

***Catholic Campaign for Human Development  
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops***

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development fully upholds the church's teaching on the sanctity of human life from conception through natural death. The Campaign funds projects that empower the poor and help them organize themselves to move out of poverty. All grant applications are carefully screened and funds are provided only to projects with objectives and actions that are fully in accord with the moral teachings of the Catholic Church. Partisan activity is strictly prohibited and upon discovery of such activity funding is terminated. The local CCHD director and field representative evaluate every proposal. Endorsement by the local bishop is required for every project recommended for funding.

**ACORN FUNDING**

CCHD has funded through the years several community organizing work aimed at lifting people out of poverty. This work includes efforts to advocate for just wages affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, health care, immigrant rights and leadership development. Each application is carefully reviewed by diocesan staff and endorsed by local bishop. Several times throughout the year, national staff is in contact with all funded groups to ensure compliance with Catholic teaching and the mission of CCHD. Quarterly reports are submitted and reviewed by USCCB Grant Staff.

**ALLEGATIONS**

ACORN has its local grants placed in indefinite suspension pending an investigation into an incident of 8 years ago. Earlier this year it was brought to CCHD's attention that close to \$1 million was embezzled by a member of ACORN's national leadership about eight years ago. The incident was not reported to the authorities and the matter was kept quiet until a whistleblower from within ACORN recently notified the Board of Directors. It appears that some members of the Board were aware of the embezzlement and chose to resolve the matter internally. Bishop Roger Morin, Chairman of the CCHD Subcommittee, is aware of the situation and is working with staff and others to determine whether any of CCHD's funds were involved with the embezzlement. In the meantime, grants to ACORN groups which were approved by the CCHD Subcommittee in June are being held back pending an investigation of and evaluation of ACORN's current procedures.

In early October, allegations of ACORN participating in illegal voter registration activities were surfaced. ACORN claims to have registered over one million voters in low income communities. Allegations were made in previous years, some have been sustained and others have been dismissed as being politically motivated. CCHD monitors all groups and funding to ensure compliance with our policy on partisanship.

It should be noted that ACORN represents less about 1/10 of all CCHD community organizing dollars granted. ACORN groups represent 41 of 380 total groups funded. They have shown to be compliant in all of our staff reviews. These allegations come as a surprise and CCHD has pledged to look into both with acute scrutiny. For the most part, community organizing is working well in most portions of the country with people needing to be formed as community more than ever. The recent financial crisis looms to affect people who are poor in a manner we have yet to experience.

## Catholic Social Teaching and CCHD

1) **Dignity of the Human Person** -- The dignity of the human person is a central theme running throughout Catholic Social Teaching. This principle asserts that the human person is made in the image and likeness of God, that human life is sacred and must be preserved from conception through natural death, and that each person possesses a basic dignity that comes from God. Therefore, the test of every institution or policy is whether it enhances or threatens human life and human dignity.

*The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) will consider favorably only those organizations which demonstrate respect for the dignity of the human person. CCHD will not consider organizations which promote or support abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, or any other affront to human life and dignity.*

2) **Poor and vulnerable** people have a special place in Catholic social teaching. A basic moral test of a society is how its most vulnerable members are faring ... Our tradition calls us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first."<sup>2</sup>

**Family Living Wage** -- Ever since *Rerum Novarum*, issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891, the issue of just wages has been a consistent concern of Catholic Social Teaching. In their 1986 economics pastoral, the bishops of the United States wrote: "The first line of attack against poverty must be to build and sustain a healthy economy that provides employment opportunities at just wages for all adults who are able to work." (196) CCHD gives priority to business development initiatives that pay a living wage.

**Institutional Change** -- CCHD's mission "is to address the root causes of poverty in the U.S." In Catholic Social Teaching, the causes of poverty are understood to be an aspect of "social sin" rooted in our social and economic structures and institutions. In their economics pastoral, the bishops of the United States describe "A New American Experiment" that calls for "an imaginative vision of the future that can help shape economic arrangements in creative new ways." (295) This will require alternative economic structures that will "expand economic participation, broaden the sharing of economic power, and make economic decisions more accountable to the common good." (297)

In addition to just wages, CCHD seeks a just balance of individual- and community-held assets. In *Rerum Novarum* this vision was described in the following way: "If working people can be encouraged to look forward to obtaining a share of the land, the consequence will be that the gulf between vast wealth and sheer poverty will be bridged over, and the respective classes will be brought nearer to each other." (47) Much more recently in 1963, Pope John XXIII wrote in *Pacem in Terris*, "The right of private property is an effective means for safeguarding the dignity of the human person and for the exercise of responsibility in all fields; it strengthens and gives serenity to family life, thereby increasing the peace and prosperity.

3) "Flowing from our God-given dignity, each person has basic **rights and responsibilities**. These include the rights to freedom of conscience and religious liberty, to raise a family, to immigrate, to live free from unfair discrimination, and to have a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family. People have a fundamental right to life and to those things that make life truly human: food, clothing, housing, health care, education, security, social services, and employment. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities - to one another, to our families, and to the larger society, to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good."<sup>3</sup>

**Participation and Control** -- Catholic Social Teaching holds that all people have the right and duty to participate in society and its organization. In his 1999 papal exhortation upon the completion of the Synod of America, *Ecclesia in America*, Pope John Paul II relates the dignity of the human person to social interaction, "It will be especially necessary 'to nurture the growing awareness in society of the dignity of every person and therefore to promote in the community a sense of the duty to participate in political life in harmony with the Gospel.' Involvement in the political field is clearly part of the vocation and activity of the lay faithful."

The right to participate in society has been emphasized frequently in Catholic Social Teaching. Pope John XXIII in 1961 wrote: "Basic justice demands the establishment of minimum levels of participation in the life of the human community for all persons." In 1986, one of six principal themes articulated in the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter on the economy was: "All people have a right to participate in the economic life of the society." (15)

***For the purposes of CCHD funding, the participation of poor people in the shaping and ongoing direction of organizations is a central criterion. While "advisory" groups may also strengthen an organization, poor and low income people must have and maintain a strong voice in the organization's leadership both in terms of its governance structure and policy decisions, especially through their direct participation in the board of directors.***

4) The **common good** is "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups, and their individual members, relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment."<sup>4</sup>

**Solidarity** -- Rooted in the dignity of the human person and their participation in society, CCHD's funding programs promote solidarity. Pope John Paul II has stressed the need for solidarity as a part of "the growing awareness of *interdependence* among individuals and nations." Solidarity is "a moral and social attitude" that requires "a *firm and persevering determination* to commit oneself to the *common good*; that is to say to the good of *all* and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for *all*." (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38.5-6, 1988)

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* relates the need for solidarity as we collectively face challenges to the common good: "[Solidarity] also presupposes the effort for a more just social order where tensions are better able to be reduced and conflicts more readily settled by negotiation. Socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all the forms of solidarity: solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor, or workers among themselves, between employers and employees in a business, solidarity among nations and peoples."(1940-1)

5) **Peace** is not simply the absence of conflict; it must include efforts which build and promote "a civilization of love". "The goal of peace, so desired by everyone will certainly be achieved ... through the practice of virtues which favor togetherness, and which teach us to live in unity, so as to build in unity, by giving and receiving a new society and a better world."<sup>5</sup>

***CCHD will not consider organizations which promote or support violence, racism, sexism, or other prejudices, in any form. We realize that conflict is inevitable and often an element of social change. However, conflict must take place in an atmosphere of non-violence and respect for human persons.***

***Signatures of authorized organization officials on the Grant Agreement indicate adherence to these principles in the administration of any CCHD-funded organization.***