

# Seek & Serve

*Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?*

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Women in Grand Cape Mount County, Liberia take part in a focus group discussion on gender-based violence.

## Empowering Women — Ending Violence

*For the Lord is righteous, he loves justice; the upright will see his face.*

**Psalms 11**

These words resonate with us when we consider how to respond when we see one person hurt by the actions of another. Our goal is to achieve justice, but also to understand why a wrong was committed, and to do all we can to keep it from happening again.

This principle guides our efforts to tackle one of the most entrenched and difficult problems facing women and girls the world over — gender-based violence. Though no form of wrongdoing is more deserving of anger and outrage, our response must be based not on seeking vengeance but achieving righteousness.

The reality is that violence against women is one of the most insidious forms of repression that exists today. Whether the aggression is physical or psychological, its impact is the same: to prevent women and girls from reaching their potential. And when women and girls suffer, their communities suffer as well.

Episcopal Relief & Development's program works to stop the cycle of violence and to empower women, not only to overcome past trauma, but to elevate their status in the home and society so that it can be avoided in the first place. This involves working with

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## President's Column:

# Leading by Example

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Many good people were responsible for ushering Episcopal Relief & Development into existence in 1940, but if one person qualifies for the title of founding father, it is the Rt. Rev. Paul Jones, a man whose life story of courage and resolve holds important lessons for us 75 years later.

A man of strong convictions, Bishop Jones was elected missionary bishop in Utah in 1914. He believed passionately in the Social Gospel's call to peace and justice, and opposed discrimination against African Americans and Jews. He even worked to allow the election of women as convocation officers — an idea decades ahead of its time.

Bishop Jones' rise coincided with the outbreak of World War I, and he did not hide his view that war was evil and that the United States should not get involved. After he spoke at an anti-war rally in 1917, the Bishop's Council demanded — and received — his resignation. Though he was a bishop for life, he had no diocese and was denied a vote in the House of Bishops.

Bishop Jones could have fallen prey to self-pity, anger or despair. Instead, he pursued his calling with as much vigor as ever. He directed the Fellowship of Reconciliation, an interfaith coalition for peace, and served as acting bishop of Southern Ohio. And he became the chaplain at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, where he was voted the school's most popular professor and earned the moniker "Bishop to the Universe."

After the Nazis took power in Germany in the 1930s, Bishop Jones pushed his diocese to find ways to assist Jewish and other refugees and resettle them in America. At his impetus, the Diocese of Southern Ohio led the way for the entire Episcopal Church to embrace the cause of German refugees and launch the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, the original name for Episcopal Relief & Development.

Tragically, within a year of seeing his life's work come to fruition, Bishop Jones passed away from melanoma. But he did receive a measure of posthumous redemption. In 1991, the General Convention of The Episcopal Church asked the Standing Liturgical Commission to add Bishop Jones' name to its Church Calendar of Lesser Feasts and Fasts. September 4th, the date of his death, is now Bishop Jones' Day of Special Commemoration.

Whether or not one agrees with Bishop Jones' views, I think we can all find inspiration in the bravery and perseverance he displayed. He paid a fearsome price for following his conscience, yet he continued on undaunted.

And that is exactly the spirit we seek to capture today at Episcopal Relief & Development. Because the monumental task of healing a hurting world is never easy and is often fraught with setbacks. Success requires both passion and patience, both tenacity and adaptability, both courage of one's convictions and the capacity to listen. Above all, it requires the ability to keep charging boldly forward, just as Bishop Jones did.

As I reflect on the 75th anniversary of Episcopal Relief & Development, I'm also reminded that this is the 10-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina — and my tenure as president. Throughout this past decade, our response to Katrina along the Gulf Coast — which continues to this day — reinforces the importance of persistence in all of our work. And it certainly is a quality I have sought to bring to my service at the helm of this remarkable organization.

All of us owe a debt to Bishop Jones, and all of us can repay it by upholding his great legacy, especially during our 75th anniversary year. That's certainly what I will seek to do as we keep moving forward on the path to healing a hurting world.



Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'R. W. Radtke'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping 'R' and a distinct 'W'.

Robert W. Radtke  
President



# The Matthew<sup>25</sup> Legacy Society

We are grateful that many of our supporters have become members of the Matthew<sup>25</sup> Legacy Society by notifying us that they are remembering Episcopal Relief & Development in their will or through other planned gifts.

Through bequests, we are assured of future funding — funding that can help us eliminate malaria, ensure that every family on every continent has access to safe drinking water and guarantee that all children, no matter where they live, receive at least a complete primary school education. These things can be achieved only if we have the resources to sustain our endeavors.

Bequests and other forms of planned giving allow us to do just that. Please consider joining the Matthew<sup>25</sup> Legacy Society by contacting us at 1-855-312-HEAL (4325). You can also learn more at [episcopalrelief.org/plannedgiving](http://episcopalrelief.org/plannedgiving).

## Fair Trade with Equal Exchange

It is with great joy and a strong commitment to fostering healthy communities that Episcopal Relief & Development has embraced the concept of Fair Trade by entering into a new partnership with Equal Exchange. By promoting Fair Trade, Equal Exchange is committed to transforming communities from hunger and poverty to a sustainable and healthy way of life.

The money we spend and the products we buy can affect more than just our own families. When you buy something that is certified as Fair Trade, this means that your money is going to help farmers whose practices are environmentally friendly, who are working to combat poverty in their area and who put time and effort into making your purchase the best it can be. We do not always consider that the smallest of our actions can make a world of difference for families across the globe, but Equal Exchange is making it easy to have a positive effect on the lives of thousands of people. They help create trade relationships that will result in healthy, productive lives for the farmers that work so hard to provide us with what we need.

Episcopal Relief & Development continues to expand its reach to do more to stop hunger and suffering the world over. This new partnership with Equal Exchange means that fifteen cents per pound of every Fair Trade item purchased through the Episcopal Relief & Development Fair Trade Project is donated to our efforts to heal a hurting world. And as more of our members support Fair Trade, we can more easily make a difference in the lives of people who may ordinarily have been pushed aside in the economically-driven world that we live in today. Visit [equalexchange.coop/episcopalrelief](http://equalexchange.coop/episcopalrelief) to purchase these fine coffees, teas, chocolates and foods while also supporting the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.



A new partnership with Equal Exchange is helping fund our efforts to heal a hurting world.

# Empowering Women — Ending Violence *(Continued from cover)*

on-the-ground partners — especially clergy — in six countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Honduras and Brazil.

Because the violence and aggression aimed at women and girls are often perpetrated under the cover of custom or convention, the best way to tackle this sensitive issue is by starting with the basics. Our first step is to open people's eyes to the very existence of gender-based violence and to help them recognize it. We then work to gain buy-in from both clergy and the community at large to take action to stop it.

In Liberia, Episcopal Relief & Development and our partner, the Episcopal Church of Liberia, are being supported by a grant from the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. We started there by convening Christian and Muslim clergy to dissect the problem and then brainstorm ways they can use their important roles in the community to increase awareness and provide support to women and girls suffering due to violence.

Our goal is to help religious leaders be champions in the fight to end violence, to end the stigma of talking about women and their role in households, to promote healthy and equitable relationships and to support churches as safe places for victims of violence. And it is being furthered by the archbishops of the Internal Province of West Africa, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other countries, who have shown great leadership in talking about this problem.

Notably, one of the two counties in Liberia that are the focus of this initiative is 80 percent Muslim. Yet this clergy-based approach is taking place in that county too, with the assistance of Islamic scholars who have highlighted passages from the Koran that speak of the value and rights of women.

It's critical that we educate people affected by gender-based violence about available support services such as safe houses and shelters, health workers and counselors, law enforcement authorities and legal representatives. Religious, lay and community leaders are being taught about comprehensive referral services for survivors of violence, and the unique role they can play in linking their constituents to much needed support.

In addition, these efforts are being integrated with Episcopal Relief & Development's other programs. Community savings groups for women so they can support one another as they become more economically



**Photos used to guide discussions about the power and influence that key individuals and institutions have over the decisions that vulnerable women and girls take in response to sexual violence.**

independent and training for women farmers on improved planting and harvesting methods also help empower women, which in turn reduces the incidence of gender-based violence.

This is a complex issue and there are no one-size-fits-all solutions. That is why Episcopal Relief & Development's programs in this area vary according to the realities of each country and community. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, we can tap into an established Church health network to support women who have been subjected to violence. In Burundi, we are integrating our anti-violence efforts into hunger and HIV/AIDS eradication programs. In Honduras, Episcopal Relief & Development and our partner, Siempre Unidos, are focusing on empowering LGBT community members. And in Brazil, the current focus is on teaching clergy about speaking out against domestic violence.

Stopping gender-based violence requires overcoming entrenched attitudes and behaviors that can go back centuries. That's no easy task, but it could not be more urgent because it is critical to protecting women and girls, lifting the yoke of oppression and unleashing their potential.

Church leaders are ideally suited to be at the forefront of this cause because they are respected and trusted community members with moral authority and the capacity to provide counsel and to advocate for needed services. That's why Episcopal Relief & Development's faith-based approach to ending gender-based violence and empowering women offers so much promise for producing "the righteousness that God desires."