

# Episcopal Network for Economic Justice E-Newsletter

Summer 2011

Volume 1, Number 1

## Welcome!

The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice has adopted a new communications program, which will include a very active website ([www.enej.org](http://www.enej.org)), a quarterly e-newsletter, and a proactive approach to revitalizing our listserv using monthly postings to the community. Our first posting went out in May. This is the first newsletter.

## Inside this issue:

ENEJ Resources You Can Use..... p.2

Key Loan for Low Income Housing ..... p.2

ENEJ at the 2011 Assembly of the Episcopal Urban Caucus ..... p.4

"Undocumented" Immigrant Workers in the USA and some Christian Response ..... p.4

Helping ENEJ Grow ... p.5

Social Inclusion: A Better Framework or Addressing American Poverty ..... p.7

## Episcopal Network for Economic Justice

c/o Sandra Majors Elledge  
5204 Vanardo Way  
Knoxville, TN 37912  
865.525.5632  
smelledge@aol.com

[www.enej.org](http://www.enej.org)

## REVOCATION OF 1776 – Commentary on Life in the US

By Dianne Aid, TSSF, ENEJ President

In this edition (page 4) of the ENEJ newsletter, you will find an excerpt of an article by The Rev. David De Verny, former chaplain to migrant workers in the Diocese of Lincoln (Church of England). David spent some time in the US last year finding out how churches in the United States responded to growing immigrant worker communities. I have been corresponding with David concerning justice issues in the United Kingdom and in the U.S.

A satirical article, entitled, The Revocation of 1776, had a couple of passages which brought some thoughts to mind:

**"You will learn to resolve personal issues without using guns, lawyers, or therapists. The fact that you need so many lawyers and therapists shows that you're not adult enough to be independent. ....If enough to sort things out without suing someone or speaking to a therapist then you're not grown up enough to handle a gun."**

*Continued on page 3*

## Fighting Obesity with Healthy Food

By Vicky Partin

I grew up in the hills of Southern Tennessee on a farm many miles from town. We raised almost every food we ate, from meats and milk to veggies and fruits and all the trimmings. A rare treat was fried Spam for breakfast and macaroni and cheese on special occasions, like when the Baptist preacher came for Sunday lunch. Other special meals were the occasional fried squirrel, roasted ground hog and small fish we caught in Tacketts Branch that runs through the farm.

We fertilized the gardens with chicken and barnyard manure and used an occasional beetle dust on the potatoes and tomatoes. Mostly we picked the bugs off with our fingers. Our huge gardens were basically organic, mainly because we did not have money to buy whatever was on the market to kill the predators, including the worms, foxes and rat snakes.

Food was plentiful for my family of four and for all the sharecroppers who lived on our farm. We worked together to pickle, shred, snap, peel, freeze, can, dry, chop enough food to fill our freezers, pantries and smoke houses for the year. We killed the hogs during the first freeze, producing hams, sausage, bacon, crackings, chittlins, souse, and we sent a calf to the butcher once a year. The chickens and turkeys were under our care from setting the eggs, nesting, hatchings, cleaning the hen houses and dressing for the freezer. Yes, I still remember the first chicken neck I was strong enough to ring!

*Continued on page 3*

## ENEJ Resources You Can Use

The following resources are available at [www.enej.org](http://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.

**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](http://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](http://www.morehouseeducation.com)), with a retail price of \$20.

## Key Loan for Low Income Housing

*This article is from the 2008 Annual Report of the Michigan Interfaith Trust Fund, recently renamed the Opportunity Resource Fund. The Trust Fund is a 2004 merger of the McGehee Interfaith Loan Fund (a business lender with substantial deposits and contributions from the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan, its congregations and members) and the Michigan Housing Trust Fund. A major priority of the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice is encouraging community investing by the Episcopal Church. The loan to Avalon Housing is an example of loans made by community development financial institutions in this country and around the world.*

In 2008 the trust Fund made another successful loan to Avalon Housing to purchase the Pear Street Apartments in Ann Arbor. This was the Trust Fund's eighth loan to Avalon, all of which have been repaid in full and on time. Avalon was started in 1992 and their first loan with the Trust Fund was made shortly thereafter. Since that time they have compiled a portfolio of 190 units in the Ann Arbor area. Avalon has been able to provide quality rental housing to people who find it difficult to afford the going rate for apartments in Ann Arbor. The high demand for housing by students of the University of Michigan enables landlords to command high rents for their apartments, which puts them out of the reach for most low-income people.

The rents for the Pear Street Apartments range from \$463 to \$772. The apartments come with a rental subsidy that requires that the tenant pay only 30 percent of their income toward the rent, so the actual rent that they pay will often be lower than these rents. In addition Avalon will set aside 9 of the 20 apartments for people who are considered chronically homeless, which includes people with disabilities such as substance abuse or mental illness. They will work with other social service agencies to get these individuals the supportive services they need to continue to live independently.

The high demand for housing in Ann Arbor also means that properties do not sit on the market for very long. As a result, when Avalon identifies a property that they want to buy they have to be able to move quickly. The Trust Fund provided Avalon a loan for the Pear Street project just for this purpose, to acquire the property quickly while they apply for low income housing tax credits and other sources of permanent funding that take longer to secure. Michael Appel, Executive Director of Avalon, describes the challenge, “With low income housing, especially in today's economy, it can take a while to put together all the funding sources necessary to purchase a property. Our Pear Street development has six separate funding sources. Were it not for the Michigan Interfaith Trust Fund providing us with a loan to purchase the property while we secured all of our permanent funding sources, I do not believe we would have been able to hold on to this property.”

The Trust Fund values its partnership with Avalon Housing and applauds their commitment to providing access to quality affordable housing to some of Ann Arbor's most vulnerable citizens.



Michael Appel, Executive Director, and Aubrey Williams, Pear Street Apartment Property Manager, standing in front of the Pear Street Apartments with Wendy Landes Hatem, Trust Fund Director of Lending

**Revocation of 1776 ... continued from page 1**

We as a nation honor “Our Founding Fathers”, giving us an image of freedom, independence and hard work which equals achievement. We remind ourselves that our grandparents were immigrants and did it the “right way” and made the American Dream come true for themselves. We hang on to our possessions and wealth as though they are armor protecting us from the working poor and new immigrants who “want to take what we have”, we try to outlaw collective bargaining and unions.

If we were to really hold on to “American Values” circa 1776, they would be community models. People depended on each other, including the native people whom a majority of Americans seem to have forgotten were already here.

Over the years “community” has ebbed away, giving way to focus on the individual who often lives in isolated fear of not having enough. We struggle with our identity, finding self, and suing to protect “what is mine” without consideration to “those others” who not part of the equation and who hold on their shoulders the burden of budget cuts.

***“Further, you will stop playing baseball. It is not reasonable to host an event called the World Series for a game which is not played outside of America. Since only 21% of you are aware that there is a world beyond your borders, your error is understandable.”***

This statement really is condemning. I met with a man last month, Jesus Lara Chivarra, a Huichol teacher from an indigenous village, “Medio Ambiente”, Jalisco, Mexico. Jesus was traveling through the Western US and Canada to bring attention to the environmental destruction of his people’s land, and the pollution of their drinking water caused by Canadian mining of the native Huichol lands. The Mexican government granted mining rights to the Canadians. This is allowed under NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement). Selling of water rights under programs like NAFTA have also become a concern. Agri-business and other corporations buying up agricultural lands to produce crops such as US bound Super Corn, killing off native varieties of corn which means starvation for village people.

Programs like NAFTA allow for free transportation of goods across the borders in North America, but do not allow for free passage of human beings. Humans, desperate for survival try to migrate to the US, having been squeezed out of livelihoods in their own countries. Few Americans have an understanding of these dynamics, and follow the sound bites when it comes to immigration “they have broken our laws”. No consideration is given to basic humanitarian laws.

We need to engage the Church in justice works in our communities and globally, it is time to stop treating the world as a “grab and go” fast food restaurant. It is not healthy for us, or for anyone else. I pray we can make room for the voices that Jesus Lara Chivarra represents to bring us back home.

Perhaps this time around, if we should gain our independence it will be without war and without conquest.

**Community Gardens ... continued from page 1**

Of course, we grew fat, not from the fresh veggies and meat, but from the frying, lard-made biscuits, cobblers, jellies and jams and, of course, the fat back in the seasoning. By high school, I was called “4 by 4” by the football coach. I was intimidated and saddened by the teasing and eventually hoarded my lunch money to buy the new product Metrical to lose weight. When my parents found this out, they thought I would surely die from starvation.

I have spent the next 50 years dieting and exercising to stay healthy. It has become my way of life.

So when the *Infusion* class of 2011 chose Environmental Justice as their theme and decided to study the justice issues around food and then grow a community garden in our partner neighborhood of Beallwood, I was thrilled. I could already see that many of the young children were on a path toward obesity and multiple health problems.

Two brothers in the *Infusion* class, Tate and Will Hutwagner, had grown organic foods on their grandfather’s farm thirty miles from Columbus and donated all the food to the local Feeding the Valley Food Bank. We were hopeful that they would design and manage the community garden, teaching the other teens and the children in *Infusion*’s literacy program, Beallwood READS. This garden is thriving in this extremely hot Georgia climate because the teen gardeners also knew how to run a drip hose from the BAND Center’s water faucet through the rows of vegetables.

The rest is history for our first year. A bright yellow sign hangs on the garden fence: *Fighting Obesity with Healthy Food*. The garden is producing onions, peppers, zucchini, squash, radishes, potatoes, and tomatoes. There are cantaloupes and watermelons and cucumbers on the vines.

*Infusion* teens went to the BAND Board of Directors early June and offered the harvest to the neighborhood and asked for a schedule for picking during the summer. Four BAND members came forth to take turns picking and delivering to the seniors and families served in the community. The goal, of course, is to assist families with their own above ground gardens in their backyards for food production year round. CVEM, through *Infusion*, has committed to offer scholarships for supplies to families willing to participate.

We hope that eating healthy snacks and enjoying the freshness of vegetables we grow will be contagious.

*Vicky Partin lives in Midland, Georgia and is the Lay Missioner of the Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry, a Jubilee Center of the Episcopal Church. CVEM has partnered with the Beallwood Area Neighborhood Development (BAND) since 1992.*



## ENEJ at the 2011 Assembly of the Episcopal Urban Caucus

By Dianne Aid

ENEJ members were delighted to participate in the 31<sup>st</sup> Assembly of the Episcopal Urban Caucus held in February in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. We would especially like to thank the EUC for their consistent commitment to holding the annual assembly in a union hotel, and one that is currently engaged in fair labor practice. We would also like to thank the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh and the excellent local planning committee for their hospitality. Although we were just a week shy of Lent, we really felt the spirit of the Resurrection in this diocese that is rebuilding and in stunning ways.

ENEJ offered two workshops as part of our ENEJ track: Community Investing: Our Assets at Work in Underserved Communities: the workshop defined and described community investing, a way to safely and effectively deposit/invest/loan (not donate) our financial assets, amounts as small as \$1000, in communities near to home and far away. The workshop was designed to bring awareness to the Church of the established network of Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) around the country which are ready to work with us in putting our funds to work as capital in distressed neighborhoods as community groups rebuild and develop housing, small business, cooperatives, and community services. The workshop promoted such community investment by entities and individuals throughout the Church. ENEJ hopes to prepare workshop participants to replicate the workshop in diocesan, parish and conference settings using the support services of the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice.

### Justice for Workers:

This well attended workshop was presented by The Rev. Tim Yeager, Financial Secretary/Treasurer for UAW Local 2320 AFL-CIO and Dianne Aid, president of the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice. This workshop reviewed the Episcopal Church commitment to fair labor practices through General Convention Resolutions that support laborers' rights to organize. Local churches and dioceses need to monitor their own relationships with those workers who provide services for church events and care for church physical plants. We looked at the history of the labor movement in the US and compared benefits of union workers to non-union workers. We look to continuing the conversation of how churches will be able to engage in fair labor practices in local communities.

### Networking In Province III

A late afternoon session gave ENEJ leadership a chance to gather with members of Province III who were interested in further economic justice network building in Province III. We look forward to continuing conversation with persons from Province III who met with us.

*Continued on page 5*

## "Undocumented" Immigrant Workers in the USA and some Christian Responses

By David De Verny

"Despite society's ongoing desire for services of day labourers and immigrant domestics, the climate of racism and harassment has reached a fever pitch...."

*New Sanctuary Movement*

"No human being is 'illegal' "

*Dianne Aid, President  
Episcopal Network for Economic Justice*

### The Background

"We are only shoulders", reads the headline in a newspaper in North Carolina, reporting on the plight of Latin American immigrants, working on plantations in camps of between 200-2000 people. Often behind barbed wire, with large signs stating " Do Not Trespass - Residents Only".

The headline in the newspaper refers to the working method in the fields: workers have to fill large baskets with vegetables or tobacco leaves and carry them on their shoulders to a waiting lorry. They earn 45-50 cents per large basket. In the USA, agriculture is virtually exempt from Health and Safety and other protective regulations and even 12 year old children are allowed to work in the fields for long hours. Some are even younger but nobody bothers to check.

The United Nations estimate that at any one time 200-250 million people are on the move around the planet in search of work and food. The US government believes that ca 10-15 million Latin Americans are "illegally" in the country, with 1.2 million arriving new every year (1) . As here in Europe, people do not just leave their homes, houses, friends, roots, culture, language and religion for fun and opt to do hard physical labour without adequate payment because they "fancy" that: people move because they are poor and cannot feed their families and themselves where they come from.

The movement of destitute human beings from Latin American countries into the USA has one major reason: the so-called North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA): it allows for cheap exports of highly subsidised US corn and other goods into Latin American countries where they are sold at dumping prices, thus pushing native farmers completely off the supply chain because they are not subsidised and cannot compete with US prices. US exports to Mexican i.e. have increased by 240% since the introduction of NAFTA in 1994 (2) and US corn is being sold up to 30% below the cost of production (3) because it is subsidised by the US government. By 2003 about two million farmers in Mexico alone have lost the jobs as a consequence (4). The numbers from other Latin American countries are equally dramatic: thousands and thousands of small and medium size farms had to be given up as a result of NAFTA and there is no end in sight.


*Continued on page 6*

**2011 EUC ... Continued from page 4**

**ENEJ Annual Awards Luncheon:** Two awards were given at this year's annual luncheon. **The Gloria Brown Award** was presented to Pittsburgh United for their excellent work in bridg- building and healing the social, economic and eco-justice issues in Pittsburgh, which are common to most American cities. Pittsburgh United has promoted strategies to address exactly who benefits from community development. They have built coalitions to organize in Pittsburgh, a city divided by bridges. **The Hugh White Award** was presented to The Rev. Tim Yeager, a long time labor organizer and attorney who has and continues to represent workers. Tim is an outspoken advocate for worker rights within the Church and in the wider community. Tim was recently ordained to the transitional diaconate and awaits his ordination to the priesthood.

**Resolutions:** Two resolutions introduced by ENEJ were passed by the Episcopal Urban Caucus. The first calls for **Solidarity with Hyatt Workers** in support of their current campaign through their union UNITEHERE. We call on the Episcopal Church to honor the boycott as we plan for 2012 General Convention in Indianapolis. The second resolution which was also passed calls for **Solidarity with Public Employees:** we call for workers' right to organize themselves and to engage in collective bargaining, especially in current struggles in Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio where worker rights are under attack. In closing we once again give thanks for new life in The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, and thank EUC for their ongoing collaboration. ENEJ is looking to expand its work through collaboration with other networks whose work is intricately interwoven with the work of ENEJ.

We look forward to seeing you in Atlanta in 2012!



The Episcopal Church  
welcomes you

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or contact [ee2011@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:ee2011@episcopalchurch.org).

**Staff Update**

Sandy Elledge, former Executive Coordinator of Episcopal Appalachian Ministries is Administrative Coordinator of ENEJ. She works for Michael Maloney and Associates. Jeff Dey is Communications Coordinator. Sandy is in Knoxville and Jeff is in Cincinnati.

**Helping ENEJ Grow**

**Volunteers needed!** Can you help build the network for economic justice? To strengthen the base of those in the Episcopal Church doing economic justice work we hope to recruit one or two people in each diocese who can help us identify: What economic justice projects are going on in your diocese - such as community development corporations, affordable housing, or community development credit unions? Who is advocating for worker rights, working on living wage campaigns or supporting janitors and other low income workers to organize for their rights? Are you involved in support for immigrants' rights? How can the ENEJ support those are doing the work on the local front?

If you would like to explore such a role - or if you have names to suggest of others who might help, please contact Art Lloyd, via email ([artsuelloyd@gmail.com](mailto:artsuelloyd@gmail.com)) or phone (608-256-7250).

**We need your support!** The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice is the only group within the Episcopal Church whose sole focus is to encourage the Church at every level - from individuals to congregations, from Dioceses to Provinces - to stand with those in economic need. For twenty-five years ENEJ has helped educate and energize Episcopalians to invest in community economic development, start credit unions or community development corporations, stand with janitors and other low-income workers or immigrants trying to organize for their rights.

To do our work of educating and energizing Church members we need financial support - to create educational materials, send members to conferences, organize workshops, have a presence at General Convention in support of resolutions and more. Please send your tax-deductible contribution to Sandy Elledge at 5204 Vanardo Way Knoxville, TN 37912. Checks should be made payable to ENEJ.

## ENEJ Leadership

### Officers

Dianne Aid, TSSF, President  
 Vicky Partin, Atlanta, Vice-President  
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 John Mark Summers, Long Island,  
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### 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

### Staff Support

Michael Maloney and Associates  
 c/o Sandra Majors Elledge  
 5204 Vanardo Way  
 Knoxville, TN 37912  
 865.525.5632  
 smelledge@aol.com

### Episcopal Church Liaisons

The Rev. Christopher Johnson  
 Michael Schut

### “Undocumented” Immigrant Workers ... Continued from page 4

Whole villages and towns all over the middle and north of Latin America have depopulated because even subsistence farming is no longer viable. The biased application of NAFTA exacerbates an already critical economic situation in developing countries struggling with financial mismanagement, high unemployment, military unrest, drug wars, social and political instability and millions under the poverty line.

Another yet minor reason is that the artificial Mexican/US border runs through ancient tribal lands, thus dividing tribal nations and indigenous people to their cultural, religious and economic detriment.

I visited two Episcopal parishes in Seattle, Washington State, an Episcopal Farm Workers' Centre in North Carolina, the Latino Missioners of Washington (DC) and Maryland, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service Centre in Baltimore and the Roman Catholic “Coalition on Immigration in the Archdiocese of Baltimore” as well as numerous “Food Larders” and “Thrift Shops” run by churches of different denominations. All people I met, highly motivated, committed, passionate advocates for the Christian faith and its practical application as expressed in Matthew 25 (and many other passages in the Bible), say the same: the immigration issues surrounding so-called “undocumented workers” from Latin American countries are created by politicians and agricultural and industrial lobbyists.

However, the real issue is not the number of visa-less “undocumented” workers because the entire US economy would collapse without them but that the US industry (agriculture is but one part of it) refuses to pay fair and proper wages for the labour it so ruthlessly exploits: fair wages, sick and holiday payments, insurance and pension contributions - little or none of that is paid, not to mention the urgent implementation and continuing enforcement of proper Health and Safety measures in all areas.

Like migrant workers in the UK, “undocumented aliens” in the US only get the most dangerous and lowest paid jobs, usually in occupations US citizens themselves do not want to do. Farm workers in North Carolina i.e. earn about 35% less than the national average (5). It is estimated that due to inflationary pressures wages decrease by 5% annually (6). Because of the total lack of legal protection for farm workers, they often suffer from dehydration and pesticide poisoning (especially those who work on tobacco plantations). They often have to work 12 or more hours in any given day. Adequate medical care in case of accidents is mostly negligible and farmers and growers are exempt from paying compensation to insured workers. This has been borne out by interviews I did with workers when visiting the camps and by many reports by NGOs (7).

Living conditions for workers in these camps are mostly shocking: twenty or more people to a cabin, without air conditioning when temperatures soar to 100+ (F). The cabins only have beds in them, nothing else: no chairs, tables or cupboards for clothes, nothing to store private property in. “Lucky” workers have mattresses covered in plastic so that they can be cleaned, the unlucky ones sleep on mattresses that have not been replaced or washed for years and are mostly filthy and disgusting. Toilet and kitchen facilities are equally awful. There are no washing machines, therefore workers have to clean their clothes by hand - with cold water, in a plastic basin, after a 12 hour working day... The camps are off the beaten track and mixing with the native population is near impossible, so are visits to shops, banks, surgeries or schools for those workers who are in the US with their children. There are no English classes. “Married Quarters” are unheard of: a sheet hung across the cabin is the only privacy married couples get. The camps I visited reminded me more of prison camps than labourer accommodation.

Despite these atrocious living and working conditions, the workers face the same barrage of hostility, aggression and racial prejudice as they do in the UK. In the USA too, immigrants are

Continued on Page 7

## Social Inclusion:

### A Better Framework for Addressing American Poverty?

By Mike Maloney

The idea of reducing poverty in America is not a popular one. Many Americans support the idea that the poor are in that condition because of some moral lapse. Most believe that the poor are already too dependent on government assistance. They know there was once a war on poverty and they believe that poverty won.

In an effort to escape such a deadly policy landscape, the United Kingdom has adopted an approach called social inclusion. Social inclusion includes the idea of advancement in the labor market (a better job), improved education outcomes, reduced health inequalities, higher quality housing, safer neighborhoods, and importantly, the reduction of income inequality.

In the UK, a family is considered poor if their income is below 60% of median income, after housing costs are subtracted. Income inequality is seen as a prime cause of social inequality, but poverty indicators also include broader social inclusion factors such as neighborhood environment, lack of opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge, housing equality, access to mainstream financial services and inequalities in health. The idea is to develop an economy that works for all.

Clearly this is an effort to "reframe" the issue of poverty in order to increase public support for antipoverty strategies. To find out more go to [www.inclusionist.org](http://www.inclusionist.org) or [www.cepr.net](http://www.cepr.net).

*Source: Social Inclusion for the United States, Heather Boushey, et al., April, 2007.*

### "Undocumented" Immigrant Workers ... Continued from page 6

accused of being "benefit scroungers" and "tax evaders". However, like here in the UK, immigrants in the USA are not eligible for benefits or any kind of welfare. And of course, immigrants pay the same taxes as anybody else. The US Social Security Administration has estimated that the "undocumented workers" pay six -seven billion dollars in Social Security contributions which, ironically, they are not able to claim for themselves (8).

### Encounters

Two of the Episcopal parishes I visited are situated to the North and the South of the city of Seattle in the Diocese of Olympia, Washington State. Saint Matthew/San Mateo, an official Sanctuary Congregation, is in Auburn, Resurreccion is in Mount Vernon's Komo Kulsan cluster of ecumenically collaborating parishes. Both parishes face similar issues and highlight in their various approaches to immigration the enormous complexity faced by both churches and immigrants. Saint Matthew/San Mateo and its neighbouring parish St. Elizabeth, both linked in with the Diocese of Olympia's Indo-Hispanic Ministry, serve a large group of Purepecha Indians from Mexico, whose livelihood in farming was destroyed by NAFTA. Many of them do not speak Spanish but only their own ancient Purepecha language. This leads to double discrimination within the Spanish-speaking Hispanic community, a problem few people seem to talk about. The problems faced by both language groups are, of course, the same. The Latina Missioner for Saint Matthew/San Mateo is Dianne Aid, a Franciscan, with degrees in anthropology and cultural geography. She speaks Spanish as a second language and is currently learning Purepecha. She is also the president of the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice (ENEJ). Dianne is training to become one of the few legal "lay" people who are allowed to represent immigrants at immigration court hearings. The course she attends is run by the Catholic Legal Immigration Network and is an excellent example of ecumenical networking.

Jo Beecher, a former MP in El Salvador, is the priest for the Spanish-speaking Parish of the Resurreccion where Misteco is the main native language among her Latino parishioners. Apart from the "usual" pastoral problems of parishioners living below the poverty line, problems with accommodation, schooling and health, facing deportation at any time day or night, families split by enforced deportation, absence of husbands and fathers in working camps, both parishes provide language and translation services. Resurreccion Parish specialises in providing immigrants with computerised driving lessons. Jo Beecher and her team have managed to get a range of computers on which immigrants can run virtual driving lesson programmes, preparing them to take the State driving test. If they pass they will obtain, although remaining otherwise "undocumented", a driving license. That in itself is a step in the right direction towards legal documentation but it also enables immigrants to become taxi- and bus drivers, jobs they would not otherwise be able to obtain. It frees them and their families from the exploitation by gang-masters and growers and the instability of seasonal working.

The State of Washington is now the only of the fifty American States which allows undocumented workers to obtain a driving license. The other two which until recently had similar laws have withdrawn them under the ever increasing political pressure from right-wing anti-immigration groups.

Another very serious yet not often openly talked about pastoral and legal problem is that of systematic rape and sex trafficking of women and children. While in the UK NGOs working in this area state that about 4000 cases of sex trafficking come to light annually, the numbers in the USA are astronomical although reliable evidence is hard to come by because of the shame and discrimination associated with these crimes. Colleagues told me of cases where gangs smuggle whole families into the USA "to order". When the families arrive the parents are handed over to the police and deported while the children stay behind and are being abused by the traffickers' clients. Both parishes are very much involved with trying to keep together families already split or threatened with deportation. The inter-denominational New Sanctuary Movement in the USA is very deeply involved in providing as much legal and pastoral protection as possible.

*Read the rest of this article on ENEJ's Website at [www.enej.org](http://www.enej.org).*