

Episcopal Network for Economic Justice Newsletter

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Episcopal Network for Economic Justice

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Words from Respected Elders

An Interview with Michael Kendall on Christian Values

Interviewed by Michael Maloney

Michael Kendall is the Archdeacon Emeritus of the Diocese of New York. His career spans more than four decades of leadership in the Episcopal Church's ministry in this country and beyond. He was active in leading the Church and City Conference (1976-80) and in founding the Episcopal Urban Caucus (co-convenor, 1980). In international work, he staffed the Diocese of New York's Global Partnerships and Companion Relationship in South Africa. Urban activism includes community organizing with IAF South Bronx Churches Nehemiah Housing. He has provided leadership in the Working Class Ministry movement and the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice (President, 2005-2008).

MM: Why are you concerned about Christian values as a topic at this time?

MSK: In the run-up to the recent election I saw a lot of signs on conservative churches saying Vote Christian Values. Billy Graham put an ad in the New York Times saying that. That was the same as saying Vote Republican. Laissez-faire capitalism is based on the idea of no taxes on wealth. This thinking goes back to Calvin. Calvin believed that because we are all sinners, we can only be saved by Jesus' sacrifice and resulting Christian grace. Those who do not experience this grace are condemned to damnation. This is double predestination.

How does one know one is saved? In this system of thinking, one sign is material success – wealth. This idea became the underpinning for capitalism in the West.

Being poor and homeless in any way is a sign one is a sinner. The rich are saved, the poor are sinners. This turns the Gospel upside-down. In the Gospels, God has a preference for the poor and the righteous. There is a danger in being wealthy. There is a mandate to care for the poor.

Economic justice means to me the sharing of resources of wealth and the caring for the whole community. Laissez

faire capitalism is the opposite and is based on greed and, at its worst, the survival of the fittest.

We have it upside down when we say Christian values approve unlimited wealth for some. When faith-based funding was first proposed by the [George W.] Bush administration, it was a way of dumping the poor on institutions in the hope they might be redeemed of their sins if cared for by the churches.

It has been a privilege to serve with ENEJ and Jubilee Ministries, organizations in the Episcopal Church that seek to bring justice to everyone. The various initiatives of ENEJ include the Economic Justice Loan Fund and other wealth-sharing strategies. Jubilee Ministries and ENEJ are at the heart of the Gospel and should be at the heart of the ministry of the Episcopal Church.



Mike Kendall speaking at a rally.

Poverty Wages Hurt; Time to Raise the Wage

By the Rev. Michael Livingston

"What does the Lord require of us but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God." (Micah 6:8)

With 12.1 million people unemployed and one in six Americans living in poverty, we should all agree that we need more good paying jobs that allow workers to support their families.

Raising the minimum wage is essential to our economic recovery. These days, far too many workers have become expendable and undervalued, easily replaced and exploited in a system that places all power in the hands of the employer. CEO's of the companies employing the most low wage workers in the nation make an average of 9.4 million dollars a year – that's 450 times more than a worker making ten dollars an hour.

The federal poverty level is \$22,000 for a family of four. Income at twice that level is

hardly enough to sustain a family. Minimum wage at \$7.25 an hour is 40 percent below the federal poverty level. In other words, if you make the legislated minimum wage, and even up to 40 percent above it – we guarantee you will live in poverty. This is immoral.

The system is unethical by design. Interfaith Worker Justice and allies around the country are advocating for a raise in the federal minimum wage. IWJ, through its affiliates, supports statewide minimum wage campaigns in New York, Illinois, Maine, California, Missouri, Massachusetts, and Maryland. Although much of the local work has slowed down with the elections, IWJ is committed to keeping the minimum wage issue on the national radar.

Join the movement to raise the minimum wage – in your state and in the nation. Visit www.iwj.org to learn more.

Source: IWJ December 2012 newsletter

Events Calendar

Episcopal Urban Caucus Assembly

March 13-16, 2013
Minneapolis, MN

www.episcopalurbancaucus.org

Diocese of Olympia

Economic Justice Conference Moving from Charity to Justice

Part I, First Weekend in May
Train the Trainers Gathering
Part II, TBA

Introducing Congregations to Justice Work

ENEJ Annual Meeting

Saturday, March 16, 2013
In Minneapolis following EUC
Assembly

www.enej.org

Economic Justice and Eco-Justice in Province II A Conference

April 27, 2013
Christ Church, Suffern, NY
Keynote: Rep. Byron Rushing
Vice President, House of Deputies

www.enej.org

ENEJ Leadership

Officers

Dianne Aid, TSSF, President
Vicky Partin, Atlanta, Vice-President
Rep. Byron Rushing, Massachusetts, Vice President – Church and Community Affairs
vacant, Secretary
Urla Abrigo, Los Angeles, Treasurer
The Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss, Newark, Past-President
The Ven. Michael S. Kendall, New York, Past-President

Committee Chairs

Dianne Aid, TSSF, Olympia, Advocacy
The Rev. Arthur S. Lloyd, Milwaukee, Capacity Building
Jeffrey L. Dey, Southern Ohio, Communications
John Hooper, Michigan, Education
Lucinda Keils, Michigan, Capacity Building
Sue Lloyd, Milwaukee, Education

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ENEJ Resources You Can Use

The following resources are available at www.enej.org:

Economic Justice How-to Action Manual: A Guide to Economic Justice Ministries for Episcopal Congregations, 2006.

Economic Justice Issues: A Guide to Church Teaching and Action Steps for congregations and individual activities on 26 issues facing the United States, 2009.
Issue Papers include:

- Predatory Lending
- Taxes and Economic Justice
- Fair Trade
- Prisons and Incarceration
- Immigration
- Affordable Housing
- Racism and Economic Justice
- Human Trafficking

Twenty Years Later: Response to A Crisis: Strengthening Economic Justice Ministry in the Church in a time of Fiscal Crisis. This report addresses current national and international issues including the international economic crisis and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, 2009.

Community Investing: An Alternative for Religious Congregations Seeking Social as well as a Financial Return, 1999.

Economic Justice Education Modules, six popular education units on such issues as inequality, worker justice and the impacts of recession. (Developed in conjunction with United for a Fair Economy)

Related Resources

"From Mammon to Manna: Sabbath Economics and Community Investing" is a 6 part, 2 disc DVD, produced by Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, featuring biblical scholar/activist Ched Myers and Andy Loving, social investment advisor. It was produced for study groups interested in exploring biblical faith and practical economic justice. It is available at (www.bem-net.org) for \$25 (plus \$2.50 shipping and handling). A facilitation guide is available without cost from the same website.

Money and Faith: the Search for Enough, edited and compiled by Michael Schut, with a substantial study guide for small groups. There are readings on many aspects of money by such authors as Walter Brueggemann, Henry Nouwen, Bill McKibben, Ched Myers, William Greider, Maria Harris, Andy Loving, and Michael Schut. The book is available from Morehouse Education Resources, (www.morehouseeducation.com), with a retail price of \$20.

News Briefs

Airport Workers Strike in San Francisco

SEIU 1021 Airport workers called a 24-hour strike on November 19 at the Oakland Airport. "After 16 months without a contract, management at the Port of Oakland still refuse to negotiate fairly," said a statement by Jobs for Justice, San Francisco. "They are demanding cuts, even with a \$37 million surplus... and are lying about their finances to the workers and the public. We need more good jobs in Oakland ... not line Goldman Sachs pockets." More at www.seiu21.org/content/portworkers

Flash Mob for the 99%

The California Alliance for Retired Americans organized a protest to stop spending cuts being considered by Congress that would preserve tax cuts for the wealthy and cut Medicare, Medicaid and other essential programs. 510-663-4086 or Jobs with Justice - 415-994-2496.

Walmart Workers Strike

Also in the Bay Area and other cities, Walmart workers engaged in an unprecedented strike by walking off the job on Black Friday. solidarity@lwisf.org.

Wage Theft Campaigns

Labor unions and Interfaith Worker Justice are engaged in grass roots campaigns to stop wage theft throughout the country. For more information, see www.iwj.org.

A Local Economic Justice Model to Consider

By Ray West

More and more communities and congregations are realizing we are called to somehow participate in the revitalization of our local Main Street economies. How, though, do we assemble and use our resources and networks to produce meaningful and justice-focused results for our neighbors out of work and desperate to care for their families?

Interfaith Business Builders is one such model for addressing pressing economic justice issues. Interfaith Business Builders (IBB) is an



organization of diverse Cincinnatians developing and promoting community-based, employee-owned and operated cooperative businesses that create jobs and ownership opportunities for low income people.

IBB people come from a variety of faith perspectives. They share a passion for social justice and the empowerment of people. They value community, cooperation and solidarity. They want to contribute to healthy communities based upon caring, sharing, dedicated work toward common goals and mutual

accountability. They are striving to do their part to build the beloved community.

Since 1983 IBB has successfully developed three social enterprises, each its own corporation:

PFJ Enterprise, a temporary labor business, operated for eleven years.

Cooperative Builders, a construction company, operated for ten years.

Cooperative Janitorial Services (CJS), a worker cooperative commercial janitorial company, has been successfully operating since

1995.

Through June 30, 2011 the businesses had generated \$3,942,920 in sales and \$2,330,293 in wages. Over 400 people have been employed in the businesses since 1983.

Results for the co-op members are impressive too:

- The average wage in CJS is \$10.40 per hour, along with paid holidays.
- CJS profit sharing averages several hundred dollars per year per member.
- The average CJS member has been with CJS for almost five years.
- The average CJS customer has been with CJS over five and one half years.

The cooperative business model is well suited for community business initiatives. It:

- Develops from and rewards local community initiative.
- Rewards the work of the employees with steady jobs and business ownership within small economic communities within the larger economic community.
- Rewards the larger society with added stability and new local enterprises.

IBB's newest co-op, Community Blend, opens in 2013. This fair trade coffee shop celebrating fine refreshments, diversity and conversation will be located in Cincinnati's Evanston neighborhood. Christ Church Cathedral and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church are important partners in this latest co-op project.

In 2013 and 2014 IBB will implement a strategic plan utilizing more partnerships to create more cooperatives at a faster pace. Interfaith Business Builders' ambitious goal is to be opening one new cooperative business per year by 2015. Here's an economic justice model based in community and building community in a new and sustainable way. It deserves watching, and joining.

— Ray West (email: ibb@fuse.net) is the Executive Director of Interfaith Business Builders (IBB) in Cincinnati, OH. www.interfaithbusinessbuilders.org

President's Letter

By Dianne Aid

I was 17 years old when I first encountered this passage from Luke's Gospel: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the Year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19, NRSV) I was at a church camp and learned this in a song. It became a mantra and guidepost for me. Not knowing the context at the time, I somehow perceived God speaking to me about my own "call". During that same year on a church youth mission I came face to face with overt racism and with poverty, and made a promise that I would work to eradicate both. Many years later I find that work being carried out through Jubilee Ministries.

ENEJ has had a close relationship with Jubilee for some years. Several of our ENEJ Officers are currently, and in years passed been actively involved with Jubilee Centers in their communities. Diocesan Jubilee officers from throughout The Episcopal Church gathered in Americus, Georgia in mid-November of this year. Vicky Partin, vice president of ENEJ stated that she really could not separate her work with Jubilee from her work with ENEJ. Jubilee Centers are front line on the ground with communities faced with poverty, violence and oppressive racism. ENEJ partners well by creating resources for advocates and communities to use as they strive for economic justice and well being.

The Office of Jubilee Ministries at The Episcopal Church Center has partnered with ENEJ over the years. Carmen Guerrero supported membership in ENEJ of newly designated Jubilee Centers. "Action speaks louder than words". Carmen pulled a national gathering of Jubilee from a hotel that was in a labor dispute – it was costly, yes, and, it was the right thing to do. Attendees (now meeting at a unionized hotel) happily paid an extra \$25.00-\$50.00 to make up for some of the loss. Chris Johnson was intentional about making sure that an economic justice voice was part of The Jubilee Advisory Committee. Both Carmen and Chris supported ENEJ's annual Gloria Brown Award – honoring an agency doing economic justice work through credit unions and socially responsible consumerism.

Jubilee: Re-Imagined, Restructured and Re-energized

As The Episcopal Church grapples with "re-structure", budget constraints and incorporates new areas of work including poverty alleviation we are bound to experience some confusion, grief and apprehension at organizational change and we need to honor that. Births of new forms of ministry are on the horizon, and if we are willing to go with the flow, we may in fact

become mid-wives to exciting new life. Jubilee is definitely in step with this.

The past six months have been filled with confusion and questions about where networks, both official church committees (Jubilee Advisory Committee) and the organic networks (ENEJ) would land. Depending on the proposed budgets available for viewing leading up to General Convention, Jubilee and ENEJ were either in or out. Specific to Jubilee, two resolutions were



St. Stephen's Table (Pittsfield, Massachusetts) serves nearly 200 nutritious meals each week to needy men, women, and children on Thursday and Friday evenings throughout the year.

concluded: D063 – a commitment to continue training of Diocesan Jubilee Officers, and D094 – recognition of 30 years of Jubilee Ministry in The Episcopal Church.

With those two resolutions, amidst staff changes, sunseting of the Jubilee Advisory Committee and pending restructure the Jubilee Ministry Network of Diocesan Jubilee Officers looks ahead with a new energy.

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The Gathering

With the support of Church Center Staff and input from members of the Jubilee Network the annual training of Diocesan Jubilee Officers took place November 14th-17th, 2012 in Americus, Georgia.

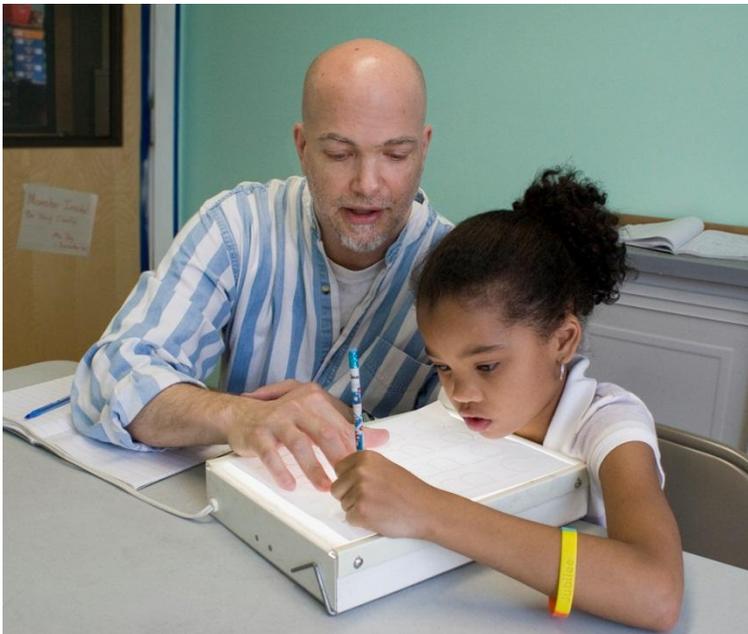
We had many questions about the place and future of Jubilee amidst the changes. We were told that most likely there would not be funding in the TEC budget to support future trainings. We were also assured that Jubilee would be part of the overall poverty alleviation work

although it was not listed as part of the job description for the new Poverty Alleviation Officer position.

Diocesan Jubilee Officers and others engaged in Jubilee Ministry

Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation (EGR) has announced that its campaign to get the Diocesan Convention of the Diocese of Massachusetts to adopt a resolution regarding divestment. The resolution commits the diocese

work are really committed to the work, and to continue gathering as a network for training and working in communities (work days are generally part of the gathering), and reflecting theologically on what the work of Jubilee is about. It is not surprising that those gathering in Americus decided “we can do this”, that is keep this network



The Jubilee Center (All Saints' Episcopal) offers the only after-school and summer safe haven for children in Hoboken's public housing neighborhood. The Center helps over 100 students from kindergarten through sixth grade after school and all day during the summer and school vacations.

together with less fiscal and staff support from TEC. A committee has been formed to plan for our next gathering and look for ways to fund it. A Google Groups network

Moving Your Money

(and urges all Episcopalians) to move their money from Big Banks to the smaller community-based banks and credit unions. EGR will do similar outreach in other dioceses. ENEJ member Geoff Curtiss will

has been set up for DJOs and others connected to Jubilee Ministries – this gives us the capacity to stay in touch with each other and share information and best practices. This seems very healthy; it moves Jubilee Ministries from being an “institution” of The Episcopal Church to a movement within The Episcopal Church.

Looking Forward

There are currently around 600 Jubilee Centers in communities served by The Episcopal Church; these Centers are engaged in feeding, advocating, empowering and transforming communities. As we move forward, the work if these Centers will continue engaging in grassroots organizing with poor and marginalized people. The Jubilee Ministry Network will continue to build partnerships with others in TEC working for poverty alleviation including The Office of Government Relations, ENEJ and others.

We Are Called

Through Jubilee Ministries, ENEJ and our partners in justice networks within TEC, and Ecumenical partnerships we will bring good news to the poor, set captives free restore wholeness and bring liberation to oppressed people.

introduce such a resolution in the Diocese of Newark.

Source: Based in part on a communication December 12 from EGR Co-Chair, John Hammock.

Inequality: One of the Biggest Challenges of Our Time

By Michael Maloney

During most of the 20th Century, Americans assumed that inequality was diminishing, not increasing. By the end of the century, we learned that our society had morphed into a new Gilded Age which exceeds the inequality of the first.



In America the share of national income going to the top 0.01% (some 16,000 families) has risen from just over 1% in 1980 to almost 5% now – an even bigger slice than the top 0.01% got in the Gilded Age.

The Economist,
October 13-19th, 2012, p.3.

“Growing inequality is one of the biggest economic and political challenges of our time,” says Zanny Minton Beddens. (ibid., p. 13). An October 10 article in The New York Times cited research by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suggesting that rapid growth in inequality is slowing economic growth and stifling recovery with 93% of growth going to upper income people.

The fact that the IMF would express concern and a grey old capitalist publication like The Economist would devote a special section to inequality as a worldwide phenomenon

which threatens the economy is astounding. That editorially they would call for a new “true progressivism” (op.cit., p. 13) is even more impressive. This new progressivism would include:

1. A Rooseveltian attack on monopolies and vested interests be they state owned enterprises in China or big banks on Wall Street.
2. Targeting government spending on the poor and young.
3. Reforming taxes not to punish the rich but to raise money more efficiently and progressively. (In rich countries mainly eliminating deductions that benefit the wealthy.

In one of the Economist’s charts, the only two countries cited on one measure of inequality that are worse than the United States are Mexico and Chile.

The capitalist establishment has thus recognized the problem of inequality. The American people have recognized the problem by reelecting a president who pledged to address it (and also in opinion polls). In a report for Congress the Congressional

Research Service (CRS) published The U.S. Income Distribution and Mobility: Trends and International Comparisons (Linda Levine, Specialist in Labor Economics, March 7, 2012). This study provides a theoretical basis for the concern for inequality, outlines measures of income and income distribution, and charts recent trends in the U.S and the world. Since 1968, according to this report, the bottom quintile of U.S. households saw their share of income shrink from 4.2% to 3.3%. The share of the middle quintile shrunk from 17.6 to 14.6. The share of the top quintile rose from 16.3 to 21.3.

Another measure of inequality cited in the CRS report is the *gini* coefficient. “It is a single number that can range between zero (a perfectly equal distribution) and one (a perfectly unequal distribution). “The historical trend in the United States is one of almost steadily increasing income inequality (from 0.386 in 1968 to 0.469 in 2010)... (CRS Report, p. 5)

Note: a longer article is available at www.enej.org.

The Myth of Upward Mobility

The Congressional Research Service report examines whether the children of low income families are likely to surpass their parents’ position at the bottom of income distribution. In a word, they are not.

(Congressional Research Service report, p. 14).

Dear Friend of ENEJ,

Let me share with you some of what ENEJ has been up to. **We have developed resources on Community Investing**, providing information on how dioceses, parishes and individuals can put some of their investible funds into community-based projects benefiting low-income people. One of these resources is a DVD and community investing. See Resources on page 3.

We have produced a "How To" Manual, to help congregations start community development corporations and credit unions, support affordable housing and strengthen local community economies. Advocacy has been an important part of the work of ENEJ. We continue to address **immigration issues**, for example the poor treatment of many families and children in the large for-profit immigration detention centers, and to advocate for **low-wage workers** and the **rights of workers to organize**. **Also we work to support justice for Church lay workers.** Are living wages being paid such workers, for example?

Collaboration is essential to the work of the Church's networks. So over the years we have collaborated with the Episcopal Urban Caucus and Jubilee Ministries. **Recently, ENEJ has begun work with the Episcopal Ecological Network (EpEN).** Together we are exploring ways to encourage Church people to join with others to work on food sustainability and urban gardens. How can we respond to those who live in **"food deserts,"** lacking access to healthy food because of geography and lack of resources? In this collaboration we help link those concerned for the environment and for economic justice.

In recent years, ENEJ has focused its network building at the Provincial level. We have begun to develop networks in several provinces. In April we will, with EpEN, sponsor a conference in Province II on Economic and Eco-Justice.

The environment, immigration, the rights of workers are issues relevant to people within our own parishes and communities – people who are being squeezed by the economic crisis and an economic system which, quite frankly, favors large corporations over small businesses, the wealthy and powerful over the poor and middle-class.

We invite you to join us in this work, to become a member of ENEJ, and to support our work as generously as you are able. We also invite you to join us in our work of advocacy, communications and education. Please use the enclosed envelope to join ENEJ or renew your membership

Faithfully, Dianne Aid, TSSF, ENEJ President

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