

Episcopal Network for Economic Justice Newsletter

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Inside this issue:

- The Ghost of the Occupy Movement..... p.2
- ENEJ Resources p.3
- News Briefs p.4
- Profile: The Rev. Canon Mark Stevenson p.5
- Events p.6
- Carl Rehling p. 6
- USPS and Payday Lending p. 6
- President's Letter p.7
- Support ENEJ p.8

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Heroes of Economic Justice

Ed Rodman, Prophet and Activist

By Mike Maloney

The Rev. Cn. Edward Willis Rodman's career as prophet and activist began in high school days when he led a successful sit-in movement in Portsmouth, Virginia. In college at Hampton Institute, he became a founding member of the Congress of Racial Equality. For half a century, Rodman has been a champion for African American youth and for all who were being excluded from the American Dream. Many of his associates



The Rev. Canon Ed Rodman facilitated a panel on Episcopal Divinity School's Role in the Freedom Struggle. *Photo by Lisa Abitbol*

have been representatives of Appalachians, Hispanics, Native Americans, people with disabilities and the GLBT community.

Social movements have been his forte and the Episcopal Church his platform. After obtaining degrees from Hampton Institute and Episcopal Divinity School and being ordained a priest in 1968 he served parishes in New Haven and Boston. According to Rodman 1968 was the year that black consciousness arrived in the Episcopal Church. The Union of Black Clergy was formed and that later became the Union of Black Episcopalians. Rodman was part of

the founding of the Episcopal Urban Caucus, the Jubilee Ministries movement, and The Consultation. He was consultant to the Episcopal Church's anti-racism program. The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice and other groups arose in the context of these organizations. These social movements have helped shape the Episcopal Church these last 50+ years.

Rodman's ministry has successfully spanned the roles of academic and activist. He has taught at Episcopal Theological Seminary, Yale University (City Planning), and Episcopal Divinity School (Pastoral Theology). Churchman par excellence, Rodman served as advisor to several bishops of the Diocese of Massachusetts two terms on Executive Council and as President of the Massachusetts Council of Churches. His publications have provided fuel for the movements he has helped found and enliven. Perhaps the best known is "To Heed and to Hear in the Cities: Urban Ministry in the Post-War Episcopal Church. Other works include publications on black youth, black lay women, urban ministry, racism, and the life of the Episcopal Church. For more detail, see: www.episcopalarchives.org/Afro-Anglican_history/exhibit/leadership/rodman.php.

According to Rodman 1968 was the year that black consciousness arrived in the Episcopal Church.

The Ghost of the Occupy Movement: A Stirring Among Low-Wage Workers

by Rev. Richard Gillett

Something is happening among our low wage workers in America.

Is the ghost of the Occupy movement stirring?

It's that probably, but maybe more. In just one astonishing week recently, the Seattle Times—a paper not exactly known for being pro-labor—featured worker protests

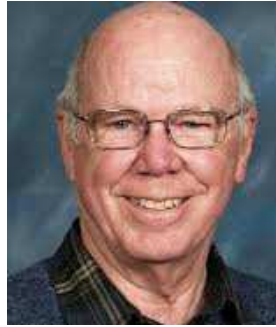
either as the lead story or prominently elsewhere:

On July 23 in the City of SeaTac in a meeting jammed with workers and faith leaders, the city council reluctantly qualified a Good Jobs Initiative for the November ballot. The initiative would establish the City's minimum wage at \$15 an hour for hotel, restaurant workers and others, including workers at SeaTac airport.

On July 26 fast food workers held a news conference on the steps of Seattle City Hall to protest wage theft by Seattle-area restaurants. According to the paper, five workers filed complaints under a Seattle law that makes it a gross misdemeanor to illegally withhold wages. On August 1 at Westlake Park, over 100 people rallied in support of fast food workers. Eight protesters were arrested.

In Burlington near the Canadian border the previous week, 240 immigrant berry pickers walked off their jobs at Sakuma Brothers

Farm, protesting issues of low pay in their piece work, and the impending arrival of 160 guest workers. A community committee including three ministers has attempted to bridge the gap as the impasse between the owners and the farmworkers continues.



Add to this list major coverage in the national press the past three months of one-day walkouts by fast food workers in New York,

Chicago and several other major cities to protest abysmally low pay at McDonald's, Taco Bell, Burger King and others.

And take note: these workers are no longer teenagers living at home. According to a recent study the median age of fast food workers is now 29, and it's safe to say that most of them must have a second job in order to survive. The now infamous McDonald's suggested worker budget memo to its workers assumed exactly that.

As in other parts of the country, the fast food worker protests here are being strongly supported by the Service Employees International Union. SEIU is also underwriting ongoing campaigns here to back the efforts of port drivers to become employees of the shipping companies instead of low-wage "contractors," and the drive of almost 4000 low wage SeaTac airport contract workers

for a union and a living wage. Likewise the push for a \$15 an hour living wage in the City of SeaTac is supported by the union. There are both Christian and Muslim faith leaders involved in each of these campaigns.

So what is happening?

It's the workers themselves, low wage workers who are suddenly rattling the cages and trying to open the creaky doors of fairness and justice with their cry for dignity, respect, and a real living wage. They are being joined by faith leaders in their protests who see this as a deeply moral issue, one to which our major faith traditions speak clearly.

The rising protests harken back to the best moments in our nation's history, from the progressive revolt against the robber barons of the late 19th century to the poor people's march on Washington led by Martin Luther King Jr (celebrating its 50th anniversary last month) to the Occupy protests beginning two years ago on Wall Street.

"The median age of fast food workers is now 29, and it's safe to say that most of them must have a second job in order to survive."

And who doesn't know by now that workers on the lowest rung have lost huge ground in the last few decades? The bottom twenty percent of American workers by income—28 million workers—earn less than \$9.89 an hour, their income falling five percent between 2006 and 2012, according to a study by the Economic Policy Institute. Meanwhile median pay just last year for chief executives of the nation's top corporations

Continued on page 3

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, 2011. Issue Papers include:

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

Share the Wealth. ENEJ's Community Investing Brochure, 2011.

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.

Immigration: The Franciscan Action Network has a new film on the need for immigration reform. This five-minute documentary can be accessed at www.franciscanaction.org. 202-527-7565. It can be used as a conversation starter.

Must Reading

Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities (J.K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, Stephen Healy, University of Minnesota Press, 2013) is required reading for those involved in sustainable community economic development. Order it through your local bookstore or at amazon.com.

The New Globalization: Reclaiming the Lost Ground of Our Christian Social Tradition, by Richard W. Gillett, Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2005 (219 pages)

Continued from page 2

jumped sixteen percent, averaging \$15.1 million—indicative of the continuing enrichment of the top one percent.

But even a \$15 an hour wage—if achieved by either fast food workers or by the approval of the City of SeaTac's initiative—would still be far below a monthly income sufficient to be able to live comfortably. According to the

Family Wage

Calculator of the

Economic Policy

Institute, a family of

just one parent and

one child would need

roughly \$4300 a

month in the Seattle-

Tacoma area. A wage

of \$15 an hour

(assuming a 40 hour

work week) would translate to about

\$2400 a month.

That is how far out of reach the goal of a

truly livable wage—a wage which used

to be well within reach until about the

1980s—has become.

So it looks like the protests of low wage

workers are picking up where the

Occupy movement left off. Could this be

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justice in America?

So it looks like the protests of low wage workers are picking up where the Occupy movement left off. Could this be the beginning of a new awakening for justice in America?

Our job as onlookers to this

development is to be more than

onlookers. We can raise our voices in

solidarity with the workers. Better still,

we can join them on the picket line or at

rallies. And we can let our elected

representatives know that the present

situation is immoral, and in the long run

unsustainable for them, for us and for

the country.

The Rev. Dick Gillett

August 3, 2013

Dick Gillett is an Episcopal priest, activist

and author. Before moving to Seattle in

2007, he lived in Pasadena and was a

board member of LAANE and of CLUE.

News Briefs

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Takes Action Against Payday Lender for Robo-Signing

Washington, DC, November 20, 2013

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) today took its first enforcement action against a payday lender by ordering Cash America International, Inc. To refund consumers for robo-signing court documents in debt collection lawsuits. www.consumerfinance.gov.

Cincinnati Establishes Fresh Food Financing Fund

Four Ohio organizations including the City of Cincinnati and the Ohio Grocers Association have collaborated to establish a 15-million dollar public private partnership to increase the number of supermarkets, grocery stores and other fresh food markets in low income areas. Two national organizations, the Food Trust and Uplift Solutions are contributing to this local effort. For information, email closingthehealthgap@uchhealth.com.

Prisons for Profit

In the fall of 2013, Cincinnati's Woman's City Club hosted a two-part educational program on the need for prison reform. The critique presented by prison reform advocates highlighted:

- 1) The need for states to regulate private prisons.
- 2) The need for programs that provide inmates with resources to help them succeed after release. These

programs should begin during confinement and continue post-release.

http://www.prisonpolicy.org/research/prison_privatization/

Is Service a Silver Bullet?

In a feature article, Can Service Save Us, *Time* Magazine writer Joe Klein describes the current movement to solve national problems through community service projects. Target populations for these programs include veterans, immigrants, and young adults. Time editor Richard Stengel believes such service projects "will foster a generation of leaders who can work together to get big things done for our country. (*Time*, July 1, 2013). Last summer *Time* collaborated with the Aspen Institute's Franklin Project to draft a plan for national service for every 18 to 28 year old.

www.aspeninstitute.org/franklin

TransPacific Partnership Treaty

At least in the Seattle area, the media is paying more attention to the controversy about the Transpacific Partnership Treaty, another free trade zone agreement similar to NAFTA. The following letter was written by Dick Gillett in response to a December 1 article by Jon Talton of the *Seattle Times*. Plaudits to Jon Talton for raising questions about the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership Pact ["Fast track risky path for Pacific trade

pact," The Seattle Times, Nov. 30, 2013].

He correctly raises the issues of secrecy and the process of fast tracking the agreement through Congress. The secrecy issue is a special slap in the face to several Pacific Rim countries whose economies are still developing, and whose voices in international trade agreements have frequently been overwhelmed by the influence and clout of large global corporations in the rich countries.

For many who oppose this Trans-Pacific Trade Pact, the issue is not only economic but also moral. My own religious denomination, recognizing that trade policies have moral implications for millions of people mired in deep poverty in developing countries, passed a resolution at the Episcopal Church General Convention last year titled "advocate for a just economy for international trade."

One of its clauses stipulated that "mutuality between all persons should be promoted in the formation of trade rules and agreements, giving equal rights and voice to persons and institutions ... whether they be in developing or industrialized countries." How can this occur if treaty deliberations are secret? Another stated that "trade should respect and enrich rather than undermine local economies, cultures and peoples."

Profile: The Rev. Canon Mark Stevenson

by Mike Maloney

In August 2013, Bishop Stacy Sauls, COO of the Episcopal Church, announced the appointment of the Rev. Canon Mark Stevenson as Domestic Poverty Missioner for the Episcopal Church. In so doing, he also broadened the scope and focus of the church's antipoverty efforts. Canon Stevenson will report to the Office of Governmental Relations ("Washington Office") but will actually live in Dallas. In this position, he will be responsible for newly created work of Mission Mark 4 including support for the Jubilee Ministry program and liaison with networks of Episcopalians working to address poverty in their communities.

Stevenson's background includes service as rector of two parishes and as Canon to the Ordinary of the Diocese of Louisiana. In the latter position, he worked closely with Episcopal Relief and Development and coordinated diocesan response to Hurricane Katrina. He also had major administrative responsibilities for the diocese, which is his home diocese. He and his wife Joy now live in Dallas.

From a military family, Mark was born in Savannah, lived a long time in Central Illinois as a youth, went to college in Illinois, lived in Memphis, and did his C.P.E. in New Orleans. "I have moved up and down the Mississippi River my whole life but claim Louisiana as home" he says.

The following is an interview Michael Maloney did with Canon Stevenson on January 2.

MM: Tell us something about your background

MS: The events that happened to me around Katrina were a watershed moment in shaping my ministry. This experience took away the mirror that had covered up the racism and indifference of that world. I

could see clearly that people were being held back by a system in which no matter how hard they tried, they could not get ahead. This awareness cut across all political lines and posed the questions, "How do we tear down unjust systems and break the cycle of poverty?" and "How can we be the Body of Christ at work here?"

MM: How do you deal with separating global poverty from domestic poverty when they are so inter-related?

MS: "I don't believe in silos. Different programs around the world can learn from each other. I worked with ERD in Zambia. We have to improve the education system and focus on early childhood development. Recruiting and training volunteers is a need everywhere. We will find ways different countries' programs

complement each other and be stronger in what we do.

MM: What are the components of antipoverty work as you see them?

A strategic decision has been made to shift the domestic poverty ministry from the ethnic area over to the Office of Governmental Relations (Justice and Advocacy Ministries). The focus had been on Jubilee

Ministries. The focus has broadened. The new focus includes working with Episcopalians in ministries of engagement and networking with other faith groups. We will combine all this with the very important work of advocacy. We need to tell the stories of people whose lives have changed. We need to connect people

so they can work together for change. People's stories will inform the work of OGR and the work of OGR will inform the work at the grass roots level. OGR's advocacy for change must be connected with what is happening on the ground.

MM: What are your priorities for this triennium?

MS: We want to get one in four Episcopalians (500,000) involved in work among the poor.



Rev. Canon Mark Stevenson

Continued on Page 5

Continued from Page 4

We want to connect smart passionate people with other smart passionate people and use technology in the work for change.

We want to help Episcopalians discover where their treasure is and to help them find ways to give it away. This includes Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) methods. For example, the Diocese of Louisiana has 22 parish-based schools. How can we share this experience with the rest of the country? How can a parish with a lot of cooks make that a resource for the community?

We want to find ways to broaden our reach through partnerships with other organizations. For example, ELCA has a lot of

expertise in food security. How can our congregations partner with them? The emerging collaboration between ENEJ, UBE and EpEN is another example of how to gain synergy through working together.

We want to help people tell their stories in advocating for change. I have a strong advocate in Jesus as a miserable poor sinner. We are all called to advocate for those in need.

MM: How do you see the networks such as ENEJ interfacing with official CCABs?

MS: This is an area that needs work. We all need to cooperate to increase momentum here.

Contact information: Canon Stevenson can be reached at mstevenson@episcopalchurch.org or 972-674-9933.

In Memoriam: Carl Rehling

By Mike Maloney

The Rev. Carl William Rehling died November 5 in Shade Shores, Texas. Carl served as a member of ENEJ's Capacity Building Committee and as Province III Liaison. He received the Michael Bryant Award for outstanding volunteer service to ENEJ in 2009. He was an outstanding preacher and prophetic voice for the cause of social justice. Ordained a deacon in 1991, he served at Christ Church, Port Republic, Maryland until 1995. He served at St. James, Lothian, until his retirement in 2000. He was also Diocesan Jubilee Officer and Liaison for Justice and Peace Ministries for the Diocese of

Maryland. Condolences may be sent to his wife, Pat, at 311 Paradise Cove, Shady Shores, TX 76208.



Bishop Rabb of Maryland presenting the Michael Bryant Award to the Rev. Carl Rehling at the Gloria Brown Luncheon at the 2009 Assembly of the Episcopal Urban Caucus.

Events

Episcopal Urban Caucus Assembly
Marriott Place Hotel, Newark, New Jersey. February 19-22. Registration: www.episcopalurbancaucus.org.
ENEJ Gloria Brown Luncheon, noon, February 21 at the Marriott Plaza.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days
Doubletree Hotel, Crystal City, Virginia. Friday, March 21 – Monday, March 24
EAD 2014 National Gathering in Washington, D.C. to focus on the ways various forms of and policies promoting violence can be transformed to policies which enable peace. For more info: <http://advocacydays.org/2014-resisting-violence-building-peace/>

USPS and Payday Lending

The Postal Service (USPS) could spare the most economically vulnerable Americans from dealing with predatory financial companies under a proposal endorsed in February by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA).

“USPS could partner with banks to make a critical difference for millions of Americans who don’t have basic banking services because there are almost no banks or bank branches in their neighborhoods,” Warren wrote in a *Huffington Post* op-ed on Saturday, February 1.

The op-ed cited a report from the USPS’s Inspector General that proposed using the agency’s extensive physical infrastructure to extend basics like debit cards and small-dollar loans to the same communities that the banking industry has generally ignored. The report found that 68 million Americans don’t have bank accounts and spent \$89 billion in 2012 on interest and fees for the kinds of basic financial services that USPS could offer. The average un-banked household spent more than \$2,400, or about 10 percent of its income, just to access its own money through things like check cashing and payday lending stores. USPS would generate savings for those families and revenue for itself by stepping in to replace those non-bank financial services companies.

Doing business in underserved communities in a more ethical fashion would still be profitable enough to inject about \$9 billion into the USPS.

President's Letter

I love to participate in Las Posadas (The Inns), a Mexican/Latin American tradition of depicting Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.

I can feel the experience of that journey to Bethlehem, crowds of people around, many of them travelers who were commanded to leave their lives to comply with the bureaucracy of responding to a government census. Crowds, noise, tiredness were definitely part of the scene.

We know the story, Joseph desperately begging for a place to sleep, and for Mary to be comfortable during the imminent birth of her child. "No room here", "Move on", "We have no place for people like you".

It is no surprise that the faith based immigrants' rights movements of today use the structure of Las Posadas as a message of vigils to bring about hospitality, and justice for immigration reform.

The story of Jesus birth I was presented with as a child is very much alive in the commercialization of Christmas, but it is very different from what I reflect on now, and what motivates my actions. The blond haired, blue eyed angels flitting around in prom dresses and the docile equally blond haired blue eyed little shepherd boys are pretty far-fetched. "FEAR NOT" say the angels, implying they had to assure the listeners that it was safe to listen to them. The shepherds were workers, wage earners, and most likely low wage earners. I will bet they were not unionized!

The angels directed the shepherds to go to Bethlehem to find this very special baby who had been born. Some left the fields, traveling from

the rural countryside into this urban scene of confusion, trying to find a needle in a haystack. They would have sought out people they felt comfortable asking for directions, other workers, stable workers, housekeepers for the inns, etc. These were the people who would have known first.

The shepherds did find the baby in the stable, a relatively quiet place away from the noise, confusion and hub bub of the town, with only the company of the servant animals, and those working around the stable they discovered the baby, being cared for by Mary and Joseph, in the simplicity of the night. "Come to the Quiet", the title of a song by singer and Franciscan, John Michael-Talbot describes for me what was happening.

The shepherds will go back to their fields, carrying with them the marvelous story in the oral tradition, which is truth for communities from the dawning of language. We don't really know if the Magi encountered the shepherds at the time they arrived bearing gifts of gold and precious herbs. We do understand they "emptied their hands" of their riches, the shepherds had come empty handed, but, it did not matter. We honor both shepherds and Magi in our Christmas tradition.

Not much information is given to us about Jesus childhood formative years, but certainly his parents would have talked with him about his birth installing in him passion and respect for the poor and those not so poor. His birth brought people from all walks of life together. It is the basis for much of the Gospel tradition, The Song of Mary, the laborers in the Vineyard, The Fish and the Loaves. We are called to a life which offers sustainability to all

regardless of origin, to break down the barriers that have created classism and economic oppression.

It is still the Christmas Season as I write this, so I wish you all peace, and as we move through the Epiphany Season, following the Star that guides to truth, lighting the way for all.

Dianne Aid, TSSF

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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.

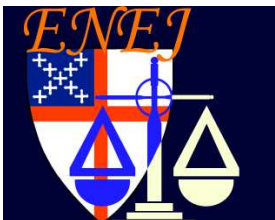
In recent years, ENEJ has focused its network building at the Provincial level. We have begun to develop networks in several provinces. In April and May we have participated in two conferences in Province VIII.

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 visit us at www.enej.org or send your donation to ENEJ at 5829 Wyatt Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45213.

Faithfully, Dianne Aid, TSSF, ENEJ President

The Episcopal Network
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c/o Michael E. Maloney
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Newsletter