

Call to Justice!

Issue 51

Disciples Justice Action Network

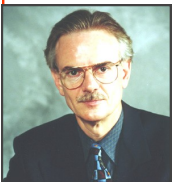
Winter 2011

A Christmas Meditation

Among Friends

by
Nancy Hunt Wirth

We find DJAN friends at work and worship around the world. We are introducing some new Decision Team members in this issue and the next.



Michael Kinnamon
(Friend and Supporter of DJAN)

Michael,

who has spoken at numerous DJAN workshops, forums, and panels at General Assemblies, Ecumenical Advocacy Days, and other events, will be stepping down from his position as General Secretary of the National Council of Churches. The Disciples theologian and activist recently told the NCC Governing Board that his cardiologist has advised him that the heavy travel schedule and other demands of his office are detrimental to his health. According to a news release from the NCC, Kinnamon has begun a "process for a stable and grace-filled transition" to bring his tenure to a close.

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You, O Word and Wisdom of God,
You through whom we come to be,
You have come to be one with us,
The Just and Holy One among us.

We gaze upon you, anointed child,
As lost sisters and brothers;
And, in our wonder and joy,
The world is born anew.

Now light shines in our darkness,
Hope frees us from our despair
And Life springs forth in our death-dealing world.

Alleluia! Your peace is upon us.
Amen! Your reign is here.
And blessed be God,
We all belong.



DJAN Activists Participate in the Occupy Movement

by Tanya Tyler

A grassroots movement protesting the economic inequalities in the United States has cropped up, and it doesn't appear it will be mowed down any time soon.

All across the country – indeed, around the world – people are taking a stand by staging stand-ins and sit-ins, and, in some cases, sleep-ins, to proclaim their desire for justice and accountability. Among those participating in these events are several leaders, members and supporters of DJAN.

In New York, DJAN Decisions Team member, Alvin Jackson, Senior Pastor of Park Avenue Christian Church, has been very active in Occupy Wall Street (OWS),

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Please Find Your Full Copy of the "Call to Justice" online at www.djan.net/news.pdf

To be good stewards of our resources during this economic downturn, we are putting the **Call to Justice** online. We are including this page to encourage you to go online to read the latest DJAN news.

Like most non-profits, we must stretch every dollar we receive. The printing and postage cost for one newsletter is more than \$1500.00. Those dollars are better spent on advocacy, providing workshops at assemblies and enabling our members to make a strong witness for justice. To receive newsletter notices, send your e-mail address to: nanaadams@cox.net.



DJAN is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic . . .

Among Friends Continued...

Pat and Bill Nottingham (Friends and Advisors of DJAN)

In June, Bill attended a 50th anniversary reunion in Cape Verde, commemorating the 1961 escape from Portugal of 60 African students, undertaken by the French service organization CIMADE. He was part of it because Pat and he were assigned to CIMADE at the time by the Council On Christian Unity. The president of Cape Verde, who was one of the students with Bill and 42 others in jail in Spain briefly, sponsored the reunion, and a number of retired government and NGO officials from Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, and Guinea Bissau attended from the original group. It was a manifestation of the church's role in struggles for decolonization, liberation, and human rights.



Dr. Jack Sullivan Jr.
(DJAN Decisions Team President)

On August 20, the Regional Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Pennsylvania elected the Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan Jr. of Cleveland, Ohio, to serve as Regional Minister and President. Dr. Sullivan will conclude his service

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Reflections on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Dedication

by Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr.

By the grace of God, I have lived long enough to see three monumental occurrences in human history, events that few people ever thought would be recorded in the annals of achievement. The first was the 1990 release of Nelson Mandela from a South African prison after 28 years of unjust apartheid-rooted incarceration. The second was the 2008 election of Barack Obama as the first African American President of the United States. Finally, the third was the October 16, 2011 dedication of the National Memorial to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an African American minister, scholar, and social justice advocate in the tradition of Jesus of Nazareth.

Occupying an area of the Washington Mall close to where my children and I stood and cheered the inauguration of President Obama, I stood once again and rejoiced as the 30-foot tall granite statue of Dr. King was formally dedicated, celebrated, and accepted as a present and future sign of appreciation for Dr. King and all whose lives were sacrificed or forever altered for the sacred cause of freedom and justice.

Weather forecasts warned of rain, but sunshine and warmth took charge of the day as if to say, "We will not take a meteorological back seat again!" Joy and energy were in abundance, complete with moving tributes from activists, artists, business leaders. Punctuating the day were touching yet challenging words from two of Dr. King's children, Martin Luther King, III and the Reverend Bernice King. Provide past and present contextual anchoring were veteran civil rights leader Congressman John Lewis and actress Diahann Carol; Reverends Joseph Lowery, Jesse Jackson, Andrew Young; "The Queen of Soul" Aretha Franklin;

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Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2012

"Is This the Fast I Seek?"

Come to the 10th annual EAD, March 23-26, 2012, in Washington, DC, where we will explore economy, livelihood and our national priorities through the lens of Isaiah 58. Join other Christians in seeking a global economy and a national budget that break the yokes of injustice, poverty, hunger and unemployment throughout the world — heeding Isaiah's call to become "repairers of the breach and restorers of streets to live in."

In a global economy based on scarcity, corporate greed, and individualism, we will seek God's alternative vision for global community: one that breaks the chains of injustice and creates the possibility of a sustainable livelihood with dignity for all, thus living into a reality of God's abundance.

We will worship, dialogue and be inspired and equipped to speak boldly as people of faith. Rousing preachers, stimulating theologians and internationally known policy experts will offer a faith-based vision for a just economy and a healthy livelihood, along with training on key policy issues and grassroots advocacy —culminating with lobby visits on Capitol Hill. In addition, area specific workshops will be offered on Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Middle East, Domestic U.S., Eco-Justice, Global Economic Justice and Peace & Global Security.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice is sponsored and organized by diverse Christian denominations and organizations, including DJAN.

Register today at www.advocacydays.org. If you're planning to attend or know someone else who is coming, please let us know at djan@verizon.net.

Among Friends continued...

as Senior Pastor of Fifth Christian Church, (Disciples of Christ) in Cleveland, OH. His prior service includes pastorates of many congregations and he has also served in the Division of Homeland Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as Associate for African American Educational Ministries.

Robyn Fickes (new DJAN Decisions Team member)

Robyn is currently attending the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey, in Bossey Switzerland, studying International Ecumenism and living with 30 other students from around the world. The Institute is a partnership between the World Council of Churches and the University of Geneva.

She will return in February to move to Lexington KY, where she'll be the Minister of Growth at Crestwood Christian Church. This position takes the unique perspective of evangelism and mission through the lens of education, local community involvement, as well as national and global outreach

Kyung-Min "Daniel" Lee. (new DJAN Decisions Team member)

Daniel is in his fourth year planting a church called Walking Faith, a Korean-American Christian Church (DOC) in Sunnyvale, California. He is delighted to promote greater communication between DJAN and NAPAD (North American Pacific Asian Disciples).

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DJAN Activists Participate in the Occupy Movement Continued...

participating in marches and preaching at an interfaith service. Associate Pastor Jennifer Kottler, an Advisor to DJAN, has also been very active, helping organize the faith community's response to and participation in what many people of faith are calling a "kairos moment" in our nation's history.

In Maryland, DJAN Director Ken Brooker Langston and his family participated in Occupy Annapolis. Ken reported people gathered at the Kunta Kinte memorial near the Harbor, made signs, listened to diverse people speak and sang songs together. Ken is now part of the "Faith of 99%" group that is meeting regularly and discussing ways to be more involved in and of greater assistance to Occupy DC.



In Chicago, DJAN Decisions Team member Alexis Vaughan occupied a Wendy's restaurant adjacent to the Garfield train station on the city's south side. Like many who had to work during the day, she could not attend a 3:30 p.m. march to the LaSalle Street Bridge. Instead, she met her colleagues at Wendy's to identify the needs of their communities and discuss the best ways to address them.

"Recently the Occupy Wall Street movement has come under attack for its apparent diversity problem," Alexis said. "As a young black woman, I have been asked several times why more people of color aren't participating in the local Occupy Chicago protests."

"In the present moment, we should not concentrate our efforts on identifying the stakes for other people and then criticize their ability to respond accordingly," Alexis said. "In times like these we need to call on the Holy Spirit to guide us deeper into relationships with those we don't know, those who seem invisible."

"Championing the 'beloved community' never was, is, nor will be an easy task," she said. "But now is the time to remain focused. We need to encourage each other to stay the course because this movement is important for all of us."

On the other side of the country, DJAN Advisor Sandhya Jha got involved in the Occupy movement in Oakland, CA. Sandhya reported that half the members of First Christian Church of Oakland, where she is Senior Pastor, marched during the General Strike with children, teachers, union members, lawyers, doctors and homeless people. When anarchists broke windows, they tried to peacefully intervene and also cleaned up graffiti and broken glass at restaurants and small businesses.

"We are inspired by and conflicted about issues related to safety, justice and the class privilege that permeates parts of the movement," Sandhya said. "We march and we raise our voices to make it a better movement. And we also pay attention to the ways justice is playing itself out in less publicized places, lest we succumb to the arrogance that we have found the one solution to our country's moral crisis."

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working together to promote . . .

Among Friends continued

Harvey Lord (Founder of DJAN)

Harvey reports that working on his collection of DJAN's history takes most of his time and energy. He does think he could still preach a "doggone good sermon" if he could do it from a chair. He says "that darn Parkinson's is such a nuisance." Harvey enjoys attending his former pastorate, University Church in Chicago, on Sundays. He is grateful to his good friends, DJAN Treasurer, **Jay Wilcoxon and wife, Pat**, for transportation to church.

Beau Underwood (new DJAN Special Friend and Advisor)

Beau began his work at Faith in Public Life in Washington, DC in March. He serves as the organization's partnership and outreach coordinator, helping to strengthen the organization's relationships with allies and identifying emerging leaders within the progressive faith movement. Since October, he has also been on the ministry team at National City Christian Church, serving as an Assistant Pastor working with new member formation, community organizing, and worship planning.

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DJAN Activists Participate in the Occupy Movement Continued...

Also in Oakland, DJAN Decision's Team member, Tai Amri Spann-Wilson, a pastor at First Christian Church of Oakland, went to find out exactly what was drawing so many people. The tent city was "beautiful and smelly and intriguing and full of joy and despair, just like everything Oakland." Tai had recently participated in an Interfaith Clergy Walk through San Francisco's Financial District with about 100 other clergy and laypeople. They stopped at intervals along the way to pray, preach and have a ceremony for the death of corporate greed.

According to Tai, he was amazed when he attended a General Assembly of Occupy Oakland. "It was the most democratic process I had ever witnessed," he said. "The people came out 3,000 strong. The human microphone was employed that allows each individual to echo the message of the speaker so as many can hear as possible." The assemblage breaks up into small groups that vote on different proposals. That night's proposal was whether Oakland should have a citywide General Strike. The vote was overwhelmingly consensual.

"Since Strike Day we have discussed what is going on in Oakland among our congregation," Tai said. "I have found a group of dedicated and seasoned clergy activists and people of faith in Oakland that meet weekly and are coalesced to make some real change in the movement. We made a plan to continue to find a way to support non-violence in the camp and to support any such proposals in a General Assembly."

OWS has seeped up north as well. DJAN activist Rick Myer, former moderator of the Christian Church in Canada, reported, "A relative and I visited our local 'Occupy Event' in Victoria Park, which is in the affluent north section of London, Ontario. The 40 or so tents with their hand-lettered signs and rag-tag residents are quite a contrast from the scenes that surround it," Rick said. The park is bordered by Richmond Street, an area that includes pubs, specialty shops, large Victorian period mansions, ornate old churches and City Hall.

Rick reported that London's Mayor Joe Fontana seemed to be trying to justify either bringing the event to a halt or at least controlling and containing it. The city is seeking legal advice to evict the Occupiers. But cold weather is about to hit Canada and, according to Rick "that might solve what the city considers a 'problem.'"

"In the past demonstrators managed to stick out the bitter weather, but it remains to be seen whether this new wave of Occupiers have that kind of grit and determination," Rick said. "We'll see."

Charles Bayer, a founding member and leader of DJAN, spent time at the Los Angeles City Hall with the 99%ers. A variety of issues were discussed in small clusters, and workshops were held throughout the day.

Charles was impressed with the way the protest was handled. "There was a well-ordered atmosphere about the whole thing," he said. "These people were determined without being obnoxious. Having been in a score of such demonstrations, I was impressed by the careful discipline in the way this one was being conducted."

"It is yet uncertain as to where these nationwide events are headed," Charles noted. "The time will come when the focus must move to an involvement in the political arena. For now there is no jelling of any action agenda. If there is none in the weeks and months to come, my guess is the whole thing may die a gray death." "Nevertheless, I am putting my faith in what is currently happening. It may mark a new day with a new group of young adults with a different way to address history."

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Among Friends

Thandiwe Gobledele (new DJAN Decisions Team member)

Thandiwe is a Ministry Intern at First Christian Church of Greensboro, NC, and is serving as intern for the Disciples Center for Public Witness. She will be working on human trafficking, violence against women and paycheck fairness.

Jim Higginbotham (DPF Representative to DJAN)

Jim, who is Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling at Earlham School of Religion, Richmond, IN will continue Disciple Peace Fellowship's long standing collegiality with DJAN. With Jim's leadership, the two organizations are currently discussing ways to work together to reinvigorate the Just Peace program among Disciples congregations and the denomination as a whole.

La Marco Cable (new DJAN Decisions Team member)

La Marco has left DOM and accepted the Regional Organizer position with Bread for the World in Washington, DC. He will be responsible for building, organizing and strengthening a regional grassroots network to help Bread for the World accomplish its legislative goals toward ending hunger and poverty in the United

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The Faithful Budget Campaign

A Congressional "Super Committee" has been charged with finding \$1.2 trillion to cut from the federal budget by November 23. These cuts could impact every federal program under the sun: Social Security, Medicare, nutrition assistance programs, prenatal and infant care, foreign aid, the military, taxes and more.

These cuts would be coming at a time when the U.S. poverty rate is at a 45-year high and one in eight people live in poverty.

In response, an interfaith coalition in Washington, DC began daily Capitol Hill prayer vigils and found other ways to work together out of a common sense of urgency about people who are impoverished and marginalized. At these events, diverse people of faith united around the need to protect social safety net programs that serve people living in poverty.

As part of this campaign, a number of religious leaders assembled in the Capitol Rotunda, where they prayed for vulnerable people and sang hymns prior to being arrested.

On November 20th, faith commu-

nities across the country participated in a Super Vigil where diverse people of faith prayed together and asked Congress for a just and compassionate federal budget. This included a vigil across from the White House in DC, local vigils in a number of cities around the nation, and individuals and communities partici-

patied in the vigil by phone.

Learn more and share information about Faithful Budget efforts on Twitter.

Use the hashtag #faithfulbudget. Also, if you've participated in any way in this campaign, please share with us information about your involvement: djan@verizon.net.



Occupy continued....

He added, "This generation doesn't need our advice, but they do need our participation."

For more complete reports on the Occupy movement from DJAN participants, please visit www.call2justice.net. Also, if you are participating in the Occupy movement, please let us know. Share your experiences and reflections with us at djan@verizon.net.



Charles Harvey and May Sweet Lord JUSTICE ACTION FUND

- ✓ **Honor** the work of May and Harvey Lord
- ✓ **Support** the Justice Ministry of DJAN
- ✓ **Provide** resources for seminarians
- ✓ **Keep alive** a strong voice for justice in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

(Tax deductible)

in our churches, our nations . . .

Among Friends

Continued...

La Marco Cable continued. States and abroad. The states in the region that he will work include: Tennessee, District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, Texas and Oklahoma.

LaShandra Smith (new DJAN Decisions Team member)

Rev. Smith is *coalition builder and trainer* for the Work Steps Coalition in Biloxi. MS.

With a commitment to rebuild the communities of the Coastal counties of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, a group of non-profits got together and formed Steps Coalition. Today, Steps Coalition, a social justice organization, consists of over thirty not for profits that champion work in five areas: Human Rights, Affordable Housing, Preservation of Historic Communities, Economic Justice and Environmental Justice.

We are proud of LaShandra's work with other local clergy in campaigning against the recent proposed Mississippi Constitutional Amendment. A future project will be developing an Expungement Clinic, which will provide pro bono attorneys with needed assistance in defending clients wanting to expunge their criminal records where appropriate.

Major Faith Organizations Join to Kick Off National Food Stamp Challenge

With Congress considering cutting the budget for SNAP, the religious community is leading an effort to focus the country's attention on the realities of hunger and poverty. National religious leaders, Members of Congress, Senior Obama Administration officials, and recipients of the current Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) joined at a DC Safeway supermarket on Thursday, October 27th. They held a press conference and participated in a shopping trip for groceries on the average SNAP allotment of \$31.50 a week.

The national event marked the beginning of the fourth annual Fighting Poverty with Faith mobilization. Fighting Poverty with Faith, cosponsored by the National Council of Churches, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and Catholic Charities USA, includes more than 50 national faith organizations, including DJAN. These organizations are brought together by shared traditions of justice that call on people of faith and conscience to act on behalf of those living in poverty in America.

Speakers included local SNAP recipients, members of Congress, White House Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Dr. Kathleen Merrigan, and leaders from the National Council of Churches, Catholic Charities USA, the Council for Public Affairs, and the Islamic Society of North America.

"More than 45 million persons live on food stamps, and they are not strangers," said The Reverend Peg Chamberlin, President of the National Council of Churches. "They are our neighbors, co-workers, family members, and they are us. I have been on food stamps. I am in better times now. But I remember how much we tried to hide it from those around me. We stand together in grocery check-out lines, yet so many of us have no idea what it is like to struggle to feed families on \$4.50 a day. I challenge all of us to share in that struggle for a week, not merely to attract attention to the growing needs of persons in poverty, but as a reminder that God does not expect us to turn our backs on others in need."

People of faith and conscience are being asked to take "the Food Stamp Challenge" by trying, for at least one week, to live off the same amount of funds available to SNAP recipients, to use this time to pray for those in need and to contact their elected officials about preserving and expanding this necessary aid to the poor.

If you are participating in the Food Stamp Challenge, please let us know. Share your experience with us at djan@verizon.net.

Give DJAN as a Gift For The Holidays



Do you know someone who has a passion for peace and justice? Why not purchase a DJAN membership for them? For \$35, they can join you as a supporter of this crucial justice ministry and receive news of the latest justice events, information and blogs. See page 8 to purchase.

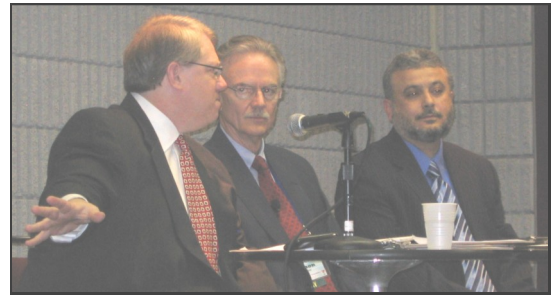
(Canada and the United States) . . .

DJAN at General Assembly July 9-13, 2011

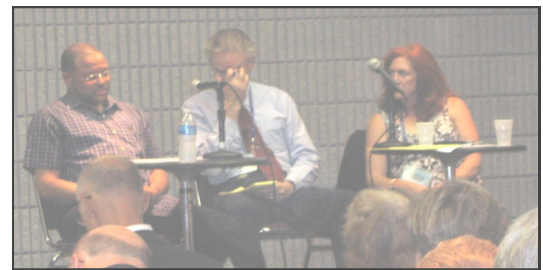
DJAN was very active at the 2011 General Assembly of the Christian Church (DOC) held in Nashville, TN. July 9-13. DJAN sponsored two very popular overflowing workshops “Justice and the children of Abraham” with Michael Kinnamon, Mark Pelavin and Safaa Zarzour, and also “A Social Gospel for Today” with Eric Brown, Michael Kinnamon and Jennifer Kottler. We had over 100 in attendance at each workshop.

DJAN conducted its annual membership meeting during the assembly. We received a report from our treasurer, Jay Wilcoxon and we honored our saints, May Sweet Lord and James Demus. Garnet Day brought us up to date on Harvey Lord’s health after the death of May Lord. Eleanor Demus introduced her daughter and told us about the DVD of the James Demus Service. (To obtain copies, see information on page 8.)

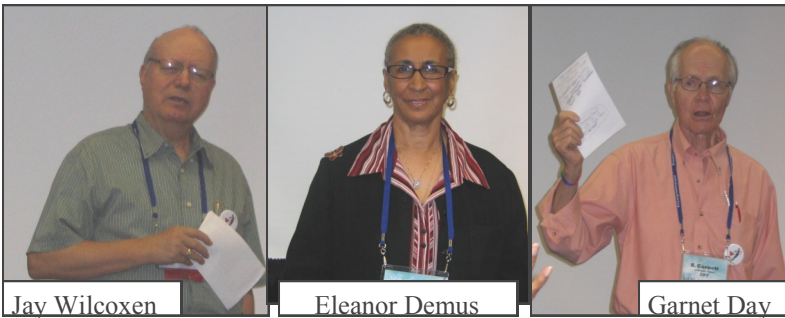
The DJAN booth at the General Assembly was a wonderful gathering place to meet and greet friends, both old and new.



“Justice and Children of Abraham” with Mark Pelavin, Michael Kinnamon and Safaa Zarzour



“Social Gospel for Today” with Eric Brown, Michael Kinnamon and Jennifer Kottler



Jay Wilcoxon

Eleanor Demus

Garnet Day



Nashville Music Hall of Fame



Garnet and Carolyn Day



DJAN Overflowing Workshop



DJAN Booth at General Assembly



Eleanor Demus, Ken Brooker Langston and Brenda Cardwell



Mark Pelavin, Safaa Zarzour & Michael Kinnamon.

and the world . . .

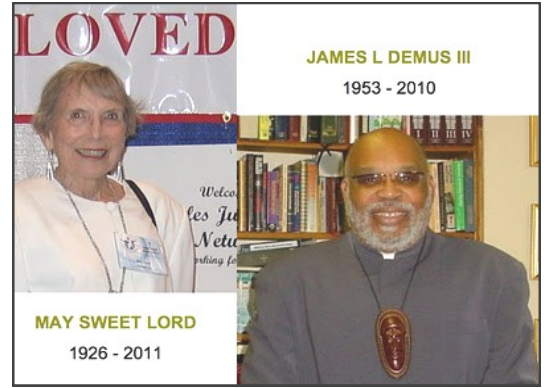
Reflections on Martin Luther King Memorial Continued...

and President Obama. Once the program ended, a concert began featuring Stevie Wonder, Cheryl Crow, Ledisi, and James Taylor.

Most of the day, I spent time with an accidental companion, a gentleman I met on the subway heading for the dedication event. A DC resident, he described himself as hailing from the deep south – Jamaica! He afforded me something I call “movement hospitality,” meaning that he reached out to me – I was alone - he treated me kindly, and conferred upon me the title of partner for the day. As we talked, we shared our faith commitments and levels of involvement in the work for justice. Amid a sea of thousands, we were not content to be live as strangers; we became partners for the day.

Now as we reflect on the life of Dr. King, we will read or listen to his speeches. We may read books that detail his life. Perhaps we will wear buttons or pins that bear his image. All of these serve as honorable acts. Yet, I hope that our reflections will lead us to deepen our involvement in ministries that dismantle social and economic injustice. As we do this, let us learn from the gentleman from the deep south I met in DC. May he teach us to avoid working alone or only with those we know best, in order to practice the kind of movement hospitality that leads us to reach out and form new relationships and bold partnerships, not just for one day but every day.

Help Us Honor our Saints



For a contribution of \$25, receive a DVD of the memorial service for May Lord at University of Chicago.

For a contribution of \$50 receive a DVD of the homegoing service of James L. Demus, III, held at Park Manor Christian Church in Chicago. Speakers included national and local political and religious leaders.

For \$65 or more receive both DVD's

To receive a DVD, write DVD on the subject line of your check.

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Let's Do Justice Together!

DJAN is composed of Christians networking to make a stronger witness for righteousness in public issues.

- Membership:** \$35 Individual \$40 Family
 - \$15 Seminarian/Student/ Low Income
 - \$100 Organization (congregation, church, region, agency,)
- (Tax deductible)*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____ (For future Newsletters)

To Honor Harvey and in memory of May Lord

I wish to contribute to the tax deductible Harvey and May Lord Justice Action Fund.

- \$2,000 \$1,000 \$750 \$500 \$250 \$125
- \$100 \$75 \$50 \$25

Other \$ _____ Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

Clip and Mail to: DJAN, P.O. Box 35887, Tulsa, OK 74153