

*Our mission is to be a catalyst: To raise consciousness, to educate, to challenge and lead the local community to action in the prophetic stance and mandate of Catholic Social Teaching.*

## Unfair and Unjust Treatment of Local Shepherders

By Tom Acker

Member of the Board of Directors GVPJ and a volunteer with the Shepherd Project. (August 15, 2011)

**#298: “Institutions in host countries must keep careful watch to prevent the spread of the temptation to exploit foreign laborers, denying them the same rights enjoyed by nationals, rights that are to be guaranteed to all without discrimination.”**

(p.130 Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church-United States Council of Catholic Bishops, 2005).

In April of 2010 in this newsletter, I wrote a description of the living conditions of the shepherders that our livestock industry is dependent upon here in the western U.S. Like much of the agricultural sector in our economy, there are no U.S. workers responsible for the herding of sheep in Colorado or Utah, as far as I can see. Many herders are brought to the U.S. from Peru, Chile and Mexico among other countries by the Western Range Association (Salt Lake City, UT) which facilitates the paperwork for its member ranches. Others work illegally.

From first hand interviews I have culled the following information with some thirty individual workers over the last year. The following are just a few of the abuses we have heard about.

- One worker had his skull fractured by a herd of steers while enclosing them in a corral. He has been unable to make a follow-up doctor’s appointment because the rancher refuses to provide him transportation to the clinic. While he was supposed to be recovering, his boss required him to travel up into the mountains to attend to some cattle.

- A shepherd’s horse fell on him causing him internal injuries, and breaking his shoulder and cracking his pelvis. He qualified for 100% temporary disability. Although a surgeon prescribed an operation so that he might regain 100 % use of his body, he has not had his operation because the rancher he works for has him running 1200 head of sheep alone in the national forest. He is in great pain and remains partially disabled. He has not received a medical release to return to work yet.

- One of the most disturbing cases was of a Mexican who had worked for a rancher in the Grand Valley. The herder entered our country 23 years ago

and has returned to Mexico only one time since then. He lives a veritable prisoner. The rancher pays him with a check, which he then signs over to the rancher. The rancher then makes “deductions”. His salary is \$5000 yearly. After deductions for clothing and food, he makes \$1000 less.

- “Totalization”: Retirement is an issue which worries many U.S. citizens. Imagine if your professional life occurred in a foreign country, but you did not qualify for their retirement. Many H2A workers, field workers and shepherders, have never paid into a retirement account in their country of origin nor here.

The treaties necessary for workers to pay into these funds are international and require a congressional vote. The Totalization Agreement with Mexico never made it out of our congress under Bush though it was introduced in 2004. Chile has such an agreement with the U.S., though few if any workers are aware of it. Peru has none.

Though Mexico and Peru both signed “Free Trade Agreements “with the U.S., the workers themselves do not benefit from these commercial treaties.

Justice requires that a Totalization Agreement be signed be-

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tween the U.S. and all the countries whose workers labor in our country.

These are a few of the cases we have come across this year. The unaccountability of the ranching industry and the lack of regulations overseeing the H2A visa program permit many such abuses. We do not believe that all ranchers are guilty of ill-treatment, but no other industry allows so much reliance upon one's boss for everything from food to housing to pay with almost no government oversight.

We all eat the products that they produce. We should also demand that the workers that produce them are treated fairly.

**GVPJ is looking for a Treasurer and a Recording Secretary to serve on the Board of Directors. If you have a few hours to give on a Monday night once a month, please call Julie at 243-0136.**

## 23/16/0...

By Sherry Cole

I closed my article in the spring Peace & Justice newsletter with statistics that show the Emergency Shelter "Overflow" Program (ESP) has made a huge difference in the lives of the men we serve. 23 people died due to exposure to the elements that first winter that ESP operated in our community. The second winter, the number dropped to 16. Last winter, no one died cold and alone on our streets because they had nowhere to go.

HomewardBound of The Grand Valley, our partner in this pro-

gram, has not turned anyone away for lack of room during the winter because this program exists. We are a proud partner with them in preserving the dignity of life for these single men. Some of the guests we serve, have told our volunteers that we are the difference between life and death for them.

With a greater focus in the media now on homelessness issues, some of you may be wondering how our advocacy efforts in the area of homelessness are in direct correlation with Catholic Social Teaching. The members of our Way Home Committee created ESP because it was unacceptable for people to die alone in the cold on the streets of the community that we and they call home.

The following summary of principle is the basis for this heartfelt labor of love:

### **"The Life and Dignity of the Human Person**

In the Catholic social vision, the human person is central, the clearest reflection of God among us. Each person possesses a basic dignity that comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment, not from race or gender, age or economic status.

The test of every institution or policy is whether it enhances or threatens human life and dignity. A consistent ethic of life should guide our lives and actions, encompassing all stages of human life from conception to natural death, as well as creation itself."

*From Catholic Social Teaching: A Brief Summary of Principles Document. Prepared by the Diocese of Pueblo, Office of Social Justice.*

I am so pleased to say that the 2011-2012 ESP Schedule is filled with host sites and volunteers dedicated to a diverse number of beliefs and backgrounds, but who are in agreement about preserving the dignity of life for these men.

We take the time here to say thank you to all our partners in the 2011-2012 Emergency Shelter "Overflow" Program. We also salute the members of The Way Home Committee, who stood in their faith and resoundingly practiced it by standing on principle---always a firm foundation from which to do good works.

2011-2012 ESP Partners:

HomewardBound of The Grand Valley, St. Joseph Catholic Church, Fellowship Church, First Presbyterian Church, New Life Church, The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of The Grand Valley, The Center for Independence, Western Equality, Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Crossroads United Methodist Church, Redlands United Methodist Church, American Lutheran Church, Community of Christ, Northeast Christian Church, First Congregational Church, Koinonia, Living Stone, River of Life Alliance Church, The Global Heart, Ohr Shalom, a number of volunteers from the general public and our crew of morning van drivers.

You are all blessed and a blessing.

## John Abraham Update

By Karen Sjoberg

Life has never been easy for our Sudanese friend, John Abraham. Beginning with his escape from the Janjaweed militia as a boy, John has undergone one trial after another, emerging always with grace and resolve. Thankfully, he has returned to Denver from his latest trip to the village of his family near Juba, Sudan, and is living with friends.



As of this writing, he has found a good job working as an airport shuttle driver for Enterprise. He always proves to be an exemplary employee, and especially enjoys driving.

John's hope is that he may earn enough money in Denver to allow him to return to his friends in Grand Junction. Here he can live, work, and eventually bring over his wife and son to join him;

they are expecting a second child very soon.

Thank you to those who have been offering your thoughts and prayers for John. Life has presented him with difficult choices and challenges. The grace is that he remains level-headed through most of it and has the fortitude to begin again, and again. His persistence and fidelity give us inspiration.

**Keep an eye out for the launch of GVPJ's new Website in November!**

## Update on Uranium Development Issues in Our Region...

By Janet Johnson

Member of the Board of Directors GVPJ

The application process for the proposed Pinon Ridge Uranium Mill continues to move through the Colorado Dept. of Health and Environment and other agencies. Last February, Sheep Mountain Alliance in Telluride filed a lawsuit against the CDPHE in Denver District Court asking that the State license for the Pinon Ridge Uranium Mill be revoked because there has been no enforcement of state and federal laws that guarantee a fair public review process of all aspects of the application. A Denver District Court Judge has rejected Energy Fuels and CDPHE's efforts to dismiss the lawsuit.

A potentially positive development is that the Department of Energy [DOE] has begun a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for its uranium leasing program in Western Colorado, which would fulfill one of

the public review requirements. An Environmental Impact Statement [EIS] is prepared when an agency's proposed actions may have significant impacts on the environment.

The Department of Energy has 31 uranium leases on 25,000 acres of land in Mesa, Montrose and San Miguel counties - these DOE leases are for defense only. There are many more privately held mines and leases in this area and the Uravan mineral belt is already home to hundreds of abandoned mines, unreclaimed radioactive waste sites and unprocessed uranium ore piles that pose threats to air and water supplies along the Delores and San Miguel Rivers. Energy Fuels of Canada has just borrowed \$11.5 million dollars to acquire more uranium mines not far from the Paradox Valley. Most all of the public and private mine sites are out of compliance with mining regulations for reopening to supply local ores to the proposed mill.

An Environmental Impact Study to evaluate the impacts of renewed uranium development is critical before we would again open up the San Miguel and Delores River watersheds to a resurgence of uranium mining and widespread impacts to human health, water, air quality, wildlife habitat, boom and bust economies, regional roads and rural communities. The Dept. of Energy held a series of public meetings in early August to hear public input as to how this assessment should be conducted and suggestions for proposals to mo-

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ve forward.

Grand Valley Peace and Justice fully supports the review, which will be a multi-year process and we requested that during the next series of public meetings a hearing be held in Grand Junction. We would like to first ask that we put people to work reclaiming mine sites, waste sites and abandoned ores. We would also request that all the scientific and socioeconomic analysis be considered by the DOE and all agencies involved. We would also ask that they utilize all the information as the cumulative effect that it is.

Our great desire would be to see that this area be used in creating renewable energy sites and to keep sustainable jobs, economies and environments protected. The teachings of our faith require us to use our spiritual and cultural resources to consider the impacts of our decisions on our human heritage!

*\*if you have questions about the uranium industry impacts or other environmental issues as social justice issues please feel free to call the GVPJ office.*

## We Salute The Good Samaritan Free Medical Clinic!

By Sherry Cole

Thank you to the many volunteers who donated their time and expertise in providing free basic medical care to 60 people at the first Good Samaritan Free Medical Clinic on Saturday, August 27<sup>th</sup> at Grand Valley Catho-

lic Outreach.

The Clinic is a project long in the making by The Downtown Vineyard Church. With the support of our local GJPD Homeless Outreach Team (HOT), Homeward-Bound of The Grand Valley and a number of other agencies and volunteers, including mental health providers, the Clinic is well on its way to providing monthly services to the impoverished in our community.

Grand Valley Peace & Justice is pleased to help organize transportation for those attending the clinics. In doing so, we salute Rhoda Cain with Solidarity Not Charity and Swan Johnson with American Lutheran Church for the use of their organizations' vans and their loving service as drivers for the first clinic, which served our local homeless.

If you would like to volunteer for a future clinic or help with donations towards the Clinic's Wish List, please contact Dr. Lloyd Davis at (970) 270-9713. Volunteer drivers, please contact the GVPJ office and ask for Sherry.



### Good Samaritan Free Medical Clinic Wish List

- Monetary Donations and Gas Gift Cards, as well as.....
- Diapers, Baby Food, Formula
- Gloves, Masks, Gauze, Wound Cleanser, Tape
- Hand Sanitizer, Feminine Hygiene Products, UA Strips

- Blood Glucose Machines/Strips/Lancets, Diabetic Supplies (needles, insulin)
- Blood Pressure Cuffs, Thermometers/Covers, Steri Strips
- Ortho Supplies (splints, boots, braces, etc.)
- Crutches, Glasses, Syringes, Medications (any)
- Sharps Container, Alcohol Swabs, Iodine, Basins, Sutures
- ABD Pads, Sterile H2O, Sterile Lac Supplies
- Use of a building, trailer, van, or other vehicle in which to store supplies

### Spotlight: Social Justice and the Church

“On Sept .1st, the Italian Church will celebrate its first ever Day for the Protection of Creation, God’s great gift to us that has been exposed to serious risks by choices and lifestyles that can seriously degrade it. Environmental degradation makes the life of the poor intolerable. In dialogue with Christians of different denominations, we need to commit ourselves to caring for creation, without squandering our resources, but instead sharing in them in a collaborative way.”

Pope Benedict XVI, remarks after Angelus address (August 27, 2006)

*Submitted in honor of  
St. Francis of Assisi Day  
October 4, 2011*

*St. Francis is the Patron Saint of  
Animals and the Environment*

**CROP HUNGER WALK**  
**SATURDAY, SEPT 24th**  
**1:00PM**

The Grand Valley Interfaith Network (GVIN) is hosting the CROP Hunger Walk on Saturday, September 24th with registration beginning at 1:00pm at the beautiful trail in **The Albertsons Shopping Center in The Redlands**. The formal start of the Walk is at 1:30pm.

In cooperation with international sponsor Church World Service and GVIN's faith-based members, including Grand Valley Peace and Justice, the walk raises monies to alleviate hunger around the world and in our own community. This year, local organizations benefiting from the CROP Hunger Walk include Grand Valley Catholic Outreach, Agape Food Basket, The Community Food Bank and Child and Migrant Services.

GVIN and Grand Valley Peace & Justice invite you to be spiritual warriors and walk the walk of compassion in this year's CROP Hunger Walk whether you actually walk the trail on September 24th or "walk online". To make an online donation, go to [www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org) and click on Crop Hunger Walk. Then, just click on Find a Walk, click on the State of Colorado and follow the instructions from there!

To sign up to walk or make a donation, please contact your parish walk chairperson or walk online with the Grand Valley Peace & Justice team. For more information about the GVPJ Team, please call (970) 243-0136.

***"Hunger.***  
**It feels the same in**  
**any language..."**

*A starving Somali child affected by the drought in East Africa. (Farah Abdi Warsameh/AP, Sept 5, 2011)*



**The Republic of South Sudan: Birth of a Nation**

By Julie Mamo

In 2005, the region of Sudan known today as the Republic of South Sudan, began the arduous process of separating from the government in the North, and becoming a sovereign nation of its own.

On July 9th, 2011, South Sudan was officially recognized by the United Nations as an independent state and was granted membership into the UN on July 14th, becoming the 193rd nation to join the UN.

The new Federal, Presidential, Democratic, Republic government is stationed in Juba (the nation's capital), includes ten provinces, and encompasses some 200 ethnic groups. The new president of South Sudan is Salva Kiir Mayardit, a former commander in the liberation army.

Both North and South Sudan have long traditions of Christianity going back more than 1500 years. Foreign conquests have lead to a large Muslim population, while indigenous/animist religions are also practiced.

While Islam is the official state religion in the North, there is evidence South Sudanese leaders are planning to keep state and religion separate. Catholic Relief Services has been active in South Sudan since 1972 providing aid and resettling displaced persons. Because of the continued efforts *(continued on the next page)*

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of CRS and the strong leadership of local Sudanese Priests, the Catholic presence has become an important component in the quest for peace in the South. Recently, a Catholic University opened in the capital, Juba.

Leading up to the separation of South Sudan from the Khartoum government, Sudanese Catholic Priests met with President Obama and former President George W. Bush to prompt US support for the division. In response, the US government has committed to a separate southern state and may even get involved in the peace process.



The flag of the Republic of South Sudan. Top to Bottom: black, red, green with intermittent white stripes. The triangle is blue and the star is yellow.

South Sudan has a long road ahead of it. South Sudan currently shares revenues from oil fields located in the South with the government in the North. While 80% of all Sudanese oil comes from fields in the South, the currently split is 50/50.

Though a referendum in South Sudan indicated 98% of those that voted were in favor of separation, numerous groups in the South are against rule by the new government, hence civil war still looms in the region. The new government is currently at war with at least seven armed

groups in nine of its ten states. The CIA has even indicated the likelihood of more mass killings or genocide happening in South Sudan in years to come. Though it faces great challenges, there is great hope for this young nation.

## The Injustice of Contribution without Compensation

Submitted by Annie Murphy  
Member of the Board of Directors GVPJ

When university lets out for summer break, the law firm with which I practice usually receives at least one call or letter from a student offering their services as an unpaid intern. In the context of the current recession, taking a student up on his or her offer is alluring. However, it is a myth that interns can work for free if they choose to do so, even if they are earning college credit for their internship. Not only may hiring an unpaid intern be legally incorrect, morally, as our church teaches, it is not the right thing to do.

Economic justice is one of the ten principles central to our Catholic social justice teaching. Included in this theme is the right of the worker to productive work, to decent and fair wages, and to safe working conditions. The Catholic church considers it her task always to call to condemn situations in which the dignity and the rights of the worker are violated.<sup>1</sup>

The practice of using workers as unpaid interns flies in the face of Catholic social justice teaching. Pope John Paul II, in his 1981 Encyclical, *Laborem Exer-*

*cens on Human Work*, states that just pay for work done is the most important way to secure a just relationship between the worker and the employer. Payment for work “must be determined in accordance with justice and equity; which means that workers must be paid a wage which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner.”<sup>2</sup>

The church provides factors for an employer to consider when making the assessment of a just wage, including “the effective contribution which each individual makes to the economic effort and the financial state of the company for which he works.”<sup>3</sup> However, even in tough times, employees must be respected – “a workers' rights cannot be doomed to be the mere result of economic systems aimed at maximum profits.”<sup>4</sup> Most importantly, a worker must be paid a wage sufficient to support the worker and the worker’s family.<sup>5</sup>

The church teaches that governments should make effective efforts to see that “each worker receives a wage in keeping with the laws of justice and equity.”<sup>6</sup> The United States government has imposed requirements and restrictions on employers aimed at protecting the rights of workers. The Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) imposes requirements on employers with respect to workers. Not only is the practice of using unpaid workers unjust according to the church, it is also probably illegal under the FLSA.

If an employer uses an unpaid intern in the place of a paid worker, the FLSA's wage requirements are triggered. Six factors are used by the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division to evaluate whether a worker is an "employee" (rather than a "trainee") for purposes of the FLSA:

1. The training, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to what would be given in a vocational school or academic educational instruction;
2. The training is for the benefit of the trainees;
3. The trainees do not displace regular employees, but work under their close observation;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the trainees, and on occasion the employer's operations may actually be impeded;
5. The trainees are not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period; and
6. The employer and the trainees understand that the trainees are not entitled to wages for the time spent in training.<sup>7</sup>

It would be very difficult for a business to meet all of these requirements, which is required for a worker to be exempt from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime provisions.

With the job market and economy in their current states, and opportunities for young, relatively inexperienced workers scarce, it is important for us all to be vigilant of our laws and our creed

and to respect and advocate for the rights of all workers.

<sup>1</sup> Encyclical *Laborem Exercens on Human Work*, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Encyclical, *Mother and Teacher*, 71.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Encyclical, *On Human Work*, 17.

<sup>5</sup> Encyclical, *The Fortieth Year*, 71.

<sup>6</sup> Encyclical, *Peace and Earth*, 64.

<sup>7</sup> *Advisory: Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 12-09*, U.S. Department of Labor, January 29, 2010.

## Mark Your Calendars for The Alternative Christmas Fair!!!

On Sunday, **November 13<sup>th</sup>**, we return to Lincoln Park Barn for the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Alternative Christmas Fair! We will once again fill the Barn with booths representing local service agencies and 35 Alternative Gifts International (AGI) projects from around the world. Because there are fewer AGI projects from which to choose this year, please be sure to respond as soon as you can if you want to represent one of these organizations at the Fair.

AGI uses the eight United Nations Goals specifically directed toward ending poverty to prioritize and organize their annual projects. Thus, these projects focus their efforts on hunger, education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, medical services, environmental sustainability and collaboration.

There will be plenty from which to choose at this year's Fair, so you might also want to ponder now just how you will give a gift to the world this year---after all,

no matter whose life you touch near or faraway, your life is also made better. We invite you to participate and in turn invite someone to come along who has never been to the Fair before. The more the merrier and then, the farther the blessings will flow.



## Director's Corner

Thank you all for the warm welcome I have received as the new Director of GVPJ. A big thank you need go to my predecessor Karen Sjoberg for passing along her love, knowledge and support to me in my new position.

I am honored to have been given the responsibility of sharing God's message of social justice and peace.

It may happen that you will not always agree with all of our efforts. So, when you find yourself at odds with GVPJ, please feel free to question our stances or actions... take a long walk... and then call me! While I promise to always do my best, chances are I will not always get it right. May I always have an open ear and an open heart.

For Peace - Julie Mamo

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***THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!***