

Local News

World council connects 'creation issues' with justice, peace

By Lee Strong

Such social issues as racism and civil rights have long been concerns of religious groups. But if the World Council of Churches has its way, environmental issues will soon join the ranks of faith issues as well, according to the Rev. Joan Campbell, director of the council's U.S. office.

"The emphasis of the World Council of Churches since Vancouver (site of the organization's 1983 general assembly) has been on the theme 'Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation,'" Campbell said. "We're trying to get churches around the world to see how these issues interrelate."

Campbell, who was in Rochester for Genesee Ecumenical Ministries' Annual Dinner, discussed the council's agenda during an informal breakfast meeting at Colgate Rochester Divinity School, April 29.

She pointed out that people can generally see a connection between peace and justice issues, but that many do not see the link between "integrity of creation" and the other two. As theologians and scientists have paid increasing attention to creation, however, "it becomes apparent that ... integrity of creation is the crucible of it all," Campbell said.

Noting that Native American and Orthodox forms of spirituality are based in part on an understanding that faith and respect for creation are intricately connected, she explained that these belief systems provide examples for other religious groups to integrate respect for creation with their faith.

"Nowhere is it clearer that these issues come together than in the South Pacific," Campbell remarked, saying that nuclear tests, the dumping of wastes, misuse of the islands and disregard for the rights of the inhabitants have led to an increase in the incidence of birth defects and the destruction of the islands, coral

reefs, the ecosystem, and inhabitants' social systems.

Inhabitants of the South Pacific islands are now working to save their islands, culture and future, and the council will pay increasing attention to these efforts, Campbell said. In fact, she noted, the next general assembly of the council is scheduled to take place in Canberra, Australia, in 1991.

An additional problem of dealing with the relationships among justice, peace and the environment is that people concerned with these issues tend to focus on one of them at the exclusion of the others, Campbell noted. At times, they even act in conflict with each other as they try to make their particular issues the predominant one. Although each of the groups is correct in assuming that its particular area of concern is important, she said, "You can't use the Gospel to argue against the Gospel!"

This fragmentation of efforts is so pronounced in the United States that it has led to a perception in Europe that the churches in the United States are doing nothing, Campbell noted. One of the goals for the council's U.S. office "is the telling of the story of what is happening and pulling it together," she said.

During the two-hour breakfast session, Campbell raised a number of other issues, frequently pointing to the links between them. The rest of the address — and an informal question-and-answer session that followed it — covered such topics as ecumenism, ministry to youth, the effects of the declining dollar on the council's budget, and criticism the council has received for taking controversial stands.

As part of her talk, Campbell recalled the moment she first understood the nature of ecumenism and the "idea of connectedness."

Campbell came to this revelation in her early 30s, when her minister told her: "Faith itself

is ecumenical!" Thinking about his words, Campbell realized that ecumenism "is crucial to who we are. It isn't about supporting institutions; it is a way of looking at things."

This realization has guided Campbell in all her activities since that time. She has served as a minister; associate director of the Greater Cleveland Interchurch Council; assistant general secretary of the National Council of Churches; and in current post with the World Council of Churches, an international ecumenical organization encompassing 301 churches with a combined total of more than 450 million communicants in 100 countries.

Although the Roman Catholic Church is not one of the member churches, it has supported council activities and has worked in conjunction with it on a number of issues, she noted.

In addition to environmental awareness, another major area of current concern for the council has been the situation of women in the world, Campbell said. At Easter, the council declared the beginning of an ecumenical Decade for Women.

"This is not another effort to give women's groups another burst of support," she said. "It is meant to be addressed to churches ... (working) in solidarity," and to focus the churches' attention "on all of the issues that impinge

upon the dignity of women."

She also asserted it is a myth that women's issues are of concern only in the United States or North America. "The issues about women are not U.S. issues; it's a worldwide issue that takes in the feminization of poverty and powerlessness," Campbell observed. "I think the issue of women is a church-dividing and a church-uniting issue."

She linked racism to the environmental focus of the council, describing it as a "disintegration of creation." The council will continue to address racism, particularly through efforts in opposition to apartheid in South Africa.

Campbell acknowledged that this work — as well as the support the council has given to groups working for social justice in various nations — has drawn criticism from various sectors, including the U.S. State Department, which recently released a report describing the council "as engaging in subversive activities."

"I think having a vision of the world — of God's kingdom — does put us in a position of being threatening people to others," she remarked. "People with a clear vision inevitably are set against their culture."

Diocesan Appointments



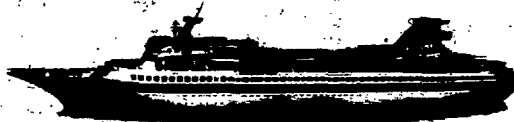
Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following diocesan appointments:
 Father Terence K. Fleming from Catho-

lic chaplain at Genesee Hospital, Rochester, to pastor of St. Charles Borromeo Church, Greece, effective June 28, 1988, at 6 p.m.

Father Donald F. Schwab from director of the Department of Pastoral Care at Rochester General Hospital to pastor of St. Christopher's Church, North Chili, effective June 28, 1988, at 6 p.m.

★ TRAINS ★ WEEKEND SPECIALS ★ COMMERCIALS ★ GROUPS

LET'S GET AWAY FROM IT ALL
 Meet New Friends or Take Along Your Own
 Tour Exciting Destinations — Enjoy New Experiences.
 — "Choose A Cruise" —



Royal Caribbean Cruise Line
Ships of Norwegian Registry

7-10 Day Cruises to the Caribbean
 New York — Bermuda Cruises.

SAVE UP TO 20% WITH EARLY RESERVATIONS
 Call for information from our experienced cruise staff.



Video Films Available

889-9090

3220 Chili Avenue



★ HOTELS ★ CAR RENTALS ★ SENIOR CITIZEN FARES ★ RESORTS ★

AIR ONLY ★ ESCORTED TOURS ★ AIR ONLY ★

CRUISES ★ ALL INCLUSIVE ★ CRUISES ★ ALL INCLUSIVE ★

CARDINAL MOONEY HIGH SCHOOL...

CARNIVAL

MAY 12-13-14

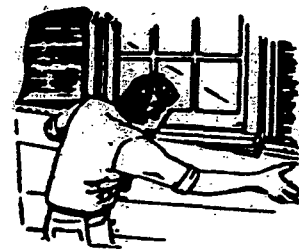


UNDER 3 BIG TENTS • RAIN OR SHINE

SIDING SPECIALISTS

VINYL REPLACEMENT WINDOWS

- ROOFING • GUTTERS
- STORM WINDOWS & DOORS
- BLOWN CELLULOSE INSULATION
- REMODELING



DAVE MARSHALL SIDING, INC.

FREE ESTIMATES — FULLY INSURED
 1693 East Main Street

OVER 25 YEARS EXPERIENCE



482-8481

