



Nebraska Report

There is no Peace without Justice

SEPTEMBER 2005

VOLUME 33, NUMBER 7

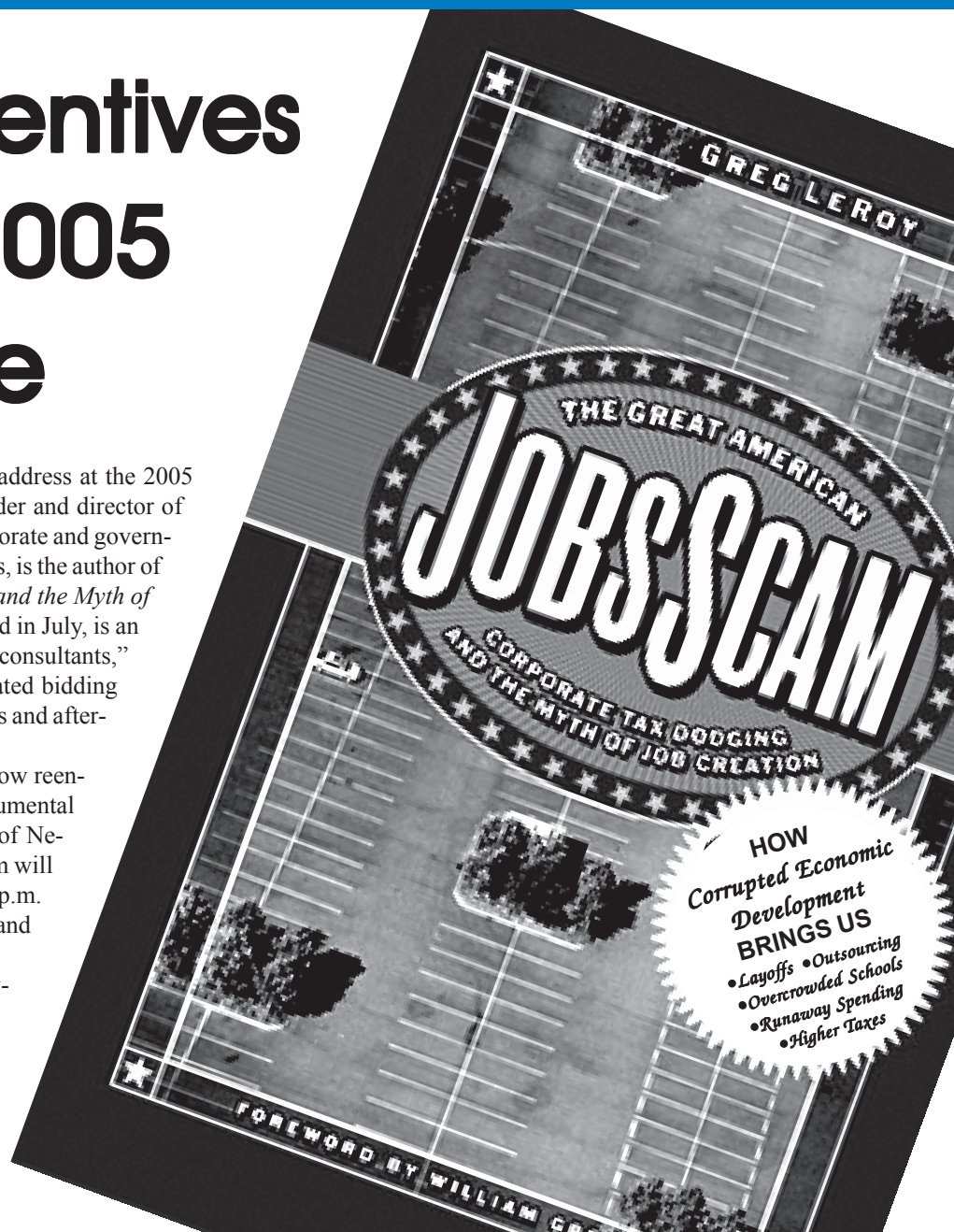
Corporate Tax Incentives Critic To Address 2005 Peace Conference

A nationally acclaimed critic of corporate tax incentives will deliver the keynote address at the 2005 Annual Peace Conference in Lincoln on Saturday, October 15. Greg LeRoy, founder and director of Good Jobs First (www.goodjobsfirst.org), a national resource center promoting corporate and government accountability in economic development and smart growth for working families, is the author of several books, including *The Great American Jobs Scam: Corporate Tax Dodging and the Myth of Job Creation* (more info at www.greatamericanjobsscam.com). This book, published in July, is an exposé of how prominent companies, with the collusion of shadowy “site location consultants,” extort millions of dollars worth of tax breaks and giveaways in carefully orchestrated bidding wars between states and communities. Both Greg LeRoy’s Saturday morning address and afternoon workshop will focus on this all-too-prevalent tactic of corporate blackmail.

The conference program will also feature actress Elena Dodd’s one-woman show reenacting moments from the political life of Eleanor Roosevelt, particularly her instrumental work in the founding of the United Nations. Jointly sponsored by the University of Nebraska-Omaha School of Social Work and Nebraskans for Peace, this year’s program will be held at Trinity United Methodist Church, 16th and A Streets from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Early registration cost, which includes lunch, is \$30 per person (\$10 for students and low-income participants).

Given the uncertainties surrounding Nebraska’s economic situation, state government has never been more in need of Greg LeRoy’s solid analysis. From 2001 to 2004, in the face of continuing shortfalls in state tax receipts, the Nebraska Legislature cut virtually every program in the budget (including five straight rounds of cuts to K-12 education, higher ed and social services), but left intact LB 775 tax breaks for Big Business. Despite growing concerns about LB 775’s cost-effectiveness, the senators repeatedly spared the annual \$130+ million program from the budget knife, arguing that corporate tax incentives were vital for economic

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Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 310
Lincoln, NE

Nebraska Report

The *Nebraska Report* is published nine times annually by Nebraskans for Peace. Opinions stated do not necessarily reflect the views of the directors or staff of Nebraskans for Peace.

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Typesetting and Layout: marketing assistants plus!

Printing: Fremont Tribune Circulation: 6,500

Letters, articles, photographs and graphics are welcomed. Deadline is the first of the month for publication in the following month's issue. Submit to: *Nebraska Report*, c/o Nebraskans for Peace, 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508.

Nebraskans for Peace

Nebraskans for Peace is a statewide grassroots advocacy organization working nonviolently for peace with justice through community-building, education and political action.

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Latin America Briefs

compiled by Christy Hargesheimer



Colombia Certified

Just prior to Colombian President Alvaro Uribe's visit with President Bush at his ranch in Crawford, Texas August 3, the U.S. State Department certified Colombia as meeting human rights requirements, clearing the way for billions of dollars in future aid from the United States and for Uribe's request for millions more to support his plans to demobilize up to 20,000 paramilitary fighters.

Over twelve percent of military aid was frozen for half of 2004 over lack of progress in cases involving extrajudicial executions and other abuses by Colombia's military. Some progress has been made in two cases, but little progress has been made in investigating the case of two families in San José de Apartadó, who were murdered and their bodies dismembered in February 2005, with evidence pointing to soldiers. The high-profile Mapiripán massacre case is still dragging through the courts.

A new Colombian law virtually ensures impunity for paramilitary leaders who have committed human rights and drug trafficking crimes. It provides generous benefits for paramilitary leaders who demobilize, without requiring that they fully dismantle their organizations or ensuring that the men under their command demobilize. Prosecutors will have only 60 days to investigate and charge demobilizing commanders for atrocious crimes, a process that routinely takes a year or two.

CAFTA Passes

After a bitter and prolonged battle, on June 31 the Senate approved the Central American Free Trade Agreement, which would eliminate most trade restrictions on about \$32 billion in annual trade with the Dominican Republic and the five Central American nations of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua. After intense negotiations between White House officials and leading lawmakers, wavering Republicans settled for modest extra protections and heeded veiled warnings about reprisals to those who balked.

The House of Representatives followed suit, approving CAFTA at 12:03 a.m. on July 28. In a stomach-churning display of 'democracy' at work, the U.S. Trade Representative Robert Portman was joined by Vice President Dick Cheney in working the House floor, making deals to secure votes. President Bush made a highly rare appearance in the House, mostly framing CAFTA as a security issue. At the end of the allotted 15 minutes of voting time, the count was 180 to 175 against CAFTA, so the Republican leadership broke rules and kept the vote open over an hour, in order to bully legislators into approving the bill. In the final tally, 217 to 215, a full 15 Democrats voted in favor of big business by supporting CAFTA, while 25 Republicans defied the Bush Administration and voted against it.

The effect of CAFTA in both Central America and the U.S. will be years of decreasing living standards, falling wages, eroding environmental protection, and loss of family farms. Additionally, the 275,000 HIV positive Central Americans will be cut off from life-saving generic medicines because of patent monopolies embodied in the treaty.

All five members of the Nebraska Congressional delegation voted for CAFTA.

Air Wars: Telesur vs. TeleBush

Telesur, the new pan-Latin American TV channel that will counter the 'objectivity' of CNN, is based in Venezuela, which has a 51 percent share in it, with Cuba, Argentina, and Uruguay making up the other 49 percent. The Bush Administration considers Telesur to be an attack against the U.S. Rep. Connie Mack of Florida has introduced a bill authorizing the U.S. government "to initiate radio and television broadcasts that will provide a consistently accurate, objective, and comprehensive source of news to Venezuela." That is, it threatens to combat the Bolivarian Revolution by installing in Venezuela a TV copy of Radio Martí, a vehicle by which the Cuban community in Miami systematically assaults Cuba.

"If the U.S. government dares to take any action, whatever it may be—for example, if it issues very powerful [TV] signals - well, then, there will be electronic warfare," declared President Chávez, adding that, "If Fidel Castro has been able to neutralize the signal of Radio Martí, than we will also neutralize any signal."

Put the Nebraska Peace Foundation in Your Will



graphic by Justin Kemmerling

'Global Strike' Mission Blurs Nuclear/ Conventional Lines for StratCom

by Loring Wirbel

Defense analyst Loring Wirbel was a guest speaker at the SOS 2005 protest in Omaha August 6. A long-time associate of the Colorado Springs-based "Citizens for Peace in Space," he is the author of Star Wars: U.S. Tools of Space Supremacy, published by Pluto Press in 2004.

Colorado peace activists did not experience a profound sense of loss when the U.S. Space Command moved to Offutt AFB in Omaha in the fall of 2002. Colorado already plays host to Buckley AFB, the Western Hemisphere's largest military intelligence base; Cheyenne Air Force Station, the bunker beneath Cheyenne Mountain where missile launches are observed; Schriever AFB, the home of the Space Warfare Center as well as several military wings dedicated to controlling satellites; Fort Carson, one of the largest Army deployment sites for troops going to Iraq; and of course, the sprawling Peterson AFB in Colorado Springs.

In fact, Peterson did not even lose very much when Strategic Command and U.S. Space Command were merged in October 2002. The Air Force Space Command was elevated to four-star general status, gaining almost as many new employees as were lost to Offutt. In the meantime, Peterson was made the home of the Northern Command, the nation's first domestic combat command.

What did StratCom gain? A unified control structure for oversight of nuclear and conventional weapons, including the high-tech space tools that represented the cutting edge of warfare in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. StratCom also gained new missions that had only been given to U.S. Space Command in recent years, such as government-wide responsibility for computer attack and computer defense.

The Defense Department knew exactly what it could gain by putting USSC and StratCom together. At the now-infamous August 2003 Stockpile Stewardship Meeting at Offutt Air Force Base (which served as the impetus for the

original Speak Out at StratCom protest), the participants brainstormed ideas for the worldwide missions later referred to as "Global Strike." In a special strategic discussion titled "Operationally Responsive Spacelift," Air Force officials pushed for the capability to strike any spot on the Earth's surface in a two-hour time window, using a new space plane called FALCON (Force Application for Launch from Continental US). They also wanted to perform an end-run around START nuclear weapons limits by allocating a new reserve force of Minuteman-3 missiles, which could be outfitted at a moment's notice with either nuclear or conventional weapons, and launched within a few hours' time. The gang at Offutt also discussed the Minuteman-4, a new strategic missile that would return to the original MX missile design of a mobile-basing scheme.

The process only accelerated in the two years following that meeting. Four days after protesters gathered at Offutt gates in August 2005, a new unified Space and Global Strike Command was created at Offutt, under the command of Lt. Gen. Kevin Chilton. Chilton will oversee implementation of the 2004 "Interim Global Strike Order" issued by Rumsfeld for optimal tactical attacks worldwide, using both conventional and nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless, conservatives in 2002 were not unified in their praise of the StratCom/U.S. Space Command merger. One on-line analysis source close to the neoconservative movement, STRATFOR, denounced Donald Rumsfeld for tying the Space Command to "the nuclear dinosaur of StratCom." The "democracy-promoting" neocons close to Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith in the Defense Department

took the so-called "revolution in military affairs" seriously. They assumed that Rumsfeld's love for fast, precision-strike warfare, combined with real-time intelligence, meant that nuclear weapons were obsolete.

These conservatives forgot that Rummy paid fealty to another conservative wing, represented by Dick Cheney and John Bolton. The extreme nationalists did not care about Wolfy's goal of spreading democracy at the barrel of a gun, nor did they care about preserving a multilateral fig leaf of support internationally when future wars were to be initiated. This group took the Bolton view that U.S. power should

Former CIA agent Philip Girdali in the Aug. 1, 2005 *American Conservative* claimed that a special National Security Decision Directive, issued from Cheney's office rather than Bush's, calls for StratCom to draw up contingency plans to use nuclear weapons in Iran if the U.S. faces another domestic terrorism act on the scale of 9/11 – even if no link to Iran is proved.

be projected by any means necessary, including the use of nuclear weapons when and if required.

The greater influence of this group can be assessed by observing that Bolton gained a recess appointment from President Bush to the UN, since the president did not care about appearances when power-brokering was the object. It can also be measured by the expose written by former

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'Global Strike,' conclusion

CIA agent Philip Giraldi in the Aug. 1, 2005 *American Conservative*. Giraldi claimed that a special National Security Decision Directive, issued from Cheney's office rather than Bush's, calls for StratCom to draw up contingency plans to use nuclear weapons in Iran if the U.S. faces another domestic terrorism act on the scale of 9/11 – even if no link to Iran is proved.

The true implication of Global Strike can only be appreciated by looking at the history of the constituent elements of StratCom and USSC. StratCom, formerly the Strategic Air Command, was in charge of air and space nuclear-strike policies throughout the Cold War. In the 1990s, its mission was expanded with more direct control over Navy submarine-launched ballistic missiles. U.S. Space Command had temporarily taken charge of some land-based missile management, but the ultimate authority for dooms-



Loring Wirbel with his good friend.

day button-pushing always rested with StratCom. Peace activists traditionally focus on the Department of Energy's role in designing and building nuclear weapons, but it's important to remember that StratCom, by managing the weapons and developing usage policy, has always played perhaps the most important role in the nuclear-weapon life cycle.

U.S. Space Command started out in 1983 managing only the military missions of the Space Shuttle and some space-based networks for communications and targeting. Spy satellite networks remained under the authority of the CIA, the National Reconnaissance Office (the nation's largest intelligence agency, in charge of spy satellites), and the National Security Agency (the nation's global "listening" electronic intelligence agency).

During the Clinton Administration, the

NRO's existence was declassified, and Clinton ordered the agency to make its intelligence product available to soldiers in the field, in a program called TENCAP (Tactical Exploitation of National Capabilities). U.S. Space Command was put in charge of efforts to make sure that TENCAP intelligence could be sent to every fighter cockpit, every battleship bridge, every special-operations soldier, virtually as quickly as the intelligence was collected.

As a result, the NSA and NRO began saying in public that their mission was no longer to serve as the "national technical means of verification" for arms-control treaties, but rather to "serve the warfighter with real-time intelligence." It was this kind of loose talk that led U.S. Space Command to draft the 1996 "document of domination," *Vision for 2020*. This slick brochure explicitly admitted that the Space Command's

goal was to dominate the planet through space, to deny the use of space to other nations (adversaries and allies alike) unless their space use fit with our plans, and to use that control of near-Earth space to preserve the current bifurcation of the world between haves and have-nots.

By the time U.S. Space Command merged into StratCom in fall 2002, these methods already had been tested in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Peace groups concerned about placing weapons in space fail to realize that a ban on weapons in space would only confront a tiny portion of what makes the former U.S. Space Command's work a threat to peace. By

re-purposing existing space networks for communications, targeting, and intelligence, and optimizing these networks for first-strike warfare, the U.S. Space Command created the Frankenstein monster that made the attack on Iraq in March 2003, what Air Force Secretary James Roche called "the first true space war."

The broad utility of Global Strike tools is certainly no secret to StratCom Commander Gen. James Cartwright. Cartwright has aided Donald Rumsfeld and such former defense associates as Stephen Cambone in creation of the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review. Several Air Force officials threatened to resign in early 2005 because they were worried that the draft QDR called for even more use of Global Strike tools to initiate first-strike attacks. If Giraldi's claims of an Iran contingency plan are borne out, StratCom should be plenty busy planning world domination missions in the near future.



One hundred people turned out for the SOS 2005 "Speak Out at StratCom" protest at Kinney Gate Saturday morning August 6. In addition to Loring Wirbel, Frank Cordaro of the Des Moines Catholic Worker community and Medea Benjamin of Code Pink in San Francisco addressed the crowd. Music for the event was provided by Omahan Michael Murphy and nationally known folk singer David Rovics, who performed his song, "Hiroshima." Rovics wrote this song after a 2003 visit to the nuclear laboratories at Oak Ridge Tennessee.

Hiroshima

Ten thousand children played in the playground
Swinging on the swings, didn't hear the sound

Of the single plane that flew overhead
The third shift workers were just going to bed
There was a flash of light and a rumbling noise
And gone in a flash, parents, girls and boys

Ten thousand mothers were boiling rice
A thousand POW's were rolling dice
Hoping they'd survive this terrible storm
When each young man in his uniform
Vanished in the air in the blink of an eye
One moment they lived, the next they all die
Hiroshima, Hiroshima

Ten thousand chickens were sitting on eggs
Heads in their wings, resting their legs
Ten thousand farmers were looking at their fields
Planning the harvest, guessing at yields
Dreaming of life after the war
The next second they weren't living no more
Hiroshima, Hiroshima

Ten thousand lovers made lover to each other
Each one of them thinking they might not get another
Living so long with death everywhere
Much more than one person alone can bear
But there wasn't time for a final kiss
Who could've known it would end like this
Hiroshima, Hiroshima

A hundred thousand people were living their lives
Grandparents, children, fathers and wives
Now they're just shadows on the street
In such a quick burst of incredible heat
Now listen to them talk about doing it again
From whence came the souls of these terrible men
Hiroshima, Hiroshima

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The Resurrection of the Religious Left

by Jeff Cole

Christian and Lincoln NFP member Jeff Cole has been troubled lately by the implication that the Bible is the sole property of the Religious Right. He wrote the following article for the Nebraska Report in hopes of getting liberals and progressives to reconnect their political program to the moral vision of the faith community.

Recently, President Bush rekindled the debate about religion and public life when he offered his belief that intelligent design should be taught alongside evolution in public schools so that people could “understand what the debate is about.” Elevating the recent, religiously inspired concept of “intelligent design” as a counterbalance to the 150-year-old scientifically tested theory of evolution rallied both the President’s religiously conservative supporters and his opponents. Many would say that by inserting religion into policy this President Bush has once again abused religion to divide our nation.

But is that really the case? Throughout our nation’s history, the power of biblical language and the moral force of its guidance provided unifying imagery for a far flung nation. Bush’s genius is that he understands the unique power that this imagery still has over substantial numbers of likely voters. Frequently, he uses religiously inspired pronouncements, such as chiming in on the evolution debates, to rally his most ardent backers. With sagging public opinion numbers, chances are the President calculated this was a good time to go back to this time-tested well to re-engage the passions of his supporters.

I believe that progressive candidates have made a mistake by abandoning the language of religion and allowing conservatives to claim its powerful imagery as their political domain. As my Southern Baptist parents’ bumper sticker defiantly reminds us—“Jesus was a Liberal.” In order to reestablish a connection with a large swath of compassionate Christian voters, progressives should end their self-imposed exile and go back to the Bible to rediscover ‘religiously enhanced policy options’ that will allow them to regain both the moral high ground and elected offices.

To retain the unique inspirational force of biblical language, religiously enhanced policy options should deal with the most critical issues of the day. On the national

level, two issues currently dominating political discourse—the War on Terror and choices concerning domestic spending—are prime candidates for allowing progressives to utilize the Bible to advance alternative policy options.

One of the biggest domestic ‘accomplishments’ of Bush’s first term was the temporary abolition of the estate tax. To bipartisan critics of saddling future generations with the cost of current spending choices, this tax break for the wealthy has been an

wealth and the overarching requirements that we serve the needs of the less fortunate. Passages such as Mark 10:24, “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!” do not register in Washington these days, for while they may have a difficult time entering the Kingdom of Heaven, the lobbyists who trust in their checkbooks seem to have bought the keys to Washington’s power corridors.

Instead of rolling over on the estate tax,

share some of the immense bounty that God has so generously provided, to help address some of the long-term fiscal problems that this administration has created.

Can the Gospels also provide language that could be used as a basis for progressives to offer a more successful strategy for the War on Terror? Borrowing from Luke, progressives could argue for a more holistic, ‘Christian’ approach that calls for society-wide efforts to battle this new scourge. Luke 12:48: “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask more.” Can you imagine, for example, the impact it would have on sagging military enlistment numbers if the President and the conservative leaders in Washington were to heed this guidance and announce that they had convinced their daughters and sons, to whom much has been given, to sign up for active military duty?

Since that is not likely to happen, progressive leaders can take the moral high ground back from President Bush by simply asking for the help of Americans in this global War on Terror. Much like President Kennedy, who in his inspiring inaugural address suggested that we “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country,” Americans are waiting to be asked to contribute to winning the War on Terror. After the horrific attacks of 9/11, what did the President ask of average Americans? Essentially—go shopping, keep doing what you are doing and let our military and diplomatic corps face this enemy alone. There was never an inspirational appeal to the population as a whole to dig deep into our collective soul and sacrifice some of our individual plenty for what is going to be a long, hard struggle.

Increasingly, experts of all stripes, especially those in the military, recognize that the War on Terror is too complex to be won by our soldiers alone. Rather it will take mobilization and sacrifice on behalf of all Americans to defeat this long-term threat. Americans need to be inspired to take bold, proactive steps and a resounding call, based on Luke or others, just might provide progressives with the rhetorical ammunition to challenge the President’s lackluster, one-dimensional approach.

Progressives could challenge Americans to take the individual and collective

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What Would Jesus Do?

The popular bracelet series of the ‘90s inspired a generation of Christian teenagers through gently reminding that daily actions should follow a more elevated model of behavior. Having trouble making a choice between sneaking out with your friends and using a fake ID to buy beer or staying at home to help your parents—WWJD? What about taking your dog out for a walk or playing yet another game on your Xbox—WWJD? Having that multicolored moral counterbalance around their wrists was intended to help steer a generation down the straight and narrow path of righteous decision making. How would such an appendage guide the daily decisions of adults?

Where would Jesus live?

- Gated suburban community
- Inner city

Something tells me that he whose ministry was built on reaching out to those on the fringe of society, wouldn’t want to isolate himself in a suburban McMansion.

What would Jesus eat?

- Super-sized value meal
- Smaller portions

Something about gluttony makes me think he’d shy away from the extra fries and that gallon of soda

What would Jesus drive?

- Hummer 2
- Prius Hybrid

While he’d probably walk most places, the Prince of Peace would definitely choose the fuel-efficient Toyota Prius Hybrid over the gas-guzzling, revamped military transport vehicle.

unprecedented disaster, dramatically accelerating the shift from record surpluses to record deficits. However, such critics have been unable to galvanize public outrage around the importance of this topic and its dramatic policy consequences. Might the Bible be able to provide some rhetorical direction for alternative policy? Proverbs 22:16: “He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth and he who gives gifts to the rich will surely come to poverty.” While utilizing the Bible as a sounding board for science policy, this administration ignores biblical warnings of the corrosive impact of

progressives should use biblical backing to illustrate the impact that this policy will have on the choices of future generations and the ability of our society to address the needs of the poor. We shouldn’t forget, nor should we let the electorate forget, Jesus’ words in Mark 10:25, which famously warn, “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.” The direction here is pretty clear—progressives could borrow biblical language to argue for domestic policies that ask the wealthiest Americans to

BULLYING

Where Are We Now?

by Paul A. Olson
Turn Off the Violence Project

Just as former Speaker of the House of Representatives Tip O'Neill used to say that "all politics is local," the work for peace begins in the home and school. Nebraskans for Peace, accordingly, has to concern itself with more than international issues and broad injustice in our society. Concerned about all cultures of violence, we have to be concerned about creating alternatives to such cultures, particularly among our children and youth, where violence and bullying is a fixture of their lives.

Well over half of our kids in Nebraska are either bullies or victims or both, especially in the middle school years, according to Professor Susan Swearer of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Our celebrated "good life" here in Nebraska is obviously failing to raise children who disapprove of violent solutions to social problems, perhaps because their adult models enjoy violence too much. The presence of bullying and violence in our school youth culture testifies to failures in adult culture. As does the widespread incidence of domestic violence and abuse in our state. As does also our instant, overwhelming approval, as a society, of the War on Iraq (despite massive evidence that Iraq had done the disarmament demanded by the UN and it constituted no imminent military threat).

We tend to be addicted to violence. If we are to change at all, we need to give our children tools to solve problems without violence, to know how to work toward conciliation and respect, and to seek just solutions helpful to all.

In 2001, a group of citizens concerned about violence in the

schools met with several Nebraskans for Peace members (though not as an official NFP subsidiary). We met to see what could be done about violence among children and youth and, as a corollary, in the family though we knew that the domestic violence centers were doing much about this issue. We tried to organize groups concerned about violence in the schools, about guns in our society, about the role of the churches in training children and youth in nonviolence, and about what various media organs can do to promote something other than 'problem-solving violence.'

We had no luck in restricting guns because the Legislature is controlled by the NRA. We had little luck in appealing to the media to offer something other than 'shoot'em ups' as the way to solve disputes, though some teachers and school children made some wonderful media stuff that is being used in local contexts. We were able to work with the churches and community learning centers to encourage better anti-violence training at the community level. But the schools were the main concern.

Our first effort to sponsor a school initiative was a 2001 bill thrown in the Nebraska Legislature's hopper by Sen. David Landis calling for widespread training in peer mediation for school kids. The bill caught the attention of the state's Mediation Centers and of some schools, but since it cost a little money never caught the fancy of the Education Committee of the Legislature.

In 2002, working with the same citizen groups, Sen. Landis sponsored an anti-bullying bill that might or might not have made it out of the Education Committee. It had good support from parents'



and teachers' groups, but it was explicitly or tacitly opposed by school administrators and school board groups on the grounds that anti-bullying work was already being done, and that the policy would constitute another unfunded mandate. Simultaneously, the Nebraska State Board of Education proposed that the thrust of Landis bill's could be handled by Board guideline and mandate. We accepted the State Board's offer, and the Education Committee said that it would monitor what the Board did.

The Board then held a Fall 2002 public hearing on a bullying policy, again with the same sides

lining up. The NRA's spokesperson on the board at that time cynically proposed an alternative policy that called for the Education Committee's opposition to all forms of nastiness in our society, things far beyond the capacity of the State Board of Education to enforce. The substitute policy was clearly a stunt, a flim-flam that proposed to do everything so that nothing would get done. We responded that the alternative policy did not meet the terms of the agreement with the Legislature's Education Committee, and after some further meetings with educators and professionals, the State Board

passed the following statement in February, 2003:

Board Policy: Anti-Bullying

The State Board of Education believes that Nebraska schools should provide physically safe and emotionally secure environments for all students and staff. It is the goal of the State Board of Education, through this policy, to create such positive learning and teaching environments. For purposes of this policy, the State Board defines positive behaviors as those, which evoke nonviolence, cooperation, teamwork, understanding, and acceptance, toward all students and staff in the learning and teaching environment. The State Board of Education encourages local school districts to establish policies and strategies to emphasize and recognize positive behaviors that promote a safe and secure learning environment for all students and staff. Local school policies should assist school personnel in identifying bullying, intimidation, and harassment; and provide a framework for an appropriate response that reinforces and encourages positive conduct. The Department of Education will disseminate information in regard to model strategies and practices for assisting the implementation of local policies. The department will also disseminate programs that promote state level efforts to assist schools in achieving positive behavior environments, including anti-bullying programs. This assistance may include, but is not limited to, help with student, teacher, and administrator in-service, and pre-service courses. The Department of Education will design a plan and process for evaluating the effects of this policy.

DEATH PENALTY UPDATE

by Eric Aspengren, Executive Director
Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty

There's been a whirlwind of important activity and news about the death penalty the past few months, and the news is generally good.

The death penalty is on its way out.

Worldwide (and even in the U.S.), almost any indicator you look at shows a distinct trend away from the use of the death penalty. Just the number of nations that still retain the death penalty bears this out. According to the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC), in 1984, 64 countries had abolished the death penalty. Two decades later, that number of nations that have abolished the practice has grown to 120. While 76 countries still retain the practice, more than half the countries in the world have abolished the death penalty since 1976.

The worldwide *use* of the death penalty is also on the wane. According to Amnesty International, only 25 countries carried out any executions in 2004. There were approximately 3,797 executions last year. But 95 percent of those executions happened in just four of those countries: China (approx. 3,400 executions), Iran (approx. 159 executions), Vietnam (approx. 64 executions) and the United States (approx. 59 executions). It's quite telling that the gap between the No. 2 country and the No. 1 country is so large.

More nations are poised to eliminate the death penalty, too. In June, the president of Kenya had this to say about the death penalty: "We are committed to abolishing the death penalty. The death sentence is a violation of the right to life" (*The Nation*†Nairobi, June 7, 2005, on allAfrica.com). India is also on that path. According to *The Statesman* (May 31, 2005), "Indian leaders are seeking to implement a change that would end the nation's death penalty even 'in the rarest of rare' cases. The amended Indian Penal Code would abolish the death penalty and replace it with a strict life without the possibility of parole measure."

United States Continues Trend Against the Death Penalty

By a vote of 5-4, the U.S. Supreme Court on March 1, 2005 held in the case of *Roper v. Simmons*, that the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments forbid the execution of offenders who were under the age of 18 when their crimes were committed.

This decision, as described by the DPIC,

"...reaffirmed the necessity of referring to 'the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society' to determine which punishments are so disproportionate as to be cruel and unusual. The Court reasoned that the rejection of the juvenile death penalty in the majority of states, the infrequent use of the punishment even where it remains on the books, and the consistent trend toward abolition of the juvenile death penalty demonstrated a national consensus against the practice. The Court

determined that today our society views juveniles as categorically less culpable than the average criminal."

The Supreme Court had ruled in 1989 that the execution of juveniles was not unconstitutional. The Supreme Court's change of opinion reflects an overall change in attitude about the death penalty in the United States, and specifically the juvenile death penalty.

When deciding on cases of this kind, the Supreme Court uses what they call, according to the DPIC, "objective evidence of a national consensus as expressed by legislative enactments and jury practices." Opinion polls do not generally have an effect on these types of rulings. The Court pointed out that 30 states had decided to abolish the juvenile death penalty. Twelve had abolished the death penalty altogether. They also pointed out that juries, more and more infrequently, had been sentencing juveniles to death.

This case, *Roper v. Simmons*, shows us exactly what needs to be done for the death penalty to be abolished in the United States. And the conditions for this to happen are trending our way.

Poll after poll shows that public opinion about the death penalty is changing. A majority of Americans do support the death penalty. But when they are offered the choice between the death penalty and life without parole, support for the death penalty drops to around 50 percent. Support has generally been dropping nationwide since the mid-1990s.

There has been a tangible, direct effect of this change inside the courtroom. The number of people on death row has been declining steadily over the past few years. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund's latest report shows the number has dropped from 3,692 in 2002 to 3,415 as of July of this year. Other reports have shown that capital prosecutions are seeing a steady decline, also. Fewer people are being sentenced to death in the United States.

Furthermore, the use of the death penalty in most states that have the death penalty is quite rare. Here are just a few examples from the DPIC:

- Kansas, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York and South Dakota have had no executions in the past 30 years, even though they have had a death penalty statute during at least part of that time.
- Illinois has had a moratorium on all executions since 2000.
- New Jersey has had no executions and has a court-imposed moratorium on executions.
- New Hampshire has had no executions and no death sentences imposed.
- Wyoming has had no executions in 13 years and only one in 30 years.
- Idaho has had no executions in 11 years and only one in 30 years.

If this trend continues, the Supreme Court cannot help but notice.

But the most important test the Supreme Court uses in these cases is decided by state legislatures. The trend in legislatures is also good.

In New York, the death penalty has been overturned by the New York Court of Appeals, ruling that the state's sentencing guidelines were "coercive." Supporters of the death penalty in the New York Legislature tried to pass a bill to fix these sentencing guidelines, but after five days of hearings, the Codes Committee voted against moving the bill out of committee. New York's death penalty is essentially dead. Kansas is in a similar situation.

Legislators too are beginning to turn against the death penalty.

Nebraska

Nebraska is the only place in the world that has the electric chair as its sole means of execution. A bill has been introduced in the Unicameral several times to replace the electric chair with lethal injection. But aside from its introduction in a Special Session three years ago, the bill has never gotten out of the Judiciary Committee. Nor has the state set a date for an execution since Robert E. Williams was electrocuted in 1997.

The constitutionality of the electric chair is currently being challenged in front of the Nebraska Supreme Court. It's impossible to guess when or how they may decide. If the electric chair is thrown out, we can be assured that the push for lethal injection will become much stronger. It's important, accordingly, for opponents of the death penalty to let their senators know that they oppose lethal injection. The only alternative to the electric chair should be life in prison.

As he has done every year that he's been in the Unicameral, Sen. Ernie Chambers is once again promoting legislation to replace the death penalty with life in prison. His 2005 bill, LB 760, was heard in the Judiciary Committee, but never advanced to the floor of the Legislature. Legislative progress at the state level, we now know, is key to favorable judicial rulings. For repeal to even get debated on the legislative floor in the 2006 Session, LB 760 must be voted out of committee in early January after the Legislature reconvenes. Contacting our state senators and urging them to support LB 760 now, before the session begins is our best chance right now to promote the cause of repeal, both here in Nebraska, and across the world.

Note: Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty's Annual Dinner will be held on October 14 in Lincoln, details yet to be determined. The keynote speaker will be Bud Welch, whose daughter was killed ten years ago in the Oklahoma City bombing. Bud is an extremely engaging speaker and members of Nebraskans for Peace are encouraged to attend.

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BULLYING, continued

The Board also passed an implementation plan that provided for “develop[ing] an overall plan to provide physically safe and emotionally secure environments for all students and staff [in Nebraska schools],” including finding and posting information on the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) website, proposing anti-bullying models and information, working with school boards, and giving training as resources allow. The Department also proposed to work with the various educational service units and develop bullying themes at the annual NDE Excellence In Education Conference and the Annual Nebraska Conference for Preventing Youth Violence. Finally, it promised to “involve other state agencies that have programs addressing youth behaviors. (i.e. Health and Human Services, and Crime Commission).” All of this would lead to an evaluation of the process of countering bullying and a periodic report to the State Board of Education.

The Department of Education did implement many things. It adopted a bullying definition emphasizing the group oppression implicit in bullying: bullying is “repeated negative behavior, over an extended period of time, directed toward a target with less power than the bully. Power in this case can be physical, positional or social (i.e., Group A having more perceived social power than Group B).” The Department’s materials offered frameworks for program design and development and for needs assessments and evaluation, training, and interventions. On its website it sets forth answers to some frequent questions and provides a list of resources. These, given the limited resources of the Department, are well done. And it gave access to parents interested in working with the issue of bullying who thought that their child was being bullied.

The Department has not only developed plans and policies. It has worked with dozens of schools in the BEST program developed by Jeff Sprague at the University of Oregon, one of the most effective in the country in countering bullying and violence in the schools. It has put money into anti-bullying efforts in its School Improvement grants. Some of the Educational Service Units are advertising programs like the following course advertised by ESU #3:

A Safe Place to Learn-Violence Prevention: Bullying and Harassment Part 1: Understanding Issues of Bullying and Harass-

ment (7488) Description: Bullying behaviors and harassment are prevalent in varying degrees in all of America’s schools. Part 1 will provide an overview of bullying and harassment issues K-12; awareness of the impact of bully-target behaviors pose to other students, staff, school climate and academic achievement; guidelines and basic strategies for addressing bullying and harassment; and supportive ideas to prevent violence in your school. Understanding the definitions and research regarding bully, target and bystander behaviors, along with some basic intervention strategies, will assist you in identifying and addressing these issues in your school. Participants are encouraged to attend with a school team. Date: Jan 10, 2006 Time: 8:30am-3:30pm Location: ESU 3 Audience: K-12 Educators and Administrators Presenter: Tammy Heflebower and Trish Kenagy Notes: A booklet per participant and a book per district is included in the registration fee. Continental breakfast and lunch are also included. There is a Part II February 24, 2006. You can register for just one part but ideally register for both.

Nebraskans for Peace and the other groups can be proud that so much has happened in many public schools. Walnut Middle School in Grand Island has received a national award for its anti-bullying work. Westside School Systems have done worked hard on anti-bullying efforts, particularly since they lost a teen to suicide blamed on his being bullied. The Lincoln Public Schools have a good bullying program, wonderful implementation in some schools like Elliott and thin work in others, but they have hired a new person to give training and encourage implementation in their schools across the system. Omaha is working on it. The BEST schools include 33 school buildings scattered all across Nebraska. About 90 schools are working on the issue through Nebraska School Improvement grants. Boys Town is helping many schools and systems. Yet, we have had some deaths from bullying in this state in the last year, and the *Omaha World-Herald* identified nine youth suicides that may be attributed to bullying.

Why, with all this effort, do we still have as much bullying as we have?

There are several reasons, in my view.

1. The policy is only mandatory to the degree that parents of bullied children are willing to sue schools for the deaths or harm to their children and litigiousness has not been a prominent feature of our state’s culture, nor does expensive litigation always succeed. LB 627,

Sen. Gwen Howard’s anti-bullying bill or its like, would make an anti-bullying policy and training absolutely mandatory in all of our schools.

2. The protected classes are not specified in the policy and research shows that school personnel often think that bullied kids ‘ask for it.’ LB 627 would also remedy that problem.
3. Pre-service teachers and administrators are *not* required to have anti-bullying training prior to their going into service. Since the turnover of teachers and administrators is very high each year in many school systems, new people starting their service may begin at zero.
4. The accreditation requirements for schools do not require that individual schools have school-wide anti-bullying programs if they are to achieve accreditation, nor do accredited schools have to provide evidence on the existence or incidence of bullying in their buildings.
5. School boards and school administrators have been lukewarm to doing anything about bullying. The Nebraska Council of School Administrators did a survey of its members in 2003, the response to which indicated that the majority of more than 300 school administrators opposed any type of bullying policy, arguing despite the research evidence to the contrary such things as that bullying does not need addressing, that not all districts have bullying problems, that bullying is part of growing up, and that only Omaha and Lincoln need fixing. School boards in many cases have also been ambiguous on the issue or opposed to action in many cases.
6. We have not sufficiently mobilized the professional groups that care that something be done: medical groups, police and other law enforcement groups, domestic violence centers, parent groups, mental health people, gay and lesbian advocates, representatives of under-served minorities, immigrant groups and the like.
7. All parties claim that anti-bullying programs cost a lot of money in training and paraphernalia. The schools that I have talked to that have had successful programs have not com-

conclusion on page 11

THE TEN VICIES of the Saudi Government

by Mohammed H. Siddiq

1. The government of Saudi Arabia is a tight circle of Saudi princes (emirs) linked together by family ties and shared interests, who have monopolized power since 1932. It is strictly a family affair.
2. The only person who votes in Saudi Arabia is the emir. He votes for himself or for his family member. Why? Because there is no democracy but dictatorship, no freedom but tyranny, no rule of law but the rule of the emir. Yes, it is true.
3. The ruling emirs are autocratic and overbearing. They lock up political opponents, ban public protests and stifle criticism with a barrage of repressive laws. Machiavellian-style.
4. The ruling emirs bar the people of Arabia from having any association or membership with any group or power block that is not loyal to the ruling emirs. Mean attitude.
5. The ruling emirs bend people under the weight of their orders and the force of their police, and the legal system is a big joke. Police state.
6. The ruling emirs have consolidated their nasty rule with a mixture of oil money, cunning and ruthlessness. Despotic.
7. The ruling emirs enforce a spit-in-your-eye Islam. It is Islam carried on the edge of a sword. Talaban-style of Islam.
8. The ruling emirs are gorging themselves on the riches they have collected (i.e. stolen) from the people of Arabia. (Example: The recently deceased King Fahd's personal worth was near \$30 billion, he owned seven enormous palaces inside the kingdom, a hundred-room palace in Marbella, Spain, a spectacular estate outside Paris, a mansion near London, over two dozen Rolls Royces and did not dress in rags. Massive robbery of oil revenues.
9. The state-controlled Saudi media do not dare mention the fact that none (yes, none) of the former kings and the current senior ruling emirs (Abdulaziz, Saud, Faisal, Kahalid, Fahd, Abdullah, Sultan and Salman) ever made it through Middle School. Unfit for command.
10. The semi-literate ruling emirs carry into the government one absurd notion: that they are superior to the people of Arabia and the ultimate font of national wisdom. Extreme arrogance.

The tyranny and dictatorship of the Saudi ruling emirs do not continue to exist because they are rooted in the Islamic Sharia and traditions, but because the West (U.S., U.K. and France) keeps them in place to serve Western interests. Most Arabians regard this policy as foolhardy and wrong.

This native son of Arabia urges the people and the leaders of the Free World (especially the leaders and the people of America) to move against the despotic and corrupt Saudi ruling emirs for three reasons: 1) The oppressed people of Arabia are eager to breathe political freedom and enjoy human rights after 73 years of iron-fisted rule. 2) These emirs have no right to rule, represent or speak for the people of Arabia because they are not elected by the people. 3) Finally, these un-elected rulers do not deserve the respect, regard and recognition of a freedom-loving nation like ours.

NFP member and U.S. citizen Mohammed Siddiq is a native of Saudi Arabia, whose life would be endangered if visiting his homeland.

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IMAGINE

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

by Doug Paterson, UNO Professor of Theatre
Assisted by Margi Paterson

The other day I was listening to *NPR*. A couple of *Washington Post* reporters were talking about their recent experiences in Russia. As they spoke with average Russians, one recounted how she was surprised to hear them say that the old days of the Soviet era were far preferable than what they had now. She went on to say that she was literally astonished because, here, the Russians now had "capitalism and democracy," and yet were yearning for yesteryear.

A number of thoughts came to my mind as I was listening, including, what was the Soviet Union truly like for average Russians? What was it like under the Soviets? And how can U.S. journalists continue to be surprised by such things as this, but entirely unsurprised by the catastrophe of Iraq?

But I was particularly struck by this continual marriage of "capitalism and democracy" by the national press. To my mind and in my experience, capitalism and democracy are not only antithetical, but mutually hostile. What the U.S. has constructed is a shallow electoral democracy (currently based on neo-liberalism—the political model for globalization), but we've little in the way of political democracy, cultural democracy or, especially, economic democracy.

The recent series in the *New York Times*, entitled "Class Matters," makes the case that class divisions in the U.S. are substantiating the venerable Marxist maxim that, under capitalism, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Indeed, the *Times* series makes this so appallingly clear that perhaps we should be surprised only that, for over sixty years, there has been barely any public dialogue in the U.S. about class, and virtually no *critical* public dialogue about class.

We are in part responsible for this. By we, I mean the Left. The progressives. The peace folk. The feminists. The civil rights and anti-racism movements. The gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders, and queer. The ecology community. The immigrant networks. On and on. Yes, all of us.

So how do we, again, for the umpteenth time, undertake a new initiative to create the world we want? When I raised the subject of Economic Democracy in my Green Party campaign for Congress in 2002, the standard response to my advocating Economic Democracy was, "What do you mean by Economic Democracy?" My response was always the same: "I have some ideas, but I'm more interested in what it means to you. What does the phrase 'Economic Democracy' conjure in your head?"

Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal, inventors of Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed, have devised many new ways of framing the struggle for a more fair and free world. I have always been particularly moved by this general concept: Imagination is crucial to overcoming oppression. If we can't imagine anything different, there won't be anything different. If we can imagine a new future, then we can build it.

I want to make a proposal. I want to invite all of us in NFP and beyond to imagine what an Economic Democracy would look like. That's right, send it in. Fill in the blank: "When I imagine an Economic Democracy, I see _____."

Right now. A word. Two words. A short description. E-mail it to me at: dpaterson@mail.unomaha.edu.

I will compile this, and keep compiling it. And report back regularly. Let's together invent a new world. If we can't imagine it, it'll never happen. If we imagine it, there is no stopping us.

By the way, another of Augusto Boal's suggestions may apply here. He says: "Have the courage to be happy." So as you crank up the computer, let the very action of emailing, imagining, and dialoguing help you, and thus all of us, be happy.

Letters to NFP...

Long-time NFP member Lela Shanks sent the following letter to Sen. Joe Biden (D-DE) July 19, 2005 and copied it to the Nebraska Report. We reprint her trenchant words in full.

Dear Senator Biden,

I am a 77-year-old, life-long Democrat, hoping you are interested in what ordinary people think about the way our country is going.

The most pressing issue is to stop the war on the Iraqi people. This is not a war on terror, but on Iraq, breeding more and more people who hate us and want to destroy us. I feel in greater danger today than ever before. It appears Congress has lost all touch with what it means to be a human being. How would we feel if a foreign nation invaded our country, bombing our homes and infrastructure, maiming and killing tens of thousands of our people. We would fight back. The people of Iraq and the rest of the world are human beings, too. They and their friends are fighting back.

Meanwhile, 20,000-30,000 of our own innocent young sons and daughters and grandchildren have either lost their lives in combat, or to accidents and disease or have been injured. It is heart wrenching. In addition to the wasted lives and the moral toll on our nation, the one billion and more spent each week on war is draining funds needed for cities and states.

The idea that our killing isn't as bad as those other guys because we kill under the banner of 'war' is insane. Think of the innocent civilians we killed in the assault on Fallujah alone.

The hubris that defines us, dominating our national and international policies, if left unchecked, will destroy us all as human beings. We have to change our thinking and policies to survive. The Congress, Democrats as well as Republicans, can no longer be blinded by feelings of superiority, thinking we are better than everybody else in the world. All we have to do is look at our violent history and present actions to know that, deep down in the human condition, we are no better or worse than any other population group. And yes, we have done many humane things in the world. But our exploiting and pillaging and deposing of democratically elected heads of state, and continued support of repressive regimes, may have used up most, if not all, of the goodwill gained over the years.

President Bush has lied all the way through this war, and the neither the Congress nor the Democrats have held him accountable. It is as if the truth is in disrepute in America. Where is there a man or woman in Congress who will show backbone and challenge Bush and the lies that continue to come out of this administration? The latest: Karl Rove; and the U.S. trying to rig Iraqi elections. President Bush needs to be impeached.

Today, our country is a one-party democracy. This could change if congressional Democrats got together and called for an immediate withdrawal from Iraq. I hope you will stop waffling on this war. Samuel Johnson said centuries ago, "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel."

Respectfully,
Lela Knox Shanks

Religious Left, conclusion

steps we need to launch a dramatic initiative to achieve energy independence, and to end our reliance on oil pumped out of a Middle Eastern we understand so poorly. Instead of dividing our allies, we could inspire innovation, creativity and, yes, the sacrifice needed to wean ourselves from our dependence on dwindling, unstable and environmentally destructive energy sources. This appeal to self-sacrifice could also be utilized to revitalize a new version of the Peace Corps, through which future generations of Americans could be called upon to battle rising global animosity to American hegemony, through exercise of our greatest resources—American optimism and ingenuity.

There are many more examples of bib-

lical foundations for progressive causes that could translate into religiously enhanced policy options. This is exactly the power of the Bible—its inspiring language allows us to bring passion to the mundane work of everyday life. Obviously, conservative supporters of the status quo would have their own biblical verses they would use to make counter arguments. As the Gnostic poet William Blake noted, "Both read the Bible day and night, but you read black and I read white." While policy debates will likely continue until Armeggedon, progressives, by using biblical language to build support for their policies, may be able to find their way out of the political wilderness and establish the U.S. as a model of moral leadership among the nations of the earth.

2005 NFP State Board Slate

Listed below is the proposed slate of nominees for the Nebraskans for Peace State Board of Directors. Any current paid member of NFP is eligible to cast a ballot for each of the board slots up for election this year. Write-in votes are naturally welcome, providing the persons whose names are being written in have given permission and are willing to serve a full two-year term. All ballots must be returned to the NFP State Office, 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, Lincoln, NE 68508, no later than October 11, 2005.

At-Large Seats (Vote for four)

___ A'Jamal Byndon—Native Nebraskan and African-American advocate A'Jamal is the Senior Director for Public Policy at Catholic Charities in Omaha. The host of a monthly Nebraska Public Radio program dealing with issues of diversity and social and economic justice, he is also an Adjunct Professor at UNO.

___ (Write-in Candidate) _____

___ Leah Hunter—Winnebago Tribe member Leah is completing her first term on the NFP State Board. A native and resident of Winnebago on the reservation in northeast Nebraska, Leah has a long history of activism on Indian issues, including Whiteclay alcohol sales and banning Native American mascots.

___ (Write-in Candidate) _____

___ Paul Olson—Paul is a Foundation Professor of English at the University of Nebraska and one of the most well-known Peace & Justice advocates in the state. An active member of NFP virtually from its inception, he has most recently been devoting his efforts to the Turn Off the Violence project in the state.

___ (Write-in Candidate) _____

___ Jay Schmidt—A retired United Methodist minister, Jay's Peace & Justice roots in Nebraska run deep. One of only a handful of clergy to provide draft counseling to draft-age men during the Vietnam War, he mobilized his ministerial colleagues to speak out publicly against both the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

___ (Write-in Candidate) _____

Congressional District 1 (Vote for one)

___ Carol McShane—A past president of the NFP State Board, Carol provided vocal and visible leadership for Nebraskans for Peace during the tumultuous period covering the terrorist attacks on 9/11 through the illegal War on Iraq. A Registered Nurse, she has 40 years of expertise on health care issues.

___ (Write-in Candidate) _____

Congressional District 2 (Vote for two)

___ Patrick Murray—A philosophy professor at Creighton University in Omaha, Patrick has served on the NFP State Board for more than a decade. Deeply committed to Nebraskans for Peace, with a long history of activism in the cause of Peace & Justice, he is one the senior members of the board.

___ (Write-in Candidate) _____

___ Virginia Walsh—The liaison between the NFP State Board and the Omaha NFP Chapter, Virginia has been an active with the organization at both levels for over two decades. This past month, she joined Gold Star mother Cindy Sheehan in Crawford, Texas to vigil at the encampment outside President Bush's ranch.

___ (Write-in Candidate) _____

Congressional District 3 (Vote for two)

___ Marsha Fangmeyer—An NFP member since the mid-'70s, Marsha is the senior attorney at Knapp, Fangmeyer, Ashwege, Besse and Marsh in Kearney. Besides being active with Nebraskans for Peace, she previously served as president of the Nebraska Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and ACLU-Nebraska.

___ (Write-in Candidate) _____

___ Byron Peterson—A retired Social Worker from the Nebraska Panhandle, Byron has spent the past six years working on the problem of alcohol sales at Whiteclay. A regular contributor to the *Nebraska Report*, he has a working relationship with many members of the Oglala Lakota Tribal leadership.

___ (Write-in Candidate) _____

BULLYING, conclusion

plained about the costs. Mostly the cost is cost in talk about what goes on in the school on the part of a school team seeing what goes on in the classroom, in the halls, outside in the playground and on the way home, and rewarding the kids that create peace in their school village. These costs are nothing compared to the costs of a violent school, a student suicide, a student that will not go to school because of bullying, a depressed student or an atmosphere in which learning cannot take place and where teachers lack a climate where teaching can be done. These are all costly.

8. We need to be serious as parents, grandparents and concerned citizens. If you think that a child or group of children is being bullied, go to school. Ask what is going on. Observe the classrooms and playgrounds. Is the climate gentle and serene? Ask what policies are in effect, what training administrators and teachers have been given. The Advocacy Group for Parents of Children Affected by Bullying has the following advice to give those whose loved ones are being demonized by the bullies:

Do not hesitate in seeking assistance from your legislators and the state attorney. If the nature and severity of bullying has produced significant emotional and physical harm, and if you feel negligence on the part of the school system has been involved, consider legal counsel to determine if

there is a legitimate case for damages. It is important that negligence be clearly established.

Did the school actually know about the bullying?

Were they aware of it?

Did they see it and were they deliberately indifferent to it?

If so, did that indifference lead to your child being harmed?

Your documented journal, photographs, witnesses, etc., will be extremely helpful when trying to clearly establish answers to the above questions in a court of law.

Obviously, it is in the best interest of your child and the school to work the situation out without having to take drastic measures. However, if school authorities continue to allow victimization, you will have no choice. Period.

Keep in mind that it is unacceptable for school authorities to further victimize your child by taking away his/her civic rights of full school participation in order to eliminate the abuse. This is common practice.

Do not go with a chip on your shoulder but be armed with the state's policies. In most cases you will find that the school people are trying and lack funds or support or will. But sometimes they aren't. If they aren't, you can make them see the need to do something. And if they are trying, your raising the issues can help them develop the will to act.

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Conference, conclusion

development and job creation.

Thanks in part to tax increases enacted during the 2004 Session, there was a marked improvement in the state's revenue situation, and this past session lawmakers, for the first time in five years, were able to avoid cutting the budget. The 2005 Session, however, saw the senators commit the state's resources even further to the pricey and unproven strategy of using tax incentives to spur job growth. Egged on by Big Business and their supporters in the governor's office, the Legislature revamped the 18-year-old LB 775 to create an expanded program called the "Nebraska Advantage Act" (LB 312). The expanded program, though, also has an expanded price tag \$200 million a year.

With state government constitutionally prohibited from going into debt, the rest of the state budget (school aid, higher ed, Medicaid, social services, state employees, etc.) is now serving as 'collateral' to pay for these tax incentives. When these tax incentives fail to pay for themselves *as they most assuredly* will the rest of the state budget will once

again be plundered to meet these contractual obligations to Big Business. As during the past budget crisis, history is set to repeat itself, only next time, it will cost even more. The need for continued public attention on the role of Nebraska's tax incentive programs in the underfunding of education and other essential public services and the shifting of our state tax burden away from Big Business (and their wealthy majority shareholders) and onto middle and lower income residents—whether rural or urban—has never been greater.

LeRoy's afternoon workshop, however, will constitute only one of a dozen or so Peace & Justice workshop sessions, covering issues from the Iraq War, to anti-bullying efforts in our schools, to StratCom's new "Global Strike" mission, to Whiteclay. Registration materials will be mailed by mid-month, or arrangements to register can be made by contacting the NFP State Office at 402-475-7616 or by email at nfpstate@nebraskansforpeace.org.

Ed Poindexter

Ed Poindexter, who along with Mondo we Langa (David Rice) was sentenced to life in prison for the 1970 death of Omaha police officer Larry Minard, will have an evidentiary hearing in Douglas County Court on October 5, 6 & 7, 2005 with District Judge Richard Spethman presiding. Designated by Amnesty International as U.S. political prisoners, Ed and Mondo have maintained their innocence for the entire 35 years they have been behind bars, alleging deliberate bias in the prosecution's case. Ed will actually be able to travel from his Minnesota correctional facility to Omaha for the hearing, where he will be represented by his long-time attorney Robert F. Bartle.

Several public events have been scheduled in advance of this highly anticipated hearing: Sunday, September 18 at the Lincoln YWCA, at 5:00 & 7:00 p.m., the BBC documentary focusing on Ed and Mondo's case will be shown on the big screen in the Georgian Room, as will a video interview with Ed. Everyone is welcome; a free-will offering will be collected. Then, on October 2, the Sunday before the hearing, the Watts Prophets (of Watts, California) will donate their talent on behalf of Ed in Omaha. Place and time to be announced later. Call Nan Graf for details at 402-435-7883.

BULLETIN BOARD

Office Hours for the Nebraskans for Peace State Office in Lincoln, at 941 'O' Street, Suite 1026, are 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on weekdays.

- Sept. 18** International peace activist Arun Gandhi speaks at the Omaha Civic Auditorium, 7:00 p.m. on the topic "Lessons Learned from My Grandfather." Sponsored by Creighton University, the event is free, but all donations will be given to NFP.
- Sept. 24** National Iraq War Protest in Washington, D.C. Contact the NFP Office for details.
- Oct. 2*** "The Big Picture: Life Behind Bars in Nebraska"
- Oct. 9*** "Women and Nebraska Justice in Nebraska's Courts"
- Oct. 14** Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty Annual Dinner
- Oct. 15** 2005 Annual Peace Conference in Lincoln
- Oct. 16*** "Race and Equal Justice in Nebraska's Courts"
- Oct. 23*** "Expert Viewpoints on Nebraska's Criminal Justice System"
- Oct. 30*** "Moving Forward: Community-centered Alternatives"

*Doing Time: A Look at Nebraska's Prison System. A five-part series featuring a diverse group of panelists, former inmates, judges advocates, lawmakers. Series are held each Sunday in October, from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Church, 6300 A Street in Lincoln. For more information call 499-6672 or email mark@welldelton.com.

*To list an event, submit in writing by the tenth of the month preceding the event.
Send to: NFP, 941 "O" Street, #1026, Lincoln, NE 68508 NeReport@neb.rr.com*

How 'Low-Level' Can You Get?

The mudslinging has begun.

You can tell by the sneering tone of recent radio ads that the folks who sponsored them are up to no good. The ads try to pin the blame on U.S. Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE) for the \$145 million paid by the State of Nebraska to settle the nuclear waste lawsuit. The real point of this smear of the state's junior senator though is not the money, but rather the leadership of Ben Nelson.

And Ben Nelson's leadership clearly IS a problem for Republicans, at home and in Washington. Unlike Sen. Chuck Hagel—an extreme partisan Republican who votes with President Bush 98 percent of the time—Nelson really IS his own man, a true moderate.

Nelson's star is high in the Senate itself. Nelson and Republican Sen. John McCain, another authentic moderate, have been sickened by a Congress held hostage to hard-line party extremes. They rounded up the s o - c a l l e d

"Gang of Fourteen" and headed off the recent crisis over the filibuster, protecting Senate rules and breaking up the logjam so Congress can move forward to do the people's business.

Nelson is a powerful senator, a coalition-builder who will not waste political goodwill on symbolic votes. He remembers the folks back home, and he likes to get 'er done. He's going to be a hard man to take down, maybe impossible. Mudslinging ads are the political equivalent of egging a car. Vandals just hope something sticks and corrodes the finish.

The truth regarding the low-level nuclear waste dump debacle in Nebraska is that the whole drama played out over the administrations of four governors—Kerrey, Orr, Nelson and Johanns. Of those four, the only one who supported building a low-level nuclear waste dump was Kay Orr. Nelson beat Orr when she ran for her second term, in part on this issue, because most Nebraskans did not want the dump.

Nelson campaigned on the pledge that the dump would not be built unless it was safe. What Nelson provided when elected was a clean process. That's why everyone was so mad at him. Developers may

have believed, with Nelson's business ties, he would roll over. He did not. Environmentalists and dumpsite neighbors hoped he would stop the dump out of hand. He did not. Nelson let the scientists make the call. The dump was not built because it would impact wetlands and, therefore, would not be not safe.

Scientists decided that the site was not safe. Honest, truly sound science today still supports the decision to deny approval to the site. In fact, water law recently passed in the Nebraska Legislature—finally admitting the link between ground and surface waters—underscores the wisdom of the decision.

And now we know that the dump will not be built—in Nebraska or anywhere else—because it will not be needed. Decommissioning has been set back for 30 years for many nuclear power plants. Also, modern technology allows plants to use fuel more efficiently and create less waste than projected. The volume will simply not be there to justify the dump. It was a business decision, in the end, not to build.

The Republicans are walking on thin ice, by playing the lawsuit settlement in a bid to call Nelson's leadership into ques-

tion. It was Republican Governor Mike Johanns who settled the lawsuit—some say abruptly—and set aside forever the important issue of states' rights. Nebraska's sovereign right to protect its waters and citizens' health would have been argued on appeal, and Nebraska might easily have won on the merits. Johanns had already spent several million dollars defending the lawsuit. Why not spend a few hundred thousand for an appeal the state had a good chance of winning?

From here, it looks like the Nebraska Republican leadership saw their main chance and took it. If they could hang that \$145 million around Nelson's neck, they could set the stage nicely for a Johanns run at Nelson's Senate seat. Or, it was a fine courtesy to a grateful president—greasing the skids for Johanns' USDA appointment and softening Nelson up for another Republican challenger.

If Republicans thought Nelson did wrong, why did they not call on Governor Johanns to reverse the decision? Is the Nebraska Republican party now claiming that an unsafe, unnecessary nuclear waste site OUGHT to be built in Nebraska?



From the Bottom by Sally Herrin
The real political spectrum isn't right to left... it's top to bottom.