

Inside...

The way of reconciliation,
p. 2

Reconciliation & the climate crisis,
p. 3

“A Day of Reconciliation,”
p. 4

Practicing reconciliation summit, p. 5

Verdict out on 2009 Legislature,
p. 6

SOAR Legal Services reunites families, p. 7

Development & fundraising updates, p. 8

Archbishop Tutu delivers prophetic message of hope & forgiveness

There are a handful of people in the world who can rightfully be called modern-day prophets. Portland was witness to one such individual on May 4, when Archbishop Desmond Tutu's presence filled the Chiles Center on the University of Portland campus for Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) 40th Collins Lecture, “The Transformative Power of Reconciliation in Society.”

With humor and honesty, Archbishop Tutu powerfully shared his belief in the power of forgiveness, as he recounted the years of apartheid in South Africa and the successful non-violent struggle to bring down the system. The sold-out crowd gave the Archbishop a standing ovation at the end of his lecture.

Many in the crowd were

students, including 350 young people given scholarships by the event's sponsors. As he was leaving the arena, a small group of middle school students yelled, “We love you Archbishop Tutu! You're our hero!”

Voices of Reconciliation concert

A multi-media concert, *Voices of Reconciliation*, preceded Archbishop Tutu's speech. Directed by local jazz musician and Portland State University music professor Darrell Grant, the concert featured more than 20 musicians and spoken-word artists from a variety of cultures and faith traditions.

Participating musician Sean Holmes later commented, “What an honor to be a part of such a diverse, world class event.”

Continued on page 5



Photo credit: Tom Hassler

Archbishop Desmond Tutu delivered the 40th Annual Collins Lecture on the evening of May 4 at the University of Portland Chiles Center.

Congregational Wellness Project: *Promoting children's health & combating child obesity*

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO) Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership (IFFP) received a two-year Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant to engage faith communities in promoting children's health and combating child obesity. EMO was one of 21 faith-based coalitions across the country to receive a grant under this new Foundation initiative.

The Congregational Wellness Project shares the IFFP goal of increasing access to healthy, just and sustainable foods, especially for the most vulnerable among us, and also supports regular physical activity and enjoyment of nature for spiritual sustenance

and general well-being.

The Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership will work with a network of citizens and religious institutions in Multnomah and Benton Counties, as well as Community Health Partnership and the Oregon Food Bank. The coalition will conduct wellness surveys within congregations, develop a model wellness policy to guide religious communities in making healthy changes, and support partners in advocating for wellness on a broader scale in the community. IFFP will place special emphasis on reaching child populations at greater risk of obesity and its

complications, primarily Latino and low-income individuals in north, northeast and outer southeast Portland and in Corvallis.

How serious is the obesity problem in Oregon—and why are some populations more severely impacted?

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Human Services, the number of overweight children in Oregon has increased by 63 percent since 2001 (survey of eleventh graders).

- In 2007, when looking at local eighth graders, 27 percent were overweight, with more than 42 percent of those children living below the poverty line and others close to it.

- Latinos are disproportionately impacted by obesity and the burden of related chronic disease.

- In Oregon, Latino adults have the highest incidence of obesity (30.9 percent) and overweight (38.6 percent), and they are five times more likely to die prematurely, often of obesity-related disease.

Continued on page 3

The way of reconciliation

Archbishop Desmond Tutu's recent visit to Oregon as the 40th Collins Lecturer made clear that reconciliation properly understood and creatively implemented is a transformative force in the world.



David Leslie

On the individual level, saying, "I am sorry," can help bring about changes to seemingly irreconcilable differences. As Jesus taught, "So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift then before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift." Untended broken relationships can easily fester and create an emotional wound that simply will not heal without a good dose of reconciliatory medicine.

On the community level, tending to the systemic wrongs that crush the human spirit are also part of the reconciliation process. This was true in South Africa, when a number of church leaders came before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to apologize for their complicity in supporting the apartheid system. This was true when the United Church of Canada apologized to the First Nations Peoples of Canada for the abuses and legacy of the church's Indian Residential Boarding Schools. And this was true when leaders in the Roman Catholic Church apologized for the sexual abuse that happened in the church and implemented major systemic changes to prevent such abuses from happening again.

While reconciliation has different meanings for different folks, it is generally understood as the mending of broken relationships. For the

church, the process of reconciliation is an important means through which we acknowledge and make amends for those times when our relationship with God or with one another is out of sort. It is also an important opportunity to bring more consistency or congruency between the stated principles of our faith with behaviors that often contradict those principles.

Today, there are several areas where we can make the reconciliation process visible. The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) is leading the call for a Commission of Inquiry to gather all the facts and make recommendations related to the use of torture by our government. NRCAT believes that by "understanding the causes, nature and scope of U.S.-sponsored torture," prevention and elimination of the use of torture, without "legal loopholes," is possible. Thus, "brokenness can be healed—both in individual lives and in the life of the nation. . . . redemption is possible . . . [and] the truth can set us on a path toward national healing and renewal." (www.nrcat.org) Clearly, this call is worthy of our support.

This year we celebrate and acknowledge Oregon's sesquicentennial—a great opportunity to lift up what is good in our state, as well as to think more deeply about the harm and marginalization that many people have experienced during the first 150 years of Oregon statehood.

There are a number of resources available to help us better understand our history and possibilities for the future, including the featured book of Oregon Reads 2009, *Stubborn Twig*, by Lauren Kessler—the story about Masuo Yasui and his family's experience in Hood River as Japanese immigrants who endured internment and disruption of life during World War II; *Standing Strong—The Tribal Nations of Western Oregon*, a

40-minute DVD focused on Oregon's tribal peoples that includes the periods of pre-contact, interaction with early settlers, tribal termination, and eventual restoration and modern day developments; and resources from the *Oregon 150* Web site (www.oregon150.org).

Congregations and faith communities can also host and visit with people and communities of different religious, sexual, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in order to find out how we are fairing and how we can be more respectfully connected to one another. Together, these acts help reconcile our rhetorical commitments to peace, love, unity and justice with our actions, ensuring an even brighter and possibility-laden future for all Oregonians in the days ahead.

Whether it is saying, "I am sorry," or initiating a systemic process of healing in one's family, church, business or organization, be assured that these acts of reconciliation do make a positive difference.

Whether it is saying, "I am sorry," or initiating a systemic process of healing in one's family, church, business or organization, be assured that these acts of reconciliation do make a positive difference.

Simply put, there are still too many individuals and communities who are disenfranchised or living in ways that are less than fully human, and we can help rectify this reality. For as Archbishop Desmond Tutu reminds us, "All of our humanity is dependent upon recognizing the humanity in others," and "forgiving is a second chance for a new beginning."

Bils fills ABCO leadership role



The Rev. Steve Bils, with wife Trudi.

The Rev. Steve Bils began serving as the new executive minister for the American Baptist Churches of Oregon (ABCO) in April, permanently filling the position after the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Wayne Brown last year.

Bils comes to the position after serving for six years as associate executive minister with the American Baptist Churches of Nebraska. His previous ministry experience includes college teaching and administration, parachurch ministry and two pastorates. Bils earned a master of arts in pastoral studies from Southeastern Bible College, bachelor of theology from Florida Bible College and bachelor of arts from Colorado Bible College. He was ordained in 1979.

Bils represented the American Baptist Churches on the board of Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska—an interfaith ecumenical council of over a dozen denominations similar to Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.

Bils values the rich diversity and commitment to working together in the American Baptist Churches. "This has been accomplished in large measure by an intentional strategy to emphasize our common values and mission and to hold them up as far more valuable than any divergent perspectives," he stated. "We want to define who we are by what we value together, not by that about which we disagree."

Save the date: October 13 for EMO's Annual Community Awards & Celebration Dinner

The event will be held at the Portland Hilton, with reception and silent auction before the awards and dinner program. As more information becomes available, it will be posted on our Web site at www.emoregon.org.

voice

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

Publisher:
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
David A. Leslie, *executive director*
Michelle Bush, *graphic designer, editor*

Telephone (503) 221-1054
Fax (503) 223-7007
www.emoregon.org

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Food Sovereignty for All: An Interfaith Summit

Overhauling the Food System with Faith-Based Initiatives

Saturday, Oct. 3, 2009

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

First United Methodist Church
in Corvallis, Oregon

- Join us for a tour of local demonstration sites and discussion on how faith communities can make a difference in our food system.
- Learn about community gardens, commercial kitchens, micro-enterprise incubation, buying clubs, wellness policies and more.
- We will visit the farmers' market to gain an understanding of electronic food stamp access and the "That's My Farmer" program.
- After the site visits, participants will explore the challenges and opportunities presented by faith-based initiatives in a moderated roundtable discussion.
- A locally-grown lunch prepared by graduates of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's cooking program will be included.



For more information, please visit www.emoregon.org.
Sponsored by Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's
Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership and Corvallis Partners.

Reconciliation & the climate crisis

Future generations, the poor and the earth need a place at the table & in our hearts

By Jenny Holmes, EMO Environmental Ministries director

Therefore choose life, so that you and your descendents may live. —Deuteronomy 30:19

More than ever before, the world needs extraordinary, longsighted spiritual and political leadership. Our traditions encourage us to take responsibility for caring for ourselves and for everything that is created and alive. This responsibility extends to water and air, oceans and soil, fire and earth. We must care for them in such a way that the eco-sphere is not exhausted for yet unborn future generations. ... Relatedness, responsibility and justice are key issues that inspire human beings. In a global community, our faith traditions must contribute to developing much needed new strategies, symbols and community practices toward healing the injuries human developments have caused to the earth and all its creatures.

—Uppsala Interfaith Climate Manifesto 2008

One of the greatest moral issues of our time is humankind's response to climate disruption—caused in large part by this generation's extravagant consumption of fossil fuels. The decisions made over the next few years by individuals, institutions and governments at all levels will determine the degree to which future generations and ecosystems will be able to thrive, or even survive. Deep ethical questions about our ways of living and our policies need to be asked and just solutions envisioned. *Are our faith traditions contributing to "healing injuries*

... to the earth," mentioned in the Uppsala Manifesto? Are we asking the right questions often and loudly enough?

Scientists tell us that we have already passed thresholds that they once predicted were further off. Urgent action is needed, but at the same time we must ensure that policies are just, fair and inclusive, especially of the voices of the marginalized. Our economic system encourages us to discount future generations in the interest of short-term gain. Some systems of political thought state our only ethical responsibilities are to the current generation. It is very difficult to act responsibly for future generations—even though religious traditions emphasize our relatedness to and responsibility for them.

Reconciliation is about restoring broken relationships and acknowledging—as well as making amends for—harm done. It is also the process of making apparently conflicting things consistent or compatible. Both senses of reconciliation apply to the climate crisis.

In the first sense, people in poorer areas of the world and future generations are disproportionately harmed by those who have excessively benefited from using fossil fuels. In March this year, the Ecumenical Advocacy Days called for the international recognition of a new category of refugee: the climate refugee. It also called for the United States, the largest historic contributor to climate change, to make room for these refugees as a matter of justice.

In the second sense, our economic system needs to be reconciled with ecology and justice. An economy that perpetuates gross inequities and impairs the ability of ecosystems to be self-renewing is not sustainable. Also in this sense, diverse groups need to work together to address the climate crisis.

These reconciliations will require a lot of our institutions and governments, but this is what we must do so that our descendents and all creation can live. We may then discover the grace of reconciling with our home planet. Rather than trying to push Earth's limits, we would instead push the edges of our human imagination, creativity and love. *What could be more essential?*

Interfaith Climate Vigil on June 28

To be held from 7 to 8 p.m., with reception to follow, at Tabor Heights United Methodist Church, 6161 SE Stark St., Portland. The vigil service will feature components from multiple faiths, cultures and generations, as well as worship through a variety of mediums including responsive prayer and special music for care of Creation by the Tabor Heights Choir. The vigil provides a time of reflection on our relationship with Creation and the moral imperative to act as the United States considers policy options to address climate disruption. Sponsored by EMO's Oregon Interfaith Power & Light (OIPL) in partnership with Tabor Heights United Methodist, local congregations and groups.

Congregational Wellness Project

Continued from page 1

Reasons for these disparities are varied and complicated, but unequal access to affordable, nutritious food, and lack of opportunities for physical activity (dearth of safe playgrounds, sidewalks or other recreational sites in some neighborhoods, for example) are among the top contributing factors. Obesity is, therefore, a social justice issue and one that requires not only early, preventative action before life-long habits set in, but perhaps even more importantly, an approach that changes families' environments to make healthier choices the easier choices whenever possible.

New Congregational Wellness Project staff

Marcela Arredondo joined the IFFP staff as the Corvallis project coordinator. Arredondo is a Corvallis native and has worked with the local Latino community as a health promoter for Benton County and an instructor of adult basic education. She also worked as a labor organizer in Chicago and spent time in South Korea teaching English. Arredondo received a bachelor of arts in Spanish from the University of Oregon and will soon enter Oregon State University's master of public health program.

Laura Raymond is the project coordinator in Portland. She has worked in a variety of nonprofit and volunteer positions, including designing programs to help children and families replace inactive time and less nutritious foods with healthier choices, teaching young Girl Scouts about nutrition and how to shop for and cook healthy foods, and helping families access higher quality food through the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program. She is an active volunteer in Portland Public Schools and at her congregation, where she chairs the children's religious education program.

Raymond has a bachelor of arts in Spanish and English from Portland State University and a



Photo credit: Liv Gifford

Getting children involved in community gardens promotes healthy eating and physical activity

master's in international health and development from George Washington University in Washington D.C.

How to get involved

As people of faith, we have the values, passion, influence and responsibility to make a significant contribution to children's wellness. As of May, the following congregations will participate in the project: Ainsworth United Church of Christ, St. Charles Catholic Church and St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church in Portland, and St. Mary's Catholic Church, Southside Community Church and Iglesia Cuadrangular in Corvallis. We hope your congregation will get involved in this project too. We are looking for one to two more congregations in north and northeast Portland, ideally where Latino families are served.

If you are interested in serving as a pilot congregation or if you have questions, please contact Laura in Portland at lraymond@emoregon.org, (503) 939-7507 or (503) 221-1054, ext. 216, or Marcela in Corvallis at marredondo@emoregon.org, (541) 908-4123 or (541) 757-1988, ext. 107.

Interest grows in congregation gardens

On Saturday, May 16, 26 participants from 13 congregations gathered at Peace Church of the Brethren in southeast Portland for a workshop about gardening on faith-based land, sponsored by EMO's Interfaith Food and Farms Partnership. Many of the participants were motivated by the desire to find new ways to help the growing number of people experiencing hunger.

The morning included a presentation by Leslie Pohl-Kosbau of Portland Community Gardens, as well as a panel discussion, networking and a tour of the brand new garden at Peace Church of the Brethren. Participants were inspired and encouraged by the stories of other congregations and organizations that have community gardens on their land.

If your congregation is interested in getting information on starting up a community garden or if you are interested in attending a community garden networking event this summer or fall, please contact Alison Warren at awarren@emoregon.org or (503) 221-1054, ext. 210.



A Day of Reconciliation



The *Voices of Reconciliation* concert preceded Archbishop Tutu's lecture. From left: Darrell Grant, piano; Sean Holmes, vocals; Linda Hornbuckle, vocals; Esperanza Spalding, bass; Marilyn Keller, vocals; Brian Blade, drums; Maureen Frary Kelly, vocals; and Patrick Lamb, saxophone.

Photo credit: Tom Hassler



During the concert, Mark Mathabane, author of *Kaffir Boy*, read from his essay "Our Common Humanity."

Photo credit: Tom Hassler



Archbishop Tutu gave an inspiring and animated lecture on the transformative power of reconciliation in society.

Photo credit: Tom Hassler

To ignore people of other faiths and ideologies in an increasingly plural society is to be willfully blind. ... We are severely impoverished if we do not encounter people of other faiths with reverence and respect for their belief and integrity. — Archbishop Tutu



During a moderated panel discussion, Archbishop Tutu answered questions from community representatives. From left: Tutu; the Rev. Dr. Lowell Greathouse, EMO president; Gulzar Ahmed, co-chair of the Interfaith Alliance of Greater Portland; Charlene McGee, African Women's Coalition, community leader and immigrant from Monrovia, Liberia; and Alicia Finney, student at Chemeketa Community College and member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.

Photo credit: Tom Hassler



Archbishop Tutu shared a light-hearted moment with the Rev. Dr. Lowell Greathouse during the panel discussion.

Photo credit: Tom Hassler

For true reconciliation is a deeply personal matter. It can happen only between persons who assert their own personhood and who acknowledge and respect that of others. — Archbishop Tutu

We can be human only together. — Archbishop Tutu

Biography of Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu

Desmond Mpilo Tutu was born in the small town of Klerksdrop, South Africa, in 1931. His childhood was characterized by many moves, as his parents tried to provide for their family in very difficult conditions. Tutu was also plagued by disease in his youth; he recovered from both polio and tuberculosis. It was his time in a state-run sanatorium recovering from tuberculosis that he began to seek a deeper spiritual life through his friendship with Fr. Trevor Huddleston, an Anglican priest.

Tutu followed his father's footsteps and became a teacher. His teaching career came to an end with the implementation of the Bantu Education Act, which downgraded the quality of education for black school children to prepare them for a life of menial labor. Tutu resigned from his post in protest, saying he would not take part in such a discriminatory system.

Despite reservations from both family and friends, Tutu decided to enter the priesthood in the Anglican Church. He later referred to this decision as "God grabbing him by the scruff of the neck."

After studying for five years in England, he, his wife Leah and their family returned to South Africa, a country embroiled in a battle against apartheid—a social and political policy of racial segregation and discrimination enforced by the white minority government.

In the ensuing years, violence and brutality wreaked havoc across South Africa, and Tutu became a courageous leader in the nonviolent effort to abolish apartheid. Tutu wrote, "The liberation of the black man is the other side of the coin of the liberation of the white man—so it is concerned with human liberation." These words would characterize his view of humanity and guide his leadership when Tutu became a Bishop and Archbishop in the Anglican Church.

His use of the African idiom *ubuntu*, "A person is a person through other people," became the central tenet for his later work in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, after apartheid was dismantled and the country was seeking healing in the 1990s.



Archbishop Tutu with Maribeth Collins of the Collins Foundation, the event's presenting sponsor.

Photo credit: Tom Hassler

Thank you to the sponsors of the 2009 Collins Lecture

The Collins Foundation, Legacy Health System, Oregon Public Broadcasting, Providence Health Services, Episcopal Diocese of Oregon, Nike Inc., Northwest Health Foundation, University of Portland, Augustana Lutheran Church, Christ Church Episcopal, Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, Disciples of Christ (Christian Church) in Oregon, DocuMart, Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, First Christian Church of Portland, First United Methodist Church of Portland, Tom Hassler/Hassler Studios, Lewis & Barbee Hodgkins, Irvington Capital LLC, Rustin & Gretchen Kimsey, Larson Legacy, Charles & Pamela Miller, *The Oregonian*, Portland Hilton and Executive Towers, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland, St. Luke Lutheran Church, St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church, Ron & Ivy Timpe, Margaret Troedson and United Methodist Churches of the Oregon-Idaho Conference.

“Practicing Reconciliation” at leadership summit



Photo credit: Lowen Berman

Leadership Summit panelists included from left: Terry Cross, executive director of the National Indian Child Welfare Association; Eric Gilman, Restorative Justice coordinator for the Clark County Juvenile Court; Imam Mamadou Toure, founder and president of the Institute of Islamic and Interfaith Studies and religious leader of Bilal Mosque in Beaverton; and Linda Isako Angst, assistant professor of Anthropology at Lewis & Clark College.

On the afternoon of May 4, preceding the Collins Lecture with Archbishop Tutu, over 200 people participated in *Practicing Reconciliation: A Leadership Summit* at the University of Portland.

The afternoon began with a keynote address by the Rev. Fred Morris, a United Methodist minister and former missionary in Recife, Brazil, during the 1970s. Morris had a close association with Roman Catholic Archbishop Câmara—the leading opponent of the Brazilian military, which had overthrown the democratically-elected government in 1964. As the result of this association, Morris was kidnapped by the Brazilian army in 1974 and spent 17 days in their torture chambers in Recife, before being expelled by presidential decree as a person “prejudicial to national interests.”

Decades later, the Amnesty Commission of the Brazilian government made monetary reparations to Morris and issued a formal request for forgiveness.

Morris’ recounting of his story and the theological foundations of forgiveness and reconciliation set the stage for a panel discussion that followed. Four panelists covered a broad spectrum of areas where reconciliation is taught

and practiced. Panelists included: Eric Gilman, Restorative Justice coordinator for the Clark County Juvenile Court; Terry Cross, executive director of the National Indian Child Welfare Association; Linda Isako Angst, assistant professor of Anthropology at Lewis and Clark College; and Imam Mamadou Toure, founder and president of the Institute of Islamic and Interfaith Studies and religious leader of Bilal Mosque in Beaverton.

One participant stated, “I really appreciated the theory and practical suggestions people presented on the panel.” Another noted the “outstanding insights from a variety of real life applications.”

Participants then attended a workshop of their choice to explore a particular area of interest in more depth. Eight workshops were offered: A Transformational Approach in the Criminal Justice System; The Healing Power of Forgiveness; Race, Culture and Reconciliation; Training to Be a Mediator; Religion as a Bridge to Reconciliation; Crossing the Economic Divide; Youth, Schools and Reconciliation; and Creating Healthy Families. A ritual led by the Rev. Peg Pfab of Southminster Presbyterian Church closed the afternoon event.

Forgiveness gives us the capacity to make a new start. ... And forgiveness is the grace by which you enable the other person to get up, and get up with dignity, to begin anew. ... In the act of forgiveness we are declaring our faith in the future of a relationship and in the capacity of the wrongdoer to change.

— Archbishop Tutu

Tutu delivers prophetic message

Continued from page 1

Several of Grant’s own songs were featured, including “I Am Music,” with vocalists Holmes, Marilyn Keller, Linda Hornbuckle and Maureen Frary Kelly, and “When I See the Water,” accompanied by Patrick Lamb on the saxophone.

Mark Mathabane, author of *Kaffir Boy*, read his essay titled “Our Common Humanity.” Other artists included the Al-Andalus Ensemble, Nisha Joshi and Kishan Patel, Michelle Fujii, Bobby Torres and Obo Addy on drums, Brian Blade, Chaz Palmer, Andrew Oliver, Devin Phillips, Esperanza Spalding, Bobby Torres, Isaac Trimble, the P’Nai Or Chant Group and Oregon Poet Laureate Lawson Inada reading an original poem written for Tutu.

Transformative power of reconciliation

As the music ended, EMO Executive Director David Leslie introduced the Collins Lecture and thanked the event sponsors (see list above). The Rev. Alcena Boozer, former EMO president and rector of St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church, gave the invocation and introduced the Archbishop.

As quickly became evident through his lecture, Tutu’s character is larger than life. He captivated the audience with his storytelling, his compassion and his humor. His self-deprecating manner and stories like that of a woman in San Francisco referring to him as “Archbishop Mandela” (“That was sort

of like ‘getting two for the price of one,’” the Archbishop commented), set a warm tone.

More seriously, Tutu recalled the days of apartheid and the violence and despair that led many to doubt God. He shared stories of remarkable forgiveness from that period of history and of the extraordinary benefits to the forgiver and to humanity that stemmed from those choices.

The Archbishop concluded by giving his heartfelt thanks to all of those in the world who supported divestment and the anti-apartheid efforts. “We asked for your help,” the Archbishop declared, “and you gave it, and now, we are free!” The audience of more than 4,100 rose in a standing ovation.

After the lecture, three community representatives asked the Archbishop a question, in a segment moderated by EMO’s board president, the Rev. Dr. Lowell Greathouse. Besides Greathouse, the questioners were Gulzar Ahmed, co-chair of the Interfaith Alliance of Greater Portland; Charlene McGee, African Women’s Coalition, community leader and native of Monrovia, Liberia; and Alicia Finney, a student at Chemeketa Community College and member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde.

Finney asked the final question, concerning the role of youth and their hope for the future. Archbishop Tutu exhorted the youth in the audience with, “You dream—you dream God’s dreams. You dream of a world where they beat their swords into plowshares, where war is no more. We can eradicate



Photo credit: Tom Hassler

Archbishop Tutu received an honorary doctorate in humane letters from E. William Beauchamp, CSC, president of the University of Portland.

poverty. We can cancel all of the debt. So dream. Don’t allow yourself to be infected by the cynicism of us oldies.”

The evening concluded with the presentation of an honorary doctorate in humane letters to Tutu from E. William Beauchamp, CSC, president of the University of Portland, followed by a rousing and memorable rendition of the St. Francis prayer and an amen chorus by the Archbishop himself.

If you were unable to attend the Collins Lecture, listen to Archbishop Tutu’s lecture at www.opb.org/radio.

Verdict still out on 2009 Session of the Oregon Legislature *Despite some early achievements, most big issues yet to be decided*

Early achievements

Back in February, religious activists throughout Oregon gathered at the state capitol for Interfaith Advocacy Day 2009, and called on the Legislature to act boldly to expand health care coverage for children and low-income adults, support funding for low-income housing programs, and take three key steps to reduce hunger in Oregon.

As we were gathering, the Legislature was already acting to pass one of our key legislative priorities—a Document Recording Fee to fund affordable housing programs. Passage of this bill, **HB 2436**, is an important achievement for the Oregon Housing Alliance—of which EMO is a member—since it will provide an ongoing dedicated source of funding for affordable housing programs in Oregon.

This victory for affordable housing has been overshadowed, however, by the deepening economic crisis and the state fiscal crisis that it has created. With unemployment now at 12 percent statewide and a projected budget gap of \$4.2 billion for the 2009-2011 budget cycle, the new funds generated by the document recording fee look increasingly likely to be largely offset in the near term by cuts to general fund support for affordable housing programs.

Other early achievements include passing legislation that makes it easier for laid-off workers to qualify for unemployment benefits. **SB 462**, which allows applicants to use an “alternative base period” to establish eligibility for benefits, was passed by both houses of the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Kulongoski.

However, as of the end of May, many key pieces of legislation are still undecided. Ecumenical

Ministries of Oregon (EMO), along with many of our religious allies, is hard at work to influence the state budget and pass several key bills. We review many of the issues we are working on (mentioned below), and once the session has concluded, a full report will be posted on the EMO Web site at www.emoregon.org.

Budget and revenue issues

Throughout the session, EMO has called on the Legislature to increase revenues, knowing that without new taxes, huge cuts will be required to fund education, health and human services, and public safety programs. With the May 18 announcement of the Ways and Means co-chairs’ budget, it looks increasingly likely that the Legislature will seek \$800 million in new general fund revenue. This will come from two sources. The first source is raising personal income taxes on high-income taxpayers. The second source is an increase in taxation of profitable corporations.

This is a step in the right direction, both for addressing the short-term fiscal crisis and for Oregon’s long-term tendency to under-fund critical state programs. But as the budget plan made clear, raising only \$800 million in new revenues would mean that over \$2 billion in cuts to critical programs would still have to be made.

The co-chairs of the Joint Ways and Means Committee have proposed cuts to many state programs. Among those programs that would be hard hit are in-home care for seniors, Employment Related Day Care (ERDC), TANF Self-sufficiency programs, and Oregon pre-kindergarten and Early Head Start programs. Higher education funding

would also be dramatically cut.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon supports several other revenue proposals, including a long overdue increase in the state beer tax. A beer tax increase would provide badly needed funding for addiction treatment programs and could allow a restoration of other proposed cuts as well. Without additional revenue beyond \$800 million, the state estimates that 1,700 state employees will lose jobs and an additional 6,000 in-home caregivers will be laid off, further compounding Oregon’s unemployment situation.

Health reform

One of our highest priorities this session is health reform, which hinges on the passage of two key bills. The first is **HB 2116**, which would increase taxes on hospitals and health insurers in order to provide health care coverage for 80,000 uninsured Oregon children and another 35,000 low-income adults.

The second bill is **HB 2009**, which enacts many of the health reform recommendations of the Oregon Health Fund Board, including the establishment of a new Oregon Health Authority. The Health Authority would be instructed to set up a health insurance exchange and develop a plan to guarantee affordable health coverage to all Oregonians by 2015. As of this writing, supporters of both bills appear to have negotiated an agreement with the hospital association and health insurers that will probably assure passage of both bills.

Continued on page 7

EMO launches “Interfaith Health Justice Campaign”

The United States is the only developed nation that does not guarantee health coverage for all of its citizens. As a result, 46 million Americans lack health insurance and another 25 million are underinsured. One in every six Oregonians is uninsured. In addition, health care costs are rising rapidly, affecting those who have insurance with rising premiums, deductibles and co-pays, and increasingly burdening both businesses and government with runaway health care costs.

This is not an abstract problem. People without insurance are more likely to go without preventative care, delay or forgo necessary medical care, and even to die prematurely. Those who receive care often face the burden of enormous medical costs. Half of all U.S. bankruptcies are caused by illness.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) has been a strong advocate for comprehensive health reform, believing that our society has a responsibility to provide care for each of its members on the basis of their human dignity, not their economic status. These efforts are now being accelerated in the formation of the Interfaith Health Justice Campaign, funded in part by a grant from the Northwest Health Foundation. The goal of the campaign is to empower faith groups across Oregon to advocate for justice in our health care system.

“It’s an exciting time to be involved with health care reform,” remarked EMO Executive Director David Leslie. “Reform efforts are taking root at the state and national levels, and the continued voice of our faith communities will be vital in pursuing reform that really meets the needs of all Oregonians.”

The campaign will offer congregations and

individuals a number of resources and opportunities to participate in health reform advocacy. Forums held in congregations across the state will pull together policy experts, health providers and faith leaders to educate the faith community about the complex but morally critical issue of health care reform. Web and written resources will focus on educating advocates on the issue and linking them with the best research and advocacy efforts in the state and country. Our partner organizations, the Archimedes Movement and Oregon Action, will lend their expertise in the areas of health care policy, advocacy training and organizing. Quarterly statewide conference calls and e-mail action alerts will provide important policy updates and an opportunity to coordinate faith-based efforts on health care reform.

Mark Mathis, the campaign’s organizer, said, “This campaign will help people of faith in Oregon stand together in their affirmation of human dignity and use their collective voice to help create a health care system that reflects the sacredness of each life.”

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s efforts are also part of a broad and growing national movement of faith communities that are connecting their faith values with the health care crisis. Faithful Reform in Healthcare is a nationwide organization that has coordinated and strengthened this movement by providing faith-based resources and opportunities for action. The Rev. Linda Walling, the organization’s director, said, “Oregonians have been leaders in health reform in our country, and I am very excited about the growing efforts of the faith community and the formation of the Oregon Interfaith Health Justice Campaign.”

Faithful Reform in Healthcare is coordinating a national Interfaith Week of Prayer and Witness for Health Care for All from June 19 to 26, with the main event at Washington D.C.’s Freedom Plaza on June 24.

Here in Oregon, EMO is encouraging Oregonians to add their voice to this national event by “Sounding the Alarm for Health Care.” During the weekend of June 19 to 21, congregations across the state will ring a bell, blow a horn or shofar, or create another sound six times, to symbolize the 600,000 plus Oregonians without health insurance. This simple act will be accompanied by a prayer and the opportunity for each congregant to write a note to their members of Congress. To receive a free event packet or for more information, contact Mark Mathis at (503) 221-1054, ext. 213, or mmathis@emoregon.org.

The continuing work of the Interfaith Health Justice Campaign will be to build a long-term interfaith network of religious advocates for health care for all. While the challenges are immense, the collective, sustained voice of Oregon’s faith communities has the potential and the opportunity to help create a health care future that includes everyone and works well for all of us.



Mark Mathis, a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, coordinates EMO’s Interfaith Health Justice Campaign.

Photo credit: Michelle Bush

SOAR Immigration legal services: *Reconciliation reflected in efforts to reunite families*

One key theme of reconciliation is to bring people together to unify and unite. Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR) legal staff work to reunite husbands, wives and children across the miles and years—families who have been separated by war, poverty and violence.

Maung and his wife Htay are one of those families. Both were born in Burma. They married in 1967 in Rangoon and raised four children. Maung worked at Rangoon General Hospital, and Htay worked as a teacher.

In 1998, the entire hospital staff, including Maung, rose up against the Burmese government, who threatened to seize control of the hospital. Interrogated by government security forces, Maung fled Burma for Thailand in 1994, leaving Htay behind. From then on, Maung and Htay had almost no contact. It was too dangerous, as the Burmese government monitored letters and phone calls. When he could, Maung sent money home through a trusted friend and left brief phone messages for Htay with his mother.

Eventually, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) processed Maung as a refugee, and in 2005 he came to the United States. Soon after arriving, SOAR helped

Maung file papers to bring Htay to the United States. The U.S. embassy in Rangoon scrutinized the application, and three years passed before Htay's case was finally approved—thanks to repeated advocacy efforts by SOAR's legal staff.

In 2008, after 14 years apart, Htay, now aged 64, and Maung, now aged 61, reunited in Portland. This November, they will celebrate their 42nd wedding anniversary.

The legal team at SOAR assists refugees—like Maung and Htay, who settled in Portland and its surrounding area—from all over the world. In the month of January alone, SOAR helped clients from Ethiopia, Liberia, Cuba, Somalia, Iran, Sudan, Burma, Eritrea, Ukraine, Russia, the Gambia, Uzbekistan and Rwanda.

Our services put families on the path to U.S. citizenship by assisting with a wide variety of immigration applications. In 2008, SOAR filed 165 applications for permanent residency, 103 applications for work permits and 60 applications for U.S. citizenship. SOAR also filed 40 petitions to reunite family members. Staff fluency in Spanish and Russian helps clients feel welcomed and



Photo credit: Liz Stuart

SOAR Immigration staff helps reunite families. From left: Olivia Horgan, SOAR Immigration program manager; Maung Maung; Htay Aung; and Yin Nwe Liu, SOAR case manager.

understood in their native language.

This summer, SOAR's legal team is thrilled to have two law student interns: Megan Johnson from Willamette Law School and Phuntsok "Jimmy" Namgyal from Lewis and Clark College. The students will provide critical support to SOAR's bustling office.

For more information about SOAR's legal work, please contact Olivia Horgan, program manager, at ohorgan@emoregon.org or (503) 284-3002.

Verdict out on Oregon Legislature

Continued from page 6

Strengthening families and fighting poverty

The Oregon Legislature has before it several proposals that would increase the economic stability of working families in Oregon and prevent a rise in childhood poverty. EMO supports the passage of **SB 966**, which would establish a Family Leave Insurance program to enable workers to take time off under Oregon's Family Leave law to care for a new infant or sick child or parent.

The Legislature also has an opportunity to protect families from hasty home foreclosures by passing **SB 628**, which requires mandatory mediation before a foreclosure sale can proceed, and it provides for notice and procedures for conducting mediation. This bill is currently in the Rules Committee.

Reducing hunger

After several years of progress, Oregon's hunger rates are rising again. EMO supports legislation to increase the state allocation to the Oregon Food Bank for emergency food services from the current \$2 million to at least \$3 million for the next biennium. We are also actively opposing a proposed cut of \$200,000 from the farmer's market coupon program for women, infants, children and seniors.

Another bill we support, **SB 695**, would increase access to free school breakfast programs for more low-income children, so that children whose families make up to 185 percent of the federal poverty line do not have to pay for school breakfasts. This bill is in the Ways and Means Committee awaiting further action.

Human and civil rights and religious freedom

Among the bills in this category that EMO supports is **HB 2599**, which establishes stronger school anti-bullying policies. This legislation has passed successfully through the House and now awaits a vote by the full Senate.

EMO also supports **SB 786**, a workplace religious freedom act carried by House Speaker Dave Hunt. If enacted, this bill would more

"Dining Out for Life" raises money, awareness for HIV/AIDS services

On April 30, 16 restaurants participated in the first annual "Dining Out for Life," benefiting the EMO's HIV Day Center and OHSU's Partnership Project.



Both agencies provide vital services for people living with HIV/AIDS. The participating restaurants donated 30 percent of their proceeds that night to both programs, totaling nearly \$7,600. Diners also had the opportunity to give personal donations that night, which raised an additional \$2,400.

A big thank you to the following participating restaurants: Bridges Soup and Sandwich, Dingo's, Dirty Duck Tavern, Echo, Fish Grotto Seafood Restaurant, Gusto Bistro and Marketplace, Il Piatto, Joq's, Muddy Waters Coffeehouse, ¿Por Qué No?, Rose & Thistle, Scandals, Starkey's, Stickers Asian Café, SubRosa and West Café.

strongly encourage employers to accommodate the religious holidays and observances and the religious attire of Oregon's religious minorities than does the current law.

During the remaining few weeks of the Legislative Session, EMO will send out e-mail action alerts to ask members of the faith community to phone or write their legislators.

If you would like to be on the EMO Public Policy Advocacy list to receive timely updates and action alerts, just send an e-mail message with your name, full mailing address and e-mail address to Kevin Finney at kfinney@emoregon.org.

EMO Ministries by the numbers

HIV Services During the first quarter of 2009, the Day Center provided 1,537 supportive counseling encounters, while the Daily Bread Express delivered 3,461 meals to homebound individuals.

Northeast Emergency Food Program at Luther Memorial During the first quarter of the year, the number of people served increased approximately 25 percent from the same period last year, with 2,667 families (representing 7,788 individuals) at NEFP's Luther Memorial and 83 families (representing 260 individuals) at the Genesis Satellite.

Portland International Community School On the evening of May 27, a graduation ceremony was held for six students. The graduates were immigrants from Somalia and Mexico. One of the Somali students arrived directly from a refugee camp and completed their studies in just two years at the school.

Russian Oregon Social Services Served 210 clients with direct services and over 840 people with outreach during the first quarter, including 20 clients who attended ESL classes and 75 domestic violence/sexual assault clients.

Shared Housing Provided over 300 months of housing for 133 clients during the first quarter of the year.

Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees During the first quarter of 2009, 67 refugees were resettled, coming from the former Soviet Union, Cuba, Burma, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Cameroon, Guatemala, Eritrea, Vietnam and Tibet. The Immigration legal team performed 150 consultation walk-in appointments and assisted 68 clients enrolled in the Cuban-Haitian Assistance Program.

Honor and memorial gifts

December 2008 through April 2009

Gifts in Honor

In honor of those who work for peace and social justice

Peter P. Post

In honor of Kristin E. Baack, and Bernie Deazley

Eric J. Baack

In honor of Virginia W. Cain

Leonard D. Cain

In honor of Martin & Norene Goplen's 50th wedding anniversary

Richard C. North

In honor of Jan Elfers

Wayne Musgrove

In honor of Robert Freedman, Dan Hoffman, Stefan Karakashian, Todd Karakashian, Menalcus Lankford, David Oates, Charlotte Wagenberg, James Waldroop and Gerry Wallman

Stephen J. Karakashian

In honor of David G. Hathaway

Janice L. Morgan

In honor of Russell & Heidi Howard, and Stephen & Sandra Jensen

Elizabeth Wetherell & Joshua Shaklee

In honor of the birthday of Susan Shearer

Rosemary J. Dodds

In honor of Jane R. Tatreau

Norine R. Reres, Douglas K. Wilson

In honor of Mark Williams

J.R. Porter

In honor of Gene Yarnell

Ellen M. Yarnell

Gifts in Memory

In memory of R. L. Carlson

Celia Carlson

In memory of John Casas

Raymond L. Barnes

In memory of Mildred E. Douthwaite

Helen A. Smith

In memory of David E. Druse

Jack L. Hilyard

In memory of Anne N. Duvall

Katherine J. Harris

In memory of Bruce K. Nichols

Esther M. Nichols

In memory of Richard Perkins

John R. Perkins

In memory of Jackelyn E. Sandmeyer

John C. Sandmeyer

In memory of Edwin L. Sorensen

Eileen A. Sorenson

In memory of Esther Zacher

Jane H. Wilkins



EMO celebrates recent grants & gifts

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's Board of Directors and staff extend their appreciation to those who have supported EMO's ministries. The following is a partial list of foundation and community support received by EMO since the Winter 2009 issue of the *Voice*.

Donor (Fund)	Program
Alpine Mortgage	HIV Services
Augustana Lutheran Church	NE Emergency Food Program, 2009 Collins Lecture
The Black United Fund of Oregon	NE Emergency Food Program
Bloomfield Family Foundation	Portland International Community School
Jane T. Bryson	Annual Fund
Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ	2009 Collins Lecture
Central Lutheran Church	NE Emergency Food Program
Christ Church Episcopal Parish	2009 Collins Lecture
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon	2009 Collins Lecture
Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy	Oregon Interfaith Power & Light
The Collins Foundation	Annual Fund
Community Health Partnership	HIV Services
Community of Christ, Portland	Annual Fund
Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde	2009 Collins Lecture
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation	2009 Collins Lecture
Construction Transformations, Inc.	Portland International Community School
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon	2009 Collins Lecture
Episcopal Diocese of Oregon	2009 Collins Lecture
Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS	HIV Services
Equity Foundation	HIV Services
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	2009 Collins Lecture
First Christian Church, Portland	2009 Collins Lecture
First Presbyterian Church, Portland	Annual Fund
First United Methodist Church, Portland	Annual Fund, NE Emergency Food Program, 2009 Collins Lecture
Fremont United Methodist Church	NE Emergency Food Program
George Flesuras Insurance Agency	NE Emergency Food Program
Harris Family Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program
Honzel Family Foundation	Annual Fund
Imperial Sovereign Rose Court of Oregon	HIV Services
Irvington Capital LLC	2009 Collins Lecture
The Jackson Foundation	Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership
James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation	Portland International Community School
Larson Legacy	2009 Collins Lecture
Legacy Health System	2009 Collins Lecture
MAC AIDS Fund	HIV Services
Moreland Presbyterian Church	Annual Fund
NIKE Incorporated	2009 Collins Lecture
Northwest Health Foundation	2009 Collins Lecture, Public Policy Advocacy
OCF Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation	Annual Fund, Portland International Community School
Oregon Community Foundation	Annual Fund, NE Emergency Food Program
Oregon Jewish Community Foundation	Theological Education & Dialogue
Providence Health & Services	2009 Collins Lecture, Russian Oregon Social Services
The Regeneration Project	Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Interfaith Network for Earth Concerns
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon	Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership, 2009 Collins Lecture
St. Luke Lutheran Church	2009 Collins Lecture, NE Emergency Food Program
St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church	NE Emergency Food Program
St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church	2009 Collins Lecture
Schwab Fund for Charitable Giving	NE Emergency Food Program
Susan G. Komen for the Cure	Russian Oregon Social Services
United Methodist Church Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference	2009 Collins Lecture
Wyss Foundation	NE Emergency Food Program
Trust Management Services, LLC	Portland International Community School
Westminster Presbyterian Church	NE Emergency Food Program

Help EMO reach the goal of raising \$70,000 for the Collins Foundation challenge grant.

Double your gift today!

Our profound thanks to the Collins Foundation for leading the way once again in our annual fund drive with a challenge grant. All gifts to EMO will be matched 100 percent by the Collins Foundation.

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Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Amount: \$2,500 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50

Other \$ _____

Please send your gift to:

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, 0245 SW Bancroft St., Suite B, Portland, OR 97239. You may also make a credit card donation over the phone by calling EMO at (503) 221-1054 or make a secure on-line credit card donation at www.emoregon.org.