

# PEACE *in ACTION*



## PEACEMAKING AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Fall 2010

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POT-SHOTS NO. 3680.



NOBODY  
WOULD  
EVER AGAIN  
SAY  
"THIS MEANS WAR!"

IF EVERYBODY  
KNEW  
WHAT  
WAR  
REALLY MEANS.

- POLICIES TO PROMOTE INTERNATIONAL PEACE
- WORKING FOR A NUCLEAR-FREE WORLD
- COMMUNITIES STRIVING TO PROTECT MOTHER EARTH
- NEW ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UN SYSTEM
- TEACHING PEACE IN CLASSROOMS & ECOLITERACY
- ROADS TO PEACE AND PEACEMAKING

# Contents

## Working for International Peace

<b>SPOTLIGHT on Peacemakers:</b>	<b>Inside Front Cover</b>
<i>Dr. Louise Diamond and David Krieger</i>	
<b>PEACE as an Organizing Principle</b>	<i>By Louise Diamond</i> 3
<b>Reasons to Kill: Why Americans Choose War</b>	7
<i>By Richard Rubenstein</i>	
<b>Message for Hiroshima Day 2010</b>	<i>By David Krieger</i> 12
<b>The Moral Challenge of a Nuclear-Free World</b>	13
<i>By Katsuya Okada and Guido Westervelle</i>	
<b>Nuclear Dangers and Opportunities in the Middle East</b>	15
<i>By Richard Falk and David Krieger</i>	
<b>TEN PRINCIPLES for the SUCCESS of the HUMAN RACE</b>	16
<i>By Hank Stone</i>	
<b>Earth Day: A Global Celebration</b>	18
<b>Permaculture: A Regenerative Design for Community Resiliency</b>	21
<i>By Penny Livingston-Stark</i>	
<b>Bioneers: A Declaration of Independence</b>	<i>By Kenny Ausubel</i> 23
<b>Growing our Future</b>	<i>By Angel Ruiz</i> 25

## United Nations System

<b>UN Women</b>	27
<b>United Nations Alliance of Civilizations</b>	31
<b>The Millennium Development Goals: A Status Report</b>	37

## Building a Culture of Peace

<b>Passing the Practice of Peace from One Generation to the Next</b>	43
<i>By Rita Marie Johnson</i>	
<b>The Peaceable Classroom</b>	<i>By Sonja Sneddon</i> 46
<b>Ecoliteracy, Systems Thinking, and Smart by Nature Education</b>	48
<i>By Michael H. Stone</i>	
<b>Forgiveness: the Road to Peace</b>	<i>By Azim Khamisa</i> 50
<b>Small Callings - My Journey Back to Peacemaking</b>	53
<i>By David LaMotte</i>	
<b>Major Religions on War and Peace</b>	<b>Back Cover</b>

## **PEACE in ACTION**

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## **EDITORIAL STAFF**

**Editor**  
**James L. Roush**

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# From the Editor

With this issue, we have completed 25 years of publishing; this will be our 20<sup>th</sup> and final issue. Recent issues and a list of earlier articles are on our website {[www.promotingpeace.org](http://www.promotingpeace.org)}. I'll be glad to send articles.

In this issue, the *Working for International Peace* section republishes Louis Diamond's *PEACE as an Organizing Principle* and also includes Hank Stone's *Ten Principles for the Success of the Human Race*. Both are designed to foster broader thinking about working for peace. We also have articles in this section on two very important prerequisites for obtaining peace: *eliminating the nuclear threat* and *healing our earth*.

The *United Nations System* reports on two new agencies: the *UN Women* organization, which will start January 1, 2011, and the *Alliance of Civilizations* which began operations in 2008 to develop, support, and highlight projects that promote understanding and reconciliation among cultures globally, especially among Western and Muslim societies. Also included in this section is an article on the progress in achieving the *Millennium Development Goals*, a major potential contributor to peace.

The *Building a Culture of Peace* section has two articles focusing on teaching peace and cooperation in the schools, as well as one promoting ecoliteracy. Also, two articles tell how two men became peacemakers: *Forgiveness: The Road to Peace* and *Small Callings - My Journey Back to Peacemaking*.

Our *Spotlight on Peacemakers* salutes Louise Diamond, the author mentioned above, for her work with various peace activities and peace work around the world. It also includes an addition about David Krieger's recently published English-Japanese anthology of poetry – *God's Tears – Reflections on the Atomic Bombs Dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki*.

Once again, we thank Ashleigh Brilliant (Brilliant Enterprises, 117 W. Valerio St., Santa Barbara, CA 93101 USA) for his permission to use his Pot-Shots postcards. With “17 words or less,” they send a strong message.

We send thanks to readers who have provided the moral and financial support to enable us to continue publishing for 25 years. Copies of PEACE in Action go to most countries around the world and also to all members of the U.S Congress. Americans may wish to call to the attention of their Representatives or Senators an article they like. While they are at it, they could request legislation to establish a Department of Peace and ratification by the U.S. Senate of the CEDAW treaty on women's rights and the new Start I Treaty.

Peace be with you all! Jim

**Foundation for a P eaceful  
E nvironment  
A mong  
C ommunities  
E verywhere**

The Foundation for P.E.A.C.E. was founded in 1979 to promote community and international peace by helping people:

- find personal peace;
- share their views of world peace and how to achieve it; and
- promote peace at community levels.

The Foundation's programs include:

1. Fostering the use of conflict resolution techniques in family and community affairs, in international development, and in political processes within and between nations;
2. Publishing PEACE in Action and producing and distributing other educational materials; and
3. Promoting the establishment of conflict resolution processes.

The Foundation for P.E.A.C.E. is an operating, nonprofit, tax-exempt foundation under Section 501©(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

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**Building a Culture of Peace**

# Peace as an Organizing Principle

*By Louise Diamond, Ph.D.*

In April 2003, Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D., Ohio), along with 46 co-sponsors, introduced a bill in Congress to establish a cabinet-level Department of Peace. In Section 101 of that legislation, describing the mission of such an entity, it says, “The Department shall...hold peace as an organizing principle.”

**P**ace as an organizing principle is an intriguing and revolutionary idea that, if applied at the global, national, and individual levels, would radically change the world we live in. To explore that further, let us consider how it would be if peace were truly the set of assumptions, values, and behaviors around which we organized our political, economic, and social lives and institutions.

Since our actions and structures grow out of our core beliefs, let us consider the assumptions of peace as an organizing principle for society. From my 15 years experience as a professional peacebuilder, I have extracted what I consider to be the four essential and inter-related principles or assumptions upon which peace flourishes. These are:

1. Community – the power of interconnectedness
2. Witness – the power of presence
3. Nonviolence – the power of love
4. Cooperation – the power of sharing power

**1. Community – the power of interconnectedness**

Peace is grounded in a basic understanding about the nature of reality – that we are all one in a single family of life on this planet, interconnected and interdependent. A simple study of the natural world tells us that this is indeed so, and our growing awareness of ecological matters confirms it. This holistic world view is something that traditional and tribal societies have long held (and that our physicists are now discovering in the laboratory). More ‘modern’ societies, however, especially those that are industrialized, have long since replaced this with a view that sees everything as separate.

**S**hifting from a mindset of separation to one of unity has profound implications for how we live together on this planet. Believing in our separation has fueled the growth of all the ‘ism’s’ by which, seeing our differences,

**Peace as an organizing principle for society can change the world**

**We are all one on this planet**

**If one is hurt,  
we are all  
diminished**

one group has concluded that it was better than, more worthy than, or more powerful than another, and therefore justified in dominating that other. Thus we see a world in which racism, sexism, colonialism, imperialism, elitism, ethnocentrism, ageism, homophobia, and religious fundamentalism abound. The use of violence is a logical outgrowth of such relationship patterns, for without force, how could one group impose its will on another?

**S**hould we instead recognize our unity as the ground from which all things arise, we would:

- Realize that if one is hurt, we are all diminished.
- Replace all forms of coercion, oppression, and unilateralism with partnerships, alliances, and multilateral coalitions.
- Change our environmental policies to reflect the fact that a healthy natural ecosystem is critical to healthy human life on this planet.
- Address global poverty and its related ills differently, allotting the resources necessary to provide for the basic needs of all people everywhere rather than for the few self-judged to be more entitled.
- Change the current culture of divisiveness -- which infuses our national polity and appears in our discourse as polarization, adversarial opposition, 'either/or' and 'us versus them' thinking -- to a culture of inclusiveness, characterized by dialogue, joint creative

**Peace is  
our spiritual  
DNA**

problem-solving, finding common ground, respect for differences, 'both/and' and 'we together' thinking.

- Honor our children and our elders above all else, making their care and well being our top priority.

**2. Witness, the power of presence**

The assumption here is that peace does begin inside each and every one of us because we all carry the seed of peace within. Like the acorn that already holds the template for the mature oak tree, we are all encoded with the pattern and potential for peace -- it is our spiritual DNA. As with other universal human ideals, like Justice, Freedom, Beauty, or Truth, Peace is one of those 'capital-letter' words that bespeaks a yearning and a striving within the human soul that cuts across all boundaries of culture, ethnicity, and religion. While we might define and understand 'peace' differently, we all hold it as one of our highest values.

**I**f we accepted this assumption, we would:

- See that potential for peace in every person and in every situation, and take it for granted that we water that seed in each other with our thoughts, words, and actions.
- Structure our work lives, our family lives, and the education of our children to support inner peace -- by giving instruction in and setting times for centering, stress reduction, and quiet reflection.

- Anchor our individual and collective lives around the importance of finding, and living from, that place of serenity, tranquility, and harmony.
- Honor those who embody the living presence of peace over those who excel in violence, be they in entertainment, sports, the military, or politics.
- Select as our leaders those who demonstrate the ability to live from and lead from that place of inner peace.

### 3. Nonviolence, the power of love

To do violence to another, we must first de-humanize them in some way. If we made the deep human connection from one heart to another, we would not be capable of causing suffering; rather, we would wish to alleviate pain, fear, and sorrow. Respect, appreciation of differences, compassion, empathy, and forgiveness are the result of keeping an open heart. We may be able to get temporary solutions to our conflicts and disputes without open-heartedness, but we will never achieve the full reconciliation needed to break forever the recurring cycles of violence which characterize our worst conflicts.

If we accepted this assumption, we would:

- Commit to healing the historical legacies and festering wounds associated with slavery and with the genocide perpetrated against the original Native peoples of this land.
- Eliminate the glamorization of violence from our culture, and eliminate the dependence on violence as a method of solving our problems.
- Insure that nonviolent methods of conflict resolution were taught in all our schools and practiced in all our family, workplace, community, and international settings.
- Celebrate and appreciate our diversity as a national priority.
- Teach listening, empathy, and compassion as the core curriculum in our schools.
- Realize that poverty and discrimination are forms of violence too, and put our collective intelligence and resources towards solutions that work to eliminate these social ills.
- Understand that violence begets violence, and so enact zero-tolerance policies against violence at every level, from the playground to the killing fields.
- Put human rights first, before profits or power.
- Put love unabashedly at the center of every decision.

### 4. Cooperation, the power of sharing power

When we realize that true power is the ability to create, and we put that together with the fact that we are all interconnected and interdependent, we understand that we are all involved in creating the world we share. In every moment, with every individual decision and action, we are choosing what it is we will collectively manifest. True

**Honor those  
who embody  
the living presence  
of peace**

**Eliminate violence  
as a way  
to solve  
problems**



**Make decisions benefiting 7 generations in the future**

cooperation means that we work together for the common good; dedicate our resources for the benefit of the whole; and realize we are crafting the future now – and that we need the wisdom and perspectives of all of us, not just a few, to make it work.

**I**f we accepted this assumption, we would:

- Offer our superpower status in service to the world, in all humility.
- Strengthen multilateral institutions and ensure that they serve the interests of the 5,000-10,000 distinct peoples on this planet, rather than primarily those of the biggest, strongest handful of powerful nation states.
- Listen to learn from the needs, the interests, and the views of other nations, cultures, and peoples, without assuming we know best.
- Shift our idea of power politics, from a reliance on power ‘over’ another to one on power ‘with’ others, and work collaboratively to create a world that works for everyone, not for the benefit of the few at the expense of the many.
- Make decisions -- like some Native American cultures -- on the basis of what is most beneficial seven generations into the future.
- Make mediation and interest-based negotiation the standard for addressing disputes.
- Teach win/win conflict resolution, dialogue skills, and joint problem solving in the core curriculum of our schools.

**Establish a Department of Peace**

In short, if these four assumptions of peace were the organizing principles of our society, our lives would look and feel quite different in every respect, from the individual to the global level. These changes would necessitate a reprioritization of our budget; a restructuring of our educational, political, and economic systems; and a revamping of our popular culture -- especially our media.

**W**e would also establish new institutions that put peace in the foreground. We would have a National Peace Academy (as now we have multiple national military academies), and community-based peace centers throughout the nation. A degree in Peace Studies would be offered in all major colleges and universities -- and held in high esteem in the workplace. We would have business networks and associations where leaders of commerce and industry could consider how their products and methods of doing business contribute to a more peaceful world. And, yes, we would establish that Department of Peace, and wonder why it took us so long to do so.

*(The resume of Louise Diamond, Ph.D., is included in the SPOTLIGHT on Peacemakers article on the inside Front Cover of this issue.)*

# Reasons to Kill: Why Americans Choose War

By Richard Rubenstein

*{Professor Rubenstein has recently published a book with the above title. He was subsequently interviewed about the book. Herewith follows a substantial part of that interview.}*

**Q.** In *REASONS TO KILL*, you study the arguments that American Presidential administrations have made throughout history as we've mobilized for war. What reoccurring themes did you find in our rhetorical and philosophical strategies?

**A.** In this book I study the arguments and images used by U.S. presidential administrations and other pro-war advocates to persuade ordinary citizens to support America's foreign wars. These methods of persuasion have got to be powerful, since they ask people to pay the human costs as well as the financial costs of war. The basic question I ask is: What convinces ordinarily skeptical Americans to send their sons, daughters, sweethearts, neighbors, and countrymen to kill other people and risk their own bodies and minds in battle?

The overall answer, I found, is that Americans are persuaded to fight by appeals to widely shared and deeply held moral and spiritual values – values associated with what some call our civil religion. **The most common themes are these:**

**Self-defense** -- We have a moral right and duty to defend our nation against unjustified attacks. *(The problem is that we have vastly expanded the definition of self-defense. The "self" we are now defending is not just America's soil and people, but U.S. troops, civilians, and allied forces around the globe. This "America abroad" represents the most dominant empire since ancient Rome.)*

**Evil enemies** -- We have a moral duty to destroy diabolical leaders who commit atrocities against

their own people, threaten their neighbors, and seek world domination. *(The problem is that we often label adversaries absolutely evil when they are **not** really satanic and can be dealt with in ways short of total war. Sometimes we label a whole people evil, which can lead to violence on a horrific scale.)*

**Humanitarian interventions and moral crusades** -- We have a special mission to secure the values of democracy, human rights, civil order, and moral decency around the world, by military means if necessary. *(The problem is that the U.S. is a superpower with its own interests and cultural biases, not a disinterested liberator of the oppressed. More often than not, we end up acting like the tyrants and aggressors we oppose.)*

**Patriotic duty** -- We earned our freedom by fighting for it. When Uncle Sam asks us to fight, even die, for our nation, we should be prepared to do so. *(The problem is that patriotism has never meant killing and dying on command. Generations of American patriots have demanded that the government justify war-making by showing that there is a real threat to the nation and that violence is needed to counter it. What I call communal patriotism creates a special problem by excluding anti-war dissenters from the American community.)*

**National honor** -- If we don't demonstrate that we are willing to fight, we will lose face and credibility, bad people will take advantage of us, and we will become a humiliated second-rate nation. For the same reason, once we have committed the nation to a war, we cannot retreat or withdraw without dishonor. *(The problem is that this is not a moral doctrine; it is an insecure cowboy machismo posing as morality. Most American wars since the end of World War II have ended in something short of victory, and most should not have been fought at all.)*



**No peaceful alternative --** Either negotiations to avert war have failed or they would be fruitless, since the enemy cannot be trusted to keep its word. The only alternative to war is therefore dishonorable appeasement. *(The problems are that the U.S. refuses to negotiate in good faith as much as any other nation, and that, even where it is attempted, negotiation falls short of conflict resolution. Without serious attempts at conflict resolution – that is, ending violence by eliminating its underlying causes – war is never a last resort.)*

**Q.** You were inspired to write *REASONS TO KILL* by the 2003 Iraq invasion, which many now agree began with the false pretense of Saddam Hussein possessing Weapons of Mass Destruction – but you were even alarmed by the *first* Iraq war Desert Storm, which is considered more “justified.” Can you talk about the distinction we make here, and add your thoughts too?

**A.** The first Iraq war, the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91, was a momentous turning point for America, since President George H.W. Bush intended to use it to put an end to the “Vietnam Syndrome.” The reason that Operation Desert Storm was not justified is that it was unnecessary. Even though our Ambassador misled Saddam Hussein into believing that we would remain neutral if he entered Kuwait, Saddam was clearly wrong to invade that country. But there is overwhelming evidence that he could have been evicted peacefully without receiving any concessions. In January 1991 he offered to withdraw unconditionally, so long as he could take his military equipment with him. The first President Bush rejected the offer and launched Operation Desert Storm because his primary aims were to destroy Saddam’s armed forces, degrade Iraq’s infrastructure, and eliminate that nation as a major player in the Gulf region – not just to liberate Kuwait.

Even so, Bush the First did not characterize Saddam Hussein as a diabolical Evil Enemy who must be removed from office, even if that meant dispatching an American army of occupation to

Iraq. That is why he allowed him to return to power in Baghdad after his defeat in the Gulf War. Ten years later, however, Saddam was diabolized by neo-conservatives, including the second President Bush. The neo-cons saw “regime change” as a way to liberate the Iraqi people, protect Israel, and pave the way for the democratization of the Middle East. And – oh yes – to guarantee U.S. control over the world’s second largest proven reserves of oil.

The second Iraq War was blatantly unnecessary. Not only were the charges against Saddam’s government (possession of WMD and al-Qaeda connections) false, but we know now that the Iraqi dictator invited U.S. officials and military forces to enter his country to search for illegal weapons, and even offered to hold elections under UN supervision in order to avert an all-out war. Once again, American officials initiated a war not because it was unavoidable, but because they did not wish to avoid it. Once again, the American people were sold a war on the basis of an appeal to their most cherished values, including the right to self-defense, the need to destroy an evil enemy, and the duty of humanitarian intervention.

**Q.** Our recent wars have been compared to Vietnam in many ways, but are there other parallels to more distant conflicts you’ve noticed as you reexamined our history?

**A.** Yes, definitely. One important parallel between wars like our current struggle in Afghanistan and earlier conflicts in which our government invaded other nations, the government claimed that weakly governed territories (“failing states”) would be used by hostile forces to attack us.

In the First Seminole War (1816-18), General Andrew Jackson led a U.S. army into Spanish-owned West Florida because Seminole Indians were said to be using that territory to raid American settlements on the southern frontier. In fact, Jackson and his men were enraged by the Seminoles’ willingness to welcome escaped slaves to their community, and the alleged Indian raids were actually reprisals for attacks on Indian villages made by white men trying to reclaim their “property.” A

generation later, the same sort of exaggerated claim of self-defense was used to justify the Mexican-American War and the seizure of California. If we didn't grab California, said President James K. Polk, some hostile power might do so. This was called national self-defense, but it was really a form of aggression.

The present Afghan War has also been sold to Americans as a struggle to pacify a lawless country in order to prevent it from being used as a terrorist base by al-Qaeda. But this claim is as questionable as were Jackson's and Polk's. There are virtually no al-Qaeda fighters left in Afghanistan. Many experts feel that we could negotiate an enforceable deal with the Taliban that would prevent them from returning, if only we were willing to let the Afghans resolve their own internal conflicts. The projection of U.S. power into Central Asia has reasons other than self-defense against terrorists. It is time that they were exposed and discussed.

A second fascinating parallel is the similarity between the Spanish-American War and more recent conflicts in which U.S. leaders claim to be acting as the liberators of oppressed populations. In 1898 we went to war allegedly to liberate Cuba from Spanish domination. Most Americans who supported that war did so because they were outraged by Spanish atrocities against the Cubans fighting for independence. But Presidents McKinley and Teddy Roosevelt decided that the Cubans were not ready for self-government and reduced that country to a dependency of the United States. Worse yet, after conquering the Philippines, the U.S. government refused to give that country its independence and fought a ghastly war of counter-insurgency that killed more than 200,000 Filipinos. In the Philippines, as in modern Iraq and Afghanistan, the main argument used to justify occupation and savage warfare was that we were helping to "develop" the country economically and politically.

Third, there are some strong parallels between World War I and the War on Terrorism. Americans were sold on joining in the incredible slaughter of World War I, and ended up losing 100,000 U.S. lives, because of propaganda

insisting that Kaiser Wilhelm II (the "Beast of Berlin") was out to conquer the world, including the United States. But Germany was no more interested in world conquest than were Britain and France and never posed any threat to America's independence or great power status. In a similar way, terrorists like Usama bin Laden are said to be interested in extending their power across the globe and in forcing us all to become Muslims. Nonsense! Their real interests are to reduce Western power over their part of the world, not to occupy ours.

A further parallel is controversial but important. When German U-boats sank American ships trying to deliver goods to England and France, these attacks were viewed as barbaric assaults against innocent civilians. But the British blockade of Europe, which caused tens of thousands of civilians to die of malnutrition and disease, was ignored, although it was at least as barbaric as the U-boat campaign.

In a similar way, the atrocious and inexcusable attacks against Americans on September 11, 2001 were used to direct our hostility against foreign extremists without considering the suffering that we and other Western powers had inflicted on Muslims in Iraq and the Middle East – an important contributor to this extremism. In such cases, the most creative response is to heal the broken relationship, not just to take revenge against the extremists. What good is it to kill terrorists unless we change the conditions that continually reproduce them? But changing those conditions means re-evaluating and changing our own government's behavior as well as the behavior of others.

**Q.** What were your thoughts on Barack Obama's Nobel Prize acceptance speech?

**A.** I found President Obama's Nobel Prize acceptance speech very disappointing – the same old ideas about war and peace flimsily disguised as a new foreign policy. "War, in one form or another, appeared with the first man," Obama said. "At the dawn of history, its morality was not questioned; it was simply a fact, like drought or disease." It makes

you wonder who researched the speech. Few good modern anthropologists believe that war is “natural” to human beings. The archeological evidence suggests that early humans were peaceful creatures, and that war did not appear until people began settling in densely populated river valleys, where classes of warriors and priests first appeared. Moreover, almost as soon as this happened, the morality of war was questioned by religious figures like Isaiah of Jerusalem (8<sup>th</sup> century BCE).

Even more questionable was Obama’s use of the theory of the Just War to justify America’s current “war on terrorism.” “Evil does exist in the world,” said the president. “A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler’s armies. Negotiations cannot convince al Qaeda’s leaders to lay down their arms.”

Obama is quite right about Hitler – but the analogy between the Nazis and Islamist extremists will not hold water. Since World War II, every American president who wants to fight a war, from Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam to George W. Bush in Iraq, has called the enemy of the moment a new Adolf Hitler. Hitler made an agreement with Britain and France at Munich and then tore it up. But how does Obama know that negotiations with al Qaeda would be useless? Has he even offered to speak with the terrorists? Clearly not. He makes this assertion because he is convinced that they are diabolical and that one cannot negotiate with the devil.

This is a mistake. Islamist terrorists are relatively, not absolutely, evil. They are the violent, misguided fringe of a much larger movement with real grievances against America and the West. Bin Laden is the tip of an iceberg that can be melted – but not by the methods of total war used against Hitler and the Nazis. I would not negotiate with Usama bin Laden either, in the sense of bargaining with him, but I would offer to meet with any and all Islamic leaders who want to discuss what is wrong with their relationship with America and what to do about that. Such a meeting should be strictly confidential, open to influential figures who

are not official leaders of any nation or group, and facilitated by impartial conflict resolvers. It might mark the beginning of a new era in Western-Islamic relations.

This kind of conflict resolution is exactly what the British and Irish did in connection with Northern Ireland – they used the services of an impartial peacemaker – America’s George Mitchell – to bring together violent extremists on both the Catholic and Protestant sides for serious analytical talks. The result was a split in each movement. The ultra-extremists on both sides isolated themselves, and militants who were calling each other children of the devil shortly before conclusion of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement ended up sharing power in a new Northern Ireland.

A final disappointment in Oslo was the president’s insistence that the U.S. “has helped underwrite global security for more than six decades with the blood of our citizens and the strength of our arms,” and that we did this not for the sake of power, but out of the goodness of our hearts. This is a grotesque misreading of history. Six decades ago, we fought the Korean War, which could be justified as an effort to defend South Korean independence against a North Korean invasion, but the vast expansion of American power since then – with hundreds of military bases in more than 60 countries – has far more to do with U.S. geopolitical and economic interests than with “global security.” President Obama equates American power with global security. He is unwilling to say the “E word” – empire – or to recognize that trying to maintain an American empire makes both the world and the United States less secure.

**Q.** In *REASONS TO KILL*, you write about the crucial role of the Exodus story in our narrative, as our most revered Presidents have been called “American Moses” for leading us through wars. This metaphor has also recently been used for our racial history, as Obama’s been called an “American Joshua.” His administration is still young, and he inherited two conflicts from his predecessor, but does this extend? Do you see a major departure in how he’s handled his foreign policy from past generations?

**A.** No, for reasons just given, I do not. In my opinion, Obama is neither a Moses nor a Joshua – he is more of a King Zechariah, the well-meaning monarch Jeremiah criticized for putting his faith in weapons and armies instead of in the Lord. So far at least, Obama is no prophet. He deserves credit for moving America back from the rhetorical excesses of the Bush years to policies that seem more rational and judicious. But I emphasize the word “seem,” since many of these policies, especially regarding the war on terrorism, continue those of George W. Bush. In some cases, like the dispatch of 30,000 new U.S. troops to Afghanistan, they are more bellicose than those of Bush. A prophetic leadership would give us a new foreign policy paradigm based on justice and peace rather than empire and armaments.

This new paradigm, which some call conflict resolution or conflict transformation is not a naive dream. It represents a practical attempt to lower the amount of collective violence in the world by solving the problems that generate collective violence. Its bottom line is the satisfaction of basic human needs like the needs for identity, recognition, security, and human development. Prophets concern themselves more with human needs than with power, property, and prestige. Mr. Obama has not yet reached this level. Perhaps one day he will.

**Q.** Do you believe there’s no such thing as a “good war”?

**A.** No, I believe that there have been “good” wars, although very few and far between. World War II was a mostly good war. The Korean War, maybe, although that case is trickier, since America’s South Korean protégé was as brutal a dictator as his North Korean enemy, and General Douglas MacArthur tried to turn a war of defense into a war of conquest.

Justifying war involves three requirements: the war must be necessary, it must be fought for a good cause, and it must cause the minimum amount of human suffering consistent with vindicating that cause. No war since Korea has fulfilled these essential requirements.

World War II was necessary because it proved impossible to negotiate with Hitler or the Japanese government. (Hitler himself would not have been a factor if Germany had been treated decently at the end of World War I, instead of being impoverished and humiliated, but that is another story.) World War II was also fought for a good cause, since we could not co-exist with fascist regimes that enslaved and exterminated millions of people, and that commanded the most powerful economies outside the U.S. The violence used to defeat the Axis powers was justified up to a point, but it ended by subjecting enemy civilians to wildly excessive force. (That is why I call the war “mostly” just.) In my view, we did not need to cause a firestorm over undefended Dresden, incinerate Tokyo, or drop atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, taking hundreds of thousands of lives when our enemies were on the verge of surrendering.

At present, there is no way to justify a “War on Terrorism” that obfuscates America’s imperial role, portrays the leaders of mass movements like the Taliban and Hezbollah as isolated terrorists, corrupts societies subject to U.S. intervention, and inflames the structural situation that is generating anti-Western violence. It is not just a new foreign policy we need but a new way of understanding ourselves and the world we inhabit.

*{Since 1987. Professor Richard Rubenstein has been a Professor of Conflict Resolution and Public Affairs at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution (ICAR) at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. In 2007 he convened the first ever workshop of European and U.S. experts to discuss how best to integrate their research and ideas into foreign policy. The ICAR website is: [www.gmu/icar.edu](http://www.gmu/icar.edu) The current address of the Institute is 2220 N. Washington Boulevard (Truland Building) in Arlington, Virginia 22201; telephone: (703) 993-1300.}*



# Message for Hiroshima Day 2010

*By David Krieger*

The Nuclear Age is 65 years old. The first test of a nuclear device took place on July 16, 1945 at the Alamogordo Test Range in the New Mexico Jornada del Muerto Desert. The Spanish name of this desert means Journey of Death, a fitting name for the beginning point of the Nuclear Age. Just three weeks after the test, the United States destroyed the city of Hiroshima with a nuclear weapon, followed by the destruction of Nagasaki three days later.

By the end of 1945, the Journey of Death had claimed more than 200,000 human lives and left many other victims injured and suffering. Over the past 65 years, the Journey of Death has continued to claim victims -- not from the use of nuclear weapons in war, but from the radiation released in testing nuclear weapons (posturing). We can be thankful that we have not had a nuclear war in the past 65 years, but we must not be complacent.

**O**ur relative good fortune in the past is not a guarantee that nuclear weapons will not be used in the future. Over the years, the power of nuclear weapons has increased dramatically. They have become capable of ending civilization and complex life on the planet. What could possibly justify this risk?

We remember the anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as cautionary tales. The survivors of the bombings, the hibakusha, have been strong proponents of Never Again! They have spoken out about what they experienced so that their past does not become our future. They have warned us repeatedly: *nuclear weapons and human beings cannot coexist.*

We must choose: nuclear weapons or a human future. The choice should not be difficult. Humanity should shout out with a single voice that we choose a world free of the overarching nuclear threat, a world free of nuclear weapons. The people must lead their leaders, choosing hope for a far more decent human future.

The United States alone has spent more than \$7.5 trillion on nuclear weapons during the Nuclear Age. The world currently spends more than \$1.5 trillion annually on weapons, war, and preparation for war, while spending only a small portion of this on efforts to meet human needs and achieve social justice.

Clearly, change is needed. Bringing about this change could begin by joining together to eliminate the nuclear weapons threat to the human future. The future is now. Sixty-five years of nuclear threat to humanity is enough. We continue to rely upon the theory of deterrence at our peril. The theory requires rationality from leaders who are not always rational.

The higher rationality and greater good for humanity would be to eliminate the threat by eliminating the weapons. The time to raise our voices and demand a world free of nuclear weapons is now, before it is too late. On this demand we must be both insistent and persistent.

*(David Krieger is President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, the offices of which are at PMB 121, 1187 Coast Village Road - #1, Santa Barbara, CA 93108; phone (805) 965-3443. The website is: ([www.wagingpeace.org](http://www.wagingpeace.org)). See SPOTLIGHT on Peacemakers for information about a book of poems that he has just published.)*



# The Moral Challenge of a Nuclear-Free World

By Katsuya Okada and Guido Westerwelle

*{This article was originally published by the Wall Street Journal.*

This May, delegations from more than 180 countries gathered in New York, at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, to discuss how to free the world from nuclear weapons. Despite the positive momentum that flowed from President Barack Obama's 2009 speech on the issue in Prague, there was enormous pressure on the conference. With a spirit of cooperation and flexibility from all delegates, however, the conference lived up to its expectations.

As foreign ministers, we draw two conclusions from this. First, it is remarkable that all delegates agreed on the conference's action plan, which includes various new and important commitments on nuclear disarmament as well as concrete measures to implement the 1995 Middle East Resolution, which called for a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the region. We should do everything possible to implement this agreement.

Our second conclusion is that the agreement is extremely fragile.

Without an intensive concerted effort, states will not honor it. The irreconcilable views expressed throughout the conference -- on such issues as the Iranian nuclear program and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's rules for how signatories withdraw -- will not fade away.

Prior to the conference, major nuclear-weapons states took some remarkable steps. The U.S. and Russia agreed to further cut their strategic nuclear weapons. The U.S. also presented a new approach in its Nuclear Posture Review, published in April,

which provided strong negative security assurances (that is, assurances that it would not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states).

We welcome and support the Obama administration's commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons and strengthening nuclear security. Together with nuclear-weapons states, including the U.S., we are ready to discuss how to reduce the role of nuclear weapons -- by, for example, committing to possess them only for the purpose of deterring others from using them. Even if nuclear states cannot immediately agree to abandon their nuclear weapons, they can take practical measures to reduce clear and present risks.

It is also necessary to make the possession of nuclear weapons unattractive. North Korea and Iran must understand that acquiring nuclear weapons in contradiction of their nonproliferation obligations would never be tolerated and would not elevate their status in the international community.

Like climate change, nuclear disarmament raises the question of whether mankind can feel a sense of responsibility across national borders and generations. Nuclear disarmament asks whether mankind can act to reduce the risks of self-destruction posed by "God's fire." We should never forget how human beings and buildings vanished in the tremendous flash of light and heat in Hiroshima and Nagasaki 65 years ago. This is a global issue that tests our sense of responsibility and morality.

Morality has recently played an important role in bringing about the success of treaties on land mines and cluster munitions. It is thus no coincidence that the Final Document of May's conference cited the need for states to comply with international humanitarian law.

Some may ask themselves why Japan and Germany are seeking to pursue nuclear disarmament with such vigor when both countries rely on the United States for nuclear deterrence. Our countries have long been advocates of disarmament. Since re-emerging from total devastation in the second world war, both countries have pursued a peaceful and stable world and the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It is in such a shared conviction that we find a common role. And we believe that pursuing nuclear disarmament is the path that will most reliably minimize nuclear risks and enhance international security.

The 21st century will be about managing our planet. History will remember favorably those countries that respond with a sense of global responsibility. Let us set upon the realistic and responsible path towards a world without nuclear weapons. It is a moral responsibility.

*{Mr. Okada is foreign minister of Japan. Mr. Westerwelle is foreign minister of Germany.}*

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**A SHORT HISTORY LESSON: 1945**

August 6<sup>th</sup>:  
Dropped atomic bomb  
On civilians  
At Hiroshima.

August 8<sup>th</sup>:  
Agreed to hold  
War crimes trials  
For Nazis.

August 9<sup>th</sup>:  
Dropped atomic bomb  
On civilians  
At Nagasaki.

David Krieger

**GOD RESPONDED WITH TEARS**

The plane flew over Hiroshima and dropped the bomb after the all clear warning had sounded.

The bomb dropped far slower than the speed of light. It dropped at the speed of bombs.

From the ground it was a tiny silver speck that separated from the silver plane.

After 43 seconds, the slow falling bomb exploded into mass at the speed of light squared.

Einstein called it energy. Everything lit up. For a split-second people could see their own bones.

The pilot always believed he had done the right thing.

The President, too, never wavered from his belief.

He thanked God for the bomb. Others did, too. God responded with tears that fell far slower

than the speed of bombs. They still have not reached Earth.

David Krieger

# Nuclear Dangers and Opportunities in the Middle East

*By Richard Falk and David Krieger*

Iran's uranium enrichment program has drawn much criticism, and there has been talk in both Israel and the United States of possible attacks against Iranian nuclear facilities. The drift toward a military solution seems to be gathering an alarming momentum, with little public discussion of alternative approaches in the mainstream US media. There would likely be very heavy costs associated with carrying out such attacks.

Iranian leaders have a variety of instruments available for retaliation, and there is little reason to think that these would not be used. It is highly probable that Israel would be attacked in response by Hezbollah and Hamas, both of which have the capabilities to inflict serious damage. Even more damage could be done by Iran itself, which is developing long-range delivery capacities by way of advanced missile technology and a type of bomb-carrying drone aircraft.

There exists also the Iranian option to block passage through the Strait of Hormuz through which two-thirds of the world's imported oil travels, undoubtedly producing supply shortages, a spike in prices, long gas lines in countries around the world, and global economic chaos. Beyond this, there are a variety of unresolved conflicts in the region that could be easily inflamed by Iranian interventions, most obviously Iraq.

Attacks against Iran, as a non-defensive recourse to force, would violate international law and the UN Charter. Force is only lawful in international conflict situations if used as self-defense in response to a prior armed attack. The core Charter commitment in Article 2(4) prohibits threats as well as uses of force. By that standard, both Israel and the United States, by their threats alone, may already be viewed as law-breakers. The actual use of force would leave no doubt.

A far better option than attacking Iran would be attempting to negotiate a Middle East Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. There is widespread support for this initiative among the governments in the region and the world. It was a priority goal agreed to by consensus at the 2010 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. But there is one large catch that has so far been a decisive inhibitor: Israel is unalterably opposed, as the establishment of the zone would require Israel to dismantle its own nuclear weapons arsenal.

Obviously, the idea of a Middle East Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone has little regional appeal if it does not include Israel. Israel's insistence on retaining nuclear weapons while being ready to wage a war, with menacing repercussions, to prevent Iran from acquiring such weaponry is expressive of the deeply troubling double standards that are an overall feature of the nonproliferation regime.

A Middle East Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone would immediately improve overall regional stability and, as well, take account of the prospect of many Arab countries poised to embark on nuclear energy programs of their own. Indeed, without such a zone, there is a substantial possibility of a regional nuclear arms race that would tempt countries such as Turkey, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, as well as Iran, to have the supposed deterrent benefits of a nuclear arsenal.

A Middle East Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone that includes all the countries of the region is an issue that demands U.S. leadership. Only the United States has the leverage and stature to bring the diverse cast of regional actors to the negotiating table to make the needed effort to avert war. There can be no advance assurances that such a diplomatic initiative would succeed, but to fail to try would be lamentable.

*[Richard Falk is the United Nations Rapporteur for the Palestinian Territories and Chair of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. David Krieger is President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.]*

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**Wherever I go in the world, they show me the monument to the unknown soldier.**

**But nowhere have I seen the monument to the unknown peacemaker.**

**U Thant, former UN Secretary-General**

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# TEN PRINCIPLES for the SUCCESS of the HUMAN RACE

*By Hank Stone*

The sustainability of our civilization is in question. If humankind is to have a successful future, unsustainable behaviors must cease. Everything unsustainable about our way of life WILL change.

What can we do to help bring about a successful human future? We were brought up to believe in “projects.” If something is broken, we do fix-up projects, like reattaching a loose rain gutter. We know about dividing big jobs into small ones, and delegating the parts to different people. Our problem is that the projects we have done in the past have brought us to our unsustainable present. New methods are required.

We got here by DOING, and now look for better things to DO. And there is work to do, but it is not mainly scientific discovery, individual virtue, or political activism. It is neither hard work nor heroic.

We are now called on not so much to DO, as to BE, to BELIEVE, and to ENVISION.

## Consider these Ten Principles:

### **BEING: Two Personal Principles**

#### *Principle 1: Be at peace.*

Fear, anger, distress and blame can distract from work on the human future. This isn't escape through denial or addictive behaviors. It's important to be in touch with our emotions, which can damage us if suppressed, and harm others if acted out inappropriately. Religious belief, meditation, gratitude, contemplating nature, and helping others can be ways to inner peace.

#### *Principle 2: Be kind and good.*

Trustworthy and considerate behaviors make us peaceful and enable large-scale cooperation. Attending to our own virtue is important precisely because all of us humans are flawed and make mistakes.

### **BELIEVING: Four Belief Principles**

#### *Principle 3: It Ain't Necessarily So.*

Communication with people in other societies shows us that things we were all brought up to believe, our cultural stories, may not be true. While societies were relatively isolated, cultural stories about outsiders being enemies enhanced security. But this is a time of transition, and our security requires us to reexamine our most basic beliefs.

#### *Principle 4: It Ain't Necessarily False.*

Human societies have discovered amazing information, capabilities, and resources. The idea is to create a sustainable human future that respects the past. Like a multi-stage rocket, we accept the need to jettison the used booster stages.

#### *Principle 5: Thoughts attract.*

Reality itself tends to mold itself to the thoughts we think, and (at least potentially) we get to choose what to think and believe. Therefore, getting the story right in our own heads is not denial or wishful thinking, but real work that the world requires.

***Principle 6: Change cultural stories.***

The only way to change the institutions and behaviors of society is to change the cultural stories on which they rely. The stories we tell ourselves are interconnected, and stabilized by the many benefits they give both to decision-makers and ordinary people. We must create an interconnected set of NEW stories in which to live.

**ENVISIONING: *Four World Principles******Principle 7: Oneness of humanity.***

Getting the future right can only be done cooperatively. Prejudice of all sorts will have to go: racism, extreme patriotism, intolerance of gays, gender discrimination—all of it. We must guarantee basic human rights for everyone on earth.

***Principle 8: Protect the planet.***

Population must be brought into balance with available energy, fresh water, and food. This must be done using non-coercive incentives and disincentives, so that people are encouraged to act in the interest of the human future. If we're not living sustainably, human numbers will crash.

***Principle 9: World peace system.***

Military competition among sovereign states has become too dangerous in the nuclear age. The world needs ways to guarantee the safety of people in every country, something the war system of dispute settlement can no longer do. A world peace system will not change human nature and will not eliminate all violence, but will require nonviolent conflict resolution and will hold every person, including state leaders, liable for criminal behavior.

***Principle 10: Human success.***

The world's population and lifestyle have become unsustainable, so things WILL change. But if we're not preparing to live "happily ever after," our work is not finished. In religious terms, our universal goal must become to bring about "the kingdom of heaven on earth."

*{Hank Stone is a retired engineer with a long-time concern about the human future. At his website ([www.c-u-e.org](http://www.c-u-e.org)), Hank offers free peace bumper stickers, with messages including EVERY CHILD Deserves a Future that Works, Many Colors ONE HUMAN FAMILY, and WORLD PEACE. Email Hank at [hstone@rochester.rr.com](mailto:hstone@rochester.rr.com) to be put on his [PEACE] email list - where this article first appeared.}*

*Being at peace means respecting all creation. I believe that this is a basic spiritual need for each one of us, commensurate with the desire to bring order out of chaos. I am an optimist, and I am convinced of the power of human beings to improve their condition through the use of intelligence.*

*BARRY COHEN*

*Minister of the Arts,  
Heritage and Environment  
Australia*

*(From PEACE in Action, March 1987)*

Peace is created when:

- > *We first are at peace within ourselves;*
- > *We recognize that all unloving acts are a call for love;*
- > *We resolve conflict via peaceful means;*
- > *We balance power with compassion, rather than with more power;*
- > *We support what sustains peace, rather than assail what does not.*

*(From PEACE in Action, March 1987)*



# Earth Day: A Global Celebration

*{The following article is from World View, an E-Newsletter to teachers in North Carolina from an organization of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, NC. This article is from the April 2010 issue of World View; it relates to plans for Earth Day 2010. Hopefully it can give ideas to teachers and others around the world for celebrating Earth Day in 2011 and beyond.}*

As advocates push Congress to adopt comprehensive climate legislation, we celebrate Earth Day's 40th birthday. Started in 1970, Earth Day represents a common day around the world to raise awareness for environmental issues, including policies and programs to protect our Earth and its resources. As the internet has closed the digital divide, countries and communities across the globe are joining forces to help save our planet. Beginning this year, the United Nations' Mother Earth Day and Earth Day will coincide, and the majority of the world will recognize April 22 as Earth Day. Earth Day was started by U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin who wanted to bring attention to the deteriorating environment. Originally, Senator Nelson's plan was to start a nationwide "teach-in" on the environment on college campuses, but soon others realized they shared common concerns and values. Grassroots organizations planned rallies, teach-ins, protests and more, and soon the first Earth Day involved 20 million concerned citizens. By 2007, it is estimated that close to one billion people participated in events all over the world.

Today's efforts are coordinated by the Earth Day Network ([www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org)), which includes members from nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations, local governments, activities, and others interested in protecting the environment.

This year's events span 192 countries and 19,000 organizations, and 1.5 billion people are expected to participate globally.

Earth Day truly is a global celebration of our planet. On the weekend of April 24, in major cities around the world, hundreds of thousands of citizens are expected to commemorate Earth Day's achievements with large-scale events. The National Mall in Washington, D.C. is home to the annual flagship event. How do **individuals** across the globe come to honor our planet and galvanize change?

**Here are just a few examples:**

**Global Day of Conversation:** Similar conversations focusing on bringing green investment and building a green economy with mayors and other locally elected officials will be happening worldwide. The goal of these conversations is to form a collective voice for positive action on a global level, bridging borders, politics, policies, and action.

**Athletes for the Earth Campaign:** Olympic, professional, and every day athletes are asking their communities, teammates, and fans to take action on behalf of the planet. Their collective voice will help promote a solution to climate change and push for policy changes. To read more about what athletes are doing globally go to:

[earthday.org/campaigns/athletes-earth-campaign](http://earthday.org/campaigns/athletes-earth-campaign)

**Billion Acts of Green Campaign:** BAGC is Earthday.net's core campaign. It utilizes individuals, organizations, communities, regional and national governments to organize service commitments on behalf of the planet. Through small and large scale environmental projects around the world, Billion Acts of Green sends a powerful message that people

from all walks of life are committed to finding solutions to pressing environmental problems such as climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity, deforestation, and pollution. Activities range from tree planting to light bulb switch-out campaigns, home energy efficiency retrofits, school greening, and water projects. Everyone is invited to participate and contribute their own green act on Earth day and every day. You can find out what is happening in your community and state through the [Billion Acts of Green Campaign](#) website.

**Arts for the Earth:** Similar to the Athletes for the Earth Campaign, artists around the globe will serve as ambassadors for the planet, communicating to their audiences the ever-growing threat of climate change. The campaign involves hundreds of arts institutions and artists worldwide to create environmental awareness. Visit [Arts for the Earth](#) to read about different artists from a variety of different mediums: music, photography, literature, and performing arts. The website also has information on programs and institutes that support Arts for the Earth.

### **Countries around the world are also making Earth Day a priority:**

In North America, cities all across **Canada** will celebrate Earth Day and advocate collective environmentalism. Groups across the Great White North are offering programs to spur Canadians to more eco-friendly lives. There's an Earth Day Festival in Edmonton; Recycling Awareness seminar in Prince Albert; a Plant-a-Tree Campaign in Kawartha Lakes, Ontario; an Earth Day Extravaganza in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia; and cleanups and greenups in every province.

In Europe, **Monaco** will continue to host its annual Earth Day Swim, where participants will compete in a 2.5 km open water swim. In **Spain**, citizens will participate in numerous demonstrations across the country, all wearing a green ribbon in support of environmental awareness. Additionally, leaders from over 20 countries will meet in Sofia,

**Bulgaria** April 22-24 for the World Energy Forum to honor Earth Day.

In Africa, **Morocco** will announce an unprecedented National Charter for Environment and Sustainable Development, the first commitment of its kind in Africa and the Arab World. The charter will guide policy in the country and future laws on natural resources, the environment, and sustainability. Last year **Ethiopians** celebrated their first annual Earth Day, setting forth the goal of creating a "Green Generation" that will give people the tools to advocate for green policies that protect their natural resources and lifestyles. This year four schools will come together for the Ethiopian National Youth Coalition for Climate Change. The students will be part of an Earth Day event to pass information on health, the environment, waste, and healthy living in their communities. The program also includes a Green School element, which will add green components to the school's curriculum and allow students to participate in green projects throughout the school year.

In Asia, the World Dhammakaya Centre, located north of Bangkok in **Thailand**, is welcoming over 100,000 Buddhist monks from 30,000 temples around Thailand for its Earth Day festivities. In **India**, nature walks for children will be organized by the WWF (World Wildlife Foundation) in 14 cities. In each city there will be a Nature Trail followed by an activity for marginalized children to teach them about biodiversity in their environments and how they are connected to the planet. In Mumbai, **India**, Sanctuary Asia will host a "Birthday Party for Mother Earth." Children will attend fun-filled events that will focus on how and why they need to protect planet Earth.

In Central America, Project Green Jungle will be using Twitter for a project called Twearth Day (a combination of Twitter and Earth Day), to upload information on the jungles of **Costa Rica** for six days. Events include beach clean-ups, water quality testing, biological surveying, and a benefit concert.

Teachers and students are encouraged to visit the website and follow the program: [Twearth Day](#).

In South America, **Bolivia** will host the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth April 19-22. Governments from across the world (at least 90) are sending delegations to the event to debate and discuss climate change. Scholars and celebrities are also expected to attend -- such as: scientist James Hansen, James Cameron, the director of Avatar, the linguist Noam Chomsky, author Naomi Klein of Canada, anti-globalisation activist José Bové of France, and actors Danny Glover, Robert Redford, and Susan Sarandon.

### 10 Tips for Going Green in Your Classrooms

1. Make a scrap paper box for your classroom in which you can place a paper that has only been used on one side.
2. Purchase recycled materials (such as pens, notebooks, and paper) for your classroom. Encourage parents, especially those who donate supplies to the classroom, to buy supplies made from recycled materials.
3. Remind students to turn off lights and electronics when they are not in use. Remind students to make sure that taps are completely turned off in bathroom sinks.
4. Encourage your students to pack trash free lunches. Students can bring their lunches in reusable bags and place their food into reusable containers. Fruits and homemade sandwiches are great non-trash lunch items! Encourage all students to bring in reusable water bottles to keep at their desks.
5. Grow a garden, visit a garden, or take a nature walk. When children experience conservation first hand, it helps reinforce a sense of responsibility towards protecting our planet.
6. Encourage the use of group transportation, especially school buses (1 school bus = 35 cars!). Encourage students who live less than one mile from school to walk with a group of students to and from school. Did you know that only 30 % of students living within a mile of their school walk to school?
7. Use environmentally friendly and recycled products to make posters on environmentally friendly school practices, and post them throughout the school.
8. Have your students organize an Earth hour, either in the classroom or school wide. Schedule an hour to turn off the overhead lights, turn off all electronics, and use only recycled materials to work on an activity.
9. Initiate a recycling challenge with your other grade-level classrooms. The class with the lowest amount of waste at the end of the week gets a green party! Encourage students to bring their own utensils for class party days.
10. Work with your Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) to encourage greening of all sorts of school activities and functions!

#### Additional References:

**Earth Day Network** [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org) and [network.earthday.net/](http://network.earthday.net/) This is a Ning social networking site for those interested in strategizing together around their plans for Earth Day in an atmosphere of support, discussion, and debate.

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**  
[www.epa.gov/earthday/events/htm](http://www.epa.gov/earthday/events/htm)

Use this site to find an event or volunteer opportunity in your community.

# Permaculture: A Regenerative Design System for Community Resiliency

*By Penny Livingston-Stark*

We are living in an era of global transformation. Our cosmology is changing as we come to realize that our survival is dependent on changing our relationship to creation, the natural world, and the planet Earth. This transformation is transcending religion, culture, climate, and consciousness. Many of us are waking up to realize we have to change the way we create our supply lines and develop the land. We are also awakening to the notion that we need to treat ourselves, each other, and all of creation with respect and compassion.

The good news is that the solutions are here. We have, at our fingertips, the technology and knowhow to grow healthy food without chemicals, to design and build energy systems that are clean and renewable, build structures without toxins, and treat each other with respect and compassion. But why aren't we? Why are we still feeling helpless towards issues such as species extinction, climate change, pollution, overpopulation, addiction, violence, racism, poverty, and disconnection when the solutions in many cases are hidden in plain view? I think one answer is that most of us are not aware of what is available to us in the form of systemic solutions. The crux is... We have to change!

## **Many Hands Make Light Work**

This isn't about one person or a few people doing magnanimous tasks to transform society and culture. This is about millions upon millions of people doing ordinary things while making clear and educated decisions. It's about humanity becoming literate about their home and their personal role in looking after it. Permaculture is one way of translating that literacy into tangible results.

## **What is Permaculture?**

Permaculture is a design science, rooted in the observation of natural systems. It aids us in designing human settlements that have the stability and resiliency of natural ecosystems. It is a non-dogmatic approach to whole systems thinking. Permaculture (Permanent Culture) integrates agriculture, built structures, energy systems, economy, land access, and social justice. The thinking stems from the worldview that we are "apart of", not "apart from" nature. Permaculture inserts humans back into the natural world rather than seeing the need to objectify nature, thus separating ourselves from it.

Two Australians, Bill Mollison and David Holmgren, conceived the Permaculture Design concept in 1978. Bill was a university professor and David was a young environmental design student. They asked the question: Why are agriculture, land use, and ecology being taught in different departments? Why aren't they part of the same program? Bill and David hashed out the principles of permaculture over many months after the university expressed very little interest in that question.

I chose the path of permaculture design because I see the brilliance of the curriculum to help us transform our worldview to start seeing the inter-connectivity between all of creation. How does the permaculture design education do this? Permaculture is based in principles that can be applied to any climate, culture, economy, and class. It can be applied to urban or rural situations as well as dry lands, tropics, and temperate zones. Many indigenous people are turning to permaculture to help them cope with diminishing land access and resources. Permaculture is an Earth-based design

system that uses nature's principles as guidelines to apply to human settlements.

A permaculture designer asks the question: "How does nature do it?" when probing into complex design issues.

Some practical examples of permaculture principles are:

How many functions can you achieve by every element you design into a system? For example, you may plant a hedge for privacy on the boundary of your garden. Depending on the plant species you choose, that hedge could provide habitat for wildlife as well as food for people and domesticated animals. These plants could fix nitrogen in the soil; provide mulch, firewood, kindling, building materials, basketry materials, etc.

If you decide to build a pond, that pond could function as fire protection, irrigation, drinking water, aquaculture, recreation, beauty, water for wildlife, and habitat for birds and frogs.

Another principle is honoring diversity. This can be diversity in your skill sets and livelihoods, cultural diversity, agricultural and biological diversity, as well as diversity of points of view between people.

Yet another principle is how many elements can support a single function. To illustrate this principle, I'll tell a story. I was in Quebec during the ice storm in 1998 that hit the Montreal metropolitan area. About 1000 steel electrical pylons (said, in Quebec, to be the most solid in the world) and 35,000 wooden utility poles were crushed and crumpled by the weight of the ice. More than 4 million people were out of power for a week in the middle of winter where the average temperature was 10 degrees below zero. Having such an important function, energy for heating and cooking, to be reliant upon one centralized and Single-stranded energy system is a recipe for

instability. The solution would be to have a variety of energy options with multiple grids. Given the losses to structures, people, and animals, it would have been more cost effective in the long run to design for such a catastrophe. The potential for an ice storm is not unlikely in a climate like Quebec, Ontario and the Northeastern US. They may become more common given the growing extremes in climate conditions.

### **True Cost Pricing**

If we looked at the real bottom line, based on true cost pricing, did a thorough life cycle analysis, factoring in all the energy and impact that goes into a product or a system, (like the fossil fuels, waste, pollution stream, transport), sustainable practices would prove to be a lot more cost effective than our current unsustainable practices. The efficiency we are enjoying today is taking away from our future generations. We should be using the energy we have now to create resilient and stable holistically-designed human settlements to provide for our supply lines of food, building materials, medicine, and energy. We all love our children and want to see them and their children and grandchildren thrive in a healthy world.

If the policy makers, decision makers, developers, and citizens can learn to think holistically as they work to achieve what is on their respective agendas, we might have a chance to develop a truly resilient regenerative culture of kindness, support, and respect toward all of creation. The solutions are available to us. To find out more, contact Regenerative Design Institute [www.regenerativedesign.org](http://www.regenerativedesign.org)

*Penny Livingston-Stark is internationally recognized as a prominent permaculture teacher, designer and speaker. With her husband, James, she founded the Permaculture Institute of Northern California, which has grown to become the Regenerative Design Institute.*



# Bioneers: A Declaration of Independence

*By Kenny Ausubel*

As the naturalist John Muir once wrote, “In nature everything is hitched to everything else.” In other words, it’s all connected. It would be wise to learn the ground rules and how to play by them. Nature bats last, as the saying goes. But even more importantly, it’s her playing field.

Overcoming the illusion that people are separate from nature is perhaps the single fatal systems error on which our civilization will stand or fall. But what Muir and his generation of European-American environmentalists failed to grasp is that people are also part of nature. We didn’t invent nature. Nature invented us. Human systems and natural systems are one system.

When we founded the Bioneers conference in 1990, we reframed “environment” on the premise that human and natural systems are one system, and we can solve the environmental crisis only by bringing all the parts together. It’s a puzzle that takes all the pieces to crack the code, both people and “issues.” You have to solve the whole problem all at once. It’s a Declaration of Interdependence.

For the past two decades, we’ve assembled a network of networks of leading social and scientific innovators with both practical and visionary solutions for restoring people and planet. The fields span virtually all fields of human endeavor, and the people come from many diverse cultures and walks of life. Since the outset, we’ve placed special emphasis on biomimicry, the game-changing emerging science founded in “innovation inspired by nature” that seeks to emulate nature’s operating instructions, as well as on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), the vast body of empirical knowledge held by First Peoples and traditional cultures, a rich collective heritage

sometimes called “The Original Instructions.”

Over time, Bioneers has focused on rewiring key disconnections or systems errors. Ecological Medicine, for instance, exemplifies the recognition that human health is dependent on environmental health. Restoring public health means repairing the health of our ecosystems, as well as on detoxifying medical practice itself. We’ve also highlighted the convergence of the environmental and social justice movements. Poverty and inequity are primary sources of environmental destruction, and a system that continues to concentrate wealth and distribute poverty is doomed to destroy the basic life-support systems on which we all depend.

A few years ago we launched a program called *Dreaming New Mexico* in our home base to take a systems approach to restoration at the state level. While the federal government’s inertia and inaction have largely failed to address our major environmental challenges, the most progressive environmental change today has been occurring at the local and regional levels where communities are rolling up their sleeves to solve problems. It’s happening primarily at the community, city, county and state levels, often led by mayors and governors, usually with vibrant involvement by civil society.

As Tip O’Neill famously said, “All politics is local.” All ecology is also local – actually it’s “globalocal”, - but it’s very particular to place and local culture. Our politics will increasingly be defined by watersheds, foodsheds and energysheds. From a systems perspective, a more decentralized system is far more resilient. Redesigning our society to be more locally self-reliant also can create much more prosperous local economies and jobs. At the heart of *Dreaming New Mexico* is the creation of a restoration economy that embraces the rights of

people and nature and builds a reliable prosperity.

The premise is: ***Dreaming the future can create the future.*** What would success look like? What are our dreams? These transformative questions have propelled a process of envisioning “do-able” dreams and mapping how to realize them. The project also provides a template and tools for other place-based initiatives worldwide.

[www.dreamingnewmexico.org](http://www.dreamingnewmexico.org)

We undertook rigorous strategic research on the state of the state, first on energy and then on a more local foodshed. We created a “shadow think tank” of key experts across disciplines, sectors and cultures, and sought to discover people’s dreams. We created “future maps” (a two-sided wall map and accompanying in-depth pamphlet). The year is 2020 and we’ve done everything right. What would the Age of Renewables look like? What would the Age of Local Foodsheds look like?

These tools serve as points of departure for action-oriented convenings of cross-sectoral networks around a shared vision of restoration, and as educational and organizing tools.

With local partners, we’ve convened two statewide gatherings, respectively on energy and the food system. Both have led to important results that are affecting state policy and shifting the thinking of government, civil society, educational institutions and business to see the state as a system and see themselves as a system. As Brendan Miller, the Green Economy Manager appointed by Governor Bill Richardson in the Economic Development Department, stated, “Dreaming New Mexico is a valuable asset for the State, and it is really what started the conversation on many of these issues.”

The jurors for the 2009 Buckminster Fuller Challenge Award, who chose Dreaming New Mexico as first runner-up said this:

“Dreaming New Mexico brings together the tools of grassroots organizing and community leadership

with scientific know-how and political savvy to both create a vision for the future and lay the groundwork for getting there. This is a fundamental leverage point for creating systemic change. The core concept of this work is the power of transformative visioning, of imagining the world we want to see, and then putting the steps in place to get us there; Bucky called it designing the ‘preferred state.’

“The solution tackles an issue often overlooked by problem-solvers – the political dynamic and the political barriers that often slow or stop large-scale change. DNM is a process for creating a new political landscape that ties together Earth stewardship values with core community needs – fresh water, clean energy, abundant local food.

“Imagining a better future is the first step towards creating that future; DNM provides a community process that can be replicated globally to give voice to the grassroots and help us build strong local economies and sustainable, resilient communities.”

Successful place-based restoration initiatives using systems thinking are beginning to crystallize and show success around the country. Important examples include Re-Amp, which is on track to reduce GHG emissions by 80% in eight Midwestern states by 2030, and TreePeople’s remarkable achievement of creating a Department of the Watershed in Los Angeles, the first-ever coherent human approach to water management in a major city. Another leading initiative is David Orr’s efforts at Oberlin where the college is partnering with the city to go carbon-neutral by 2020.

So yes, it’s all connected. Now we all have to get connected. Together we can learn from our successes and spread the most promising practices. Dreaming the future indeed can create the future, and it’s in our hands.

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*Kenny Ausubel, Co-CEO & Founder (with Nina Simons) of Bioneers, is an award-winning social entrepreneur, author, journalist and filmmaker. To learn more about Bioneers go to [www.bioneers.org](http://www.bioneers.org)*

# Growing Our Future

By Angel Ruiz

When John Jeavons, the Director of Ecology Action, started our first class with the quote, “The purpose of farming is not to grow crops, but to cultivate people” (Fuokoka), I knew I was in the right place. These words resonated deeply with my own personal philosophy and experiences.

I recently moved back to the US, after almost two years doing sustainable agricultural work in rural communities in El Salvador, in order to attend this six-month internship with Ecology Action. My experiences in El Salvador taught me how gardening can grow people and communities.

In mid 2008, I arrived in Los Naranjos, a rural community of impoverished subsistence farmers who were re-located after the Salvadoran civil war (1980-1992). The village had no basic amenities such as transportation, potable water, electricity, health clinics, or public schooling. Despite poverty, illiteracy, and oppression, the village and community was well organized and exemplified the country’s struggle for a just, sustainable future.

Before moving to the community, I had the opportunity of attending a Basic Level GROW BIOINTENSIVE workshop that ECOPOL {Ecologia y Poblacion} was doing in San Salvador. The experience was overwhelming, because my Spanish was quite poor at the time; I was the only “gringa” in attendance, and this was my first week in the country. Yet, I left the workshop knowing that GROW BIOINTENSIVE could change the world, and I had to start a Biointensive garden.

Unfortunately, I had just moved to a new country and didn’t even have a place to live, much less a plan to do Biointensive work. Thus, I kept the workshop and ideas in the back of my mind as I moved to Los Naranjos. Once in the village, I

spent my first several months focusing on getting to know the community, and its reality, in order to understand the community needs and dynamics. I also did research on, and visited, some successful sustainable agriculture projects around the country.

The original plan for me was to facilitate the process of identifying and starting an organic certified cash crop for the cooperative. However, after months of interviewing, visiting, observing, and more, we realized that this was not a realistic short-term goal or a true need and desire of the community. We also realized that a real need and desire of the community was a community garden -- a perfect opportunity to try out Biointensive!

In Los Naranjos it was not obvious that people were malnourished, but once you got to know the community, you realized that most of the women were anemic, and teachers frequently complained that children could not focus in class because of improper nutrition. Vegetables were not part of their diet (due in part to their high cost), and few people knew how to grow them successfully. However, the people wanted to learn to grow good food for their families and take care of their land in the process.

The goal for the community garden was that it would serve as a school for the community on organic growing, and the skills learned would be put to use in each family’s garden. The harvest from the community garden would eventually be sold at the market for supplemental income.

Once the decision was made to start a community garden, we hit the road running. We decided to plant half an acre -- which we learned later was way too much to start with. In that first month of work, I can say that I saw the power of community and the pure brute force of Salvadorans. The available land

had not been planted in 20+ years, and it was reforested and on a steep hillside. Our only tools were our hands, machetes, pick-axes, and shovels.

We worked 3-4 days a week, working 5 plus hours a day, and working with everything in us -- keep in mind this was all volunteer labor; and everyone working also had another job or their own land to be taking care of. We went into the mountains, hiking long distances to find logs to help form the terraces, and then carried them back on our backs. I always accompanied and tried to help, but I quickly learned that I couldn't last long in the Salvadoran heat. Eventually we did terrace the whole hillside, and we completed 12 beautiful long beds ranging from 30 to 100 feet long and 4.5 feet wide, all dug 2 feet down. Everyone helped all the way through the process. To be a part of the work, with everyone present, laughing, arguing, sweating and working together, was an inspiring experience.

On our first planting day, we made flats of tomato, green pepper, onion, and cabbage, and then planted 2 small beds of radishes. The plant list was short that first month as it was very difficult to find local, open-pollinated, non-GMO seeds. El Salvador had lost most of the traditional farming knowledge, and few people had seeds saved. There were lots of surprises in those first months, and I was often shedding tears of both joy and frustration.

One especially beautiful and unexpected impact of the garden was what happened with the youth (ages 11-17) of Los Naranjos. It quickly became obvious that the youth wanted to come help, and that some of the most excited workers were the youth. They were accustomed to manual labor, and they often spent all their "free time" working in the cornfields -- frequently, they were alone or a good distance from other workers. However, in our garden, there were always several of us working together, and the youth tended to all come on the same days.

At first, I would get frustrated because, with all the youth there, we weren't as "efficient," and we would often lose a few seeds or plants. But I soon realized how revolutionary this was -- the youth

wanted to come plant and be a part of the garden. On off days they would stop by my house and ask when we were going to work!

Instead of being frustrated, I embraced the situation. They were closer to my age than all the adults, so it became fun. All of us there, telling jokes, digging, laughing, and enjoying the garden together. After working for a few hours, we would head down to the river for a quick swim to cool off. They were not generally allowed to go to the river alone, but with me and all of us together, the parents didn't refuse.

Once the youth started working together in the garden, they started doing a lot of things together. We even started an official "Youth Committee of Los Naranjos" with a group committed to working together to organize and improve community life. We planned special celebrations in the community (like for Mother's and Father's Day), did community clean-up, invited people to do workshops on human rights, environmental issues, politics, and any thing else of interest to the group. We even raised money and took a field trip to a water park -- most of the group had never been swimming in a pool before.

The Youth Committee is still going; they have a Youth President and a leadership team, and they have many plans for the coming year. The youth have taken a leadership role in the garden. Before I left, I went to a national GROW BIOINTENSIVE training workshop with a 12-year-old boy that the community sent as their representative. The youth group spends at least one morning or afternoon working together in the garden, and they regularly participate in workshops or other garden activities.

When I first went to El Salvador, I had no idea I would be working with youth, but a lot can happen in the garden.

*{Angel Cruz, a native of North Carolina, is a 2008 graduate of Furman Univ. She will soon complete her internship at EcologyAction farm in California; its website is: (<http://www.growbiointensive.org>).*}



## *A New Organization of the United Nations*

# UN Women

The creation by the United Nations General Assembly in July 2010 of the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, known as UN Women, will give new impetus to UN system support to Member States in advancing the rights and priorities of the world's women. UN Women will be a dynamic and strong champion for gender equality and the empowerment of women, and provide a powerful voice for women and girls.

The year 2010 marks the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), and the 10th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace, and security.

Ten years have also passed since the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were launched, with a series of time-bound targets for advancing development and reducing poverty by 2015 or earlier. While MDG 3 focuses specifically on promoting gender equality and empowering women, there is now broad recognition that gender equality is also a means towards the achievement of all the MDGs, but especially the following goals:

Goal 1 – Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger;  
 Goal 2 – Achieve Universal Primary Education;  
 Goal 4 – Reduce Child Mortality;  
 Goal 5 – Improve Maternal Health;  
 Goal 6 – Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases; and  
 Goal 7 – Ensure Environmental Sustainability

With regard to Goal 1, the majority of the world's poor are women. Certain groups are particularly vulnerable to poverty, such as women farmers, women in the informal sector, women with disabilities, and older women. Women's unequal

access to financial resources has a negative impact on their well-being and that of their families and communities, as well as economic growth and development overall.

While girls' access to education has increased over the last decade, they still lag behind boys at primary and secondary levels. Women account for nearly 2/3 of the 776 million illiterate adults in the world.

Maternal health is a big problem, particularly in the less developed countries. In these countries, a large number of women and girls die during pregnancy, childbirth, or following delivery, and most of these complications are largely preventable and treatable.

Despite advances in a number of countries, violence against women and girls is a global pandemic. Among women aged between 15 and 44, acts of violence cause more deaths than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, and war combined. In 2006, women and girls comprised 79 percent of the victims of human trafficking

Additional facts and figures on the plight of women around the world are available in the Facts and Figures section of the UN Women website.

The work of UN Women to deal with the foregoing problems will be framed by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which marked its 30th anniversary in 2009. The Convention provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men, and an agenda for action by State parties to guarantee the enjoyment of those rights. As of June 2010, 186 countries are party to the CEDAW Convention – but not the United States.



There has been a gradual recognition of the need for improving the possibilities for action by women and for increasing their capabilities. Some of the developments were cited in the UN Commission article on the Status of Women in the Winter 2007-2008 issue of PEACE in Action.

The following four UN bodies will be merged into the new UN Women agency: 1) the Division for the Advancement of Women; 2) its International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women; 3) the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women; and 4) the Development Fund for Women.

The establishment in July 2010 of UN Women, and the appointment in September of former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet as its executive director, provide an occasion to reflect and identify lessons on UN strengthening, reform, and effectiveness. UN Women will be the world body's lead advocate and operations agency for gender equality and women's empowerment throughout the world. It will work with governments, build partnerships with civil society, and mobilize political and financial support for advancing international goals for women.

UN Women will be financed by the UN's regular budget and by voluntary contributions. The member governments of the UN have agreed that annual spending of at least \$500 million is the minimum amount required for the new entity. However, nongovernmental organizations have called for an annual budget of \$1 billion.

By all accounts, Michelle Bachelet, 59, is an outstanding choice to serve as executive director for the first four-year period of UN Women's operations. In 2008, Time magazine ranked her in the 100 most influential people in the world.

When Bachelet takes over as the first head of UN Women in January, one challenge – apart from raising substantial funds from donor nations – will be working around the cultural influences in many

societies that entrench discrimination and get in the way of a woman's ability to exercise her rights and make choices about her personal life.

In an interview in September, drawing on her experiences in Latin America and elsewhere, most recently in Haiti, where she has been a spokesperson for the UN Development Fund for Women since February, Bachelet said "Where women cannot put their abilities to work, often because of cultural, political, legal, or economic barriers, a community loses valuable talent." Bachelet was president of Chile from 2006 until March this year.

"I believe that in all the countries of the world, the sagacity of women and their commitment to the community is high," she said. "Their capacity to start from nothing and being able to feed the family, to do whatever they can do, is something the world cannot lose. We need to give women better possibilities."

Bachelet said that at UN Women she planned to work not only with governments, but also with grassroots organizations, where women often establish their first foothold and a sense of solidarity in taking on discrimination or campaigning for social change. She has been struck, she said, by the tremendous capacity of women in her own country to take charge in time of crisis.

"I flew to different places, and women were organizing everything – the tents and camps and everything," she said.

Bachelet feels confident that her life has helped to prepare her for working within different cultures toward the same goals that apply in Latin America, among them health and social security, better employment prospects, and a greater role in politics.

"But we also need to go further, to give them physical autonomy," she said. "That means women have the right to choice in sexual and reproductive rights. And violence will be a key issue for us." Bachelet believes strongly that governments need to take on the responsibility for equitable social policies.

There are many places in the world where women are not allowed to own property or inherit it from a spouse or father. They have no access to capital for building economic independence beyond limited microfinance programs. When husbands die, widows may be forced into marriages in their spouses' extended families or be turned into virtual domestic servants in the homes of relatives, condemned to a life of poverty and humiliation.

More than half the people in the world living with HIV are women, in large part a reflection of their woeful lack of power to demand safe sex. No access to family planning means unwanted, possibly dangerous, pregnancies, which often rank as the leading killer of teenage girls in developing countries. Violence against women is on the rise in numerous poor nations; it does not happen only in conflict areas or end when wars finish.

Bachelet deflects the criticism that her own middle-class upbringing and the prosperity and high level of human development in Chile – now a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, viewed in developing nations as a rich nations' club – would make her less understanding of the poor.

As a child, the daughter of an air force officer and an archeologist, she had many advantages, she said. But as the family moved around Chile to follow her father's career, she said, "It gave me the possibility of seeing the contradictions, the tensions of being in a small village -- or a big village, an urban area -- the opportunities that people can have or not have depending on where they were born."

At age 12, she lived for a while with her parents in Maryland, where, she said, "I got to learn not only the language but also a different culture."

Tragedy struck the family when Bachelet was in her early 20s and had begun studying medicine in Chile. Her father, General Alberto Bachelet, who had been appointed to a government post by the left-wing president Salvador Allende, was jailed when Allende was ousted in a 1973 coup by General Augusto Pinochet. Alberto Bachelet was tortured and died of a heart attack in prison.

Michelle and her mother were also detained for a month in 1975 and went into exile after being released, first to Australia and then East Germany, where she continued her medical studies in Berlin.

In Germany, she married another Chilean exile, Jorge Dávalos, an architect, with whom she had a son and daughter. They later separated.

When the Pinochet era ended in 1990, Bachelet rose quickly in her medical career and political life. Qualified as a surgeon, she took time out to study military strategy in Chile and in the U.S. National Defense College. She was appointed health minister in 2000, and then defense minister in 2004 -- the first woman in Latin America to hold that position.

The experience of violence, death, and exile are seared in her memory, though she does not like to talk about that period or the abuses she suffered as a prisoner of the Pinochet regime. Regarding the exile, she says: "I went to many places. You are not only getting more mature with age, but you are also able to explore so many experiences, know so many interesting people, and ask yourself questions you might not ask in a small country far away. I think it gave me a broader perspective, a much broader cultural understanding. I know that the world is different and there is no uniformity. But we always have to have a common goal, to move to equal rights and equal opportunities. We can factor in or not factor in certain things, but we must go in that direction."

On November 10, 2010, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) elected the Executive Board for UN Women. The 41 members include 10 from Africa, 10 from Asia, 4 from Eastern Europe, 6 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 5 from Western Europe, and 6 from countries contributing to UN Women's budget. The agency opens 1 January 2011.

In the Outcome Document of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly September 20-22, 2010 to review progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the General Assembly welcomed the establishment of UN Women. It went on to say that

achieving gender equality and empowerment of women is both a key development goal and an important means for achieving the MDGs. It also reaffirmed the need for the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (as set forth in the *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995*).

The UN Secretary-General issued the following statement on November 25, 2010:

“As we observe the 2010 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, let us acknowledge the widespread and growing efforts to address this important issue. No longer are women’s organizations alone. From Latin America to the United States, from Asia to Africa, men and boys, young and old, musicians, celebrities and sports personalities, the media, public and private organizations, and ordinary citizens are doing more to protect women and girls and promote their empowerment and rights.

The social mobilization platform “Say NO-UNiTE” has recorded almost 1 million activities implemented by civil society and individuals worldwide. In August this year at the fifth World Youth Conference in Mexico, young activists from around the world were clear in their message: “It’s time to end violence against women and girls!” Member States, too, are engaged. As of November 2010, my database on the extent, nature and consequences of violence against women, which also logs policies and programmes for combating the pandemic, has registered more than 100 reports from governments.

This year’s observance highlights the role the business community can play – from developing projects to providing direct financial support to organizations working to end violence and embracing the principles of corporate social responsibility. The “Women’s Empowerment Principles”, an initiative of the UN Global Compact and UNIFEM, recognize the costs to business of violence against women and are now

supported by more than 120 leading companies. A growing number of media outlets are bringing light to bear on so-called “honour-killings”, trafficking of girls and sexual violence in conflict, and are raising awareness about the benefits to society of empowering women. Yet much more needs to be done. In homes, schools and the office, in refugee camps and conflict situations, the corporate sector can help us to prevent the many forms of violence that women and girls continue to face.

My UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign, and the Network of Men Leaders I launched last year, have generated welcome momentum and engagement. The word is spreading: violence against women and girls has no place in any society, and impunity for perpetrators must no longer be tolerated. On this International Day, I urge all – Governments, civil society, the corporate sector, individuals – to take responsibility for eradicating violence against women and girls.”

In support of the new UN Women organization, and in support of the Secretary-General’s positive statements, we hope to see the United States Senate at long last ratify the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). A Senate Committee again began consideration of the Convention in November 2010. U.S. ratification of CEDAW will strengthen the U.S. as a leader in standing up for women and girls around the world. It can also encourage the other few countries that have not ratified the Convention to do so. It would be particularly appropriate to approve CEDAW at the time of the establishment of the new UN Women organization.

*(This article draws on: 1) an article by A. Edward Elmendorf, President of the UN Association-USA (UNA-USA), in UNA-USA’s E-mail World Bulletin of October 13, 2010; 2) an article by Barbara Crossette, UN correspondent of The Nation, in the InterDependent, a publication of the UNA-USA; 3) the UN Women website (www.unwomen.org} 4) the Outcome Document from the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly September 20-22, 2010, and 5) the proclamation of the Secretary-General on November 25, 2010).*

## *A New Organization of the United Nations*

# United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) is a relatively new organization within the United Nations (UN) system. It was proposed in 2004 by the President of Spain. The Prime Minister of Turkey joined as a co-sponsor in early 2005. Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed a High-Level Group to explore the roots of polarization between societies and cultures, and to recommend a practical program of action to address this problem. The report of the High-Level Group, which was released on 13 November 2006, provides an analysis and puts forward practical recommendations that form the basis for the implementation plan for the Alliance of Civilizations (AOC).

On April 26, 2007, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as the High Representative for the AOC with the responsibility to lead the implementation phase of the Alliance. The AOC objectives have been established as the following:

- a. Develop a **network of partnerships** to reinforce their interaction and coordination with the UN system;
- b. Develop, support, and highlight **projects** that promote understanding and reconciliation among cultures globally, especially among Western and Muslim societies; and
- c. **Establish relations and facilitate dialogue** among groups that can act as a force of moderation and understanding during times of heightened cross-cultural tensions.

The AOC Mission Statement sets forth the following functions, both globally and within the UN system, in the following capacities:

A **bridge builder and convener**, connecting people and organizations devoted to promoting trust and understanding between diverse communities, particularly – but not exclusively – between Muslim and Western societies;

A **catalyst and facilitator** helping to give impetus to innovative projects aimed at reducing polarization between nations and cultures through joint pursuits and mutually beneficial partnerships;

An **advocate** for building respect and understanding among cultures and amplifying voices of moderation and reconciliation which helps calm cultural and religious tensions between nations and peoples;

A **platform to increase visibility**, enhance the work, and highlight the profile of initiatives devoted to building bridges between cultures; and

A **resource** providing access to information and materials drawn from successful cooperative initiatives which could, in turn, be used by member states, institutions, organizations, or individuals seeking to initiate similar processes or projects.

The highlights of the initial Implementation Plan included the following:

1. Help develop a **Media Fund** to promote productions across cultural, religious, or national issues;
2. Help develop a project aimed at expanding **international student exchange programs**;
3. Establish a **rapid response media-based mechanism** to provide platforms for constructive debate during times of increased tensions around cross-cultural issues;



4. Develop an **online clearinghouse of best practices, materials and resources** on cross-cultural dialogue and cooperative projects;

5. Develop a “**Group of Friends**” network to support the objectives of the Alliance; and

6. Organize an **International Forum** to broaden the influence of the Alliance.

The Alliance held an International Forum in Spain in 2008; a second one in Turkey in 2009, and a third in Brazil in 2010. A fourth is scheduled for 2011 in Doha.

*The principal results of the 2008 forum were:*

Announcement of a **Global Youth Employment Initiative**, called Silatech, with an investment of \$100 million from H.H. Sheika Mozah bint Nasser-el-Missned and partnerships with the World Bank and the corporate sector, notably with CISCO, which will begin with 5 pilot country programs in the Middle East;

Announcement of a multi-million dollar **AoC Media Fund** that will be a first-of-its-kind nonprofit large-scale media production company focused on normalizing images of stereotyped communities and minorities in mass media through partnerships with major Hollywood production, distribution, and talent management companies. The Fund was launched with an initial commitment of \$10 million, and an estimated target of \$100 million.

Announcement of national and regional **strategies for cross cultural dialogue** by governments and multilateral organizations to advance AoC objectives in their respective countries and regions.

Establishment of **partnership agreements**, with various multilateral agencies and organizations, which contain specific terms that will enable the AoC to leverage networks, contacts, and competitive advantages of partners in the implementation of its programs. Five agreements were signed -- with UNESCO, ARABIC STATES

LEAGUE, ISESCO, ALECSO and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) - and a letter of intent with the Council of Europe.

Launch of the **AoC Clearinghouse**, beginning with a theme of **Media Literacy Education**, which will catalogue media literacy programs and related government policies in different parts of the world; and announcements of partnerships with several universities that will serve as nodes to enliven this clearinghouse by initiating exchanges and posting materials on the latest development in media literacy education.

Launch of a **Rapid Response Media Mechanism** beginning with an online resource that will feature a list of global experts in cross-cultural issues who are available to comment or to talk to journalists, particularly in times of major cross-cultural crises.

Establishment of a **Youth Solidarity Fund** aimed at providing grants to support youth-led programs in the areas of intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Moreover, a decision was made to strengthen the network of youth participants that attended the AoC Forum and broaden the network to include other youth.

Creation of a **global network of philanthropic foundations and private funders**, which will share information, raise awareness of ongoing initiatives, identify mutual needs, and explore ways to leverage existing resources for greatest impact.

Discussions at the policymaking level that highlight the importance to **move the Alliance forward in 2008**, such as: developing joint multi-stakeholders initiatives at the regional level aimed at promoting a better inter-cultural understanding and preventing the mounting of tensions and the rise of extremism; contributing to the upgrade of the inter-cultural dialogue among the two banks of the Mediterranean Sea; and launching a number of activities within the framework of active and city diplomacy.

Establishment of an **Alliance network of good will ambassadors** made up of prominent, high-profile, internationally recognized figures drawn from the worlds of politics, culture, sport, business, and



entertainment to help in promoting the work of the Alliance, highlighting priority issues and drawing attention to its activities.

Commitment by the United Nations Global Compact to producing a publication aimed at **raising the visibility of best practices** in the corporate sector toward supporting cross-cultural relations.

Signing of an action-oriented statement of solidarity and joint **commitment by diverse religious leaders** toward the goal of advancing shared security and peace and providing youth with guidance to counter extremist influences.

By the time of the *AOC Forum in Istanbul, Turkey in 2009*, a number of accomplishments were reported:

### **Rapid Response Media Mechanism**

This program, which was established at the 2008 Forum, was reported to be well-established by 2009. The Global Expert Finder program ([www.globalexpert-finder.org](http://www.globalexpert-finder.org)) was connecting media professionals with leading analysts and commentators on international crises and their likely long-term impact. Since the launch, the resource had grown to over 100 experts.

The project concluded a number of partnerships at the Forum with key organizations, including the Anna Lindh Foundation, the European Commission, Search for Common Ground, Gallup, and the International Center for Journalists. An announcement was made to collaboratively launch a Rapid Response Media Mechanism for the Euro-Mediterranean region with the European Commission and the Anna Lindh Foundation.

### **AOC Media Fund**

In Istanbul, the Media Fund unveiled a three-part strategy, which included:

a. conducting research to increase understanding of the impact of media on attitudes and behavior

through a research project at Harvard University, MIT, and the New School University;  
b . raising awareness of the research findings through a global media-industry-targeted campaign to garner additional support of media industry leaders for the Media fund; and

c . producing and distributing content in film, television, and news media to promote greater cross-cultural understanding.

### **Media Literacy Education Clearinghouse**

It was reported at the Istanbul meeting that the Clearinghouse had attained the collaboration of 33 partner organizations and had become an internationally known Media Literacy Education portal with over 24,000 unique visitors per month.

### **Youth Solidarity Fund**

The initial budget for the Fund was \$100,000, and it was used to seed funding to outstanding youth-led initiatives that promote long-term constructive relationships between young people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Over 110 proposals were submitted for the first program. Six projects were accepted and received grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$20,000. At the Istanbul Forum, the winners reported results of the projects receiving the first grants. Later, the Alliance launched a new edition of the program.

### **International Network of Foundations**

The network, created at the Madrid Forum, has identified four areas of common interest: inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, education and translation, arts and media, and the engagement of religious leaders in peace building efforts. At the Istanbul Forum, the network outlined future priority activities: knowledge exchange, information sharing, and discrimination in the four focus areas; operational support with a view to developing tools that help identify projects and partners and build capacity; identification of collaborative activities; and advocacy and contributing to public policy.

### **Doing Business in a Multicultural World: Challenges and Opportunities**

In response to a commitment made at the Madrid Forum, a report was produced, developed jointly with the UN Global Compact, entitled *Doing Business in a Multicultural World: Challenges and Opportunities*. Distributed at the Istanbul Forum, the report explores cross-cultural challenges that companies are facing, highlights good practices and lessons learned, and illustrates why and how business can play a vital role in fostering intercultural understanding.

### **Education about Religions and Beliefs**

Launched in Istanbul, the Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) Clearinghouse collects and organizes resources for learning about the world's diverse religions and beliefs as well as ethics education, tolerance education, and civic education. The clearinghouse features resources on these subjects, including learning and teaching materials, links to relevant organizations, a journal, events listings, a forum, and news that could be useful to teachers, policy-makers, and researchers.

### **Alliance Fellowship Program**

Announced at the Istanbul Forum, the Alliance Fellowship Program facilitates mutual, substantive, and meaningful exposure for emerging leaders from North America, Europe, and Muslim-majority countries to media, culture, politics, institutions, civil society, and religion in each other's countries. This project is being organized in partnership with the British Council, the League of Arab States, ISESCO, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

### **Dialogue Cafe**

In collaboration with the Alliance of Civilizations, CISCO launched Dialogue Cafe at the Istanbul Forum. The project is based on a bold but simple idea: ordinary people have more in common than not and, given the opportunity, will explore their common interests – even across racial geo-political

divides. Dialogue Cafe links diverse groups of citizens from around the world through video-conferencing. Dialogue Cafe's development is being supported by an international multi-sector consortium of partners.

### **PLURAL +**

In Istanbul, the Alliance, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, launched PLURAL +, a youth-produced video festival on migration, inclusiveness, identity, and diversity. PLURAL + will invite young people from across the world to participate by sending videos expressing their opinions and visions relevant to these themes. UNESCO and a number of private organizations are supporting the program. A selection committee of youth and experts from the media, migration, and development sectors will identify the finalists and the winner for each of the award categories and age groups.

### **Restore Trust, Rebuild Bridges**

This cluster of projects was jointly developed by the Alliance and partner organizations in the wake of the Gaza crisis. This initiative followed a meeting co-organized by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Alliance of Civilizations in February 2009. A series of joint actions were agreed upon in order to help restore trust in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

### **Mapping Media Education Policies in the World: Visions, Programs, and Challenges**

The Alliance launched a unique publication to help create a generation of informed media consumers capable of navigating their way in the complex and often polarized world of news and current affairs. The book, title above, offers the insights of 18 international experts who, through their in-depth analysis, advise on media literacy policies and provide citizens with the tools they need to make sense of the sometimes overwhelming flow of daily news and information.

## Alliance of Civilizations Research Network

This network brings together a group of institutions from around the world that will serve as a collective think-tank for the Alliance and will drive a movement to encourage cross-cultural educational exchange. Institutions that are a part of this network share an interest in the four key areas of work of the Alliance (education, media, migration, and youth), as well as other topics such as cross-cultural understanding, good governance of cultural diversity, conflict resolution, and city diplomacy. The Research Network will also provide a base of experts to form “communities of knowledge” in different areas of interest to the Alliance.

## Partnership Agreements

At Istanbul, the Alliance signed agreements with seven international organizations with a view to leverage networks and the comparative advantage of its partners. The seven organizations were: the International Organization of Migration, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Ibero-American General Secretariat, the Anna Lindh Foundation, l'Organization de la Franco-phonie, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, and the Union Latine.

## National Plans and Regional Strategies

By the time of the Istanbul Forum, the Alliance of Civilizations was being supported by a growing community of over 100 countries and international organizations known as the Group of Friends. This network had expanded by 20 percent since the Madrid Forum, enriching the work of the Alliance by providing ideas, insights, and financial support. Members of the Group of Friends have also created their own National Plans to advance the goals of the Alliance. A range of practical initiatives aimed at creating trust and promoting mutual understanding across cultures have been launched.

In Istanbul, National Plans to advance the objectives of the Alliance were announced by: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Qatar, and

Slovenia. Bulgaria, New Zealand, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom had already adopted Plans. Regional Strategies for East-European countries, the Euro-Mediterranean region, and the Ibero-American countries were also announced.

Major highlights of the *2010 AOC Forum held in Brazil* included the following:

**Dialogue Cafe Network:** the first two Dialogue Cafes have been inaugurated in Lisbon and Rio de Janeiro.

**Global Youth Movement:** it was announced that the first conference of the Movement will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan in October 2010 at the invitation of the Azerbaijani government.

The **Alliance Fellowship Program** has been expanded to include an exchange of young leaders between the Arab world, Europe, and the United States in November 2010.

Announcement of the **Alliance of Civilizations Summer School** -- “*Bridging hearts, opening minds, and doing things together*” (held in August 2010 in Aveiro, Portugal). This was a multi-state initiative to celebrate the International Year of Youth.

Launching of the third round of the **Youth Solidarity Fund**, an initiative to provide seed funding to youth-led projects that promote cross-cultural understanding.

It was announced that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Global Model United Nations, organized by the United Nations in partnership with the government of Malaysia, will take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in August 2010 on the themes of the Alliance of Civilizations.

The creation of the **United Nations University International Institute for the Alliance of Civilizations**, based in Barcelona, Spain.

Launching of **The Online Community on Migration and Integration** in partnership with the International Organization for Migration.

Presentation of the new **Global Expert Finder** website, a free online resource of experts and opinion leaders, which supports the work of journalists.

Presentation of a **new resource for journalists of the Mediterranean region** – in collaboration with the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) and the European Commission. It is to be fully developed in the context of the joint AOC – ALF – European Commission strategy and in the framework of the future Action Plan implementing the AOC Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean.

**Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and partnership agreements were presented/signed:**

Renewed MOU with UNESCO;

MOU with IRICA;

Action Plan implementing previous MOU with OIC and ALESCO;

Letter of Intent with the ILO; and

Finalization of the preparation of the MOU with the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and the World Bank.

**The Rio Forum** further confirmed the global scope of the Alliance of Civilizations and provided new and existing partners with a platform to collaborate with each other on substantive projects in the field of intercultural relations.

Additional information about a number of the Alliance projects can be found at the Alliance of Civilizations website: [www.unaoc.org](http://www.unaoc.org)

The following book is relevant to the AOC's work:

**Toward a True Kinship of Faiths  
How the World's Religions Can Come Together**  
By His Holiness the Dalai Lama  
Hardcover \$25 – Doubleday Books

In his preface to the book, His Holiness the Dalai Lama stated his purpose, “May the effort of this book be of benefit to the emergence of a greater understanding

between the world's religions, and may it foster in us deep reverence for each other.” Knowledge is the foundation of understanding; in this awareness, the beginning of the book establishes this framework by exploring the basic tenets of each of the world's great faith traditions. Skillfully, points of comparison are illuminated, enabling the reader to grasp the threads of truth that run through each tradition. Passages from the sacred texts of the different traditions are woven together to create a tapestry of wholeness and truth. Differences are examined as unique expressions with the understanding that all religions address the same human needs and questions, and all turn to compassion as the guiding principle for living a good life.

In today's world, we are more aware than ever before that no person is untouched by what happens in the rest of the world. The challenges of environmental degradation, economic gain and loss, and nuclear proliferation have provided an even greater necessity for understanding. Technological advancements and instant communication allow for greater cultural familiarity. It seems that the world has become a smaller place. And its inhabitants are positioned as never before to move forward as global citizens. The essential task of humanity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is to cultivate peaceful coexistence.

His Holiness explains that coexistence requires “the ability to recognize the truth in the interconnectedness of all things, even in our disagreements....The process entails both returning to the basic simplicity of our shared human nature and looking out with the widest possible perspective. The shift of perspective alone can open the door of our hearts.” He offers a plan that will allow individuals to travel to the essence of his or her individual religious teaching and arrive at an understanding that we are all simply human. As we understand the spiritual perfection of all beings, we can embrace a compassionate understanding based in genuine respect. This is the hope for the future.

*(This review of the book is by Claudia Abbott, the Editor of Science of Mind magazine. It was published in the November 2010 issue of the Science of Mind magazine. The magazine's editorial offices are located at 573 Park Point Drive, Golden, Colorado, 80401-7042; their phone number is: (720) 496-1370; their website: [www.scienceofmind.com](http://www.scienceofmind.com)*



*A Program Created by Members of the United Nations*

# The Millennium Development Goals

## A Status Report

In September 2000, world leaders agreed at the United Nations (UN) upon the **Millennium Declaration**, which distills the key goals and targets agreed to at international conferences and world summits during the 1990s. Drawing on the Declaration, the UN System, the World Bank, and the Organization for European Community Development (OECD) drew up a set of eight **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** with associated targets and indicators. By the year 2015, 191 UN Member States pledged to meet the MDGs.

In September 2010, the UN met to review the progress made and to target additional needs to meet the goals. Crucial elements in meeting the MDGs are: 1) the amount of aid given by the more developed countries to the developing countries; 2) providing improved international market access for the developing countries; 3) international debt relief for some of the poorest countries; 4) access to essential medicines; and 5) access to new technologies.

The MDG Gap Task Force looked at these indicators and prepared a report to submit to UN members for their September conference at the UN on the status of MDG progress. The principal findings reported by the Task Force are as follows:

### **Global Official Development Assistance (ODA)**

The commitment for 2010 is \$145.7 billion in annual ODA to meet the 2005 Gleneagles pledge of \$50 billion (in 2004 dollars) increase by traditional donors, i.e., members of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The amount provided in 2009 (\$119.6 billion) was \$26.1 billion less than the Gleneagle pledge for 2010. The report recommended that: 1) the DAC countries recommit to the still-standing UN target of 0.7 percent of gross national income devoted to

ODA, and 2) deliver on 2010 aid effectiveness targets and agree on a renewed set of targets beyond 2010.

### **Official Development Assistance for Africa**

The commitment for 2010 is \$61.5 in annual ODA to meet the Gleneagles pledge of \$25 billion (in 2004 dollars) increase by DAC donors. The delivery in 2009 was \$43.9 million, leaving a gap of \$17.6 billion less than the 2010 pledge. The report recommends the fulfillment of the commitment to Africa.

### **Aid to Least Developed Countries (LDCs)**

Based on the endorsement of the 2001 Brussels Programme of Action of ODA that between 0.15 and 0.20 percent of DAC countries' gross national income (GNI) by 2010 should go to the LDCs, the commitment for 2010 would be \$58.9 – 78.5 billion. The amount provided in 2008 was \$35 billion, leaving a gap of \$22.9 - \$42.5 required to meet the 2010 target.

### **Aid as a Share of National Income of Donor Countries**

The target of 0.7 percent of GNI, as agreed to by countries at the UN in 1971, would mean a commitment of \$272.2 billion (in 2009 U.S. dollars). The \$119.6 billion delivered in 2009 was only 0.31 percent of developed countries' combined national income. Again, the Report recommends a recommitment to the 0.7 target.

### **Market Access: Doha Round**

The UN Millennium Declaration in 2000 pledged signatories to establish an “open, equitable, rule-based, predictable, and non-discriminatory



multilateral trading and financial system.” The Doha Round of trade talks was launched in 2001 largely to fulfill this goal, and the G20 aimed for completion in 2010. However, the Doha Round is not completed, and negotiations are at an impasse. The Report recommends that the developed countries: 1) intensify efforts to conclude the Doha Round within a realistic timeframe; 2) dismantle protectionist measures taken during the economic crisis; and 3) accelerate delivery on commitments by developed countries to eliminate all agricultural export subsidies, and support measures with the same effect.

### **Duty-Free Access for LDC Exports**

By recommendation of the World Trade Organization's 2005 Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration, 97 percent of LDC products for export should benefit from duty-free and quota-free access to developed country markets. In 2008, 81 percent of developed country imports from LDCs, excluding arms and oil, were admitted free of duty. The report recommends an acceleration of progress towards the goal.

### **Debt Sustainability**

The commitment was that debt problems of all developing countries should be dealt with comprehensively through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term. As of 2010, 35 of 40 “eligible” countries have reached the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) “decision point” and are receiving debt relief of \$58.5 billion, measured in end-2009 net present value. Twenty-five of the 35 countries have reached their “completion point,” receiving an additional \$27 billion in debt relief through the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). Dozens of developing countries have fallen into debt distress, or are at high risk of debt distress, because of the global financial crisis. The report recommends: 1) the completion of the HIPC and MDRI initiatives; 2) the extension of eligibility to participate in the HIPC initiative; and 3) ensuring that all debt relief is additional to ODA.

### **Access to Essential Medicines**

The commitment was to make essential medicines available. The result in 2008 was that the median prices of essential medicines in developing countries were, on average, 2.7 times higher than international reference prices in the public sector and 6.3 times higher in the private sector. The Report's recommendations were: 1) encourage developing governments to increase the availability of medicines in the public sector and strengthen national health systems, supported by ODA; and 2) research and development (R&D) for selected diseases.

### **Access to New Technologies**

The commitment was to make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies. While 100 percent of the population of developed countries have access to mobile cellular subscriptions, only 57 percent of the populations in the developing world have such access. Some 64 percent of the population in developed countries are internet users, compared to only 18 percent in the developing world. The Report's recommendation: in cooperation with the private sector, support continued rapid growth in access to mobile phones, as well as internet services, in developing countries.

The developing countries, in their meeting of the G-20 in Seoul, Korea in November 2010, will be focusing on the MDG Gap report and its recommendations.

The foregoing indicates there is much to do, by developed and developing countries, if the MDGs are to be achieved by 2015. However, there are examples of progress in a number of the goals in a number of countries. The following examples were found online in July 2010 – presented here by the specific MDG and its targets.

#### **# 1 – Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger**

The **targets** are: a) Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar per day; b) achieve full and productive

employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; and c) halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger. Examples of country progress include the following:

- \* Through a national input subsidy program, **Malawi** achieved a 53 percent food surplus in 2007, compared to a 43 percent national food deficit in 2005;
- \* **Vietnam's** investment in agricultural research and extension helped cut the prevalence of hunger by more than half, from 28 percent in 1991 to 13 percent in 2004-06. The prevalence of underweight children also more than halved, from 45 percent in 1994 to 20 percent in 2006.
- \* **Nicaragua** reduced its hunger rate by more than half, from 52 percent in 1991 to 21 percent in 2004-06.
- \* In **Northeast Brazil**, stunting – an indicator of child malnutrition – decreased from 22.2 percent to 5.9 percent between 1996 and 2006-07.
- \* Between 1991 and 2004, the number of people who suffer from undernourishment in **Ghana** fell by 34 percent, to 9 percent of the population.
- \* In **Argentina**, the Jefes y Jefas program employed 2 million workers within a few months after its initiation in 2002, contributing to the country's rapid poverty reduction – from 9.9 percent in 2002 to 4.5 percent in 2005.
- \* In **Laos**, supporting local farmers is helping to fight national poverty.

## # 2 -- Achieve Universal Primary Education

The **target** is to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

- \* By eliminating school fees, **Kenya** was able to quickly get 2 million more pupils into its primary schools. **Mozambique** had similar results after eliminating school fees.

- \* In **Ethiopia**, the net enrollment rate for primary school was 72.3 percent in 2007, an increase of 88 percent over the 2000 enrollment rates.

- \* In **Tanzania**, the abolition of school fees in 2001 led to a net enrollment rate of 98 percent for primary schooling in 2006, almost doubling the 1998 enrollment rate.

- \* In **Bolivia**, bilingual education has been introduced for three of the most widely used indigenous languages, covering 11 percent of all primary schools in 2002, helping to expand access to education among indigenous children in remote areas.

- \* **Mongolia** has been providing innovative mobile schools (“tent schools”) to cater to children in the countryside who may otherwise not have access to educational services. One hundred mobile schools have been spread out over 21 provinces.

## # 3 – Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

The **target** is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education by 2015.

- \* **Mexico's** 'Oportunidades' conditional cash transfer program led to an increase of secondary school enrollment rates of over 20 percent for girls and 10 percent for boys in rural areas where the program operated.

- \* In 2008, **Rwanda** elected a majority of women (56 percent) to its lower chamber of parliament, the highest level of female representation in the world.

- \* Starting from a very low gender parity index in primary education (0.35) in the 1980s, **Bangladesh** closed the gender gap in primary and secondary education within a decade.

- \* **Tanzania's** Land Act and Village Land Act of 1999 secured women's right to acquire title and registration of land, addressed issues of customary

land rights, and upheld the principles of non-discrimination based on sex for land rights.

\* In *Ethiopia's* Amhara Province, promotion of functional literacy, life skills, reproductive health education, and opportunities for savings for girls has significantly reduced the number of marriages of girls aged 10 to 14.

\* In *Guyana*, help for teenage mothers to improve their competencies through education and life skills training has significantly empowered them to make decisions for better lives for themselves and their children.

#### # 4 – Reduce Child Mortality

**Target:** Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.

\* *Rwanda* is very likely to meet – and possibly surpass – the MDG targets for child and maternal mortality by 2015, in part thanks to the government's successful health insurance program.

\* The under-five child mortality rate has fallen by 40 percent or more since 1990 in *Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Niger*. In *Malawi*, for example, the under-five mortality rate fell 56 percent between 1990 and 2008.

\* The under-five mortality rate was reduced by 50 percent or more since 1990 in *Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, Eritrea, Laos, and Nepal*.

\* Since 1990, *China's* under-five child mortality rate has declined from 46 deaths for every 1,000 live births to 18 per 1,000 in 2008, a reduction of 81 percent.

\* From 1990 to 2008, child mortality declined by 25 percent in *Equatorial Guinea* and by 14 percent in *Zambia*.

\* *Cambodia* increased exclusive breastfeeding from 13 percent to 60 percent from 2000 to 2005, strengthening children and reducing their vulnerability to illnesses.

#### # 5 – Improve Maternal Health

**Targets:** 1) Reduce by three-fourths, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality rate; and 2) achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health.

\* In *Malawi* and *Rwanda*, removal of user fees for family planning services has contributed to significant increases in use of family planning services.

\* In *Rwanda*, contraceptive prevalence among married women aged 15 to 49 jumped from 9 percent in 2005 to 26 percent in 2008.

\* The contraceptive prevalence rate among married women aged 15 to 49 in *Malawi* has more than doubled since 1992 to 33 percent in 2004.

\* In *Rwanda*, the skilled birth attendance rate increased from 39 percent to 52 percent from 2005 to 2008.

\* Between 1980 and 2006, the maternal mortality rate in *Tamil Nadu, India* fell from 450 to 90 per 100,000 live births.

#### # 6 – Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Other Diseases

**Targets:** 1) Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS; 2) achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it; and 3) have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

\* New HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths have declined substantially in *sub-Saharan Africa*, thanks to education programs, prevention policies, and wider availability of anti-retroviral medicines.

\* In *Uganda*, the adult HIV prevalence rate dropped from 8 percent in 2001 to 5.4 percent in 2007.

\* *Cambodia* has managed to halt and reverse the spread of HIV, with the prevalence falling from 1.8 percent in 2001 to 0.8 percent in 2007.

\* The number of new HIV infections among children has declined five-fold in **Botswana** from 4,600 in 1999 to 890 in 2007.

\* Reductions of more than 50 percent in the numbers of reported malaria cases and deaths were observed in four high-burden African countries: **Eritrea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, and Zambia** -- as well as the island of **Zanzibar** in **Tanzania**.

\* In **Peru**, improved tuberculosis (TB) case detection and cure rates through DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment Short Course) saved an estimated 91,000 lives between 1991 and 2000. TB incidence declined at a rate of 5 percent per year over 2006 – 2008.

\* Between 1991 and 2000, improved TB control in **China** reduced prevalency by over a third.

\* A decade ago, **Estonia** and **Latvia** were considered the multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) hotbeds of the world, with the highest prevalence of MDR among TB cases ever reported. Thanks to rapidly expanded MDR-TB treatment programs, the total number of MDR-TB cases per 100,000 population decreased by an average of 6 percent per year in Estonia and 14 percent in Latvia between 2002 and 2007.

\* Between 2006 and 2008, the proportion of TB patients tested for HIV increased from 3 percent to 77 percent in **Tanzania**, from 11 percent to 68 percent in **Lesotho**, and from 24 percent to 81 percent in **Mozambique**.

\* In **Malawi**, 53 percent of tuberculosis patients detected with HIV infection were put on antiretroviral treatment in 2008.

#### # 7 – Ensure Environmental Sustainability

**Targets:** 1) Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs, and reverse the loss of environmental resources; 2) reduce biodiversity loss, achieving a significant reduction in the rate of loss by 2010; 3) halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable

access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation; and 4) Achieve by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

\* Between 1999 and 2005, **Costa Rica** prevented the loss of 720 square kilometers of forests in biodiversity priority areas and avoided the emission of 11 million tons of carbon.

\* In 2006, 80 percent of the rural population in **Ghana** had access to an improved drinking water source, an increase of 43 percent over 1990 levels.

\* In **Mali**, the percentage of the population with at least one point of access to improved sanitation rose from 35 percent in 1990 to 45 percent in 2006.

\* **Guatemala** has increased its investment in water and sanitation resources, contributing to an increase in access to improved drinking water from 79 percent in 1990 to 96 percent in 2006, and to improved sanitation from 70 percent in 1990 to 84 percent in 2006.

\* **South Africa** successfully achieved the MDG target of halving the proportion of people lacking access to safe water – from 19 percent in 1990 to 7 percent in 2006.

\* In **Senegal**, the proportion of people living in cities with access to improved water reached 93 percent in 2006.

#### # 8 – Develop a Global Partnership for Development

**Targets:** 1) Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system – this includes a commitment to good governance, development, and poverty reduction (both nationally and internationally); 2) address the special needs of the least developed countries (specific commitments discussed in the MDG Gap Report at the beginning of this article); 3) address the special needs of the landlocked developing countries and small island developing states; 4) deal comprehensively with the debt problems of



developing countries through national and international measures in order to make debt sustainable in the long term; 5) in cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries; and 6) in cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.

\* In 2008 the only countries to have exceeded the target of official development assistance of 0.7 percent of Gross National Income were **Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden.**

\* **China, India, Iran, and Uzbekistan** succeeded in lowering private sector prices for generic medicines to less than twice the international reference price.

The High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, which met September 20-22, 2010 to review progress in achieving the MDGs, approved a 32-page Outcome Document. Some of the conclusions and major points in the Document are listed below:

“We recognize that progress, including in poverty eradication, is being made despite setbacks (e.g. the financial and economic crisis). ... We are deeply concerned, however, that the number of people living in extreme poverty and hunger surpasses 1 billion, and that inequalities between and within countries remains a significant challenge. We are also deeply concerned about the alarming global levels of maternal and child mortality.”

In the Document, the UN members commit to making every effort to achieve the MDGs by 2015. They also express confidence that the MDGs can be achieved, including in the poorest countries. They state that national ownership and leadership are indispensable to the development process, and that good governance and the rule of law are also essential. They recognized that gender equality, the empowerment of women, women's enjoyment

of all human rights, and the eradication of poverty are essential to the achievement of the MDGs.

The Members recognized that all of the MDGs are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. They also acknowledged the diversity of the world and recognized that all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind. They called on civil society, including non-governmental organizations, voluntary associations and foundations, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders at the local, national, regional, and global levels, to enhance their role in national development efforts, as well as their contribution to the achievement of the MDGs.

Based on lessons learned and successful policies and approaches, the Document sets forth 19 actions for consideration by national governments and organizations and their international helpers. In addition, the Document sets a number of commitments to be made for achieving each MDG. They requested an annual review by the GA of MDG progress, and a special event in 2013 for follow-up.

*Editor's Comment:* Success in achieving the goals requires a major effort by each of the developing countries, but significant achievements will only be accomplished if the developed countries increase their support to the program.

Creating a better world for the developing countries is also in the interest of international peace and, therefore, is in the interest of the more developed countries. Although not specifically mentioned in this article, many nongovernmental organizations and talented individuals from countries around the world are also contributing significantly to the achievement of the MDGs.

May the effort be successful in all countries!

*(The information provided in this article came mostly from various parts of the United Nations website: ([www.un.org](http://www.un.org)); however, the latter part about the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly was drawn from the meeting's Outcome Document (UNGA A/65/L.1).)*



# Passing the Practice of Peace from One Generation to the Next

By Rita Marie Johnson

Can you imagine a world where every child practices peace and, upon reaching adulthood, passes this gift to the next generation? This is the vision being fulfilled by the Rasur Foundation as it trains teachers and counselors to evoke the wisdom and compassion in children through the practice of *BePeace*.

This practice has been spreading in schools in Costa Rica since 2004 and is now being offered to schools in the United States (U.S.). I founded the Rasur Foundation after traveling to Costa Rica in 1993 and being attracted by its national model of peace. In 2003, I founded the Academy for Peace and developed the practice of *BePeace* with the aim of institutionalizing this practice within Costa Rica's educational system.

In 2006, the Rasur Foundation initiated a bill for a Ministry for Peace to be integrated into the current Ministry of Justice in Costa Rica and also recommended an alliance of nonprofit organizations for peace. The bill passed in 2009 and the alliance was formed and is now coordinated by the new Ministry for Peace. This success culminated in a Summit of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Departments for Peace in 2009, hosted by the Costa Rican government and facilitated by the Rasur Foundation. Over 200 participants from 41 countries attended and were inspired by Costa Rica's progress in establishing a national model of peace.

In 2010, the UN University for Peace, located in Costa Rica, offered *BePeace* as a graduate course to 26 students from 16 countries. As a result of teaching this course, I am in dialogue with U.S. universities, such as the University of North Texas, about offering *BePeace* through their continuing education programs. Peacemakers Inc. in Dallas, founded in 1987 and the host of three

international women's peace conferences, has adopted *BePeace* as its curriculum of choice for teachers, counselors, students, and parents.

With the scourge of bullying that is sweeping the U.S., there is new receptivity to approaches like *BePeace*, which positively impacts the entire social and emotional environment of the school. In the past, peace education has been primarily aimed at the intellect. However violence stems from reactive feelings. To shift these reactions, we must be able to efficiently and reliably redirect these feelings into a peaceful state and be able to speak in a way that prevents conflict. *BePeace* does just that by offering to individuals a clear "how to" for experiencing peace in real life situations. Below is a description of how and why *BePeace* works.

*BePeace*<sup>TM</sup> is a practice that combines a scientifically proven method for "feeling peace" with a clear path for "speaking peace" that creates an authentic, compassionate connection. As we learn this practice, we are empowered to pass it on, to "teach peace."

## The Benefits of *BePeace*:

1. Stop stress in just 60 seconds
2. Resolve conflicts
3. Find release from worry, anger, anxiety and depression simply and quickly
4. Achieve your highest brain function and open up your intuition
5. Maintain emotional balance, even in times of great turmoil and stress

*BePeace* is a combination of Coherence + Connection.

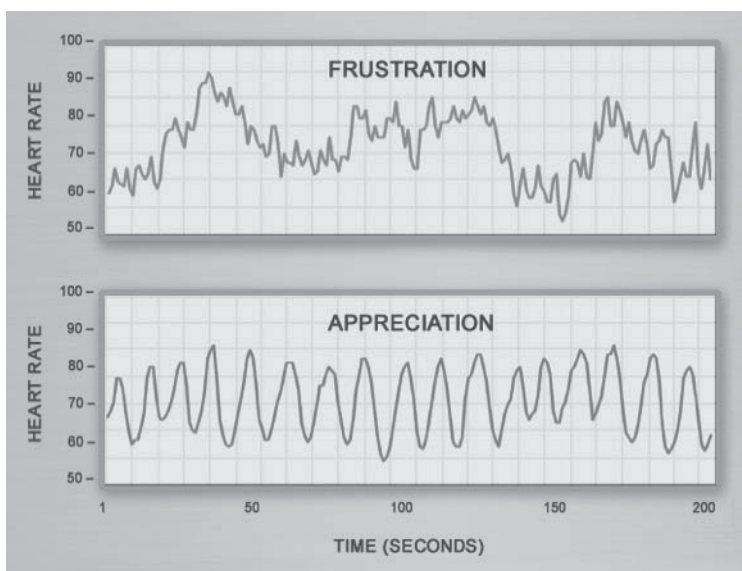
## Method 1: Coherence

According to the Institute of HeartMath, coherence is the state when the heart, mind and emotions are in energetic alignment and cooperation. It is a state that builds resiliency - personal energy is increased and sustained, not wasted – leaving more energy to manifest intentions and harmonious outcomes.

Coherence is achieved by taking three steps:

1. Heart Focus
2. Heart Breathing
3. Heart Feeling of Appreciation

Like most skills, the more we practice it, the easier it gets. Research shows that when we are in a state of incoherence from negative emotions, our heart rate variability pattern is erratic. Positive emotions create coherence, a rhythmic, even pattern. When we are coherent, we think more clearly and can more reliably tap our intuition. Since the electromagnetic field of the heart radiates up to three feet from the body, our coherence also has a positive influence on those around us.



**B**ecause the heart is the strongest biological oscillator in the body, when it generates a coherent signal, it draws the other biological oscillators into synchronization. This includes the digestive system, the respiratory system, and most importantly, the brain. When the heart is in a

coherent mode, it can override the amygdala in the brain, which gets triggered by emotional memories. As an example, a person bitten by a dog when he/she was a child may have a recurring negative emotional response (fear, anger) whenever they see a dog. If they have learned to sustain coherence, over time they can extinguish this response.

Research by the Institute of HeartMath has shown that students who practice coherence before exams perform significantly better in math and reading and have an improved capability for learning.

## Method 2: Connection

Human beings share universal needs. Connecting to them, within ourselves and when interacting with others, is the key to the compassionate language of empathy and honesty. This aspect of *BePeace* is inspired by Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, who developed Nonviolent Communication (NVC). The four steps of Nonviolent Communication are:

1. Observation – A description of what we are seeing, hearing or touching, specific to time and context, and free of judgment, criticism or analysis.
2. Feeling – A description of our emotional state, the result of a need being met or unmet (e.g. happy, sad)
3. Need – Something we require to sustain and enrich our life. Our needs can be satisfied by accessing our inner resources or through outer strategies that also honor the needs of others. Needs are universal and do not refer to a specific person or thing (e.g. clarity, justice, to be heard, to matter).
4. Request – Clear, positive, concrete words that request clarity, connection or a specific action in order to satisfy a need.

## The Power of BePeace

The transformational power of *BePeace* arises from the synergy of combining coherence with connection. When we achieve heart-brain coherence, and also connect with our feelings and needs, we can respond more consciously to life; then we rise to a higher level of social and emotional

intelligence. In this way, we are able to continually enrich our own lives and help create a more peaceful world.

Here are some of the results of teaching *BePeace* in Costa Rican schools:

**Teachers reported that:**

- Aggression and violence had diminished.
- There was less intolerance and fewer conflicts.
- Misconduct reports decreased from 16 to 9 per month.
- Students learned to resolve conflicts on their own.
- The relationships among teachers and with the principal improved significantly.

Now the primary aim of Rasur Foundation International is to offer *BePeace* in U.S. university programs and in schools through *BePeace Hubs*. These hubs spring from a group of people located in the same city who have taken *BePeace* courses and support the transfer of *BePeace* into the school system in their area.

For information on courses, or initiating a hub in your area, consult the website below or write to: [info@rasurinternational.org](mailto:info@rasurinternational.org).

Resources: Rasur Foundation International:  
<http://www.rasurinternational.org>  
 Academy for Peace of Costa Rica:  
<http://www.academyforpeacecr.org>  
 Center for Nonviolent Communication:  
<http://www.cnvc.org>  
 Institute of HeartMath: <http://www.heartmath.org>

*{Rita Marie Johnson lived in Costa Rica for 17 years and, in 2010, relocated Rasur Foundation International to Arlington, Texas to serve her own country's needs for peace. In the U.S., she has already presented BePeace Foundation Courses in Missouri, Virginia, Florida, Texas, Vermont, California, and North Carolina. In Fall 2010, 30 U.S. trainers were contracted to offer BePeace services.}*

**PEACE**

How does it feel to live in peace,  
To know the calm of hate's surcease?

Who puts the yearning in the breast  
Which guides the wise man's humble quest?

What master thought exudes such grace  
Then disappears without a trace?

When shall we grasp Love's simple plan  
And live the Golden Age of Man

Where time and space and fear are naught  
and only harmony is taught?

It happens in each human soul  
It's individuation's goal.

We hold the lock and key within  
Which conquers anger, fear and sin.

The lock which guards the gentle heart  
Bids eccentricity depart.

The key that opens wide the door  
Love's light floods in, we're free once more.

Come help me now, please hold my hand,  
We've harmony to teach the land.

--Linda I. Fasig  
Charlestown, South Carolina

(Published in PEACE in Action, November 1987)

# The Peaceable Classroom

By *Sonja Sneddon*

At the Virginia Avenue Charlotte DeHart Elementary School (VACDES), where I teach, we have been working for several years towards a "Peaceable School." The four main parts of this program include: 1) a Student Conduct Code, 2) special Class Meetings, 3) Peer Mediation, and 4) the Peaceable Classroom Program.

In our school, we work on bringing peace to the classroom in two main ways. First, I will detail our *SHARP Points* activity, which essentially is the development of the Student Conduct Code. Secondly, I will discuss some of the activities that are a part of the *Peaceable Classroom*. I am detailing these components of our school's culture of peace in the hope that other teachers will have an opportunity to implement similar activities to develop more peaceable classrooms.

The *SHARP Points* are based on a book entitled *Essential 55* by Ron Clark (Hyperian Books, NY, 2003). The teachers read it over the summer, then a professional learning community of teachers and staff come up with their own school rules.

## **SHARP Points**

In a Title I school, many of our students come from homes in which manners are simply not taught -- or modeled by their parents. I believe this program has had a positive impact and does help foster more peaceful, mutually respectful relationships between students.

*SHARP Points* are behaviors and manners we expect students to follow at our school. Every day one is read over the loud speakers during morning announcements. The goal is to give students the tools they need to develop respectful behavior. The name represents Students Having Awesome Respect (for) People. The *SHARP Points* are as

follows:

**When responding to any adult, you must answer by saying "Yes ma'am" or "No sir." Just nodding your head or saying any other form of yes or no is not acceptable.**

**Make eye contact.** When someone is speaking, keep your eyes on him or her. If someone makes a comment, turn and face that person.

**Always say "Thank you" when someone gives you something.** There is no excuse for not showing appreciation.

**Quickly learn the names of other teachers in the school, and greet them politely.**

**Do and say nice things to people.** Surprise others by performing random acts of kindness. Take pride in your school. Help keep it clean inside and out.

**If you win or do well at something, do not brag. If you lose, do not show anger.** If someone else in the class wins a game or does something well, congratulate that person.

**When you are with a substitute teacher, you will be respectful, and you will obey the same rules followed daily.**

**Never do or say anything that would hurt someone's feelings or embarrass them.** Be nice and polite to everyone.

**Accept responsibility for your actions and mistakes.**

**When greeting visitors or meeting new people, make them feel welcome.** Repeat their names and shake their hands when appropriate.

If you approach a door, and someone is following you, hold the door.

If you bump into someone, even if it was not your fault, say "Excuse me."

Do not interrupt when others are talking unless it is an emergency. If you have to interrupt, say "pardon me" or "excuse me." Note: when a group of people are talking, walk around the group, not through it.

Do not show disrespect with gestures or comments.

If any child in this school is bothering or bullying you, let an adult know. You have the right to be safe, protected, and not to be made to feel uncomfortable.

If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all!

No matter the circumstances, always be honest.

Be responsible for yourself and your actions. You are not "in charge" of the behavior of anyone but yourself.

Smile, be positive, and be the best person you can be. Choose to make each day a good one!

### ***Peaceable Classroom***

I believe that this program has been instrumental in promoting peace at our school. *Peaceable Classroom* helps facilitate community peace by teaching students about conflict resolution, diversity, and fostering positive relationships.

We start the *Peaceable Classroom (PC)* activity at the beginning of the school year, and it lasts the entire year. We have a *PC* lesson every Monday, and every teacher teaches the same curriculum -- which was developed by a guidance counselor. In the beginning of the year, we build relationships, teach students how to compliment one another, and how to discuss problems that might come up during the year. We have a meeting in the beginning of the lesson where students make comments and discuss problems. Then we teach

the lesson or do an activity. It all lasts about 15-30 minutes. Some lessons include:

### ***"Peaceable Being"***

We draw a life-size student on poster paper and students write words that they think demonstrate a safe, peaceful classroom inside the "being" and words they think are negative and destructive outside the "being." We post it in the classroom for the year.

### ***"Class Compact"***

We make a compact together as a class, reflecting how we expect to treat each other.

### ***"Conflict Resolution"***

We talk about what conflict means to students, and we teach them how to deal with conflicts peacefully. We equip students with problem solving skills, and we teach them strategies to resolve disagreements through role playing and games.

The sources of the program activities generally come from four main sources:

**Friendly Classroom for a Small Planet**, by Priscilla Prutzman, et. al.;

**Conflict Resolution: an Elementary School Curriculum**, by Gail Sadalla, et. al. of the Community Board of San Francisco;

**Adventures in Peacemaking**, by William Kreidler and Lisa Furlong of Educators for Social Responsibility in Cambridge, MA; and

**Early Childhood Adventures in Peacemaking**, by William Kreidler of Educators for Responsibility of Cambridge, MA.

*(Sonja Sneddon is in her third year at VACDES teaching the fourth grade. The principal of VACDES is Kathy Wetzel who can be contacted at: [wetzel.kathy@wps.k12.va.us](mailto:wetzel.kathy@wps.k12.va.us))*



# Ecoliteracy, Systems Thinking, and Smart by Nature Education

*By Michael K. Stone*

Educating our children for a sustainable world is more than a timely slogan. Many of the challenges we face today have some connection to the natural world: climate change, energy, food and water security, deforestation, and more. Therefore, the citizens and leaders of tomorrow need to understand how the natural world works. They must perceive the connections between human activity and nature, and have the values and skills to act effectively on this knowledge. They must understand sustainability at a deep level. In other words, they must be ecoliterate.

The natural world is a living system, and humans are an integral part of that system. To build toward sustainability, therefore, the Center for Ecoliteracy, a nonprofit based in Berkeley, California, exists to support schools in preparing students, and the adults who live and work with them, to carry that mantle of ecoliterate leadership.

Our framework for this is Smart by Nature™, an approach grounded in the knowledge of living systems and two decades of work with schools and organizations from more than 400 communities across the U.S. and around the world. A systems orientation helps young people apprehend the complex dynamics of the natural world and human society.

Systems thinking also informs our approach to working with schools around pedagogy, organizational practices, and institutional change. The Center understands schools as whole systems and “curriculum” as everything that leads to students’ learning. We recognize that schools teach by classroom lessons, but also by the food served in their dining halls, their use of energy and resources, their decision-making processes, and their relationships with the larger community.

## SHIFTS IN PERCEPTION

Systems thinking within the Smart by Nature approach entails several shifts in perception with important implications for teaching and school practices. These shifts are not either/or alternatives, but rather movements along a continuum:

**From parts to the whole.** In any system, the whole is different from the sum of its parts. By shifting focus from the parts to the whole, schools can help students to better grasp relationships, connectedness, and context. For instance, instead of copying pictures of honeybees from a book, an art teacher takes her class to the school garden to draw bees in their natural setting. This shift can also mean moving from isolated subjects to integrated curricula, and from individual class periods to block scheduling.

Similarly, long-lasting institutional change usually occurs at the level of the whole school or the district, one reason that the Center strongly encourages participants in its seminars to enroll as school-wide or district teams.

**From objects to relationships.** In systems, the relationships between individual parts may be as important as the parts themselves. In the systems view, the “objects” of study are often networks of relationships. Farmer/philosopher Wendell Berry uses the analogy of a healthy organ acting within the body. The organ does not “give” health to the body, but is a part of its health: “The health of organ and organism is the same, just as the health of organism and ecosystem is the same.”

This perspective emphasizes relationship-based processes such as cooperation and consensus. Though it can feel counter-intuitive to action-oriented school reformers, it’s sometimes necessary to spend considerable time cultivating relationships

among stakeholders before ever addressing objectives or agendas for change.

**From objective knowledge to contextual knowledge.** This shift may be facilitated through project-based and place-based learning instead of prescriptive curricula. Whether restoring the habitat of an endangered species, tending a school garden, or designing a neighborhood recycling program, students learn best from active engagement in which their actions matter and have larger meaning than simply completing an assignment.

Students are inspired to learn because they recognize that the knowledge is essential to completing a project that they or people in their community care about. This process also encourages teachers to be facilitators and fellow learners alongside students, rather than experts dispensing knowledge.

**From quantity to quality.** Western science has often focused on things that can be measured and quantified. It has sometimes been implied that phenomena that can be measured and quantified are more important—and perhaps even that what cannot be measured and quantified doesn't exist at all.

Some aspects of systems, however, like the relationships in a food web, a school, or a community, cannot be measured. Rather, they must be mapped. In education systems, this shift can lead to efforts to define more comprehensive and more appropriate forms of assessment than standardized tests. Cultivating this perspective also inspires efforts to improve the quality of life in communities while requiring less material consumption or stress on the environment—necessary strategies for sustainable living on a finite planet.

**From structure to process.** Living systems develop and evolve. Understanding these systems requires a shift in focus from structure to processes, such as evolution, renewal, and change, which are important concepts for understanding ecological principles. In the classroom, this shift can mean

teaching students that how they solve a problem is more important than the answer. How decisions are made can be as important as what is decided. When educators, parents, trustees, and other members of the school community make decisions and act collaboratively, the school serves as an apprentice community for acquiring skills and values needed for sustainable living.

**From contents to patterns.** Within systems, certain configurations appear repeatedly in patterns such as cycles and feedback loops. Understanding how a pattern works in one system helps us to understand other systems that manifest the same pattern. For instance, recognizing how flows of energy affect a natural ecosystem may illuminate how flows of information affect a social system.

As Fritjof Capra has emphasized, the phenomenon of emergence within systems offers clues for facilitating change in institutions such as schools. Leaders need to be able to recognize emergent novelty, articulate it, and incorporate it into the organization's design. Effecting change sometimes requires that leaders loosen their apparent control and take the risk of dispersing authority and responsibility more widely.

In our experience, a systems perspective is basic to ecological literacy, and hence to schooling for sustainability. To explore in depth the ideas explained in brief here, and to learn more about the Center, see our website ([www.ecoliteracy.org](http://www.ecoliteracy.org)) and our publications, especially our recent book *Smart by Nature: Schooling for Sustainability* ([www.ecoliteracy.org/books/smart-nature-schooling-sustainability](http://www.ecoliteracy.org/books/smart-nature-schooling-sustainability)).

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*Michael K. Stone is senior editor at the Center for Ecoliteracy, and the primary author of Smart by Nature: Schooling for Sustainability (Watershed Media/University of California Press, 2009) and Ecological Literacy: Educating Our Children for a Sustainable World (Sierra Club Books, 2005).*

# Forgiveness: The Road to Peace

*By Azim Khamisa*

## THE END / THE BEGINNING

“Bust him, Bone!” Those were the words from an 18-year-old gang member, words that demanded 14-year-old Tony Hicks – also known as “Bone” - to fire his weapon. A single shot from the 9mm handgun exploded in the cold air that January night in 1995 in San Diego. Tariq Khamisa, 20-year-old college student and part-time pizza deliverer, lay dead in the front seat of his car.

Tariq was my boy.

So ended the life of an artistic, vibrant, generous and humorous young man. Upon hearing of Tariq’s death, it felt as if a nuclear bomb went off in my heart, a pain beyond excruciating. I recall leaving my body and being cradled, by the loving embrace of God, as shock went through my body. When I returned to consciousness, though I was in pain, I had a realization - that there were victims on both sides of the gun.

So began a journey for myself ... one I would not take alone. I would take the spirit of Tariq with me, as I forged my way ... from murder to forgiveness ... to fulfillment ... and hopefully, God willing inshallah! ... to enlightenment. So began a journey I would also take with many others, including Tony Hicks, his grandfather Ples Felix, and hundreds of thousands of children watching on as we all took part in the gentle healing brought to us through forgiveness.

On April 7, 1995, 10 weeks after Tariq’s death, I drove to Mammoth Mountain in Southern California to spend a few days in solitude and reflection to help calm my inner storms. My thoughts drifted back to the conversation with my spiritual teacher and his teachings about the soul’s journey. I knew Tariq was at peace, even though I

was not. I began to understand that to find peace for myself, I needed to find something that I could do for Tariq, for his journey. This grief had to be broken – or at least set aside – for both our sakes. The phrases “spiritual currency” and “fuel for the journey of the soul” kept playing in my mind.

So, it was high up in the mountains in front of the fire on a chilly April night that I got my first inspiration about what I might do. “What if I became a foe — not of the boy who killed my son, but of the forces which led him to kill my son? What if I reached out as far as I possibly could, and devoted myself to fighting the plague of youth violence?” It was as if three strands of longing had come together to form a slender lifeline: to do something for Tariq, to do something for my country, and to do something for myself.

I came down from the mountains with a new purpose. I started talking to almost everyone I knew about my concept for a Foundation in my son’s name. The response was incredible. Everyone offered to help. The next six months were filled with the planning, communications, and resource hunting required to launch a non-profit organization. My close friends Dan Pearson, Kit Goldman, and Mike Reynolds (“Rojo”) joined me, serving as my core team.

After months of hard work, the first meeting of the Tariq Khamisa Foundation (TKF) took place on October 26, 1995 at my home in La Jolla, California. My modest townhouse was packed with about 50 people who were committed to my vision. A total of \$8,000 was collected to launch the Tariq Khamisa Foundation. Immediately afterwards, I told San Diego prosecutor Peter Deddeh that I wanted to meet Ples Felix, the grandfather and guardian of Tony Hicks, Tariq’s killer.

One short week later, on Friday, November 3 at the office of Tony's attorney, I met Ples for the first time. From his heart, he shared that he had been holding my family and me in his daily prayers and meditation. I then told Ples that I felt no animosity towards him or his family, and that I believed both his family and mine were victimized by this tragic incident. I was pleased to discover in Ples a faith as strong as my own, and a similar burning desire to end the plague of youth violence. Ples pledged to help with the work of the Foundation in any way he could.

I invited Ples to attend the second meeting of the Foundation the following week. With great courage and grace, Ples walked alone into my home that evening. The house was filled with my family, friends and colleagues, including Tariq's mother, his grandparents, Tariq's sister Tasreen, and his aunt. I can't imagine the courage it took for Ples to face these 50 people who had known and loved Tariq. Ples spoke eloquently to the group, coming from his huge heart. After Ples and I had finished speaking that evening, there was not a dry eye in the house... TKF was born ... and the TKF Journey had begun.

### **AZIM, TARIQ & TKF TODAY**

For the past 12 years, through such programs as the interactive VIF (Violence Impact Forums) at middle schools throughout San Diego, TKF has made huge strides in inspiring children to make the choice towards nonviolence and away from the false security of a gang life.

Today, the Tariq Khamisa Foundation is actively pursuing partnership with San Diego State University in order to create a peace and non-violence curriculum suitable for grades K-12, based on TKF's vision and programs. As well, Dr. Carl Cohn, the Superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District, who has experienced TKF's programs, wants TKF placed in every school in the district.

**TKF** is teaching children that through the development of empathy, compassion and

forgiveness, we can create peace, love and unity out of conflict. Our children are our future leaders, and it is my personal goal that TKF programs first enter every school in our country and is then taken to Israel, Palestine, Iraq, Iran, North Korea and other parts of our world. The reason? To teach that unless we, as a society, learn to create love and unity from conflict, the human race will most certainly perish. Think about this – if TKF meets its mandate, the only logical outcome is world peace. What could be more important?

### **CONFLICT & RESTORATION**

I realize that conflict is a part of life. There is conflict between spouses, mother-daughter, father-son, families, peers, and nations. Conflict is not going away. We need to shift our paradigms about conflict and look at it as an opportunity to build trust, empathy, unity, and peace. That is precisely what we teach at TKF ([www.TKF.org](http://www.TKF.org)) as well at another program I founded called CANEI.

Developed under the auspices of the National Youth Advocate Program, CANEI (Constant And Never Ending Improvement) ([www.CANEI.org](http://www.CANEI.org)) is a restorative justice program for adolescents located in five US cities.

In both programs, we teach and hold in mind that no matter the gravity of the offense – by making the right choice – we can transform society and manifest a miracle. Every day there are opportunities – small and big – in which we can create unity, love, and peace from conflict by making the right choice – the compassionate choice – choosing to forgive rather than seeking revenge. And also choosing to restore the individual who has harmed.

These high ethical values are not just the purview of the enlightened lot in our society – we can all do this. Neither Ples nor I are trained in theology. On the contrary, Ples is an ex-Green Beret, and I am an investment banker. And yet we were able to forge a strong brotherhood from a very tragic incidence through forgiveness. We can all do this! This is what will get us to world peace, not get us the horrific results found with the prevalent “eye for an eye” attitude.



For that bigger picture of peace, I am currently working to get Tony out of prison so that he too can stand alongside me to show what forgiveness can do. Imagine the kind of impact Tony would have on the younger generation as he relates his side of the story. What would best serve – having Tony hanging from the highest tree for his wrongdoing in an everlasting punishment, or having him atone for his actions, and then – upon his restoration – give back to society as a helpful, useful force? What serves better – a sense of rage, bitterness and resentment towards Tony, or the openness and willingness to hold empathy and forgiveness for all impacted here? If I didn't hold in my heart empathy and love for all concerned, what would I replace it with?

## FORGIVENESS & PEACE

Truly, I believe that if we have more forgiving people in the world, we can speed up the process to discover not only our inner peace but a world at peace. I would love to see more and more people making a commitment to get engaged in a meaningful way to the process of world peace. We can all make a difference. Let us leave a better and safer America for our children and grandchildren. It is their right ... and our duty.

Now, if you will, stretch your imagination. If all the conflicts in the world could be resolved by extending brotherhood and sisterhood, what would our world look like?

Peace *is* in the air. Can you feel it? Yes, there are wars raging, rumors of war, and plenty of turmoil on our streets and within our homes. But can you feel the other trend arising? Peace is in the air. Even with the new trends, I still know that peace starts with the individual: me and you.

1. Do you have peace in your life?
2. Are your relationships resolved?
3. Could you pass from this life today with a clean slate, a clear conscience, a healed heart?

If not, then I invite you to resolve internal conflicts, which will bring about the external peaceful

outcomes, since we know now that our outer world is a reflection of our inner world. And as we heal the battle within, we will see the peace reflected in our relationships, home and society. As we also know:

Sustained good will creates friendship.  
Sustained friendship creates trust.  
Sustained trust creates compassion.  
Sustained compassion creates peace.

People ask me how I was able to extend good will to the person who murdered my son. It was through forgiveness. As you can tell from my story - found in my book, my website and my talks - it worked for me and my family. And it worked for Tony and his family. It can work for you. It can work for the country, and it can work for the world. I know that peace is possible. And how do I know that? It is because I am at peace.

*(Azim N. Khamisa was born in Kenya, Africa and is now a resident of La Jolla, California. Azim is the Chairman, CEO and Founder of the Tariq Khamisa Foundation ([www.TKF.org](http://www.TKF.org)), as well as founder and National Director of CANEI, Constant And Never Ending Improvement ([www.CANEI.org](http://www.CANEI.org)), a restorative justice program for adolescents.*

*Azim followed up his 1998 award-winning book **Azim's Bardo—From Murder To Forgiveness** with another book in 2007: **From Forgiveness to Fulfillment. Bounce Back**, written with Jillian Quinn, was published in 2009 by Bantam Books. Azim offers more of his passions, his book, CD series, and DVDs though his website [www.AzimKhamisa.com](http://www.AzimKhamisa.com).*

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## PEACE

*cannot be kept  
by force  
It can only be  
achieved by  
understanding*

Einstein



## Small Callings

# My Journey Back to Peacemaking

Peace work is the most practical of pursuits. It is not naive to think we can change the world. The problem with that phrase is that we define our terms loosely: *change* is not synonymous with *fix*. If we think we can fix the world, we are indeed foolish, but it is not naive to think we can *change* the world. On the contrary, it is naive to think we could possibly be *in* the world and *not* change it. Everything we do changes the world a little bit, and the small changes matter. The real question, then, is ‘which changes will we make?’

I went to high school in the 1980’s when Mutually Assured Destruction was taken by many to be sane and practical foreign policy. From the perspective of a teenager, it didn’t look that way at all. I was pretty confident that my life would end in a mushroom cloud, and that it would happen long before now. Happily, I was wrong, though history shows that I came extremely close to being right, and the current debate about the New START treaty shows the lingering influence of Cold War politics.

Thankfully, as I was growing up, grim commentaries on the evening news were not the only voices I heard. My mother and her friends were involved in women’s rights and peace issues, and my father, a Presbyterian pastor, spoke out against US intervention in Central America, a move that was not popular with many of his parishioners. These issues concerned me deeply, too, which made me a little odd in my suburban high school in southwest Virginia, where most students were more concerned about generating enthusiasm for our team at football games.

At college it was easier to find friends to talk with about such things. In 1986 I entered James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Though JMU was hardly a hotbed of political consciousness, I did find some kindred spirits

there. I majored in Psychology, but I developed a keen interest in mediation and alternative conflict resolution. I volunteered at the Community Mediation Center as an intern in order to learn more, and I took the few conflict resolution classes that were available on campus.

Mediation was a burgeoning field at that time, and I became passionate about promoting and practicing it. It was tremendously empowering to find that there were effective tools and well-developed methods that could enable people to work through conflict in ways that were much less destructive than litigation and violence, our two most popular choices. And these methods were teachable! How different would the world be if they were broadly disseminated? The idea of working to promote mediation had the smell of a calling to me.

In those same years, though, another world was also opening up to me. I had been playing guitar—primarily in my bedroom with the door closed—since I was about 15. In college, some friends encouraged me to share a few songs at an open mike in town, and I was thrilled to find that people did not rise up en masse and leave the room as I had feared. The open mike nights led to real gigs, and by the time I graduated, I was doing enough performance that I could imagine doing it for a living.

I loved music for many of the same reasons that I loved mediation. They both have the potential to remind us of our connectedness and common humanity. They can speak to our better natures and call us to our higher selves. And they both seemed to welcome me and my gifts to their service.

The summer after I graduated in 1990, I took a summer job in the mountains of western North Carolina and spent those few months trying to discern which of these two paths was right for me. I

applied for one job in the field of alternative conflict resolution. There was a new mediation center opening in Roanoke, and they were looking for a director. As a recent graduate in his early twenties I was grossly under-qualified, and only a miracle would have led to my hiring. As it turned out, though, the deal was sealed by the flat tire I had on the way to the interview and the fact that I had left my dress shoes at my sister's house. I showed up to the interview 45 minutes late, wearing a suit and old tennis shoes. Enough said!

That seemed like enough of a sign to me, so I threw myself into music professionally, though I knew the odds were against me. I gave myself two years to try to make it work. Eighteen years later, it had worked remarkably well. I was a veteran of 2,000 shows on 4 continents and 10 CDs of primarily original music.

The pull toward peace work never left me, though, and I took any opportunity to step toward conflict zones and learn from people who are on the front lines there. On various European concert tours I would play a string of concerts in countries like Germany to make a bit of money, then visit Belfast or Sarajevo and play for free to hear the stories of people who were working on improving the deeply difficult situations in those places. More recently, I went to Israel and Palestine and met with people on various sides of the many issues there.

I also spent time in downtown Atlanta at the Open Door Community where I learned from bold activists and peacemakers who were working on social justice issues that have an impact on Atlanta's massive homeless population. I also connected with countless activists who were working on local issues in the various towns that I visited on tour. These are the people that almost never make the news but are slogging it out day by day to change the world, and they are doing it.

One of the biggest corners on the trajectory of my own peace work came, surprisingly, on my honeymoon. Deanna and I were married in 2004, and we chose to go to Guatemala for about 18 days

to celebrate. Being admittedly nerdy, the thing that most appealed to us to do there was to go to a language immersion school. We spent four or five hours each day studying Spanish, lived with a family, and explored Guatemalan life and culture. It was a wonderful time; we learned more Spanish than we had expected, and we made some deep and enduring friendships.

I have generally not been too interested in 'the sites' when traveling internationally. If there is any way to figure out how to do so, I much prefer to talk in people's living rooms than see the wonders. I am much more fascinated by the variations on what people consider 'normal' than I am by the unusual. So when I had the opportunity to visit a Guatemalan elementary school, I took it.

The school I went to visit is in Santa Lucia Milpas Altas, in the mountains outside of Antigua. It had 218 students at that time, five or six classrooms, a tiny and simple office for the principal, a small kitchen space in a hallway, and boys' and girls' bathrooms. The bathrooms were in a North American style, but most of the sinks and toilets were off the walls, and there was no running water. They simply hauled buckets up from the well to clean them at the end of the day.

After the principal of the school showed me around, he mentioned that he had a dream to run water from the well to the bathrooms. I asked what was keeping him from doing that. He said they simply didn't have the budget—that the necessary plumbing would cost 1000 quetzales. I did the math in my head, and thought I must be wrong: 1000 quetzales was about \$125.

That was the day that I began to learn about public schools in Guatemala. Poverty and corruption were both endemic to Guatemala. It is generally considered the second poorest country in the western hemisphere, after Haiti. It was not surprising, then, that education was underfunded. The reality of the numbers, though, is striking: The government only paid, if anything, the salaries of an inadequate number of teachers and nothing else -- . not the cost of constructing a building, nor the power bill, nor the cost of textbooks, which is why there were no

textbooks in many (perhaps most) Guatemalan schools.

This meant that the communities had to pitch in to pay for those things if they wanted their children to have an education. Many Guatemalans were living on less than two dollars a day, so gathering those funds in the school community was difficult if not impossible. Some rural Guatemalan ‘schools’ consisted of children sitting together under a tree writing with sticks in the dirt. There was certainly no money for plumbing, let alone to build the simple kitchen which the principal dreamed of -- a cost of about \$850.

As I talked with the principal that day, several thoughts were forming and joining in my head: 1) US dollars go a long way in Guatemala; 2) I’m a performer and have frequent chances to speak to large groups and tell them stories; and 3) I might be able to leverage more effective change by spending my own money on logistics and collecting donations at my concerts than I could by simply donating money. I didn't discuss my plans with the principal, because I didn't know whether I would be able to come through on them. However, I began to formulate a plan to raise money for the school.

My audiences were more than happy to contribute, and I raised the \$1,000 quite easily by telling the story at three small concerts. They understood that the need was great, and they trusted me to get the money to the school, and they believed me when I promised that every penny of their donation would go to the project rather than to my expenses.

As it turned out, however, a host of unfortunate circumstances and a few goofs on my part led to that project being delayed. My first trip back, the principal was unreachable by phone or E-mail; on another trip when I came to town, the principal was away. By the time I finally reconnected with him, another organization had visited and done a wonderful job of renovating the school—much more than we would have been able to do.

That was great news for the students, even though I felt a little silly. The kids had a much better and

safer facility, and in the meantime we had started several other projects which were successful and which continue to thrive. Because of that initial enthusiasm, we had formed a small non-profit, PEG Partners (Proyecto para las Escuelas Guatemaltecas, or Guatemalan School Project). We’ve raised over \$100,000, funded more than a dozen library and school projects, and had a significant impact on hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of children’s lives in Guatemala. We still don’t seek large corporate funders, preferring to empower small donors, and to emphasize the efficacy of small efforts. We still don’t remove anything from donations for administration unless the donor specifically requests that part of their donation help with plane tickets and printing.

There is a lesson, though, in the fact that all of this was launched by a project that never happened. All of our efforts are imperfect, but that doesn’t make the effort wasted. I’ve been to Guatemala more than 10 times since then, and on each trip I’ve seen the large results of these small efforts.

In 2007, feeling empowered by the effectiveness of our work in Guatemala and re-connected to my long-time passion for peace work, I applied for a Rotary World Peace Fellowship. The fellowship program, which began in 2001, is a generous scholarship that chooses 60 people each year from a large pool of applicants worldwide and sends roughly 10 to each of 6 universities around the world where Rotary Peace Centers have been established.

For the last decade that I was on the road full-time, I had been offering citizen activism workshops called “World Changing 101” at universities, churches, and conference centers in the U.S. and Europe in conjunction with my concert tours. When I heard about this fellowship, it felt like an opportunity to go deeper into this work that had been tugging on me all of these years. So I jumped at the chance, even though it was counterintuitive. After spending years as a starving musician, my music career was going beautifully.

In January of 2009 I flew to Brisbane, Australia to begin a master's degree in International Relations, Peace, and Conflict Resolution at the University of Queensland. Between my second and third semesters, I spent three months in rural India working with a Gandhian integrated development organization called Arthik Samata Mandal.

When I told people I was hanging up my microphone, I got a variety of responses. I got some supportive pats on the back, but I also got some pats on the head at least figuratively—looks and comments that said, implicitly if not explicitly, “That’s cute.” The common presumption is that peace work is naive, and that a solid dose of “the real world” will strip those who pursue it of their childish hope.

The way to judge the wisdom or naiveté of an idea, though, is to compare it to the historical record and see if it matches. If dedication to peace and justice are predicated on inexperience with the harsh realities of human depravity, and exposure to those realities turns people away from such thoughts, then Dr. King, Nelson Mandela and Gandhi must have been quite sheltered (just to name a few well-known examples). In reality, those three could only have been considered sheltered if one counts prisons as shelters. They knew (and Mandela still knows) more about the cruelty of humans than I ever care to, and yet they persisted in their hope and their work for peace.

Peace work is not predicated on ignorance of cruelty, greed, bigotry, etc. It is choosing a proactive response to them, rather than a weak resignation or an equally base reaction. As Howard Zinn wrote, “human history is a history not only of competition and cruelty but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness.” Peace work is anything but naive. It merely acknowledges that there are more productive and less productive ways to respond to bad situations, and argues for the former.

On the whole the verb *peacemaking* is more important to me than the noun *peace*. I am more concerned with what I’m called to do with my days than I am with the unachievable ideal I use as a compass star. My working definition of peacemaking is “approaching conflict in ways that are primarily constructive rather than destructive.” The word *approaching* should be emphasized—it is an irony of peace work that making peace requires stepping toward conflict rather than away from it.

I had the opportunity to spend a couple of hours in private conversation with civil rights hero and U.S. Congressman John Lewis in January of 2009. We talked about the fact that the civil rights movement stirred up quite a bit of conflict, but, as Rep. Lewis said to me “conflict is sometimes necessary on the way to justice.” Real peace, *positive peace*, as Johann Galtung called it, is not placidity. It is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice. Rep. Lewis told me that Dr. King used to put it this way, “Sometimes we have to turn the world upside down in order to set it right.”

King and Lewis understood, though, that even in turning it upside down, they had to act with maturity, compassion and integrity, so as not to add to the evil and dysfunction that they were trying to oppose.

Now that I’ve come home to North Carolina, I’m working on peace issues as the Program Associate for Peace at the NC Council of Churches. I’ve been given a great deal of room to define my job and to determine how I can be most effective in it. That’s good for a man who reached his early forties without ever having had a boss before.

It’s meaningful work, and sometimes hard. Many of the issues are grim. I’m working on everything from advocacy on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict to interfaith dialog and to proposed changes in some North Carolina school systems which threaten to effectively re-segregate public schools. These are often discouraging conversations to have. I’m sustained, though, by meeting and working with so many good people who are, yes... changing the world, and for the better.

# Major Religions on War and Peace

## WAR

### ● Buddhism

Intentional killing of any living being is condemned. Peace, and not war, is the ideal and should be sought by all who are truly religious.

### ● Christianity

The peacemakers, and not the warmakers, are blessed. Those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. War is the road to destruction, while peace is the road to happiness and prosperity.

### ● Hinduism

Injury to any creature is wrong. The wise man will seek always to avoid strife and will dwell in peace. The ideal for life here on earth is peace, not war. No one should seek to extend his power through war.

### ● Judaism

Only fools give way to war. The wise seek peace. The peace loving, the meek, shall inherit the earth. The Lord will judge between nations, and wars are of no avail.

### ● Islam

Peace is to be sought by all. If there is war, the religious man will seek to establish peace. The Lord has ordained peace, and no one can engage in war without endangering the stability of the world.

## PEACE

### ● Buddhism

True happiness comes to those who live at peace with their fellows. The aim of all should be to learn peace and live peacefully with all men.

### ● Christianity

Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He came to this earth to bring peace to all men. The peacemaker is blessed and shall be a child of God. We should seek the ways of peace and finally come to peace with God.

### ● Hinduism

If one would find happiness and security, he must seek for peace. The peaceful mind will become established in wisdom. God is God of peace and desires peace for all people.

### ● Judaism

Judaism looks forward to an ideal time when peace shall reign throughout the world. God commands peace and urges all His followers to work for peace. The peaceful life offers the greatest opportunity for happiness and prosperity.

### ● Islam

God will guide men to peace. If they will heed him, he will lead them from the darkness of war to the light of peace.

**Source:** *Topical Index, The Sacred Writings of the World's Great Religions*, edited by S.E. Frost, Jr, McGraw-Hill Paperback Edition, 1972.