



The Justice & Witness Insider

Issue 34

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Monthly Snapshot

The JWM Insider offers a monthly glimpse into the world of Justice and Witness Ministries. Learn more about our mission, staff, exciting projects, upcoming events and more. Get to know our ministry on a more personal level.

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“CCI is getting it done!”



by Bentley de Bardelaben

As a 2009 Neighbors in Need (NIN) grant recipient, Des Moines, Iowa’s Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (CCI) is a grassroots organization that empowers and unites people of all ethnic backgrounds to take control of their communities. CCI assists people to identify problems and needs while taking action to address them. They encourage residents to be vehi-

cles for social, economic and environmental justice.

Executive Director Hugh Espey says, “CCI has helped thousands of its members across Iowa from all walks of life – whether urban or rural, black or white, immigrants and lifelong Iowans - to work together to get things done. CCI staff has over 100 years of combined experience to provide training and expertise. However, it’s our members that provide the focus and the leadership and the power in numbers.”

As CCI celebrates three decades of assisting ordinary people to transform their own lives, Director Espey says, “We are one of those organizations that is truly

by the people and for the people. We believe you don’t have to stand by and just let things happen, which is probably why we’re growing so much.”

Taking a stand against injustice, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement understands that their success lies in the power that comes from thousands of citizens standing together and getting things done. Their current slogan is “We talk! We act! We get it done!”

JWM is honored to be in partnership with CCI through our NIN grants. To learn more about NIN grants or CCI visit www.ucc.org/nin.

Seeking Peace Among the Peoples



by Michael Neuroth

Several UCC members, including JWM board members and staff, attended the ecumenical peace conference, “Peace Among the Peoples,” July 28–31. The conference, hosted by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana, had more than 150 participants from the ecumenical community.

The event was an opportunity to gather North American churches to discuss coordination of efforts to foster peacemaking and the ethical challenges posed by technology, terrorism, consumerism, and living amidst “empire.” The speakers included several well known theologians, including Duke University’s Stanley Hauerwas, who boldly proclaimed, “the church does not have an alternative to war, but rather *the church is the alternative to war.*”

The event was also a preparatory gathering for the upcoming World Council of Churches’ International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC), to be held in Kingston, Jamaica in 2011. The

IEPC is envisioned as a “harvest festival” to celebrate the achievements of the World Council of Church’s Decade to Overcome Violence which began in 2001. The WCC is working on an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace which will be delivered at this conference and will issue a global call for greater commitment to and coordination of global peace with justice activity.

To view plenary presentations and reports visit www.peace2010.net. For more information about the IEPC visit <http://www.overcomingviolence.org/en/peace-convocation.html>.

Immigration, the Economic Crisis

These two topics – immigration and the economic situation including joblessness and the deficit – are important justice issues. They are also much in the news these days with new developments almost daily. JWM’s web pages are also being frequently updated to stay on top of many of these twists and turns. Follow the economic crisis from a justice perspective at <http://www.ucc.org/justice/financial-crisis/> and immigration updates at <http://www.ucc.org/justice/immigration/>

www.ucc.org/justice

Visit with/Pray for your Rep

by Mari Castellanos

Few new Congresses have been received with such hope and expectations as the 111th Class of 2009 – 2011. They are on break to get back in touch with their constituents. Yet, many think the Congress is out of touch. So what happened?

To be fair, this class faced enormous challenges — an economic crisis, the healthcare system, immigration, climate change, a seriously troubled education system and the longest war this country has ever fought. As if we didn’t have enough troubles, an oilrig in

the Gulf of Mexico blew up, bringing about an environmental nightmare.

If ever anyone was in need of our prayers, surely these folks are. Moreover, take time to visit with them. Thank him or her if s/he voted for healthcare and financial reform. Tell them that we still have serious issues they must address before the 111th Congress adjourns. Remind them that while we helped rebuild GM, rebuilding the Earth will be a little bit harder.

2011 JWM Message on Public Education

Check out the just-released “2011 JWM Message on Public Education: “New Federal Public Education Policies Undermine Justice, Eliminate Democracy, and Shatter Community.”

Available on-line at: <http://www.ucc.org/justice/public-education/2011-justice-witness.html>

Call to Boycott Craigslist



by Loey Powell

The 27th General Synod adopted a resolution calling for an end to human trafficking

<http://www.ucc.org/synod/resolutions/gs27/human-trafficking.pdf>.

One form of trafficking is the sexual exploitation of minors. Craigslist is an online service for locating things to buy, sell or rent and unfortunately, minors are among the “goods” offered. A FUTURE, NOT A PAST is a campaign to end the sexual exploitation of girls and has issued a call to boycott Craigslist Watch this Anderson Cooper 360

CNN video exposing them <http://www.cnn.com/2010/CRIME/08/03/craigslist.sex.ads/index.html>

Consider signing the petition http://salsa.democracynaction.org/o/844/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=3733. Tell your friends! The Justice for Women Working Group of the National Council of Churches has been actively engaged in the issue of human trafficking and supports this effort.

“One form of trafficking is the sexual exploitation of minors.”

Language Matters



by Loey Powell

The Justice for Women Working Group (National Council of Churches) convened a gathering of diverse people to talk about “expansive” language about God and humanity, August 9-11, in Chicago. This meeting grew out of the expressed concern from mem-

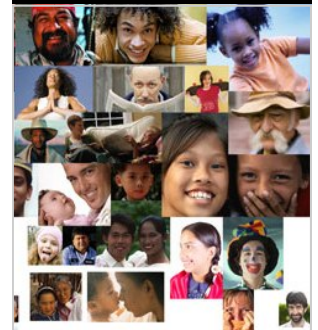
bers of the Working Group that the use of gender inclusive language in our churches is slipping and that awareness of language that expands inclusion of persons with disabilities and communities of color is still a growing edge. Participants were invited to share a personal experience of becoming aware of the power of language as a starting point and listening to each other’s stories moved the group into deeper conversation.

Next steps include developing a resource that can be used in congregations so that members can

engage in similar conversations with each other. The group recognized that the academic work around language has been done (gender bias in Biblical translations, for example) but there has been little done to support dialogue on language and its impact on how we think about the world, each other, and God.

A press release will be posted on the NCC’s website at <http://www.nccusa.org/>. JWM supported this project with a grant.

2010 Neighbors in Need Offering



Imagining
Another World is Possible

www.ucc.org/nin UNITED CHURCH

