Possible Peace and Justice/Social Analysis Topics – for Anawim Paper

Students: In the Peace and Justice Religion class you will be asked to explore in depth ONE social justice issue through a final paper or class project. We call this the “Anawim Paper” or “Social Sin Paper” and it is the culmination of the whole service learning/social justice program. It connects your class work to your hands on service learning.

The following topics are offered for your consideration. - You do NOT need to choose from this list. It is provided to spark ideas and give examples of topics you might explore.

Email Mr. Moore if you have specific questions. gmoore@bishopodowd.org

Issues regarding People with Disabilities:

- ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 – before and after, how the law changed US society
- Abortion of abnormal (potentially disabled) fetuses
- Hiring practices, current general employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- Targeted employment for special needs people (workshops)
- Learning disabilities/education and the right to education for all
- History of treatment / discrimination of people with disabilities.

Issues regarding Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault/child abuse

- How social assumptions of domestic violence (poverty, alcoholism, anger, etc.) affect the issue
- Men’s attitudes that domestic violence is a “women’s issue” and how that affects the issue
- The Struggle for Social Change: Social attitudes that lead to violence against women
- Child abuse and social attitudes that perpetuate or deter it

Issues regarding Elders/Senior Citizens:

- Health care for elders and distribution of societal resources (drugs costs, access to services, etc.)
- Social costs of preventative vs palliative care (Adult day health vs. hospital or nursing home)
- Why are significant percentages of our elders poor? Elders and hunger/poverty issues (fixed income, social security as only income vs. food costs?)
- Governmental assistance ($) for seniors vs. children (or other groups in need). Who gets limited resources? (social security, medicare)
Issues regarding Youth Education

- Appropriate use of educational resources (mandated expenses for special learning needs, costs of special programs, etc.)
- Access to education Internationally vs. USA (both poor and rich countries)
- The effect of the neighborhood on a school - struggles of schools in low-income areas and the governments responsibility and response to those needs.
- Prison Industrial Complex and its effect on urban youth (who is put in jail and why - how it has affected communities)
- Funding comparison of Oakland schools (hills vs. flats) and distribution of resources (or Educational resources in the inner city, compared to suburban schools) (look at funding, unique challenges, available resources, social attitudes)
- Issues, challenges faced by Oakland schools (hills vs. flats) and student need requirements (where schools are mandated to put resources and the levels of student needs they are responding to.)

Issues regarding Urban Youth (non-education based)

- Drug trade in the inner city and police response
- Relationship between police and inner city populations - helpful or harmful?
- Lack of male presence in families (and multiple reasons this exists)
- Prison Industrial Complex and its effect on urban youth
- “Latch-key” kids and lack of attention for kids in families

Issues regarding Homeless and Urban poor:

- Mental illness and homeless (impact of deinstitutionalization – look it up!)
- PTSD and homeless vets (funding for Veterans’ affairs or mental health coverage)
- Immigrants and access to public services
- Illegal drug trade in the inner city
- Effect and effectiveness of anti-homeless laws (mostly city or county ordinances)
- Do social services help or hurt? Charity vs. Social Change for homeless populations

Issues regarding criminal justice or prison industrial complex

- Crack v. powder cocaine and length of mandatory sentences for convictions of each
- Rates of incarceration for specific populations
- Impact of “War on Drugs” on our society
- Effect of more intense focus by police on “communities of color” - effect of historical relationship between certain communities and law enforcement.
A NOTE ON FINDING RESEARCH RESOURCES ONLINE:

A GREAT place to get information is from “advocacy” organizations. Most broad social issues have State or National organizations that exist to advocate for the betterment of that issue in society. They usually collect a lot of statistics about the issue and they EXIST to look at these issues from a social analysis perspective and to work for social change.

So USE them!

They are often called “advocates,” “coalitions,” “associations” or “networks.” And they are often organized on a “national” “federal” “state” “county” or general “government” level.

Adding these terms to an online search will help you find them.

For example - **do a Google Search for any issue** and put the word “advocacy” after it. See what you get with the following searches:

- homeless advocacy
- violence prevention advocacy
- advocacy prison industrial complex
- disability advocacy

and even try getting more specific - such as...

- employment for people with disabilities advocacy
- homeless veterans advocacy
- “Alameda County” housing resources

Here are some lists of national advocacy groups where you can find links to other organizations:

Homelessness:  

People with disabilities:  
[http://home.earthlink.net/~dawwn/natlorg.htm](http://home.earthlink.net/~dawwn/natlorg.htm)

Domestic Violence:  
[http://nnedv.org/resources/nationalorgs.html](http://nnedv.org/resources/nationalorgs.html)