



Developing communities

churches and citizens in partnership

by Father John S. Rausch

 **W**hen you pass by most churches on Sunday or Wednesday evenings, the singing inside invites you to join the service. However, on other days of the week the attraction may lie in the flurry of activity of social programs offered by the church. Some churches sponsor day care for children, teach literacy to migrant workers, host 12-step meetings like Alcoholics Anonymous, or house food pantries or rummage closets. Beyond their inspirational role, many churches play an active part in the life of the community every day of the week.

People concerned about the pressing needs of community frequently rely on the church as a resource and partner in community work. This work spans efforts from emergency help for families to establishing a cooperative with the unemployed. Through working to meet needs, the church undergirds and strengthens community development.

By community development, I mean a broad array of activities that promise a better life for everyone—a process that moves from a less desirable to a

more desirable situation. The process meets immediate needs plus invests in long term dreams. Authentic community development includes greater economic activity coupled with an equitable distribution of wealth. It builds trust among people and strengthens local control, promoting inclusive participation and mobilizing resources locally and beyond. Ultimately, successful community development envisions people cooperating with one another to meet their needs in the context of community with respect for creation and future generations.

In this essay I outline the role of the church in community development. I describe the social principles that motivate church involvement, discuss three models of ministry showing how the church can respond, and underscore practical and unique resources available in the church for community work. I conclude that the church and local citizens operate best as a partnership to meet a pressing need, or to serve the poor, or to foster a dream about developing community.

continued on page 2

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Topic this issue

Churches and community development

Native churches
and development
page 5

review of Addie
Davis' new book
page 8

Social justice
movements
page 9


toolbox
Following through
on assignments
page 11

Developing communities

continued from page 1

The Church's Niche: Values

The social philosophy of churches arises from basic principles and forms the basis for church action in communities. The values of the church stand in contrast to many values of the marketplace.

While the theology of the church teaches that every person possesses intrinsic worth as a son or daughter of God, the economic system values people according to transitory possessions like wealth or skills. The Scriptures encourage helping the least brother and sister in society, while the economic system rewards winners and abandons losers. Also, the church represents a community of people

joined as the Body of Christ, whereas the economic system treats everyone as an isolated decision maker motivated by self-interest. Finally, a Christian views creation as the handiwork of the Creator and as a gift for all to enjoy. Yet to the industrialist the earth remains merely a natural resource to exploit when the market demands it.

The church offers values that build community. It says

everyone deserves respect as a dignified person and not manipulation as a target of some marketing strategy. It teaches that we must evaluate society not by the number of millionaires created, but by the living standards we tolerate for the poorest among us. The teachings of the church remind us that, bound to our brothers and sisters, we are called to become co-gardeners with the Creator. The basis for the involvement of churches in community development arises from these few principles.

The Church's Response: Three Models

The church responds to community needs through three ministries: 1) direct service; 2) advocacy; and 3) social change. How an individual church chooses to respond depends on various factors from theology to resources to abilities. In some areas

different denominations readily collaborate ecumenically to solve problems. Other needs might beg a regional ecumenical approach, because they exceed the resources of a local church effort. Understanding the scale of the problem and knowing the degree of ecumenical cooperation will help community people engage the church at the proper level to address the appropriate need.

Direct Service

Direct service represents a short term solution to a problem, serving an immediate need. Christians are called upon to meet the needs of others in Matthew 25:31-46. The passage describes the judgment scene when the sheep and goats are separated by whether they fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the imprisoned, etc. Most churches—even those not known for their social involvement—will collect funds for a family whose house burned, or for a neighbor facing a serious operation. Other churches that recognize a stronger call to “compassion ministries,” or social service, might establish a soup kitchen or run a used clothing store.

Direct service projects that help individuals and the larger community represent the least controversial, most visible and easiest activities to fund. This ministry allows individual churches to act alone. Christmas food baskets, visits to retirement homes and home repair projects utilize skills available in most moderate sized congregations. Larger projects, such as Habitat for Humanity, might require an ecumenical response of area churches. Many times the local Ministerial Association coordinates a fund for specific needs, like emergency relief or traveler's aid.

All these efforts tie together various levels of ecumenical cooperation, while they contribute to meeting the needs of people and represent a form of community development.

Advocacy

The advocacy model brings expertise to a pressing situation in an efficient manner. An

Direct service projects that help individuals and the larger community represent the least controversial, most visible and easiest activities to fund.

advocate pleads another's cause, sometimes speaking on behalf of that person.

In Luke 4:16-20, Jesus enters the synagogue and reads from the scroll of Isaiah. The message focuses on release of captives, recovery of sight for the blind and letting the oppressed go free. Theologians claim this first public sermon of Jesus' set the tone for His ministry and His perspective about the reign of God.

Even today, churches can witness the need for advocacy for those unable to represent themselves. Someone in bondage needs an advocate who knows the system. Other times folks need a companion as they face litigation or an intimidating social agency.

Migrant ministry frequently involves advocacy for issues such as school problems with children or labor mediation for workers. The advocate may monitor police excesses in certain neighborhoods or help women without legal papers get prenatal care. This advocacy ministry usually is coordinated by a diocesan or regional church agency, like the Office of Hispanic Ministry.

Advocacy can be vital during labor disputes, which often involve disadvantaged workers with few alternatives. In factories and food processing plants, migrant workers, minority workers, the working poor and women frequently face disrespect, poor pay and verbal abuse. The Commission on Religion in Appalachia sponsored a fact-finding project in one labor dispute in eastern Kentucky, and the Interfaith Committee on Worker Justice sent an investigative team to a labor struggle in western North Carolina. Both ecumenical groups heard testimony from workers that indicated that churches need to advocate for changes and a just settlement.

Other advocacy ministries include protecting the environment, establishing a safe house for battered spouses, and defending people against financial rip-offs from check cashers, loan sharks and rent-to-own stores.

The ministry of advocacy especially serves people when technical knowledge is

required. While local churches engage less in advocacy ministry than in direct service, occasionally a local parishioner speaks Spanish or does pro bono legal work. An outside ecumenical group can more easily fact find in a labor dispute or other politically charged issue, relieving the political pressure on the local church and adding credibility to the final report.

While churches shun partisan political involvement, those that take the sermon of Luke 4 seriously, stand with the most disadvantaged. By speaking out through advocacy ministry, churches put words to a justice issue and contribute to a better life in the community.

Community Change

Community change ministry, the most sophisticated and threatening ministry model, deals with the root causes of problems. Frequently the struggle focuses on the "haves" and the "have-nots," and the arena entails a social, economic or political problem—e.g. racism, poverty or elitism. The emphasis falls on local folks to solve their own problems through democratic, community-inclusive organizations, while the work of church representatives facilitates the leadership skills of group members. By emphasizing justice over charity, this ministry leads to greater local empowerment to effect a fairer, more democratic, more participatory community that benefits everyone.

Again, relying on a deeper analysis inspired by Luke 4:16-20, church workers attempt to address the root causes of oppression. They want the Good Samaritan, in addition to caring for the victim of violence, to make the road from Jericho to Jerusalem safer. Critics of the community change model cite the social problems seemingly ignored by the preaching of Jesus. For example, while Jesus liberated individuals from

Community change ministry, the most sophisticated and threatening ministry model, deals with the root causes of problems.

continued on page 4

Developing communities

various sicknesses, he never condemned slavery, the worst malady of the time. Even St. Paul sent Onesimus, a slave, back to his owner, Philemon.

A possible answer comes from the intent of Jesus. Jesus preached about the reign of God, a power that manifests itself in the community of believers. St. Paul understood this new existence as all-inclusive: “. . . there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Liberating folks from modern social and economic slavery fulfills the intent of Jesus’ preaching by establishing right relationships in society so all can freely grow to their God-given human potential.

Self-help ventures epitomize community change ministry. Cooperatives and credit unions, owned and controlled by their members, empower local folks in economic matters. Non-profit corporations that are truly democratic empower people in social and political ways. By addressing a variety of concerns like land use, environmental issues, the tax system and community education, self-help groups broaden community participation and develop people in the process.

Since the role of the church in community change ministry facilitates the growth of people in these organizations, church workers need skills in group process, business and organizational development. These specialized skills usually come from the regional ecumenical level rather than from an individual local church. The goals of this ministry unfold continuously, because a single issue, like stopping the pollution of a stream, represents only one step in the broader process of empowering people.

Resources of the Church

Knowing how to approach the church and at what level opens the potential for partnership between local community workers and the church. Sitting in the pews, managers, judges and politicians often hold the key to unlocking a problem. Occasionally the message of the Gospel and the encouragement of the church can spark a needed sense of justice. The church’s social teachings remain vital for community work.

The church also includes material and human resources. Start-up funds come from local congregations, from church agencies and from ecumenical

continued from page 3

endeavors. The Campaign for Human Development of the Catholic Church channels \$6 million each year to community groups throughout the U.S. The Commission on Religion in Appalachia funnels about a half million dollars annually to specifically Appalachian projects, and various denominations offer restricted money for certain community work. Add to this the volunteer power of the church, and communities discover a valuable partner in development.

Ministry always entails a two way street. The church has a theology and some resources for community development, but its programs can patronize and degrade. The church can forget the humility of service and espouse the world’s power and prestige.

With all its potential the church needs the honest critique of those who have a special claim on its resources—the disadvantaged, the oppressed and the poor. Partnership suggests a mutuality and sharing. While the oppressed may need the church, the church needs the oppressed as much to remain faithful to the proclamation of the reign of God preached by Jesus in the Gospel.

1997-98 annual campaign

Brushy Fork kicked off its sixth annual campaign in 1997. Our appreciation goes to the following individuals for their contributions to our programs.

Edna Sue Breeding
Susan Brown
Robert E. Hille
John Manchester
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Wolfgang and Elizabeth Natter
Tom Shattuck/Wilderness Road Tours
Susan Spectorsky
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Faith Young

separating worship from social action

Appalachian churches and community involvement

by Loyal Jones

I have been asked to comment on native churches as they relate, or don't relate, to social action. Over the past thirty years, I have spent a lot of time visiting rural non-mainline churches, interviewing people about their religious lives, and taping sermons and testimonies. I have collected many minute books and other material in which Appalachian Christians speak of their faith. Out of this I have completed a manuscript, *Faith and Meaning in the Southern Uplands*.

In my working life I have been associated with such groups as the Council of the Southern Mountains, Berea College, Hindman Settlement School, Settlements Institutions of Appalachia, and other organizations that have been identified with missionary activity in Appalachia. And, of course, I know a lot of middle- and upper-class mainline denominational believers. Perhaps I have become one.

I have observed one major difference in outlook between these two groups. People in the native churches that I know—Old Regular, Primitive, United and Missionary Baptists, some Churches of Christ, some fundamentalist Methodists, and many varieties of Pentecostal-Holiness people—tend to see church as a place to find God, to seek redemption, to listen to the Word expounded, to pray, sing, testify and give praise, as well as to relate to one another. Some come out of a Calvinist tradition of keeping things simple, with a fear that one can easily be distracted from the primary worship of God by good things that lead one astray.

Mainline church people, of course, have the same purposes and concerns. However, many in addition tend to see the church as a means for personal and societal development. To them the church serves as a vehicle for uplift programs, which implies commit-

tees, budget, and involvement in activities beyond the church.

Native Christians do get involved in activist programs, perhaps **because** of the church if not **through** the church. Dan Gibson and Ollie Combs, Old Regular Baptists, were important leaders in the drive to get strip-mine control laws. Reverend Otis King, a Missionary Baptist from Harlan County, Kentucky, was a strong voice for justice in the Brookside Mine strike of the 1970s.

Maxine Waller is motivated by her religious beliefs to find ways to revive the culture and economy of Ivanhoe, Virginia. Elder Tom Sutton, a United Baptist, was prominent in fighting the takeover of land through colonial charters in Knott County, Kentucky, announcing meetings in church, but keeping his two activities separate. Bishop Willie Lamb, a black Pentecostal, was a strong United Mine Workers supporter and now works on problems in McRoberts-Neon-Fleming caused by the closing of mines and unemployment.

Elder Elwood Cornett, Moderator of the Indian Bottom Association of Old Regular Baptists, worked for many years to improve education through the Kentucky River Educational Cooperative in Hazard, and is now a Distinguished Educator under the Kentucky Education Reform Act. William Adkins, a West Virginia coal miner and Pentecostal, testified about becoming an effective UMWA leader after being empowered "to be a man" through his religious conversion experience.

These Christians are involved, but in ways that middle-class Christians may not always notice. Much of the work is personal. For example, when he was in the mining business, John Preece, an Old Regular

Some [native Appalachian Christians] come out of a Calvinist tradition of keeping things simple, with a fear that one can easily be distracted from the primary worship of God by good things that lead one astray.

continued on page 6

Loyal Jones is an author and historian and served as director of Berea College's Appalachian Center for many years. He continues to be active in Appalachian studies in his retirement.

Native Christians

continued from page 5

Baptist, hauled coal to persons who could not afford to buy it and set up a sawmill to provide jobs for some of his neighbors. The sawmill failed at a six-figure loss to Mr. Preece.

This is not to criticize either group. Certainly we could question attitudes, mindsets and methods of both. Middle-class Christians have trouble relating to the style and intensity of worship in native churches. Native Christians have similar problems with the mainline churches. My purpose here is to say that each group has its own basic outlook and set of values in discerning what they as individuals should do with their lives and what the purpose of the churches should be. Life in the region, and certainly mutual respect, might be improved if each were more tolerant of the other and their ways of doing things.

Attitudes and activities are changing and will continue to change. Mountain people have accepted many new things when they have made sense to them. Perhaps we mountain Christians are more reluctant to change our religious ways than we are other practices, but I don't see that as the problem that some have noted.

At least one study has shown that as people become more urban, better educated, have more income, security and esteem, their degree of religiosity lessens. That is, other things like education, career, success and relationships may be mentioned before God, whereas God tends to be first in the values of those who are poor, rural and without the esteem of others (Photiadis and Maurer, "Religion in an Appalachian State," *Religion in Appalachia*. Morgantown: West Virginia University, 1978, pp. 171-228).

There is room for a lot of Pauline humility, and my observation is that the native church members have the hang of this better than do those in mainline churches.

Welcome back, *Appalachian Reader*!

After a three-year break, the *Appalachian Reader* is in production again. The publication covers the work of citizens' organizations and others working for justice in the region. The *Reader* provides information about job openings, available resources and activities in the region. The new *Reader* will also contain more in-depth analysis of regional issues that

Mountain Promise page 6

The Christian Appalachian Project Promoting cooperation

The Christian Appalachian Project was founded in 1964 in response to the pressing economic and social challenges in the Appalachian Region. As an inter-denominational service agency, CAP strives to promote a spirit of cooperation among religious groups. Working with various churches and charitable organizations, CAP operates over 70 projects throughout thirteen Appalachian states.

The programs offered are often staffed by volunteers from across the country and serve people from infants to the elderly. CAP operates five child development centers for infants to five-year-olds, providing education for the children and parenting skills for adults. Two recreational camps offer summer adventures and learning experiences to other children.

Adult learning centers help adults study for and obtain GED certificates. Teen center programs encourage and support young people in staying in school. Families in crisis can find assistance with physical and emotional needs through CAP programs. Projects help people deal with spouse abuse, family problems, home repair, and finding employment.

In addition to offering these services, CAP distributes millions of dollars worth of educational materials, building supplies, food, clothing, school supplies and household goods to over a thousand community organizations in the region.

For more information, visit CAP's website at www.chrisapp.org or write 322 Crab Orchard Road, Lancaster, KY 40446.



concern citizens' organizations and profiles of groups and people working in the region.

To submit articles and information to the *Appalachian Reader*, contact Kristin Layng Szakos, Editor at 1132 Otter Street, Charlottesville, VA 22901. Subscriptions to the *Appalachian Reader* are \$15 per year and can be requested through the address above.

Young people active in leadership program



Kenny Jones of the Jackson County youth leadership group presents Governor Paul Patton with an EKLN cap and a card of thanks for his financial support of the program.

The pilot project of the East Kentucky Leadership Network (EKLN) is underway with 58 students from seven eastern Kentucky counties participating in a youth leadership program. Young people from Breathitt, Jackson, Owsley, McCreary, Rockcastle, Letcher and Cumberland Counties have begun taking part in the democratic process in their home communities.

The young people have attended workshops focusing on running meetings, planning projects and serving on boards. As part of the program, they are also serving on boards in their communities. Current board members serve as mentors to the students on their boards.

The Jackson County EKLN youth leadership group has been taking advantage of opportunities beyond serving on local boards and attending workshops. In December group members attended a town meeting with Governor Paul Patton, where they expressed their thanks for his support of the program by presenting him with a thank you card and an EKLN cap.

The Jackson County group meets once a month to discuss their board experiences and plan for upcoming activities. The members serve on a variety of boards: the Jackson County Environmental Task Force, the Conservation District, the local Forward in the Fifth educational affiliate, the Empowerment Zone Board of

Directors, and the Northern Jackson County Committee.

EKLN youth participants will travel to Frankfort in February and will attend the East Kentucky Leadership Conference in April.

EKLN is a collaborative of organizations working for community improvement in eastern Kentucky: Big Sandy ADD, Brushy Fork Institute, Christian Appalachian Project, Commonwealth Fellowship Program, Eastern Kentucky Women in Leadership, Forward in the Fifth, Leadership Kentucky, MACED, Morehead State University, New Opportunity School for Women, and the UK Appalachian Center. (See article in the summer 1997 issue of *Mountain Promise*.)

Next *Mountain Promise* will focus on youth issues

Mountain Promise, the newsletter of the Brushy Fork Institute, is published quarterly. Our next edition will examine issues for youth in Appalachia. We encourage readers to submit articles, reports, photos, line art or story suggestions. If you have an article or a story idea, contact:

Mountain Promise

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from the bookshelf

Here I Am Again, Lord

Landon Colley: An Old Time Primitive Baptist Universalist Preacher

by Adda Leah (Addie) Davis

reviewed by Donna Morgan

Addie Davis is a Brushy Fork Associate that served with the McDowell County, West Virginia team. She will appear at this year's Appalachian Studies Conference in Boone, North Carolina, where she will participate in a panel discussion with other authors who have addressed religion in Appalachia. For conference dates and other information, see page 12.

"I received my 'calling,' or first spiritual experience, on the Siegfried Line near Busbach, Germany, during World War II." So begins Landon Colley's recollections of a life spent in service to his church and God.

Writing to reflect the oral tradition, author Adda Davis strives to preserve a personal and non-scholarly approach while explaining the Primitive Baptist Universalist religion. She uses many of Landon Colley's own words to chronicle his life's journey, both spiritual and physical. The book reaches beyond the sociological and historical aspects of the religion and provides the reader with a flavor of the language and the culture surrounding it.

Landon Colley's story begins in early childhood with the death of his parents. He was only two years old at the time, but his grandfather told him the story of how his mother had raised up in bed and sang the first two verses of *Jerusalem, My Happy Home*, an old Baptist hymn. She then succumbed to the typhoid that had already taken Landon's father. As one of the youngest of eleven children, Landon found himself being passed from relative to relative, thus beginning a life in which prayer was often his only solace and refuge.

In addition to Landon Colley's religious evolution, Adda Davis focuses on cultural aspects of the region. She devotes chapters to hunting, formal and informal education, work and responsibility, and courtship and marriage. Davis also describes Landon's participation in World War II, from which

stems the emergence of his spiritual self. It is around this experience that the rest of the book revolves.

The turning point in Landon's spiritual life came on the battlefield as he was passing ammunition to another soldier in preparation for the impending fight. "Suddenly I heard preaching, as clear and plain as I ever heard preaching in my life. It was Little Henry Mullins, an old time Primitive Baptist preacher who lived on Slate Creek in Buchanan County, Virginia. . . . From that time on I was a different man and it has stayed with me to this day. I'd never had an experience like that before and it has come to me often when I have been in doubt."

When Landon returned from the war, he didn't act directly on his arising spiritual consciousness. He struggled to understand the meaning of his calling. He had trouble understanding the significance of the "old preacher I had heard on the battlefield" over more well educated and perhaps more sophisticated religious leaders.

But through a series of events, such as a car accident that left him praying for his young son, and through dreams and visions, Landon realized his calling would lead him to the pulpit in the Primitive Baptist Church. He began attending meeting regularly for "it is the Primitive Baptist experience that the Lord prepares his servants."

As Landon Colley became prepared, preaching did not come easily to him. He noted that in order for his sermon to be truly blessed it had to come from beyond himself. He describes his experience of being

blessed to preach: "People who have never experienced the power of the Lord can't understand. . . . if my britches legs don't shake I won't be in the stand long and the congregation won't hear nothing but Landon. I don't know why this happens except it is the power of God. . . . I do know that perfect love casteth out fear and when I'm shaking I'm full of love and I'm not afraid."

Here I Am Again, Lord also includes chapters on the church's customs, beliefs and rules. As Colley describes the particular beliefs of his church, he also provides a more broad-based observation about churches in the community. "Troubles in the churches not only hurt the church but especially the

communities they are located in and eventually the world." Interwoven throughout the text are Biblical references that lay the foundation for the Primitive Baptist Universalist's view of our world. The end of the book contains lists of churches, elders and members—an interesting historical resource for people who might be tracing their roots.

Here I Am Again, Lord provides readers with a down-to-earth view of a long-standing religion in this region. The conversational style in which it is written, though sometimes a little hard to follow, allows for an intimate view of the Primitive Baptist Universalist faith.

Here I Am Again, Lord by Adda Leah Davis, 4849 Valley Road, Rosedale, VA 24280. \$15.70.

The American Friends Service Committee

Working locally for social justice

by Rick Wilson, West Virginia Economic Justice Project Director

The history of social justice movements in Appalachia is an interesting and largely untold story. Historically, unions have been in the forefront of the struggle, but churches, community groups and other organizations have played significant roles.

In telling even part of the story, however, it is important to distinguish between social justice movements and "missionary" efforts. In the former, local people work together to solve social problems, sometimes with assistance and material aid from those outside the region. In the latter, local people themselves are seen as the problem by "benevolent" visitors from outside the region who seek to save the "natives" from themselves. The missionary approach, by its very nature, involves condescension and colonial arrogance. Between these approaches, there is little or no common ground.

AFSC: A brief history

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is one example of an international organization which has consistently worked to assist local people in the struggle for social justice while avoiding the partonizing aspects of the missionary approach.

It is based on values held by Quakers and shared by many others regarding the worth of all people. According to a statement adopted by the AFSC board, "We cherish the belief that there is that of God in each person, leading us to respect the worth and dignity of all."

Founded in 1917 by the Religious Society of Friends, the AFSC initially provided alternative forms of service to conscientious objectors. This involved assistance to war refugees on all sides. Over time, the mission of AFSC expanded to seek to understand and address the root causes of poverty, injustice and war, and to work nonviolently for social and economic justice.

Although the Quaker connection is still strong within AFSC, the organization draws into its work people from many religious backgrounds who share a commitment to social and economic justice and nonviolence. Among those who work with or contribute to AFSC around the world, one will find Muslims, Christians from many denominations, Jews, Buddhists, atheists and many others.

continued on page 10

Social justice movements: AFSC

continued from page 9

Outside Appalachia, the work of AFSC has taken some interesting turns. In the 1930's it worked to help Jews emigrate from Nazi Germany. It worked with war refugees in both world wars and many regional conflicts and has supported many self-help and development projects. In 1947, it shared with the British Friends the Nobel Peace Prize.

Issues of civil rights and human rights have been a central focus, which is not surprising given the history of Quaker involvement in the abolitionist movement and underground railroad before the Civil War. The AFSC was first to publish Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." In 1958, it sponsored Dr. King's visit to India during which he met with nonviolent groups and studied nonviolent techniques for fostering social change. In 1968, it provided nationwide support to the Poor People's Campaign.

AFSC in Appalachia

In Appalachia, AFSC has both provided relief and material aid and worked to assist local organizing. In 1931, President Hoover asked the organization to feed the children of unemployed coal miners in Appalachia. Later, AFSC cooperated with the Roosevelt administration to set up a variety of programs under which the unemployed miners could help themselves through building self-help homesteads (of which Arthurdale in West Virginia is probably the best known) and the development of cottage industries and cooperatives. During the Kentucky mine wars, AFSC sent shipments of clothing and material aid to families affected by the strikes in Harlan County.

A concern with the well being of residents of the coal fields has been a consistent theme in AFSC history. In 1979, it established New Employment for Women (NEW) in Logan County, West Vir-

ginia. The program was originally intended to train women for nontraditional employment, which locally meant the coal mines. Not surprisingly, many of these women faced obstacles to their employment which included resistance and hostility. Unfortunately, the mining industry took a major down turn shortly thereafter.

NEW adapted to changes in the economy and the needs of constituents by becoming an information and referral service helping low income people, women, children and minorities in the community. NEW has worked on issues of housing, employment, welfare rights, domestic violence, civil rights, countering racism and sexism, and economic development. It coordinates an annual Black History celebration in February and regularly offers educational programs to local schools and the community.

In 1989, AFSC established the West Virginia Economic Justice Project (WVEJ) as a statewide information sharing and networking resource for groups and individuals interested in social and economic justice and nonviolence. Over the years, WVEJ has worked to support union members and their families involved in labor disputes such as the Pittston strike and the Ravenswood lockout; offered programs for schools, colleges and community groups on labor history, popular education, economic literacy, Appalachian culture, nonviolence, community economic development and social justice; worked in communities and schools affected by racial conflicts; supported the development of multicultural educational programs dealing with diversity and tolerance.

Two popular programs offered by WVEJ include the Help Increase the Peace program (HIP) and Listening Projects. HIP is a three-day program offered to schools and community groups which deals with alternatives to violence, prejudice reduction and positive social change. Listening Projects are commu-

continued on page 12

To learn more about the West Virginia Economic Justice Project, contact:

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toolbox

Following through on task assignments

Much of the actual work for a project takes place outside regular meetings. As volunteers try to balance jobs, family life and their work in communities, finding time to follow-through on task assignments can be difficult. There are some steps that groups and individuals can take to make working on projects a little easier.

The whole group can:

✓ When the group decides a task needs to be done, be sure someone agrees to do it. Avoid the trap of saying something needs to happen but not assigning a name to the task.

✓ Assign a recorder during meetings. The recorder takes minutes and has them typed and distributed to all group members between meetings. The minutes should include clear reference to task assignments and the names of people who agreed to do them. Minutes should be sent out soon after the meeting and well before the task assignments are expected to be done, so people have a written reminder of their responsibilities.

✓ Assign someone to be the group reminder. The reminder calls people between meetings to remind them of task assignments and of the next meeting time and place.

✓ Divide tasks into smaller parts. For example, rather than assigning one person to find out about all the publicity possibilities for a group event, have an individual check into newspapers, another into radio, and another into the local cable station.

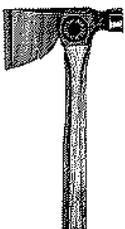
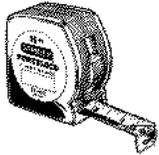
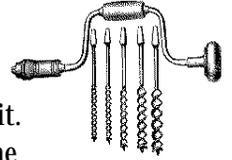
✓ Avoid asking too much of one person. Some people have a hard time saying no, and there is a real danger of burn out if other group members are not sensitive to the fact that one person may be taking on too much. Remember that assigning tasks to new members gives them real ownership of a project.

✓ Team people up on task assignments. Pair up someone who is experienced at a task with someone who wants to learn about that job. That way the group is providing a learning experience and increasing its own resource base.

✓ Plan fun work parties for large tasks or projects requiring lots of physical labor. Include refreshments or a meal and have fun awards for such things as most phone calls made, most envelopes stuffed or the oddest find in a trash cleanup.

As an individual you can:

✓ Keep track of tasks on your calendar. Write in things like when you expect to hear from someone or receive material and what you'll do if what you expect doesn't happen. From the calendar you can create a prioritized to-do list to help you plan ahead. Having some idea of the steps and time required to complete a task keeps you ready for the next move.



Social justice: AFSC

continued from page 10

nity surveys in which volunteers conduct in-depth interviews with residents in order to find positive solutions to social problems. The results of the Listening Project are then used as a basis for further organizing and education. WVEJ has conducted Listening Project trainings on a variety of subjects, including criminal justice, civil rights/human rights, domestic violence, hunger, and community economic development.

A current focus of AFSC programs is countering the negative effects of welfare "reform" on working class and low income people. Efforts include monitoring and documenting the effects of welfare repeal; publishing a welfare rights handbook for recipients, advocates and mediators; working to change state policy on issues of access to education, SSI, public sector employment and worker protection; and working with others to lay the foundation for a broader movement for economic and social justice.

from the calendar

Appalachian Studies Conference

March 20-22, 1998

The twenty-first annual conference of the Appalachian Studies Association will be held at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. Conference sessions address a variety of regional topics. For more information, contact the Appalachian Studies Association, PO Box 6825, West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV 26506; (304) 293-8541.

East Kentucky Leadership Conference

April 24-25, 1998

This year's East Kentucky Leadership Conference will be held in Ashland, KY. During this annual conference, local leaders meet to discuss current issues in eastern Kentucky. For registration information, contact Johnda Barker at the Ashland Area Convention and Visitors Center, (606) 329-1007 or 1-800-377-6249.

10
Ten years of leadership for something

**Don't forget!
We need your stories!**



In celebration of Brushy Fork's tenth anniversary we're gathering leadership stories from Associates. The first twenty-five people who submit a story will receive a Brushy Fork t-shirt and be entered in a drawing for \$100 to be given to a community organization. Stories will be published in an anniversary newsletter. For details, see the fall 1997 issue of *Mountain Promise* or call the Brushy Fork office.

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