



NETWORK
Connection

PEOPLE LOBBYING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE • FOURTH QUARTER 2013

**Men at the
Economic Margins**

dear members

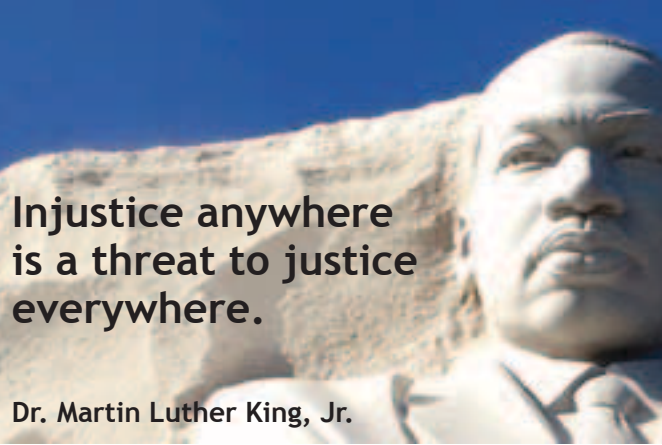
This *Connection* completes this year's looks at the needs of different segments of our society—children, women, and now men. As we have done this, I have been struck by the fact that our natural inclination at NETWORK is to focus on women and children. It is women who are paid less than men for the same work. It is women who are principally responsible for child rearing. And more single women and children live in poverty than any other family structure.

We wanted to focus this issue on men because they, too, are a critical part of the economic struggle to make ends meet. The new census data out in September made crystal clear that all parts of our society are struggling with poverty. So we are focusing on the challenges faced by men in our nation and our world.

As we do this, I have to say thank you to you and all of our NETWORK members and supporters. Because of your support and advocacy we continue to have unprecedented opportunities on Capitol Hill. We are being sought after for our opinions and influence on the issues of poverty, struggling families and immigration. This is making a difference.

I hope that our ongoing partnership of advocacy in DC and your advocacy at home can continue to stir the political system so that people are able to live in peace, raise their families, and contribute to the common good. It is a big goal, but one that is grounded in faith and well worth the effort.

Simone Campbell, SSS



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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Everyday Struggles of Men

BY SISTER SIMONE CAMPBELL, SSS

As I have traveled the country, I have met so many people with important stories to tell. I want to share some of those stories with you. Often, I think of women in poverty and struggling as single parents. This issue of *Connection*, however, focuses on the struggle of low-income men in our society. With 50% of the jobs in the United States paying less than \$36,000 a year, it is obvious that many men are working in jobs that pay poverty wages. And often they are unseen.

In 2010, NETWORK completed a follow-up study to our earlier welfare reports. This new report was called “TANF Tested: Lives of Families in Poverty during the Recession.” During the study, one of the researchers reported that men at soup kitchens and food banks were reluctant to talk to them while women were eager to share their stories. We interpreted that reluctance to indicate that the men felt some shame for using these supportive services. It is a tremendous struggle in our current economy for many men to meet the societal expectation that they be the principal providers. The reality is that many continue to valiantly struggle to feed their families.

In St. Louis, for example, I met Mike when he drove me to a television studio. I asked him about his life, and he said that he and his wife had three (almost four) children. They had thought that if she went back to school they would have a better income for their family. They decided that she should enroll in a for-profit educational facility and learn to be a medical technologist. She did well and completed the course. However, once she graduated the best job she could find paid \$10.25 an hour—not even enough to make the payments on the \$25,000 loan they took out to pay for her education. Mike had to take a second job driving limos to pay the bills, so he was missing evening time with his family. He was especially worried about not being home after the birth of their new baby. But he knew

that under the circumstances this was the best they could do.

In Trenton, I met a young college student who told me he had always thought that his family was middle class. Then, in the workshop I was giving, he discovered that his family was actually in

the bottom 20% of income in the United States. He was stunned, and his reaction to my talk was unexpected. He said that he now understood how his dad had protected him and his sister from the worry his parents must have felt. His parents made sure that both he and his sister attended college. He had tears in his eyes as he realized what their struggle must have been. He said that he had to call them to say thank you.

On the Bus this year, I was able to meet Representatives Pete Gallego and Joaquin Castro in San Antonio. Both men are new to Congress. I heard them each speak in their own way about the challenging adjustment to DC life and politics. They are striving to represent their districts and be advocates for the people who struggle at the margins of our society. They are dealing with being new and in the minority party. They are still trying to find their way, but each is committed to making a difference for their constituents and for our nation. Their visions include making room for everyone who lives here. This makes comprehensive immigration reform a top priority for them. But it also makes them frustrated at the gridlock in Congress and unsure how to make the biggest impact. They left me with the feeling that it is quite like trying to care for a family, but feeling challenged and unsure about how to proceed.

All of these men model for me that struggle to be faithful in our society. These day-in, day-out efforts are at the heart of forming a more perfect union. The struggles of Mike in St. Louis, the young man in Trenton, the representatives in DC, and millions of others help build our families and nation. We can't afford to take their efforts for granted. Each of us should value their fidelity and care for family and country. By their commitments they are building a more faithful world for the 100%, and this is good news indeed.

Simone Campbell, SSS, is NETWORK's Executive Director.



Beyond Stereotypes of “Deadbeat Dads” in Low-income Communities

BY KATHRYN EDIN AND TIMOTHY J. NELSON (FROM *DOING THE BEST I CAN: FATHERHOOD IN THE INNER CITY*)

For decades, legislators across the political spectrum and many in the media have promoted caricatures of low-income unmarried fathers, often described as “deadbeat dads.” Harvard Professors Kathryn Edin and Timothy J. Nelson have investigated how those stereotypes do or do not reflect inner-city realities. Operating out of a tiny apartment in East Camden, New Jersey, they interviewed more than 100 fathers and chronicled their findings in their new book, *Doing the Best I Can*.

Among other findings, they discovered that “[t]enuous relationships and a lack of sufficient desire to avoid pregnancy produce unplanned conceptions and births. Drawn by the possibility of a profound connection to another human being, a child of one’s own, future fathers and mothers—young people who may barely know each other—often work fairly hard to forge a significant relationship around the impending birth. The new baby often spurs these efforts further, at least for a

time.” (pp. 44-45) Many fathers try to create strong father-child bonds even when their relationships with the mothers falter. But then their deep-seated hopes bump up against the everyday realities of their lives.

This is an important book that should help dispel some myths. In particular, Edin and Nelson address what may always have been an inaccurate portrayal of low-income fathers but is an increasingly racist and classist stereotype given the changing landscape of the American family. This unjustly undercuts efforts by men who wish to be an active and contributory presence in the lives of their children.

We are pleased to publish these excerpts from the book’s introduction with the hope they will encourage further investigation of the origins of struggles facing separated families, as well as discussion about solutions that include and support all parents.

“It is unmarried fathers who are missing in record numbers, who impregnate women and selfishly flee,” raged conservative former U.S. secretary of education William Bennett in his 2001 book, *The Broken Hearth*. “And it is these absent men, above all, who deserve our censure and disesteem. Abandoning alike those

who they have taken as sexual partners, and whose lives they have created, they strike at the heart of the marital ideal, traduce generations yet to come, and disgrace their very manhood.”

“No longer is a boy considered an embarrassment if he tries to run away from being the father of the unmarried

child,” Bill Cosby declared in 2004 at the NAACP’s gala commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown versus Board of Education*, as he publicly indicted unwed fathers for merely “inserting the sperm cell” while blithely eschewing the responsibilities of fatherhood.

Then, in 2007, two days before Father’s Day, presidential candidate Barack Obama admonished the congregants of Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Spartanburg, South Carolina, saying, “There are a lot of men out there who need to stop acting like boys, who need to realize that responsibility does not end at conception, who need to know that what makes you a man is not the ability to have a child but the courage to raise one.”

Across the political spectrum, from Bennett to Obama, unwed fatherhood is denounced as one of the leading social problems of our day. These men are irresponsible, so the story goes. They hit and then run—run away, selfishly flee, act like boys rather than men. According to these portrayals, such men are interested in sex, not fatherhood. When their female conquests come up pregnant, they quickly flee the scene, leaving the expectant mother holding the diaper bag. Unwed fathers, you see, simply don’t care.

About a decade before we began our



exploration of the topic, the archetype of this “hit and run” unwed father made a dramatic media debut straight from the devastated streets of Newark, New Jersey, in a 1986 CBS Special Report, *The Vanishing Family: Crisis in Black America*. The program’s host, Great Society liberal Bill Moyers, promised viewers a vivid glimpse into the lives of the real people behind the ever-mounting statistics chronicling family breakdown.

But by far the most sensational aspect of the documentary—the segment referenced by almost every review, editorial, and commentary following the broadcast—was the footage of Timothy McSeed. As the camera zooms in on McSeed and Moyers on a Newark street corner, the voiceover reveals that McSeed has fathered six children by four different women. “I got strong sperm,” he says, grinning into the camera. When Moyers asks why he doesn’t use condoms, he scoffs, “Girls don’t like them things.” Yet Timothy says he doesn’t worry about any pregnancies that might result. “If a girl, you know, she’s having a baby, carryin’ a baby, that’s on her, you know? I’m not going to stop my pleasures.” Moyers then takes us back several weeks to the moment when Alice Johnson delivers Timothy’s sixth child. McSeed dances around the delivery room with glee, fists raised in the air like a victorious prizefighter. “I’m the king!” he shouts repeatedly. Later, Timothy blithely admits to Moyers that he doesn’t support any of his children. When

to order a copy for each of the 7,500 schools in their system. “It is the largest demand for a CBS News product we’ve ever had,” marveled senior vice president David Fuchs.

The response to Timothy McSeed was particularly intense and visceral. An editorialist in *The Washington Post* could barely contain his outrage, writing, “One man Moyers talked to had six children by four different women. He recited his accomplishments with a grin you wanted to smash a fist into.” William Raspberry’s brother-in-law wrote the noted columnist that the day after viewing the program, he drove past a young black couple and found himself reacting with violent emotion. “I was looking at a problem, a threat, a catastrophe, a disease. Suspicion, disgust and contempt welled up within me.” But it was George Will who reached the heights of outraged rhetoric in his syndicated column, declaring that “the Timothies are more of a menace to black progress than the Bull Connors ever were.”

The Vanishing Family went on to win every major award in journalism. Those commenting publicly on the broadcast were nearly unanimous in their ready acceptance of Timothy as the archetype of unmarried fatherhood. Congressional action soon followed: in May 1986 Senator Bill Bradley proposed the famous Bradley Amendment, the first of several of “deadbeat dad”

... you couldn’t find a black American more perfectly calculated to arouse loathing, contempt and fear.

pressed on this point, he shrugs, grins, and offers up the show’s most quoted line: “Well, the majority of the mothers are on welfare, [so] what I’m not doing the government does.”

The impact of *The Vanishing Family* was immediate and powerful, creating an almost instantaneous buzz in the editorial columns of leading newspapers. In the week after the broadcast, CBS News received hundreds of requests for tapes of the show, including three from U.S. senators. The California public schools created a logjam when they tried

laws aimed at tightening the screws on unwed fathers who fell behind on their child support, even if nonpayment was due to unemployment or incarceration. Only a lone correspondent from Canada’s *Globe and Mail* offered a rebuttal, fuming that Timothy “could have been cast by the Ku Klux Klan: you couldn’t find a black American more perfectly calculated to arouse loathing, contempt and fear.”

Bill Moyers’s interest in the black family was not new. In 1965, two decades before *The Vanishing Family* was first



broadcast, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then assistant secretary of labor for President Lyndon Johnson, penned the now-infamous report titled *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. Moynihan claimed that due to the sharp increase in out-of-wedlock childbearing—a condition affecting only a small fraction of white children but one in five African Americans at the time—the black family, particularly in America’s inner cities, was nearing what he called “complete breakdown.” Moynihan was labeled a racist for his views, and Moyers, then an assistant press secretary to the president, helped manage the controversy.

Moynihan drew his data from the early 1960s, when America stood on the threshold of seismic social change. At the dawn of that decade, in February, four young African Americans refused to leave a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, an action soon emulated across the South. In March the Eisenhower administration announced that 3,500 U.S. troops would be sent to a country called Vietnam. In May the public approved the first oral contraceptive for use. And in November an Irish Catholic was narrowly elected to the White House. Yet across the nation as a whole, nine in ten American children still went to bed each night in the same household as their biological father; black children were the outliers, as one in four lived without benefit of their father’s presence at home.

Now, a half century after the Moynihan report was written, and two-and-a-half decades since Moyers’s award-winning broadcast, nearly three in ten American children live apart from their fathers. Divorce played a significant



SHELLY PERRY

(29 percent) than black fathers did in Moynihan’s time, but rates among blacks and Hispanics have also grown dramatically—to 56 and 73 percent respectively. And the gap between unskilled Americans and the educated elite is especially wide. Here, the statistics are stunning: only about 6 percent of college-educated mothers’ births are nonmarital versus 60 percent of those of high school dropouts.

In the wake of this dramatic increase in so-called fatherless families, public outrage has grown and policy makers have responded. In the 1960s and 1970s liberals worked to help supplement the incomes of single mothers, who were disproportionately poor, while conservatives balked, believing this would only reward those who put motherhood before marriage and would thus lead to more such families. Meanwhile, surly taxpayers increasingly demanded answers as to why their hard-earned dollars were going to support what many saw as an immoral lifestyle choice and not an unavoidable hardship. This taxpayer sentiment fueled Ronald Reagan’s efforts to sharply curtail welfare benefits in the 1980s and prompted Bill Clinton’s promise to “end welfare as we know it,”

fathers of these children. Part of the problem is that most surveys have provided very little systematic information from which to draw any kind of representative picture. Unwed fathers’ oft-tenuous connections to households make them hard to find, and many refuse to admit to survey researchers that they have fathered children. Thus, vast numbers have been invisible to even the largest, most carefully conducted studies.

The conventional wisdom spun by pundits and public intellectuals across the political spectrum blames the significant difficulties that so many children born to unwed parents face—poor performance in school, teen pregnancy and low school-completion rates, criminal behavior, and difficulty securing a steady job—on their fathers’ failure to care. The question that first prompted our multi-year exploration into the lives of inner-city, unmarried fathers is whether this is, in fact, the case.

...The question that originally prompted our study—is it true that these fathers simply don’t care about the children they conceive?—led to a deeper and more complex focus of inquiry: what does fatherhood mean in the lives of low-income, inner-city men? This query spurred us to chronicle the processes of courtship, conception, and the breakup of the romantic bond. We then looked at how fathers viewed both the traditional aspects of the fatherhood role—being a breadwinner and role model—and its softer side. Finally, we elicited the barriers men faced as they tried to father their children in the way that they desired, and how they responded to these challenges. Our goal was to offer honest, on-the-ground answers to the questions so many Americans ask about these men and their lives.

... what does fatherhood mean in the lives of low-income, inner-city men?

role in boosting these rates in the 1960s and 1970s, but by the mid-1980s, when Timothy McSeed shocked the nation, the change was being driven solely by increases in unwed parenthood. About four in every ten (41 percent) American children in 2008 were born outside of marriage, and, like Timothy’s six children, they are disproportionately minority and poor. A higher portion of white fathers give birth outside of marriage

which he fulfilled in 1996.

Meanwhile, scholars have responded to the trend by devoting a huge amount of attention to studying single-parent families, detailing the struggles of the parents and documenting the deleterious effects on the children. These studies have offered the American public a wealth of knowledge about the lives of the mothers and their progeny, yet they have told us next to nothing about the

...This is the story of disadvantaged fathers living in a struggling rustbelt metropolis at the turn of the twenty-first century. By examining each father's story as it unfolds, we offer a strong corrective to the conventional wisdom regarding fatherhood in America's inner cities. There is seldom anything fixed about the lives of the men in this book—not their romantic attachments, their jobs, or their ties to their kids. Only by revealing how they grapple with shifting contexts over time can we fully understand how so many will ultimately fail to play a significant and ongoing role in their children's lives.

The men in these pages seldom deliberately choose whom to have a child with; instead “one thing just leads to another” and a baby is born. Yet men often greet the news that they're going to become a dad with enthusiasm and a burst of optimism that despite past failures they can turn things around. Conception usually happens so quickly that the “real relationship” doesn't begin until the fuse of impending parenthood has been lit. For these couples, children aren't the expression of commitment; they are the source. In these early days, men often work hard to “get it together” for the sake of the baby—they try to stop doing the “stupid s***” (a term for the risky behavior that has led to past troubles) and to become the

man their baby's mother thinks family life requires. But in the end, the bond—which is all about the baby—is usually too weak to bring about the transformation required.

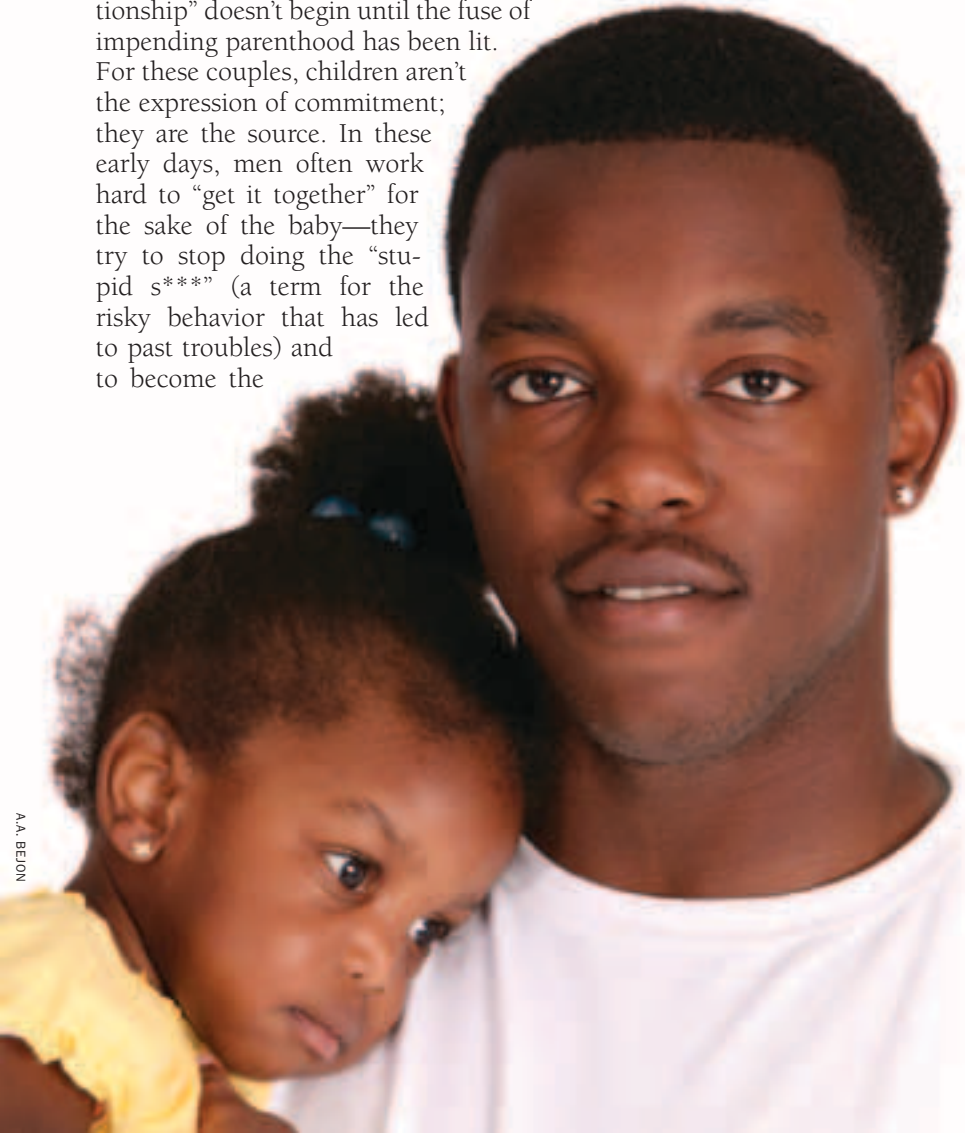
Not surprisingly, these relationships usually end, but instead of walking away from their kids, these men are often determined to play a vital role in their children's lives. This turns out to be far harder than they had envisioned. Nonetheless, they try to reclaim fatherhood by radically redefining the father role. These disadvantaged dads recoil at the notion that they are just a paycheck—they insist that their role is to “be there:” to show love and spend quality time. In their view, what's most important is to become their children's best friends. But this definition of fatherhood leaves all the hard jobs—the breadwinning, the discipline, and the moral guidance—to the moms.

As children age, an inner-city father's scorecard can easily show far more failures than success-

es, particularly because of the “stupid s***” he often finds so hard to shake. In this situation, it can require incredible tenacity and inner strength to stay involved. But few of these men give fatherhood only one try. Each new relationship offers another opportunity for “one thing” to “just lead to another” yet again. And a new baby with a new partner offers the tantalizing possibility of a fresh start. In the end, most men believe they've succeeded at fatherhood because they are managing to parent at least one of their children well at any given time. Yet this pattern of selective fathering leaves many children without much in the way of a dad.

By examining the unfolding stories of these men's lives beginning at courtship, and moving through conception, birth, and beyond, we come to see that the “hit and run” image of unwed fatherhood Moyers created by showcasing Timothy McSeed is a caricature and not an accurate rendering—a caricature that obscures more than it reveals. Some readers will argue that our portrayal is no more sympathetic, or less disturbing, than Moyers's. Others will find seeds of hope in these stories, albeit mixed with a strong dose of disheartening reality. But getting the story right is critical if we hope to craft policies to improve the lives of inner-city men and women and, of course, their children.

*Kathryn Edin is Professor of Public Policy and Management at the Kennedy School of Government and a Faculty Affiliate with the Sociology Department at Harvard University. Timothy Nelson is Lecturer in Social Policy at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. This article is based on the introduction to their book *Doing the Best I Can: Fatherhood in the Inner City* ©2013, University of California Press. Used by permission.*



Fall in Congress: The Season for Showdowns

BY THE NETWORK ISSUE STAFF

Congress returned from their August recess to a bevy of issues and political theatrics that altered their planned legislative calendar. Though Congress has been distressingly slow to help the 100%, recent legislative activity underscores the desperate need to stand with marginalized members of our communities.

NETWORK has juggled responding to unexpected issues, such as the planned-then-postponed U.S. military intervention in Syria, with managing ongoing advocacy for priorities like a responsible federal budget, immigration reform, and dignified access to quality healthcare. Most recently, we spoke out about the government shutdown and looming debt crisis.

Today, we repeat our call to Congress that they abandon empty political theater and focus on desperately needed solutions for our pressing financial and legislative woes.

Budget, Debt and Sequestration

As this *Connection* went to press, congressional gridlock had led to a government shutdown, and our elected leaders were engaged in political brinksmanship at the expense of the entire nation.

Turning democracy on its head, a small minority of legislators on the far right (mostly those affiliated with the Tea Party movement) had ignored the will of the people and most of the legislators, forcing the shutdown. Their goal was initially to attack and dismantle the Affordable Care Act, which is now the law of the land. Their demands fluctuated over the final weeks as they shifted among delaying the ACA for a year, repealing a medical device tax, piecemeal funding of government services, and miscellaneous other fiscal demands.

While much of the media coverage focused on barricades in front of parks and monuments along with disappointed tourists, NETWORK and others spoke out about the government shutdown's

far more serious effects on people already struggling at the economic margins.

The closure affected funding and staffing for vital programs that provide nutrition assistance for mothers and young children (WIC), education for young children (Head Start), job training, energy assistance, public housing, and much more. When added to the deep cuts already imposed by sequestration, the effects on struggling families were dramatic and deeply unjust.

At the same time, Congress debated to the last minute about how to deal with the debt ceiling. House Republicans initially demanded that strings be attached to any vote to raise the limit and pay our nation's bills. This would have created another financial crisis and is an unconscionable dereliction of duty. NETWORK strongly opposed any actions other than a "clean" raising of the limit. What we have spent, we have spent. And every bill must be paid.

Our nation has dealt with numerous crises over the years, but we at NETWORK have rarely witnessed such a dysfunctional legislative branch. Recent polling shows that the American people agree with our assessment. A very recent poll conducted by the Associated Press revealed that only 5% of the American public approved of Congress, with 68% saying that the government shutdown was a "major problem."

According to an NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, a record 60% of Americans reported that, if given the chance to vote, they would replace every member of Congress, including their own. Two-thirds also said that the shutdown was doing substantial harm to the economy.

NETWORK will continue to speak out loudly and strongly for a functional Congress that serves the common good. The American people deserve no less.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

This same Tea Party group has a second significant goal: to severely cut funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The House



Need up-to-date information about legislation in Congress? Check out NETWORK's Legislative Action Center at <http://capwiz.com/networklobby/issues/bills/>. ★ To learn what happened to legislation you followed in the past, go to <http://capwiz.com/networklobby/issues/votes/> and enter your zip code in the "Key Votes" field.



did not approve the farm bill, part of which is funding for nutrition assistance. Rather, they returned the bill to the Senate, minus the nutrition assistance section. They then passed the Nutrition Reform and Work Opportunity Act (H.R. 3102) to cut \$40 billion from SNAP over the next 10 years. Estimates by the Congressional Budget Office and advocacy groups are that almost four million people would lose SNAP benefits. In eliminating categorical eligibility, an estimated 280,000 children would be denied school meals. NETWORK continues to work for passage of a farm bill that adequately funds SNAP. Even without the House's damaging legislation, all SNAP benefits will be decreased effective 2013 as the 2009 Recovery Act's temporary boost to funding ends.

Healthcare: Affordable Care Act

The NETWORK community was influential in passing the Affordable Care Act, and we are continuing to see the fruits of our labor. On October 1, an estimated 44 million uninsured people gained new opportunities to get health insurance. At this point, 15 states and Washington, DC have state healthcare exchanges. States without their own exchange may have less access to information about how to get health insurance. Go to enrollamerica.org to learn more.

One matter that continues to deeply

concern NETWORK is that, in the 25 states that have thus far chosen to refuse Affordable Care Act federal funding to expand Medicaid, many struggling families will neither qualify for coverage under Medicaid nor will they be able to get tax credits to enroll under the new healthcare exchanges. NETWORK has active teams organizing for Medicaid expansion in Ohio, Virginia, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Wisconsin, Missouri and South Dakota. Email networkupdate@networklobby.org if you want to join efforts with these teams to advocate to the governors and state legislatures for dignified access to quality healthcare for all.

Immigration

Before September 20, our best hope for comprehensive immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship was the bipartisan "Gang of 7" group working in the House of Representatives. Now, more options are emerging. Democratic Representatives Grijalva and Vela introduced CIR ASAP (H.R. 3163) and Democrats in the House of Representatives have introduced and cosponsored H.R. 15, a bill similar to the Senate-passed bipartisan bill S. 744 with some border security adjustments. Despite these comprehensive options, it looks like leadership in the House of Representatives will continue to address reform in a piecemeal fashion.

Currently, there are five piecemeal bills that have gone through the committee markup process. They are the Strengthen and Fortify Enforcement (SAFE) Act (H.R. 2278), Ag Act (H.R. 1773), Legal Workforce Act (H.R. 1772), SKILLS Visa Act (H.R. 2131) and the Border Security Results Act (H.R. 417). None of these bills provide solutions for aspiring Americans who are already in the United States, and the SAFE Act, which would criminalize being undocumented, is particularly worrisome for our families, neighbors and communities.

We are pleased that other bills could gain traction. Representative Roybal-Allard's Protect Family Values at the Border Act would significantly improve repatriation practices and treatment of individuals in detention. We are also waiting for the KIDS Act, the House version of the DREAM Act, designed to provide a pathway to citizenship for people who were brought to the U.S. as children without documentation.

NETWORK will continue to work for commonsense reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for aspiring Americans. If you would like to connect more with our work, or let us know about a local event in your community or visit you had with your member of Congress please email awilson@networklobby.org.

Syria

On September 4, when military action against Syria seemed imminent after the use of chemical weapons on the Syrian people, NETWORK issued a statement deploring the violence and suffering Syrians continue to experience. We opposed any U.S. bombing, knowing it would result in more violence.

We continue to believe that diplomatic and political solutions, combined with humanitarian aid, are more effective than military force when addressing complex crises such as this and are hopeful that the U.N. can make strides for peace in securing Syrian's chemical weapons.

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From the Unthinkable to Thinkable and Possible: Helping Young Pakistani Boys Turn Away from Extremism

BY MOSSARAT QADEEM

Pakistan in general, and the province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Areas in particular, have suffered immensely as violence surged to unprecedented levels in these regions of my country for the last few years. Many reasons are attributed to this unprecedented increase in violent extremism, but chief among them are said to have been the weaponization of communities, the transformation of youth into becoming extremists, and the influx of money that is being pumped in from different channels. Rectifying measures are the need of the hour, but the process of rehabilitation, reintegration, peacebuilding and social cohesion cannot be successful in any society unless women are involved as they play vital roles in averting violence, resolving conflict, and helping rebuild their societies.

We founded PAIMAN (an Urdu word meaning “promise”) Alumni Trust in 2004. It is a nonprofit group promoting sociopolitical and economic empowerment of marginalized Pakistanis. PAIMAN Trust saves not only individual lives; it saves families.

PAIMAN’s center for conflict transformation and peacebuilding has built the capacity of thousands of male and female youth in conflict transformation, peacebuilding and mediation across the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province to help build social cohesion in the most volatile region of Pakistan. We bring in youth from different ethnic and sectarian groups and put them together to think and act collectively and to learn the skills needed to address violent extremism through non-violent ways of engaging and building networks of like-minded youth.

How We Work

PAIMAN works directly with mothers of radicalized youths, builds their capacity in critical thinking, and infuses a sense of confidence to ask questions. We help them understand the signs of resentment or any behavioral or attitudinal change in their sons. We also train them in various marketable skills to start earning a living so they can have a say in their families’ affairs.

We reach out to radicalized and vulnerable youth through their mothers. We use the text of the Quran in its context to address and help transform the minds of the youth who have been forced to act wrongly using the same text but without the context.

So far, 80 young boys have turned to a new life after PAIMAN in our own subtle manner shattered their smug world of falsified indoctrination. I and my partners in this sojourn have taken upon ourselves to purge the society of nefarious designs of extremists who have affected the psyche of people in Pakistan in general and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Areas bordering strife-torn Afghanistan in particular—where every home has lost one or more male family members to the violence or false indoctrination aimed at bringing destruction. After transformation from an extremist person, we ensure that the boys receive job training and education, and work with them through the difficult phase of reintegration into their families as well as find them jobs.

People often ask me and my colleagues which model do we follow for de-radicalization; do we follow an Indonesian Model or Cuban Model? But we can proudly say that ours is a unique, indigenous and innovative model of engaging the mothers and also keeping in view our religious realities and cultural sensibilities.

The innovative method of working through mothers has helped transform hundreds of youth, and we have brought mothers from different ethnic and sectarian groups to work collectively to moderate extremism.

I did not imagine doing all this, but perhaps providence has its own ways. I majored in Gender Studies at the Institute of Social Sciences in the Netherlands, received my M.Phil. degree in International Politics (major: Conflict Studies) from the University of Hull, and taught at the prestigious Peshawar University



OMNIBUS

Three young men of Bahawalnagar, a border town with India.



PATRICK PENNELL

At the Faisal Mosque in Islamabad.

for thirteen years before joining the social sector. I also served as the Minister for Information and Public Relations, Culture, Education, Women Development and Social Welfare in the caretaker government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Extremists in this part of Pakistan not only recklessly slaughter, but they are covetous of glory as well in the name of Islam. For me it had always been tragic to witness boys taking interest in all sorts of ghoulish events taking place around them; the sights of the killings, the shootings, the hostage-taking and the lamentations of victims.

One Young Man's Story

Let me recall here the story of one Safiullah, a young boy in his early twenties who once became part of violent extremists prior to his transformation. Just like other boys of his age, he developed a liking for worn-out clichés of extremists and the false promises they made to the public. He joined a militant organization and soon he was “promoted” to upper echelons because of his extraordinary commitment. Safiullah would do anything on the command of higher authorities. Given his personality traits, he was daggers drawn to everyone and did not spare anyone.

One day, Safiullah was told that he was being sent on “training.” Safiullah was overjoyed when he heard this since he wanted to do something for the cause of extremists and extremism, and wanted to gain prominence. He had been indoctrinated to the extent that he was ready to do anything in the name of

Islam. He was sent to a rugged hilly terrain where he was given military training and sermons on the importance of sacrificing one's life for the cause of Islam. His utopia was full of fanciful settings; public beheadings, suicide bombings, seventy nymphs in paradise; his trainer also told him that Holy Prophet (PBUH) would “greet” him at the doors of heaven if he lays down his life and kills the “infidels” in a suicide attack.

“There will be seventy nymphs waiting for you and you will be allowed to drink like fish,” his trainer told him one day. In the heat of the moment, Safiullah made up his mind to sacrifice his life.

When his “D” day arrived, the extremists gave him new clothes and new shoes, and all hugged him as if he were going to enter into paradise. “You are fortunate, brother, as you are leaving this temporal abode,” his best friend hugged him and continued, “Pay my Salam to Holy Prophet (PBUH) when you meet him.”

Safiullah reached the target point where he was supposed to explode himself. He entered into the crowd to cause maximum damage; when he pushed the button to explode himself, the vest did not blow off completely due to some technical flaw, but left him badly injured. Two hit men were also covertly dispatched with him by the outfit to shoot him in case he did not blow himself up. The hit men opened fire on him but he narrowly escaped. Sensing what a blunder he had committed, he made his escape from the scene and hid in different places. Fortunately, in one of his hideouts he met PAIMAN's peace practitioners who brought him to my organization.

I knew from the onset that it was an uphill task to transform the boy, but I was determined to metamorphize the young lad, come what may. I started conducting exclusive sessions with him and showed to him the other ugly side of the coin. “This conflict is about humans and their ulterior motives; it's not about religion,” I told him during one of the sessions. It took us two months before Safiullah understood how such unscrupulous elements turned the ordinary people around and made their lives a living hell; he started showing the signs of repentance.

Under supervision of PAIMAN, Safi-

ullah completed his masters' degree and now he is employed at a respectable position in a private bank. He still regrets the day when two innocent girls came in the line of firing and breathed their last in front of him, when the hit men opened fire on him and the bullets erroneously hit the innocent girls. Though it was not his fault, Safiullah visited the house of both girls to express his condolences.

Women and Peace

I am also the national coordinator of Amn-O-Nisa (Women and Peace) a coalition of women leaders throughout Pakistan striving to moderate violent extremism and promote understanding among diverse ethnic and religious issues. Amn-O-Nisa is the Pakistani Women's Coalition Against Extremism and finds strength in six R's (Reconcile, Resolve, Reintegrate, Redefine, Rehabilitate, and Rebuild). PWCAE reflects the vision of Pakistani women to change the country for the better by eradicating extremism. They have been experiencing irremediable losses of their bread-earner male family members and are constantly going through physical, financial and emotional insecurities.

My humble efforts of moderating extremism have resulted in the publication of two books, a series of articles, and many documentaries on topics including mothers for change and women's experiences with conflict and extremism.

Mossarat Qadeem is Executive Director of PAIMAN Alumni Trust, which is based in Islamabad. www.paimantrust.org.



Finding Room for Men in the Safety Net

By JOY MOSES

A relatively small but growing group of voices has been championing the cause of low-income men and fathers—they come from grassroots groups, national organizations, foundations, Congress, and even the White House. Their reasons may vary but, at heart, all of those involved in the movement seem to agree that low-income men and fathers have an inherent value that is not being fully realized. Currently, far too many men are simply disconnected in far too many ways—from employment, their families and society.

Employment rates for men with a high school diploma or less dropped more than 20 percentage points between 1970 and 2000, and those rates have not substantially increased since that time. Poverty is contributing to family breakdowns as 9.3 million poor children now live apart from their fathers and 44 percent of mothers in these families report that their children have no contact with their dads. Although growths in mass incarceration are subsiding, there are still 1.4 million men currently in prison—most having entered the system with limited education and therefore limited employment opportunities. Men of color are disproportionately affected in all of these areas.

These challenges suggest that men should receive the best possible help from the safety net. However, limited numbers of men have access to job help and SNAP food assistance. Healthcare reform is just beginning to open the doors to Medicaid in those states that choose to participate in a federal expansion of services. Overall, however, there isn't much available for men unless they are in the direst of circumstances and are able to get a cot in a homeless shelter.

The lack of assistance men receive is rooted in the origins of welfare. Emerging during the New Deal, this income assistance program was created for single mothers who were correctly identi-

fied as being at a disadvantage in the economy and workforce. Other social services were later created with the same target population and reasoning in mind. Men were considered able to take care of themselves. With the chang-



AWAKENED EVE

ing fortunes of male workers, however, it has become clear that gender is not a determining factor in who might need a hand-up in their efforts to achieve economic security.

History aside, the role of men in the safety net is affected by reactions to resource constraints and perceptions about the value of serving men. When critical services such as child care and housing assistance fall short of reaching all of the mothers who need help, the idea of investing some resources in men is challenged. Marriage and child support payment rates cause some to devalue men as people who do not take

care of their kids—even worse, employment and incarceration rates can feed stereotypes painting all low-income men as dangerous criminals who don't work. Within these narratives men have no value to their families or no value generally.

These notions don't exclusively belong to the political right or left. And they take the conversation in some wrong directions spiritually, politically, practically and racially.

Spiritually, we have to question whether God created any group of people with no inherent value or that is unworthy of a helping hand when in need.

Politically, we should question paths that divide and conquer efforts to help families. Investments in both mothers and fathers ultimately benefit children.

Practically, we have to think about how we could possibly solve the problem of poverty by only focusing on half the adults (the women) in families and communities.

Racially, we have to wonder whether generalized notions of low-income men are also influenced by racial stereotypes, with the blocking of services reflecting where the nation stands on racial justice.

All of these factors suggest the need for unified movement towards improving the safety net—movement that considers whole families, or at least the needs of men and fathers in conjunction with those of women and children.



Joy Moses is a Senior Policy Analyst in the Poverty and Prosperity Program at the Center for American Progress in Washington, DC.

Fiscal Responsibility: Tax Justice for the Common Good

“From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.”— Luke 12:48

As people of faith, we are called to care for our sisters and brothers, especially those most in need. In addition to working in our own neighborhoods and faith communities, we are called to work in the political sphere to help build a system of government—including a tax system—that promotes our values of community and caring for those struggling on the economic margins.

How is the Current Tax System Unfair?

- * Though the federal tax code is relatively progressive, there are real injustices in the system. For example, flat taxes like payroll and sales taxes have a regressive effect and disproportionately affect lower-income people.
- * The top tax rate in the 1950s was 91%—today it is 35%. Due to a multitude of tax credits, many of the wealthiest individuals pay an effective rate as little as 11%.
- * Due to both unintentional and intentional tax loopholes, many large corporations and extremely wealthy individuals pay zero federal income tax.

What Can the Tax System Do Better?

- * Loopholes for wealthy individuals and corporations must be examined and some must be closed to ensure everyone is contributing to the revenue that drives our country’s important social programs and long-term infrastructure investments, which help people climb out of poverty.
- * Capital gains (income from selling stocks, bonds and other investments) should be taxed at the same rate as earned income.
- * The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) should be strengthened. These are tax expenditures that help hardworking families and individuals, promote economic mobility, and help grow the economy.

What Can We Do For Tax Justice?

- * Lobby Congress for a fairer tax code that ensures the wealthiest among us pay at least the same effective tax rate as middle class families.
- * Contact your senators and representatives in Congress to tell them you support an increase in reasonable revenue to reduce inequality.
- * For more information about how to fight income inequality and move to a more just tax code, check out NETWORK Education Program’s ***Mind the Gap!, Mend the Gap,*** and ***We the Taxpayer*** programs: <http://www.networklobby.org/nep/campaigns>

We encourage the reproduction and distribution of this back-to-back fact sheet.



NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace
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Educate and Advocate for Tax Justice!

NETWORK has excellent resources for anyone looking to learn more about wealth inequality.

If you want to learn more about how to heal inequality . . .

- Register to receive the *Mend the Gap!* email series**
Throughout the fall, you can receive weekly emails with tools addressing the wealth gap in four areas of federal policy: Tax Policy, Asset Building, Housing, and Labor.
- And register your friends, family and representatives**
Your loved ones and our elected officials need tools to heal wealth inequality as well. Sign them up, or refer them to the campaign's website (below).
- Visit NETWORK Education Program's campaign website**
Explore the entire *Mend the Gap!* campaign, where each lesson is broken down for easy navigation.



For more information and to register for the email series, visit www.networklobby.org/nep/mendthegap or email Shannon Hughes, NETWORK Education Program Manager, at shughes@networklobby.org.

If you are an educator interested in resources for teaching tax justice . . .

- Investigate *We the Taxpayers* resources**
We the Taxpayers addresses the structure of our current tax system, what our taxes support, and how we might adjust the tax system to better represent our values.
- Become a *We the Taxpayers* workshop facilitator**
You can learn more about the *We the Taxpayers* curriculum by attending a facilitator training. October 2013 trainings are currently scheduled in Cincinnati, OH. Other opportunities will be available soon!



For more information or to inquire about *We the Taxpayers* facilitator trainings, visit www.networklobby.org/nep/WeTheTaxpayers or email Shantha Ready Alonso, NETWORK Field Organizing Manager, at sready@networklobby.org.

We encourage the reproduction and distribution of this back-to-back fact sheet.

“Reasonable Revenue for Responsible Programs”

BY SHANNON HUGHES

Right now, many elected officials are saying we don't have enough money to create the communities we want—communities with quality education, dignified healthcare, and clean, safe places to live, work, play and pray. In truth, all we need is public support for a strong enough tax base to build those things together, but it's not easy to start an informative, exciting and hopeful conversation about . . . taxes.

A Personal Journey

Like so many NETWORK members, I've learned to connect my faith to loads of personal choices—I've attended church, volunteered at an Earth Center, soup kitchens and afterschool programs, started drinking fair trade coffee, and dabbled in vegetarianism. My faith moved me around the world to teach high school in a developing nation, and back again to work for affordable housing in my hometown. But I never talked about faith and . . . my taxes.

My spiritual life and my financial contributions to my government seemed unrelated. But last summer, as the Nuns on the Bus chanted about “reasonable revenue for responsible programs,” I started to think about all the ways we care for our neighbors, brothers and sisters, and about the ways that revenues determine what we can do together. Taxes—from what we pay, to the exclusions we allow, to the programs and infrastructure they support—connect me directly to the structures and people around me.

A Shared/Interfaith History

With just a little digging, I learned that in many faith traditions, my connection wasn't a new one. Since their

earliest days, Judaism, Christianity and Islam have concerned themselves with how our money does or does not contribute to economic justice and a healthy spiritual life. All of these faiths work toward an ideal of increased fairness, opportunity and equality among humankind, and each of them points toward organized financial systems as one crucial way to get there.

federal budget that reflects our values: a “Faithful Budget.” NETWORK Education staff is working with local leaders to set up facilitator-training days. We can train groups of eight to ten people, and give each leader a facilitator's guide and DVD of the five short videos that bring this topic to life. After the training, our staff will offer the support you need to lead a small group through the six lessons. Check out the introductory video on our website today (www.networklobby.org/nep/WeTheTaxpayers).

GUSTAVE DORE, 1875



“Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.”

Taxes are one of the most direct ways that we—the people—are connected to each other and to the society we share. The way we use and share resources can bring us closer to each other and to our faith, or drive us apart.

What You Can Do

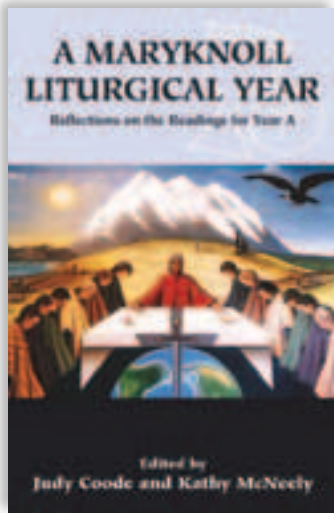
NETWORK's new tax curriculum, *We the Taxpayers*, aims to transform our national conversation about revenue in six lessons. Through instructive videos, discussions and guided activities, we hope people of faith will start talking about a

If you're not ready to lead a small group, but would like to learn more about the issues of economic justice facing our nation, you can sign up to receive our email series, *Mend the Gap!*, an individual, online learning experience about strategies to heal wealth inequality through federal policies on Taxes, Asset Building, Labor and Housing. The lessons explore the history of anti-poverty movements and policy choices we could make today to reverse the widening wealth gap.

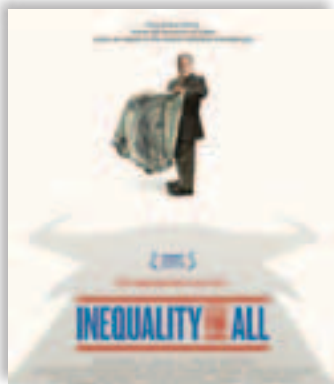
It's up to us to decide what we want our taxes to do. Our choices about the way we use and move money can bring us closer to God's intentions for abundance, or drive fragments of our nation farther apart. We have the ability to reject the economic injustice in our nation today, and trust in a God who desires a common good, where each person in society has enough. Moving from our commitment to each other, we can make a positive change.

Join us today by using the tools on pages 13-14 in this issue to spread the word!

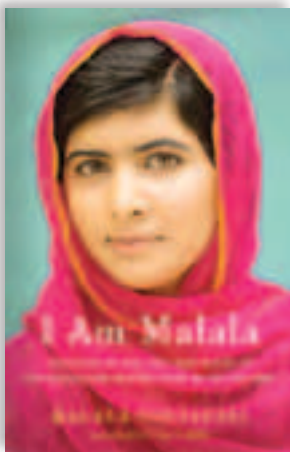
Shannon Hughes is NETWORK's Education Program Manager.



A Maryknoll Liturgical Year; Reflections on the Readings for Year A, ed. by Judy Coode and Kathy McNeely, Orbis <http://www.orbisbooks.com/a-maryknoll-liturgical-year-en.html>



Inequality for All, a Robert Reich film directed by Jacob Kornbluth <http://inequalityforall.com/>



I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb; Little, Brown and Co. <http://www.littlebrown.com/malala.html>

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Celebrate community this holiday season!

As the holy season of Advent arrives in the coming weeks, we hope you will remember NETWORK's continued work for justice.

A great way to increase the impact of our community is to give a NETWORK membership to a loved one this holiday season. We will send your recipient a welcome package introducing them to our movement for social justice, as well as issues of *Connection* through 2014.

You can order gift memberships by filling out the enclosed envelope, or call Megan Dominy at 202-347-9797 ext. 200, or go online at www.networklobby.org/gift.

Act before December 12 for a special rate of \$35 for each gift membership!

