

Chapter 6

Creating a Culture of Justice

The purpose of this manual is to help you create a culture of justice in your parish, diocesan commission, or other ministry organization. Depending on the history of your parish or group this may be extremely easy or very difficult. One can imagine a “typical” parish. One third of the members may have developed a culture based on charity. They are willing to dedicate time and money to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and provide dental care to poor children. This group may not be interested in social analysis and civic involvement. At the other end of the spectrum another third of the group may be immersed in some form of cultural Darwinism which could be summed up in the motto, “The poor you will always have with you” or perhaps “survival of the fittest.” The middle third includes a broad array of people including people involved in foreign exchange programs, reconciliation ministry, book club, youth ministry, and a contingent who are totally absorbed with just trying to survive life’s vicissitudes.

How can we create a culture of justice in such an environment? One approach is to find a core of individuals who are looking for something more and who have the potential to be leaders or change agents in the congregation. Then use this manual as a study guide beginning with the materials provided in Chapters 1 and 3 and related appendixes. These chapters and appendixes (A, C, and K) provide the theological foundations for economic justice ministries and are thus the foundation upon which a culture of justice can be established. In Chapter 1, we described the continuum between service provision (charity) and activities which create policies or structures which change the economic status of the poor (justice). Your parish might provide emergency food and clothing or health care to 1,000 families. That work is wonderful and is

supported strongly by our faith tradition. In Chapters 2-5, we have focused on strategies which could raise the income levels of people so that they would have less need for emergency services. For example, church-based advocacy efforts have helped pass “living wage” ordinances in several cities and several states have recently raised the minimum wage. The Episcopal Church through the Episcopal Public Policy Network (EPPN) is currently advocating for Congress to raise the minimum wage. Such legislation would impact the lives of millions of Americans.

What if raising the state or federal minimum wage or advocating that employers pay a “living wage” is controversial in your parish? What if even a healthy dialogue on these issues does not seem productive? There are plenty of other justice issues that are not so controversial. Affordable housing, perhaps? Predatory lending, access to health care for poor children, reinvesting in low-income communities, financial services that are non-exploitative? What about neighborhood revitalization? What does it take to change people’s lives and provide hope to those in despair? Who are today’s “widows and orphans” and how can we use our talents and resources to help them?

Some of the models described in these chapters are transforming the social and physical landscape of entire neighborhoods. These community organizations and economic development corporations are described in Chapter 4. The models described in Chapter 5 (Socially Responsible Investing) are part of a national and international movement that has helped lift the burden of poverty for millions of people. Creating a culture of justice in your congregation means developing an awareness of the full range of strategies for addressing the issues of poverty and racism in our country and in our world. Developing such a culture involves finding or refining a framework including the theological, theoretical, and practice elements included in this manual.

As we pointed out in Chapter 1, there is no dichotomy between charity (direct service) ministries and those which involve economic justice. There is a continuum. We do not always follow the stages implied in the illustration on page 1-12. The continuum plays out in several ways. In the models we have listed in various chapters and appendixes, some congregations have initially engaged in service ministry. After engaging in the lives of low-income people they have found it necessary to add an economic justice component in the form of advocacy, community organizing, community economic development or socially responsible investing. Others have moved immediately into an enabling form of economic justice and founded a credit union or housing ministry only to find that it is impossible to do effective work in working class neighborhoods without addressing the need for better health, human services, and education. So they move back on the continuum to establish direct services or establish a partnership with service providers. Examples in Chapter 4, include Church of the Messiah Housing Corporation in Detroit and Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement. Episcopalians throughout the country are having an enormous impact through such ministries.

Should every congregation seek to engage in economic justice ministries? By advocating that congregations strive to create a “culture of justice” as well as a culture of charity, we are saying no more than that there should in our language and in our ministries be a full reflection of our faith. We need, in order to be faithful to the example of Jesus our model, to both feed the hungry and work to correct the injustices in our country and world that cause people to be hungry. But, as John Hall points out in *Organizing for Economic Justice* (Hall, 1990), you do not have to go it alone. Whether your parish is small and struggling or large and secure, you have the option of joining existing local efforts and/or getting help from national networks such as Interfaith Worker Justice (advocacy), Gamaliel Foundation (community organizing),

National Committee for Community Economic Development (community development corporations), Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation (global poverty) and Episcopal Network for Economic Justice (socially responsible investing and all other economic justice focal areas). Becoming part of a larger multi-parish, ecumenical, or interfaith collaborative is a viable option in many communities.

In this manual we have provided the tools we think will be useful in helping you create a culture of justice in your congregation. These include reflections on our faith tradition and examples from around the country of many of the ways Episcopalians are carrying out ministries of charity and justice. For those congregations that are well-advanced in carrying out economic justice ministries, we hope that you find affirmation and a useful framework for interpretation and evaluation. We also expect you to tell us how to improve this manual or to develop appropriate educational material to supplement it.

To those congregations just getting started in economic justice ministries, we have provided some “how-to” material in each chapter. We have provided further models in the appendixes. We have also provided a bibliography (Appendix L) and educational resources (Appendix I). For those who need additional “how-to” information, we recommend the following:

- **General:** Organizing for Economic Justice, by Robert Hall, especially Chapter 6, Getting Organized which we have included in Appendix C. This is the basic Episcopal Church resource. www.episcopalchurch.org/congregationalservices/ and Appendix D of this manual. The Lutheran reference is Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001 (www.fortress.press.com). The Roman Catholic equivalent is Credible Signs of Christ Alive: Case Studies from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, by

John P. Hogan, New York: Sheed and Ward, 2003 (available from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Washington, D.C.).

- **Advocacy:** See the web site of the Episcopal Public Policy Network. For Advocacy education resources (See Appendix D and visit www.enej.org.)
- **Community Organizing:** See the community organizing section of our bibliography (Appendix K) and the web sites of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), DART, Gamaliel Foundation and PICO (page 4-4).
- **Globalization:** In addition to reading the Rev. Cn. Richard Gillett's new book, *The New Globalization: Reclaiming the Lost Ground of Our Christian Social Tradition*, Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2005, we recommend use of resources provided by Episcopal Relief and Development and Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation.
- **Community Economic Development and Housing:** See the models listed in Chapter 4, Appendix J, and the web site of the National Committee for Community Economic Development (NCCED), www.ncced.org.

ENEJ Mentors

Creating a culture of justice for most parishes will involve a process of education or *conscientizacion*, if you prefer, and you may feel you need some guidance in getting this started. Senior members of our network are willing to share their experience and to help you identify appropriate materials and techniques. Some of them are listed here by topic.

Advocacy: Dianne Aid, The Rev. Canon Richard Gillett, Aina Gutierrez

Community Organization: The Ven. Michael Kendall, Archdeacon of New York, Michael Maloney, Michael Bryant, The Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss

Economic Justice Education: John Hooper, Sue Lloyd, Aina Gutierrez

Community Economic Development: Michael Bryant, The Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss

Credit Unions: Urla Abrigo, Vicky Parton

Community Development Loan Funds: Sue Lloyd, John Hooper

Socially Responsible Investing: Sue Lloyd

Worker Justice: Aina Gutierrez, Lucinda Keils

Wealth Building: Michael Bryant

Housing Development: The Rev. Earl Kooperkamp, The Ven. Michael Kendall

General: The Rev. Arther S. Lloyd, The Rev. Geoffrey Curtiss, The Ven. Michael Kendall.

Contact information is available for these resource people at

www.enej.org/steeringcommittee/. If you have questions regarding our mentors, please contact our staff, Michael Maloney at meamon@aol.com or 513-531-8799.

Provincial Liaisons

ENEJ also has a system of Provincial Liaisons. These individuals can advise you regarding ENEJ resources and other people active in your part of the country:

Province I: The Rev. Norman Faramelli

Province II: The Rev. Earl Kooperkamp

Province III: The Rev. Carl Rehling

Province IV: Eric Liles

Province V: Barbara Larsen

Province VI: – The Rev. Stephen Schaitberger

Province VII: – vacant

Province VIII: – Dianne Aid

Province IX: – The Rev. Canon Carmen Guerrero

Contact information is available at [www.enej.org/steering committee](http://www.enej.org/steeringcommittee)

Conferences

ENEJ is organizing a series of provincial conferences. Please contact our staff or your provincial liaison person to get on the e-mail list for these events. They will also be posted on our listserv and web site once dates have been established. Economic justice networks also are emerging in Provinces III and VIII.

An Invitation

In this manual, we have described the theological rationale for economic justice ministries, outlined the major approaches currently in use and some of the resources available to congregations. The depth and scope of this material makes clear that the Episcopal Church has made real progress since the adoption of “The Michigan Plan” by the 1988 General Convention. That plan became the “charter” for ENEJ and many of the initiatives we have described here. We will present an updated plan for economic justice work at the 2009 General Convention. We invite the reader to become part of this movement through engagement in local efforts and through becoming active in ENEJ. Please use the following pages to give us feedback on the manual and to begin or renew your membership in this network. Do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance in your local, diocesan, or provincial efforts.

Economic Justice Resources

Order Form

Economic Justice How-To Manual

___ printed copies @ \$25 =

\$_____ (English / Spanish) circle one

___ copies on CD @ \$10 =

\$_____ (includes Spanish)

Community Investing

Download free at www.enej.org

Economic Justice Education Units

A Christian Response to Economic Inequality

The Real Threat to Family Values

Why the Economy Isn't Working for Workers

The Global Economy

Making Sense of the Recession

The Church and Its Money

All can be downloaded without cost at www.enej.org

ENEJ Brochure

Please send ___ copies @ 1.50 ___ (color) =

\$_____

___ copies @ .00 ___ (b&w) =

\$ 0.00

for distribution to my parish or organization.

Total: \$_____

Please make checks payable to **ENEJ**.

Ship to:

Name:		
Parish/Organization:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:	Email (Optional):	

Mail to:

ENEJ

5829 Wyatt Avenue

Cincinnati, OH 45213

513.531.8799 / 513.531.3899 (fax)

meamon@aol.com

If you prefer to order on-line and be billed, write to Michael Maloney at meamon@aol.com.

Economic Justice How-To Manual Feedback Form

Name:		
Parish/Organization:		
Diocese:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:

I found the _____ section of the Economic Justice How-To Manual:

- Very useful
- Not very useful
- Needing improvement

What would you change?

What models would you add or delete?

Other comments

Mail to:

ENEJ
5829 Wyatt Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45213
513.531.8799 / 513.531.3899 (fax)
meamon@aol.com