catholic-Inland Register

Looking at our world today, we see storms in many areas—gusts of terrorism in the Middle and Far East, squalls of civil unrest in Africa and Asia, a deluge of poverty in the Americas and a flood of violence everywhere. Sudden storms of sickness, sorrow and pain rise up in our families and souls. It is easy to understand the plea of the apostles, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

We know Jesus cares. He is not distant.

He is no longer dead. He has been raised. Therefore, the love of Christ impels us to invite everyone caught up in the storms of life—beginning with ourselves—not to be terrified, but to have faith in Jesus whom even the wind and sea obey.

This faith must not remain merely a profession with our lips. It must redirect our lives to our proper destination. It will cost no less than everything.

The Rev. Daniel Barrett
St. Patrick's Catholic

Our mission is not, among other things, to convert everyone else to our particular denomination. It's not to "put the world right" according to our rules and beliefs. It's certainly not to seek the level of righteousness where we finally feel we have "earned" God's gift of salvation.

We hear "love your neighbors, love your enemies, love all of God's children. If we are a member of God's family, we are part of everyone else on this planet.

In our own family and extended families, we probably do not agree with each member on all levels. We often, however, find ourselves coming to their rescue out of our deeper love of family. How are we caring for this larger—much larger—household of God?

Linda Inman - council president
Zion Lutheran - Deer Park

Faith is a journey. Every journey is rich with stories—the security of our

grandfather's lap, missing the school bus, the moment we felt God's reality intensely, the birth of a baby, the moment our mother died. We remember joy and suffering, successes and failures, being ashamed and frightened and then forgiven.

The stories of life and God-in-our lives are holy. In each of us, they create a wondrous landscape pulsating with mystery and revelation.

When we share our faith by telling it in the form of a story, we are sharing what we hold most deeply in a way that connects with others. Often people discover their faith when they tell their stories, because they discover the threads of meaning and purpose that run through it.

The Rev. Leslie Ann Knight
Audubon Park United Methodist

Today so much strife is fueled by believing. So many subscribe to: "If you don't believe in my ideas of God and what God commands, then we cannot be in communion with each other and perhaps we cannot live in the same church—temple, mosque or synagogue—the same neighborhood, the same country or the same planet!"

When the Middle East erupts in ever-greater violence and loss of innocent life, I'd love to have God do something attention grabbing, stunning us into silence and stillness, dazzling us with a display of divine power and purpose.

As Christians, we can behold God in

warfare and disaster by seeing the Crucified One through the eyes of every wounded child, every widow or every man searching rubble for his family.

"If you do it to the least of these, you do it to me." The violence and disease afflicting millions is done to Christ. The healing and rebuilding we can bring to the suffering is done to Christ also. When we set aside believing for beholding, our efforts move from trying to control each other to serving the world in Jesus' name.

The Rev. Jan Griffin
All Saints Episcopal - Richland

A young boy watching the news and listening to his parents talk about war, killing, feuds and retaliation asked the simple question, "Why can't we all just get along?" That is a great question.

What would the world be like if we learned to get along? What if we learned to get our deepest needs met without violence or dishonesty?

As spiritual seekers, this is the work that lies ahead of us. Our journey to harmony may include activities such as prayer and meditation, spiritual study and discussion, even therapy, but until we develop the daily practice of "getting along," we are fooling ourselves that the world will some day be at peace. Getting along will happen only when we fully love, appreciate and accept ourselves and others.

The Rev. Clare Austen
Unity Church - Spokane

Lecture series scheduled

Gonzaga University Religious Studies began its 2006 to 2007 Catholicism for a New Millennium lecture series in August.

Fall lectures are at 7:30 p.m., Thursdays at the Globe Room in Cataldo Hall at Gonzaga.

- On Sept. 21, Timothy Clancy, S.J., of Gonzaga will speak on "The DaVinci Phenomenon and What It Says about Us."

- On Oct. 12, John Coleman, S.J., of Loyola Marymount in Los Angeles, will discuss "The Church and Globalization."

- On Nov. 9, Nancy Sylvester, IHM, will lecture on "Engaging Impasse through Contemplation and Dialogue."

For information, call 323-6715.

Coffee grower shares story

Freddy Urbano, a Colombian farmer, will discuss "A Colombian Coffee Story," at 7 p.m., Monday, Sept. 25, in Weyerhaeuser Hall at Whitworth College.

At 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 26, he will speak again in the Moot Court Room at Gonzaga University Law School.

He tell how the Colombian government used \$4.2 billion from the U.S. government since 2000, for Plan Colombia to fight the "War on Drugs." Coca for cocaine continues to grow, but his free-trade coffee farm was fumigated.

For information, call 781-0251.

Promise Keepers event set

"Promise Keepers Unleashed," one of a series of 2006 Promise Keepers conferences around the United States, will be held Thursday to Saturday, Sept. 28-30, at the Spokane Arena.

Organizers seek volunteers to take shifts in a prayer room, which will be available those at the event. For information, call 327-7700 ext. 14.

Manna concert set

Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ will present a concert, "Manna," at 3 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 1, at the church, 411 S. Washington to raise funds for Second Harvest and Mid City Concerns Meals on Wheels.

For information, call 624-1366.

YWCA luncheon planned

The 2006 YWCA Spokane Women of Achievement Luncheon will be at 11:30 a.m., Monday, Oct. 30, at the Spokane Convention Center.

Linda Armstrong Kelly, mother of the seven-time Tour de France champion cyclist, Lance Armstrong, will share some of the insights that helped her overcome obstacles in her life.

For information, call 326-1990.

Speakers to discuss climate change

The Interfaith Council's Faith and the Environment Network and the Evangelical Environmental Network will present an educational forum, "A Christian Response to Climate Change," at 7 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 14, at Whitworth College.

Speakers, who will discuss the need for Christians to respond to this issue that adversely affects everyone, particularly "the least of these" around the world, include Peter Ilyin of Restoring Eden,

Tom Ackerman of the University of Washington science faculty, and Bill Robinson, president of Whitworth College

AmeriCorps volunteer Jason Duba said that with the Faith and Environment Network this summer, he established congregational partnerships, helped plan the Spokane River Clean-Up on Saturday, Oct. 7, led a hike and planned for the future of the Faith and Environment Network.

For information, call 329-1410.

Calendar of Events

- Sept 6 • The Fig Tree Board, 3220 S. Grand, 1 p.m. - 535-1813
- Sept 8 • Community Congress on Human Relations, "Our World, Our Connections: Understanding the Pieces, The Lair, Spokane Community College, 1810 N. Greene St., 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. - 623-2050
- Sept 11 • "9/11: What's Real and What's Not," United Nations Association, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 Ft. Wright Dr. - 624-3608
- "Social Justice Lessons Learned from 9/11," Community Building, 35W. Main, noon to 2 p.m.
- Sept 12 • Faith in Action Dialogue Planning Committee, 709 E. DeSmet, 8 a.m.
- Tsunami Recovery in Sri Lanka, Darn Hayden, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4340 Ft. Wright Dr., 7 p.m.
- Sept 13 • "Skills for Success," Robert Maurer of Science for Excellence, Leadership Spokane with Gonzaga and Whitworth, Spokane Arena Les Schwab Room, 7-8:45 a.m. - 323-3575
- Sept 14 • "Palestine and Israel," Bill Dienst, M.D., Washington State Physicians for Social Responsibility, St. Ann's Parish Hall, 2120 E. 1st, 7:30 p.m.
- "A Christian Response to Climate Change," Faith and the Environment Forum, Whitworth College, 7 p.m. - 329-1410
- Sept 15 • Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture Golf Tournament, benefit for an endowment for Center for Plateau Cultural Studies, Circling Raven Golf Course, Worley, Idaho - 456-3913
- "Tuning Out and Dropping Out: How Disengagement Challenges Democracy and Weakens Constitutional Protections, David Mindich, professor of journalism at St. Michael's College, Colchester, Vt., Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m. - 777-3707
- Sept 16 • Peace and Justice Action League Yard Sale, 2807 S. Post, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Sept 18-20 • Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence Conference, "For Good Measure: Defining Success on Our Own Terms," Wenatchee Convention Center - (206) 389-2515
- Sept 19 • "Challenges and Opportunities in Creating Shalom Community," Mary Nelson, Bethel New Life in Chicago, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m.
- Sept 20 • Gonzaga University Service Fest featuring 70 nonprofits, between Crosby and Hughes, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. - 323-6487
- "How to Nurture the Good City," Mary Nelson, Bethel New Life in Chicago, Spokane City Forum, First Presbyterian, 318 S. Cedar, 11:45 a.m.
- Sept 21 • International Day of Prayer for Peace 24 Hour Vigil starting at noon and Community Coalition for Peace of Walla Walla observance at 7 p.m., First Congregational United Church of Christ, 73 S. Palouse
- VOICES, Emmanuel Lutheran, 314 S. Spruce, 5:30 p.m.
- "The DaVinci Phenomenon and What It Says about Us," Timothy Clancy, S.J., Cataldo Hall Gonzaga University, 7:30 p.m. - 323-6715
- Bridges for Peace Christian Leaders' Forum on Israel, Assembly of God, 15618 E. Broadway, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. - 924-0466
- Sept 23 • Friend to Friend 5K Fun Run, Avista, 1411 E. Mission, 10 a.m. - 483-1600
- Sept 25 • "A Colombian Coffee Story," Freddy Urbano, Cosurca coffee cooperative, Weyerhaeuser Hall, Whitworth, 7 p.m. - 777-4269
- Sept 26 • "Colombian Coffee Story," Moot Courtroom, Gonzaga Law School, 7:30 p.m.
- Sept 28-30 • "Greek Festival 2006," Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 1703 N. Washington, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. - 328-9310
- Promise Keepers, Spokane Arena - 327-7700 ext. 14
- Sept 28-Jan7 • "Discovering the Dead Sea Scrolls," Pacific Science Center, Seattle
- Oct 1 • 23rd Annual Pullman-Moscow CROP Hunger Walk - 332-2216
- Mid-Columbia CROP Hunger Walk - 586-2101
- "Manna," Concert, Westminster Congregational United Church of Christ, 411 S. Washington, 3 p.m. - 624-1366
- Oct 3 • Domestic Violence Month March, YWCA, 829 W. Broadway, 5:30 p.m.
- Oct 4 • Transitions Fund-Raising Breakfast, Red Lion Inn at the Park, 7:30 a.m.
- Oct 7 • Mennonite Country Auction and Relief Sale, Between Ritzville and Moses Lake, 7:30-9:30 a.m. breakfast, 10 a.m. - 659-0926

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Grandmother 'adopts' Ugandan children who escaped from violence

By Deidre Jacobson

A Spokane grandmother of three has "adopted" and been adopted by orphans in Kampala, Uganda.

"By listening to African music over the years, I slowly became an 'Afro-phile'—someone in love with Africa. Then I visited Africa," said Bea Lackaff. "Now I'm trying to make a meaningful connection between my life in Spokane and my African experiences."

Bea traveled alone as a tourist to Uganda during the 2004-05 Christmas-New Years holidays.

The trip arose in the summer of 2004 at a Ugandan song and dance program held at Unity Church. Young performers were traveling with John Nsambu, a member of the Ugandan Parliament. He came to visit Bob and Diane Lloyd, his host family while he attended a Christian high school in Spokane.

When Bea mentioned she sponsored a child in Kampala through the African Children's Choir, Nsambu said: "You must stay with me when you visit your child."

Bea emailed her friends Maasai artist Nicholas Sironka and his wife, Serena, whom she had met in Spokane, to say she would be in East Africa. They invited her to stay with them in Nairobi.

She was able to make the trip because of their hospitality.

Two days before leaving Kampala, Bea met Isaac Owor, a 21-year-old "papa" and musical director of a performance troupe of about 30 young people without families. Isaac and his troupe—called UFCA, short for Undugu Family Cultural Association—support themselves with lively, joyful musical presentations of dances and songs from tribes of Uganda and other East African countries.

The Undugu Family is a loose, umbrella organization, using music and sports to engage children who have experienced violence by spreading "the realization that we are all God's children, and therefore brothers and sisters, regardless of race, tribe, religion, gender or social class," Bea said.

"Undugu" is a Swahili word for brotherhood and sisterhood. The Undugu Family cares for orphaned children and educates the community on Undugu values through example.

Bea said a Rwandan priest, Father Stephen Msele, SJ, started the international Undugu move-



Bea Lackaff plays a Zimbabwean Shona mbira or thumb piano.

ment in 1996, in response to the genocide in his largely Christian homeland—93 percent Catholic.

His story of developing the movement is on a Jesuit website: Living in Ireland for his Jesuit formation from 1982 to 1985, Father Stephen was struck by the lack of connection among individualistic people, not just between Protestants and Catholics but also among Catholics. People "minded their own business."

He wanted to promote a communal brotherhood and sisterhood, and a God who is "our common parent."

In the Philippines in the 1990s, he watched, in disbelief, TV coverage of the genocide in Rwanda.

That rekindled his desire to promote brotherhood and sisterhood to reflect "a caring God" who shares time, joy, sorrows and pain.

Returning to Africa in the mid 1990s, he was assigned to a parish in Mwanza, Tanzania, where he shared an Undugu attitude among the 40-percent Muslim and 40-percent Christian population who were in conflict over pigs. After an assignment in Australia, he later returned to Africa to the Jesuit community at Xavier House in Kampala, where he formed a branch of Undugu.

Through email correspondence, Bea learned that Isaac and his sister were orphaned by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda about 10 years ago—came to Kampala and met Father Msele. Six other

UFCA children came from the same region, one escaping from Kony's children's army.

In August after 19 years of violence, Uganda entered a fragile truce with the LRA, Bea said.

After Isaac came to Kampala, he began using his musical talents to support himself and his sister. He sent her to school and she is now at the university.

Others joined him and, believing in the family-hood of all people, they became part of the Undugu Family and called their group UFCA, Bea said.

Last year, Isaac and UFCA adopted eight young orphans—victims of Kony and the LRA—found homeless and alone on streets of Kampala.

"I began receiving emails asking me to help pay tuition for children or rescue UFCA from eviction," said Bea. "Several friends and I have done what we can to help. I never doubted Isaac's honesty or his devotion to the children and belief in the principles of the Undugu Family."

Bea sent friends email appeals to "offer them the opportunity to assist." Because she is not involved in a church, she does not have that channel for expressing her caring.

Bea worked for a while as a volunteer and then on staff with

Church World Service Refugee Resettlement in the 1980s, before she went back to school at Spokane Community College and earned a bachelor's degree in geography from Eastern Washington University. She has worked 15 years with Spokane County in Geographic Information Systems computer mapping.

"There are many musical orphan troupes throughout Africa," she said. "Many are unscrupulous, exploiting children."

Bea admits, "Some say I'm 'naïve.' I wondered if I could avoid being hustled by skilled, manipulative, desperate people. However, I am in touch with several westerners, who are skeptical and more experienced African travelers than I. They have met Isaac and UFCA, and constantly confirm my trust in UFCA."

One couple, Paul and Helene Rippey, work with non-governmental organization in micro-financing and AIDS education in Kampala. They help Bea decide how to use support money. She met them through email when their daughter took a laptop, trombone and trumpet to Kampala.

A friend sent a digital camera with Bea on one trip. After using it, Bea left it in a school where children were taught how to take pictures and write about them.

UFCA also sends pictures and narratives, which Bea put on a website at www.bealackaff.com.

Bea wants to help UFCA achieve more security and financial independence.

She thought of sending tools so UFCA members can diversify their income sources, but Rippeys advised her that they should focus on performance skills. They advised her this summer when they were in Portland that school tuitions are most important.

Bea keeps in mind the picture of poverty on a global scale, not just in undeveloped countries, but also in the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Contact with UFCA makes her wonder about millions of people who suffer these conditions every day with no end in sight.

"Their invisible, unnatural disaster is born in part from local conditions, but their situation is more difficult because of indifference, unfair trade policies, financial sanctions, racism and lack of commitment from their Undugu brothers and sisters here in the developed world."

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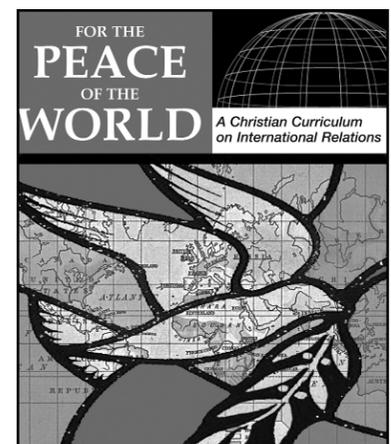
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