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The snow's gone, but the parking rules aren't. A guide. B5 • Poverty summit held in St. Paul. B3

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## End poverty by 2020? Faith forum crafts strategies

● Collaboration and creativity are keys to tackling a tough goal, a St. Paul summit concluded.

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If a hall-full of people gathered Friday in St. Paul have their way, Minnesota will be poverty-free by 2020.

Impossible? Not if good will, intelligence and cooperation among communities and institutions can prevail, they concluded.

The event was "Focus on Poverty," a summit convened by Archbishop Harry Flynn of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Bishop Peter Rogness of the St. Paul Area

Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Irish Catholics all in green and Lutherans in Norwegian sweaters were among the hundreds in attendance from church and nonprofit groups, politics and business. A sense of camaraderie not always found when people of faith discuss social issues pervaded the hall at Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church.

They applauded fiercely when Flynn called poverty "a scourge on the human family and an affront to our God." But eliminating it?

"We possess the financial resources and the creativity to end poverty in Minnesota by 2020 if we work together," Rogness said.

Speakers assigned to facets of pov-

erty attacked them with conviction.

Steve Cramer, head of Project for Pride in Living, said poverty foes' first priority should be affordable housing. He lauded state efforts and called for churches and businesses to press the federal government to improve funding of Section 8 (public) housing.

All-day kindergarten, year-round school and more "vocational school pathways" to high-paying blue-collar jobs would narrow the achievement gap between white and minority schoolchildren, said the Rev. Al Gallmon of Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church in Minneapolis.

High-priced health insurance throttles the working poor, said former U.S. Sen. David Durenberger, now senior health policy fellow at

the University of St. Thomas' Graduate School of Business. Communities must insist that value, not volume, be the key component of health care, he said.

Patricia Harvey, former St. Paul superintendent, said schools and parents must demand academic rigor in math, science and languages.

Folk singer Julia Dinsmore, who described herself as "steeped in the rich cultural heritage of poor white-trash Minnesota," said individuals who reach out to others can address poverty even more powerfully than institutional change. "Let's do something new that's really old," she said. "Let's practice sharing."

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