Interfaith service marks eve of Million Mom March

On Mother’s Day, May 14, the crowd in downtown Portland was more than double predictions. Five thousand Oregonians from across the state gave up traditional Mother’s Day brunches and family celebrations to show solidarity with other moms and honorary moms in a rally promoting gun safety legislation. Other Oregonians marched in Eugene or Ashland, and marches were held in 65 cities across the United States. More than 50 faith groups sponsored the Washington, D.C., rally, which drew 500,000 people. Among the groups were the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the American Baptist Churches, the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church, the National Council of Catholic Women, the American Jewish Committee, the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the National Council of Churches.

Portland’s participation began the night before Mother’s Day with a candlelight worship called “Prayers for Our Children’s Safety.” The interfaith worship, hosted by Temple Beth Israel and organized by EMO and the Million Mom March, drew people from Salem, Talent and the Portland area to a service of healing and hope.

“We believe silence and indifference are not options for a community of faith in the midst of such pain.”

“We can turn away from violence; we can build communities of greater peace,” she read. “It begins with a clear conviction: respect for life. . . . We believe silence and indifference are not options for a community of faith in the midst of such pain.”

Patton Home’s tradition of caring

Former board members recall hard work and the reward of caring

Patton Home, located at 4619 N Michigan Ave. in Portland, represents the best of Oregon’s history. Built in 1890 with money raised by 29 women, on land donated by a pioneer who herded his sheep along the Oregon Trail, Patton Home was managed for over a century by Portlanders who lived out a tradition of helping others. The charity that marked the home’s beginning continues today: Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s $6.1 million renovation, made possible through generous donations from foundations, individuals, congregations and others, will improve the comfort and quality of the home’s 64 rooms for low-income, special needs residents and also provide space to community groups.

But it started with pioneer Mathew Patton. After settling in the Portland area, Patton set out for California to mine for gold and came home rich. With the $10,000 he earned, he started what became a thriving iron mining business. In 1888, Patton offered any organization willing to accept the challenge a full block of land, free of charge, if the group could build a home for the “aged, friendless, and others” within a year, at a cost of $1,000.

A home for the friendless:

The Ladies Union Relief Society of Albina accepted the challenge. One year earlier, the women had formed a group whose purpose was to “provide food, clothing and fuel for the poor, friendless, orphaned and erring in our midst.” Though Albina was a struggling village north of Portland then, the women raised the money by organizing parties, taffy socials, picnics and balls. They even charged each other penalties to raise the funds: each woman was fined ten cents for missing a meeting, for failing to attend to committee duties, or for failing to have any necessary materials at a meeting.

Granted a time extension from Patton, the women raised the $1,000 and had the home built within two years. That was room for six residents. Additions made during the following years added a spacious library and the reward of caring

Committee, the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the National Council of Churches.

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Continued on page 6

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Continued on page 6

Continued on page 3
It’s all about vision

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

In Oregon, we seem to be struggling with this vision thing. Specifically, we are struggling with the essence of vision, namely the future and how we will justly relate to one another as members of the human community. During this season of initiative politics, several initiatives that have been filed by Oregon Taxpayers United (Bill Stene Moore, et al.) and Don McIntire clearly demonstrate just how serious this lack of clarity about the future is.

Initiative 10, Initiative 88 and Measure 88 are designed, according to the drafters, to provide “tax relief” and “limit government . . . to the benefit of the people.”

Initiative 10 makes federal income taxes fully deductible on Oregon personal and corporate income tax returns. This is a very enticing initiative because it appears that this “tax relief” measure will benefit many Oregonians, but alas, the vision is simply a mirage. Not only will the benefits be limited both in scope and number of people positively impacted, many Oregonians, while maybe not perishing, will suffer.

First consider the benefits. According to current analysis, a family of four with a combined income of $40,000 will receive a $1,66 per month tax break, or $19.92 per year. For people making $200,000 this amount is projected to increase to $326 per month, or $3912 per year.

Now consider the costs. If this initiative passes, the impact is swift and immediate. According to current estimates from the Legislative Fiscal Office, reductions in state spending would be more than $630 million in the 2000–01 state budget. These cuts will have to be implemented in the last six months of the biennium, or between January and June 2001.

The impact does not end in June 2001. Starting in the 2001–03 biennium, approximately $1 billion will have to be cut from the budget each year. Given the nature of our state budget, many of the reductions will be focused on already under-funded programs serving children, indigent people in need of basic health care, people with disabilities and other Oregonians needing our public support. At the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported, Oregon is one of the “hungriest states in the nation.” It is distressing to think about the state of affairs if Initiative 10 passes.

Initiative 10 is just one measure that will adversely affect Oregon. Initiative 88 (sponsored by Don McIntire) would also limit state spending. If approved, the state would be limited to spending approximately $26.7 billion, a reduction of $5.7 billion off the projected $32.4 billion anticipated budget for the 2001–03 biennium. While possibly hard to believe, the impact of Initiative 88 would be more draconian than Initiative 10.

At a recent community forum co-sponsored by EMO addressing these initiatives, state Sen. Verne Duncan, initiatives, state Sen. Verne Duncan (R-Milwaukie) spoke on just how visionless these initiatives really are. The senator said, “They are about us and now, taking us backwards. They will be devastating to the people of Oregon . . . bad, bad public policy bordering on the reckless.”

The EMO board of directors agrees with the senator’s assessment. These measures are too extreme, unfair and extremely regressive, disproportionately benefiting the wealthy at the cost of the poor. In this year of Jubilee, people are focused on God’s vision for the world and contemplating what it means to live more fully into the scriptural mandates that call us to support one another, lift up the needs of the oppressed and release the bonds of debts. This also is the basis for our opposition to these initiatives, and I invite you to work against them. For these initiatives are not about the vision of community and about people discovering their God-given potential but visionless movements that will adversely impact life and cause dreams and visions to perish.

You can reach David Leslie at (503) 221-1054 or by e-mail at dleslie@emoregon.org.

Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon welcomes the Rev. Gregg and says farewell to Bishop Kimsey

In May, the Rev. William O. Gregg, Rector of St. James Episcopal Church in New London, Conn., was elected the sixth bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon. Gregg, 49, will be ordained/consecrated in late September. He will succeed the Rt. Rev. Rustin Kimsey, who retired June 20.

Gregg is a native of Virginia and has been a priest since 1978. He is a graduate of the University of Richmond and the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Mass., and holds a master’s degree in Medieval English from Boston College and master and doctoral degrees in systematic theology from the University of Notre Dame.

In response to his election, Gregg said, “To be called to be a bishop is daunting. To be called by the people of eastern Oregon is a gift and blessing of immense joy. I am deeply grateful to God and to the diocese. The Diocese of Eastern Oregon is a wonderful and healthy community of faith. I know that God will equip us for a great adventure together. My family and I look forward to getting to know and work with the people of eastern Oregon.”

There are 25 congregations and about 3,700 Episcopalians in the diocese, which includes all of Oregon east of the Cascades and Klickitat County in Washington.

University of Portland honors Mary Jo Tully

At its graduation ceremony last month, the University of Portland honored Mary Jo Tully, chancellor of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland, “for educating others in the brilliant light of Christ’s life and story.”

Tully was noted for serving cardinals, archbishops and bishops with “rare distinction, discretion, and dash.” She was also honored for her “clear and passionate pose” that has been “read by millions of Catholic men, women and children.”

Mary Jo Tully has been chancellor of the archdiocese since 1990. She has served on the EMO board of directors since 1991 and is a member of EMO’s Interfaith Work Group. She is the author of a series of religious education textbooks and has worked to further understanding between the Jewish and Catholic faith communities. She has been involved in church ministry since she was 17.
Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate

V engeance is a quick fix to frustration and hurt, and hate can trap people and nations in patterns that perpetuate the damage. Forgiveness, on the other hand, is neither quick nor easy. But it is a powerful path to liberation.

In a world where newspaper headlines often announce conflict, we rarely hear the stories of reconciliation that Michael Henderson tells in Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate. From South Africa to Oregon, from nations to individuals, Henderson gives numerous examples of the transforming power of forgiveness.

The key is seeing the other—whether oppressor or victim—as a human being. In Forgiveness, Terry Anderson, an AP bureau chief kept hostage for nearly seven years in the Middle East, said that at first he hated his captors, but that as he listened to their stories, they slowly became people to him. During days of looking at “nothing but a blank wall” he began to understand his own motives and actions, and to “move beyond hate.”

Most remarkable are the stories from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, where people subjected to torture were able to forgive their torturers. Henderson also includes stories of men who once persecuted South Africans, asked for forgiveness, then became activists in reconciliation efforts.

In Forgiveness we also read about historic apologies by institutions and governments to the people who suffered because of hurtful policies. Pope John Paul II is noted for his apologies to Jews, Muslims, Native Americans and African Americans. And Australia is shown as a model of the way many sectors of society—government, churches and other organizations—can collectively apologize. About 400,000 people signed apologies to Aborigine citizens for more than a century of removing children from Aborigine homes so the children could be raised by non-Aborigine families.

Oregon’s most notable apology is also presented in the book: the Day of Acknowledgment on April 22, 1999. Nearly 1,000 Oregonians met in Salem to celebrate the Legislature’s signing of a resolution acknowledging the state’s history of discrimination, a history that included an exclusionary act in 1849 making it illegal for “Negroes and mulattoes” to live in the old Oregon Territory. The Legislature and the many diverse groups of people who attended the Day of Acknowledgment ceremony made a commitment to a future of equality and mutual respect.

The Day of Acknowledgment was only a beginning. Oregon Uniting, the organization that spearheaded the event, has organized ongoing dialogues to further reconciliation and has initiated a Marking History Project that involves designating sites in Oregon where significant strides in interracial or intercultural reconciliation have occurred. Recent acts of racism—anti-African American graffiti at Portland State University and anti-Native American racial slurs during a public hearing on the future of the Snake River dams—make clear that the healing process has only begun in Oregon, and much work lies ahead.

Henderson closes his book by encouraging us to consider the steps we can take, small or large, to “jetison the baggage” of resentment we still carry with us. He asks us to consider how we can personally meet the “challenge of forgiveness.” Judging from the examples in his book, the challenge is more than worth meeting.

To order Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate, call 1-800-895-7323 or e-mail bpbooks@teleport.com.

Patton Home builds on tradition of caring

Continued from page 1

porch in 1891, then extra rooms in 1894, 1910, and 1926. A 1958 addition brought the total number of rooms to 64.

The Albinia women who built the original structure “were thinking of the sailors,” said former Patton Home board member Elizabeth Howells. She explained that when Patton Home was built, there was no I-5 and there were few, if any, buildings between the hill Patton Home is built on and Swan Island, where boats were docked. The Albinia women wanted to build a home “for anybody who didn’t have one . . . down the hill.”

Playing God

At one time, said Ruth Harris, who served on the Patton Home board from 1960 to 1980, Patton Home faced the Willamette, so residents could “look to the river.”

Harris, now 95, remembers running Patton Home “on a shoe string.” She and the other women who formed the volunteer “working board” of Patton Home did just about everything. When the board had a meeting at the home, they joined the residents for lunch, then stayed all day to work. “I learned a lot about roofing and other things,” Harris said, adding that managing Patton Home had been a great learning experience.

For a couple years Harris also handled admissions to the home. “My daughter used to ask me if I was ‘going out to play God again,’” she said, laughing. Harris added that sometimes the residents she had concerns about admitting turned out to be “top Susan” and others she thought would be great residents “fell by the wayside.”

“It was a very good time in my life,” Harris said of her 20 years on the Patton Home board. “I loved every minute of it.” It was especially gratifying that the residents “felt they were loved,” she said. “And they were.”

High teas and lawn parties

Former Patton Home board member Jack Parker remembers lawn parties in July, where Beaverton’s American Legion Band performed. Board members and relatives of residents brought pot luck dishes, and the Patton Home cooks made barbecue. He also remembers the board members hosting fancy teas each spring and winter.

Elizabeth Howells remembers a birthday party once for a resident who turned 100. She also remembers a resident who enjoyed carving on the big chestnut tree in the yard. “He loved to take his knife and whittle on the bark,” she said. She used to worry that he’d kill the tree, but it’s still there. And, she added, it’s over 100 years old.

Eventually the women on the board “hauled our husbands in,” said Howells. For several years, the board of Patton Home was composed of six couples. Like the women who managed the home in its earliest days, the couples handled most of the home’s activities and needs, redecorating rooms and purchasing needed equipment. “When Patton Home needed new curtains in the bathrooms,” said Howells, “I made them.”

“It was homey,” she said. Home is a word that comes up often when people talk about Patton Home. One of Ruth Harris’s strongest memories is that Patton Home residents who left the home for the day always said, when they returned, “It’s so good to be home again.”

Keeping traditions, coming home

Parker said he’d driven by Patton Home recently and that the renovation is “impressive on the outside.” He thinks the renovation will “greatly improve the quality of the rooms.” He also looks forward to other improvements when the renovation is completed: a brighter sun room and a new chapel that will provide a separate space for worship services.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, which purchased Patton Home in 1991, has formed a Patton Home Redevelopment Committee to spearhead the capital campaign and renovation. The committee is composed of former Patton Home board members, as well as business, community and religious leaders. Co-chairs are EMO board member the Rev. Dr. LeRoy Haynes Jr. of Allen Temple Christian Meth-
Innovative collaboration enhances hospice care at Hopewell House Hospice Center

Since 1991, EMO’s Hopewell House has been an important resource for patients with terminal illness and their families, offering them compassionate medical services, family support, and spiritual care in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. In recent years, Hopewell House has also become a resource for the community, bringing clergy, caregivers, volunteers, and community members together for education and dialogue on end-of-life care.

On June 15, Hopewell House took an exciting step toward a vision of expanded patient care, family services, and community education opportunities through an innovative collaboration between EMO and a leading home hospice provider, Legacy Visiting Nurse Association (LVNA). To better represent the collaborative vision of both organizations and Hopewell’s expanded services as a premier hospice center in the Northwest, Hopewell House will now be called Hopewell House Hospice Center: A Program of Legacy Visiting Nurse Association and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.

“This is an exciting moment for us at EMO and a defining moment in the history of Hopewell House as a community resource,” said EMO Executive Director David Leslie. “It marks the creation of a dynamic collaboration between two very different organizations, combining skills and talents for the benefit of hospice patients, community members, and caregivers throughout the Northwest.”

Medical services, access expand
As part of the collaboration, LVNA will assume responsibility for inpatient medical services, bringing a new depth of resources and expertise to controlling each patient’s pain and discomfort and managing each patient’s medical needs according to an individualized care plan. Staffing will be an LVNA responsibility as well, with most Hopewell medical staff becoming LVNA employees.

LVNAs’ participation in this collaboration will, for the first time, help accomplish the long-hoped-for goal of allowing Hopewell House Hospice Center patients to access the federal Medicare hospice benefit, available to all adults over 65. This opportunity will be in line with the increased flexibility and depth of LVNAs staffing resources, means that the Center will be able to serve 30 percent more patients than has been possible in recent years.

EMO’s central role
“EMO will continue to play a central role at Hopewell House Hospice Center,” said the Rev. Melinda Smith, EMO’s director of compassionate care. “We will, of course, provide the Hopewell House facility and food service for patients and families. But EMO will also dedicate increased funds for charity care so that more unfunded or underfunded patients can be served than ever before.”

EMO will coordinate and maintain the Center’s active volunteer program, recruiting and training volunteers for service in the areas of patient care, spiritual care, and bereavement support, among others. EMO will also provide more opportunities for community learning and involvement in hospice care and end-of-life issues.

“One of the most exciting aspects of this collaboration is the opportunity it gives EMO to expand our community education and outreach,” Smith said. “We will be offering more classes and workshops, not just in the Portland area but around the state, for clergy, caregivers, and community members. And we will be able to sponsor outreach opportunities like Compassion Sabbath, which will raise awareness of terminal illness and hospice care in faith communities.” (See calendar on back page.)

“Together, both EMO and LVNA will provide internships, practicums, and service learning opportunities to students in medical, social service, and spiritual care fields.

Seeds of Change helps refugee women run businesses

A new opportunity provided by EMO’s refugee and immigration ministries, Seeds of Change, helps refugee women establish businesses in their homes. It also helps the women develop the skills they need to improve self-esteem and “navigate the community,” said Kristin Ecles, who directs Seeds of Change.

The program pairs refugee women with established businesswomen who volunteer to work with the refugees for a year, assisting them in business development. Seeds of Change also offers classes in basic business skills and self-esteem. So far ten women have enrolled in the program, which is open to refugees receiving noncash public assistance who have lived in the United States one year or more.

Seeds of Change has been especially helpful for women who manage large families. For some paying for day care services so they can work at a minimum wage job outside the home is not only unprofitable but also conflicts with their religious and/or cultural practices or beliefs.

The women enrolled in Seeds of Change now operate businesses in day care, bookkeeping services, sewing, cake decorating, and selling nutritional supplements and environmentally friendly cleaning supplies. Most have come to Portland from the former Soviet Union, though some come from Bosnia and Rwanda. The busi-nesswomen offering them mentoring assistance also come from diverse countries, including Uganda, Rwanda, and Japan.

Seeds of Change operates through Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR), a part of EMO’s refugee and immigration ministries. Located at 5404 NE Alameda Drive in Portland, SOAR resettle services between 800 and 1000 refugees a year.
American mainline Protestantism has not lost its political voice—not has it surrendered the field to conservatives, according to a new study by Princeton University.

At the center of the struggle for political reform over the years, especially for civil rights and against the Vietnam War, mainline involvement has been overshadowed by more conservative religious groups, leading some observers to conclude that the churches have lost their voice.

"The perception that religious groups are really only interested in conservative issues is not true," said Princeton sociologist Robert Wuthnow, an Episcopal layman who directed the study. "Progressive issues do seem to be of enormous importance to people," he said.

The study by the Survey Research Center found that more than three-quarters of the public believe that religious groups should take a more active role in raising awareness of racial discrimination, giving the poor a voice in public affairs, protecting the environment and promoting a greater sense of community responsibility.

For example, six in 10 people surveyed said that they were "quite interested" in legislation to protect the environment and in "social policies that would help the poor."

The survey showed nearly as much interest in the issues of "overcoming discrimination against women in our society," and for "achieving greater equality for racial and ethnic minorities in our society," as well as government policies to promote international peace.

"We have too often assumed that mainline Protestants are politically dormant," Wuthnow said. "These results show they are politically interested and active."

He noted that the public "wants churches to be taking a more active role at the local level but is less keen on religious groups exercising influence at the national level." Yet he underscored the potential for alliances on the local level among liberal Protestants, African American churches, Roman Catholics and Jews on such issues as protecting the environment and overcoming social injustices.

Excerpted from a story by James Schlim
Episcopal News Service

EMO will publish a ballot measure guide in the full edition of the Voice. Copies of the guide will be available in September by calling (503) 221-1054. EMO can also arrange to have speakers make presentations on the ballot measures at your congregation's adult education classes.

Public Policy

Join EMO’s public policy advocacy network

Would you or one of your congregation’s committees like to receive timely information about key policy issues affecting Oregonians, and some ideas for responding to those issues? If so, please fill out this form and mail it to End Edwards, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, 0245 SW Bancroft St., Suite B, Portland, Oregon 97201. If you'd prefer to respond electronically, this form is also on EMO’s Web site at www.emoregon.org.

Key contact for public policy advocacy alerts:

(Contact name)

(Contact e-mail address)

(Congregation name)

(Congregation e-mail address)

(Congregation mailing address)

EMO has identified several areas of focus for the upcoming legislative session, as well as during this interim period. Please check below any issues that are of particular interest to you or your congregation.

- Church/State Issues
- Environmental Issues
- Farm Workers
- Health Care
- Housing
- Hunger
- Minimum Wage/Living Wage
- Welfare Reform

Listed below are a selection of initiatives circulating for the November ballot as well as a list of measures referred to voters for the general election. Please identify below any initiatives or measures of particular interest to you or your congregation. (See EMO’s Web site at www.emoregon.org for more information on policy positions taken to date by the EMO board of directors.)

Please let us know if you are interested in information about an initiative:

- calling for full deduction of federal income taxes on Oregon tax returns
- making it more difficult for public employees to give money to political causes
- prohibiting public school instruction encouraging, promoting, or sanctioning homosexual or bisexual behaviors
- repealing mandatory minimum sentences for certain felonies
- requiring repayment to landowners if government regulation reduces property value
- replacing the death penalty with life without the possibility of parole, and restitution
- limiting the growth in state spending to 15% of the personal income of Oregonians in the previous two calendar years, beginning in 2001–03
- requiring a vote on most new or increased taxes, fees, or charges, retroactive to December 1998
- creating a process for requiring the Legislature to review administrative rules
- expanding the circumstances requiring a background check before firearm sales
- creating a commission ensuring quality home care services for the elderly or disabled
- prohibiting certain minimum wage changes and requiring an inflation adjustment
- eliminating references to white inhabitants in the Oregon Constitution
- establishing a constitutional requirement to return any excess general fund “Kicker” revenues to taxpayers
- Other ________________________________

Please let us know if you are interested in information about a measure:

- allowing regulation of the location of sexually oriented businesses through zoning
- increasing the deduction Oregon taxpayers may take for federal income taxes
- allocating tobacco litigation settlement proceeds to finance specified health programs
- authorizing rates giving utilities a return on investments in retired property
- Other ________________________________

Please feel free to circulate this form to any interested parties. We look forward to hearing from you!
Interfaith service
Continued from page 1

In May, Gov. John Kitzhaber signed an executive order directing state government to work toward environmental sustainability by the year 2025. Within six months, guidelines are to be developed to ensure that the state constructs buildings and roads using recycled materials, nontoxic paints, and safer chemicals. The governor also urged all Oregonians to become good stewards of the state’s resources.

The order was made in response to the final draft of the Oregon State of the Environment Report released to the Oregon Progress Board. The report was written by a volunteer science panel composed of outstanding researchers with expertise in various components of Oregon’s environment, chaired by Dr. Paul Rauer, president of Oregon State University. Jenny Holmes, who directs EMO’s Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns, served on the Environmental Stewardship Plan Committee that proposed and contributed to the report.

“Oregon is the first state in the United States to establish a goal of achieving sustainability in one generation and the first western state to require sustainable practices within state government,” said Bob Deppert, director of the Portland State University Center for Watershed and Community Health. Deppert helped manage the development of the Oregon State of the Environment Report.

Sustainability involves phasing out the use of toxic materials and substances, reducing the use of energy in producing goods and services, and increasing reuse and recycling of waste. Sustainability also involves using fewer natural resources and harvesting them in a manner that preserves ecological health.

Governor orders sustainability

Roseburg congregations unite in dialogue and service

E cumenism is thriving in Roseburg, where a decades-long collaboration continues to help people in need, and where a series of dialogues inspired by the God at 2000 conference recently brought together 70 to 90 people each week for eight weeks.

According to the Rev. Sherman Hesselgrave of St. George’s Episcopal Church in Roseburg, people from the area who either attended the God at 2000 conference in Corvallis or viewed it from an area downlink site felt that the speeches by seven internationally respected theologians were “so rich that they wanted others to have a chance” to hear them. The follow-up dialogues were sponsored by Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, Roman Catholic and Unitarian Universalist congregations in Roseburg.

The God at 2000 conference speakers included Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Marcus Borg, Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, Seyed Hossein Nae, Karen Armstrong, Joan Chittister, and Diana Eck. (See story in April 2000.) The first seven Roseburg dialogues began with a video presentation of one of the seven theologians’ speeches, and the final dialogue opened with a video of the panel discussion at the end of the God at 2000 conference.

Hesselgrave said that the people who participated in the Roseburg talks came from “very diverse” faith traditions. “This has provided a way of talking about practices. “This has provided a way of talking about faith that’s not denominational,” he said. He added that some of the people participating had been connected to the faith community earlier in their lives and found this an interesting way of “sticking their toe in the water” again. He was especially impressed that the numbers of people attending the discussions stayed consistently high for each session.

There was a “really enthusiastic response,” he said.
NCC to undergo major change, CWS to separate

The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCC) is undergoing major changes during its 50th year. The council plans to invite Christian denominations that are not currently members to discussions about the future of the NCC, with the possibility of offering them membership. In addition, Church World Service and Witness (CWS), the humanitarian response ministry of the NCC, is setting up its own administration and finance offices, with the goal of reaching full autonomy from the NCC by fall. In the past, CWS has raised and spent about 80 percent of the NCC's total annual budget of around $70 million.

The NCC was established 50 years ago as a council of mainstream Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox and historically African American churches. Christian groups invited to the discussions about the NCC's future include Roman Catholic and evangelical and Pentecostal Protestant churches.

Some of the council's many past projects include introducing the Revised Standard Version Bible and working on church-state issues to advocate for religious liberty. CWS provides disaster relief, refugee resettlement, and community-based events to help stop hunger through Christian Rural Overseas Program (CROP).

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is currently working in partnership with the NCC to organize the Oregon Interfaith Global Warming Campaign. EMO's Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns is also engaged in a project with the NCC to strengthen the work of faith-based, environmental justice ministries in eight western states including Oregon. EMO also works as an affiliate of CWS to resettle refugees in eight western states including Oregon. EMO also engaged in a project with the NCC to strengthen the work of faith-based, environmental justice ministries in eight western states including Oregon. EMO also works as an affiliate of CWS to resettle refugees in eight western states including Oregon.

Dr. Page is also satisfied that before he leaves, a new relationship has been envisioned between CWS and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. "This new structure will enhance and enrich other organizations to fulfill their missions in a much better way," he said.

David Duncombefasts again

Last month, the Rev. Dr. David Duncombe, retired minister from White Salmon, Washington, began another fast in Washington, D.C., to persuade Congress to cancel the debts of impoverished countries. Eight months ago he fasted in D.C. for more than six weeks, demonstrating personally the effects of starvation. But despite strong support from President Clinton, bipartisan co-sponsorship, and the Helms-Biden authorization of $600 million for debt relief, only $75 million has been appropriated for debt relief programs this year. Without a stronger commitment to debt relief, the wealthiest eight countries in the world (the G-8) may decide when it meets this month in Okinawa that the U.S. has reneged on a pledge it made last June to cancel $900 million in debt. As a consequence, other countries may withdraw their pledges, too.

To read more about the Rev. Dr. Duncombe's fast, visit EMO's Web site at www.em Oregon.org, and click on Jubilee Oregon.

Rodney Page retires as director of CWS

When the Rev. Dr. Rodney Page took the helm of Church World Service and Witness (CWS) in 1996, CWS income was $42 million. As he retires, CWS income has grown to over $62 million, thanks to the addition of funding from government, foundations, major gifts and planned giving campaigns. Dr. Page is proud, though, of the human side of his work, from hiring “talented, committed, creative people,” to encouraging a more collegial style of working, to visiting CWS projects all over the world to demonstrate “care for our common ministry.”

“He came in during a difficult period in the life of the council and of CWS,” said David Weaver, director of the CWS Middle East Office. “He managed to effect powerful transformations in the way CWS envisions and does its work, as well as increasing the revenue streams.”

“What struck me about Rodney Page from the first was his energy and vision,” said Ronda Hughes, CWS director of program information and resource creation. “Rodney's leadership and discernment have seen Church World Service through some important milestones.”

The transformations to which his colleagues allude include a strategic planning process that has led to a plan calling for the complete reorganization of CWS. Dr. Page describes the new organization as one that moves from "semiautonomous units" to a more "dynamic, collegial way of working."

Dr. Page is also satisfied that before he leaves, a new relationship has been envisioned between CWS and the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. "This new structure will enhance and enrich other organizations to fulfill their missions in a much better way," he said.

These accomplishments, notes Dr. Page, are important because they demonstrate a commitment "not only to the distribution of food, aid and development," but to "the ministry of Jesus Christ."

Dr. Page was executive director of EMO from 1982 to 1996. In his retirement, he will live in Austin, Texas, and in Portland, Oregon. He has taken courses to become a certified mediator and hopes to do some mediation work.
July—all month  
Christmas in July  
Annual food, funds and awareness raiser for EMO's Northeast Emergency Food Program in Portland. Each participating congregation hangs paper ornaments provided by NEFP on a giving tree set up in the church during July. Congregation members leave the food and nonperishable items named on each ornament at the foot of the tree. The food is delivered to NEFP or to another food pantry that the church supports, at the end of the month. Call Drew Hudson or Rob Wennzin at (503) 284-5470.

July 8 and 9  
Eats locally, seasonally and sustainably  
11 a.m. to 5 p.m., New Seasons Market, 7300 SW Beaverton-Hillsdale Hwy., Portland. Sale of locally grown produce and barbecue will benefit EMO’s Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns. Copies of Portland’s Bounty: A Guide to Eating Locally and Seasonally in the Greater Portland Area will be available for purchase. Call (503) 292-6838.

July 8 to 12  
From Many . . . One Keeping Faith in the Times  
Noon, July 8 to noon, July 12. Seattle University, Seattle, Washington. Annual gathering of the National Association of Ecumenical and Interreligious Staff (NAEIS). Call Rebecca Tollefson at (612) 885-9990.

July 11  
The Art of Forgiveness  
6:30 to 9 p.m., First United Methodist Church, Room 134, 1838 SW Jefferson St., Portland. Workshop will be led by Robert Gould, Ph.D., director of Graduate Program in Conflict Resolution and chair of Philosophy Department, Portland State University. Sponsored by Oregon Peace Institute. $10 donation appreciated. Call (503) 725-8192.

July 15  
Charlie Patton plays rhythm and blues  
6 p.m., Beaverton Christian Church, 13600 SW Allen Blvd., Beaverton. Patton’s performance is part of the church’s seven-week series of performances called “Saturday Nights on the Green.” Call Sherri Lacy at (503) 646-2151, ext. 230.

July 16  
The Bible and the Environment: Is there a connection?  
6:30 p.m., Columbia Presbyterian Church, Vancouver, Washington. Speaker Dan DeWitt, internationally known Christian environmentalist and professor of environmental studies at University of Wisconsin, Madison. Sponsored by EMO, Columbia Presbyterian Church, Eco-Justice Unit, Presbyterian of the Cascades, and Target Earth Northwest. Call (503) 244-8318.

July 17 to 21 and July 24 to 28  
The Mission of the Church in the Contemporary World  
8 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday. A two-week course exploring the mission of the church in the post-modern multicultural world. Instructor Sister Joan Marie Smith of Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Northwest House of Theological Study (NIHTS), Salem. Auditors are welcome. Call Arlene McKenna at (503) 588-4344.

July 21 to 22  
Dead Sea Scrolls, Jesus and Judaism  
Two-day workshop taught by Professor Daniel Falk, Department of Religious Studies, University of Oregon, Eugene. Examine the most recent findings of the Dead Sea Scrolls and their significance for understanding Judaism, Jesus and Christianity. Call (541) 346-3475.

July 21 to 22  
The Life of Prayer and the Art of Writing: A Retreat for Writers  
Collins Retreat Center near Sandy. The retreat with author Robert Benson is based on the Benedictine model, a simple rhythm of directed reflection, writing, silence, and prayer. Sponsored by Journey into Freedom. Deadline for registration is July 7. Call (503) 244-4728.

August 18 and 19  
Godly Play Conference  
Friday, August 18, 6 to 9 p.m. and Saturday, August 19, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Redwood Friends Church, 2981 NE Stark St., Portland. An imaginative approach to religious education with Episcopal priest, author and teacher Jerome Berryman. Godly play is a method of Christian education and spiritual direction used to teach children the art of using religious language (parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action) to become more fully aware of the mystery of God’s presence in their lives. Cost is $85. Call Caryll Menkhus at (503) 234-5017 or e-mail her at clmenkhus@aol.com.

August 23 to 26  
Wilderness Trip of Perspective into the Oregon Cascades  
Spend four days hiking in the Jefferson wilderness, praying, sharing stories, and sharing silence in the beauty of God’s creation. Sponsored by Journey into Freedom. Registration deadline is August 4. For information, call (503) 244-4728.

September 3  
Ecumenical Labor Day Service  
10 a.m., St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 1805 Minnesota St., The Dalles. Includes participation by United Church of Christ, Episcopal, Lutheran and Methodist congregations. For more information, call (541) 296-9587.

September 10 to 13  
“On Our Own Terms: Movers on Dying”  
In this four-part PBS series, set to air on Oregon Public Broadcasting television at 9:30 p.m. September 10 through 13, journalist Bill Moyers examines the numerous issues and challenges faced by terminally ill people and their loved ones. Check out the program Web site at www.pbs.org/onourownterms for more information, or call EMO’s Melinda Smith at Hopewell House Hospice Center at (503) 244-7890.

Compassion Sabbath  
October 27 to 29  
This EMO-sponsored interfaith project will encourage faith communities to devote one Sabbath on or around October 27 to 29 to a focus on issues faced by terminally and chronically ill persons, their families, and caregivers. EMO will provide a resource book to congregations including bulletin inserts, prayers, scriptures, speakers, sermon assistants, and educational materials. The resource book will be available August 15.

**Jazz under the stars on July 20**

On July 20, Dan Balmer returns to Hopewell House as the Dan Balmer Quartet fills the night sky with jazz for the annual Jazz under the Stars concert. This year, in addition to celebrating Hopewell’s long history of compassionate hospice care and community outreach, the concert will celebrate the new Hopewell House Hospice Center, a unique collaboration between EMO and Legacy Visiting Nurse Association. (See story on page 4.)

Balmer has recorded numerous CDs and is recognized nationally for his virtuosic guitar performances and his original compositions. Those attending the concert can bring picnics to enjoy on the gently sloping lawn. A variety of complimentary desserts, pizza and coffees will be offered.

Door prizes will also be given away. Seating begins at 6:30 p.m. for the 7 p.m. concert, with parking provided at Wilson High School on Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway. The Hopewell House Hospice Center is located at 7161 SW Capitol Highway. The concert costs $25, with children admitted free of charge.

For more information about the concert, or to order tickets, call Beth Richley at (503) 221-1054.