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# Dialogue

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Volume 4 Issue 1 *Strength for the church's journey into wholeness in Christ* January 2002

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## The subject: *Peacemaking*

Now that the media has tattooed 911 on our corporate psyches and the president has launched us into a plan for perpetual warmaking, it is once more time to get serious about the alternative. When there is relative peace in our country, we Christians don't need to think much about the radical teaching of the Prince of Peace, who calls us to follow a way unlike that of the violent, loveless world. We often don't need to be converted or to convert others to these ways until the unforeseen war is upon us.

So let's talk about it. This issue is devoted to the subject of peacemaking.

That's peacemaking, not *pacifism*.

Suddenly, since last September, everyone is asking us if we are a pacifist church. In the broadest possible sense, I suppose we would be aligned with pacifists. But if I have my history right, pacifism is a chronically weak political movement that first got organized in the early 1800's. Christians were always involved in it, but it was not necessarily about Jesus. The pacifist movement has always been about the logic of not blowing people up and wrecking the world with war.

Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers," and I'm sure he is pleased with pacifists, too, as far as they go. But we are not just part of political movement. We are citizens of the kingdom of God empowered to deliver peace with God from the God of peace.

To many people, pacifism implies passive-ism. (Although Ghandi and ML King are hardly passive, even though they were premier pacifists). That's why I prefer to insist on the term "peacemaker." It is closer to what I think Jesus was trying to get across. And it implies the deliberate action he was trying to teach. Love, forgiveness, reconciliation are all very hard, very active, very downright bloody. Listen to what

the Bible says again.

*Seek peace and pursue it. (1 Peter)*  
*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans)*

Jesus says: "*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*" (John)

Jesus says: "*Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who persecute you.*" (Matthew)

Our understanding of how you live joyfully and redemptively in a violent neighborhood or as part of a violent country may still be in process. But I do



think I know that it isn't about merely being part of a political movement, and it sure isn't about being passive.

Peacemaking requires the Spirit of God and it requires a lot of action. So let's talk about it.

In this Issue, Mike helps us think through 9-11. Megan helps us think through alternatives to punitive thinking. Patrick brings up the sore subject of what causes a lack of peace in Philly. Pam digs deep to explore how we get the spiritual strength to make a difference. And MCC supplies us with basic training.

As always, the rest of the dialogue is up to you.

Ed. Rod White

## Like a Garden Without Water *(Isaiah 30)*

I love our gardens. I look forward to springtime when we can plant. I enjoy summer afternoons sitting and smelling the wildflowers. I even like to get those little bugger weeds out so they don't kill the vegetables. Unfortunately, I don't know much about gardening. I'm hoping to learn about plants and how they grow; hints and strategies. For instance, it would make sense that 'pole beans' grow up a 'pole'. We could have staked a pole for them to climb, but it didn't seem important. They became ground cover, producing not one bean, shooting around other plants, mixing in with weeds and growing out of control. We got it almost right. We were so close. Bean salad was one step away, but we blew it... big time.

This poor crop turnout was the result of a few things. Although I had good intentions, I was not faithful in either my knowledge nor my practice. The pole beans would have grown better were there a pole, AND if I watered with some regularity. The garden of violence in this country is also out of control. Although we may have started with good intentions, our lack of knowledge and faithfulness have led to an unproductive crop growing wildly out of control.

I read in the newspapers (though I do take corporate media with a grain of salt) the other day about three, maybe four kids getting arrested in Massachusetts for planning the "next Columbine". They planned to set an explosive in the school and then pick off students and teachers they didn't agree with as they fled from the building. It is horrible, was perhaps unthinkable before

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Columbine. There is, however, another place, other fertile soil they could have learned all of this. The US military has been bombing "military targets", most recently a prison where Taliban fighters were rebelling. When the soldiers fled from the burning building, Northern Alliance fighters picked them off... dare I say... Columbine style?

When I work with Summer Theatre Camp kids we have a "no fighting" rule. More than once during the summer we hear, "My momma said if he starts with me, I am supposed to fight back." You know what we say, right? "Not here you don't." We say that because the example given to us has been Jesus saying, "Turn the other cheek. Those without sin cast the first stone. You've heard 'An eye for an eye', but I will show you a better way!" Praise God there is a better way!

Should Osama bin Laden or whoever is behind the devastation of September 11<sup>th</sup>, go unpunished? Not at all. Were the events of 9.11 an act of war? Of course not. They were horrible acts – unthinkable – but a criminal act is not an excuse for war. The second most devastating act of terrorism on US soil was the Oklahoma City bombing by Timothy McVeigh. Did we wage war on all white male veterans?

An overwhelming majority of Americans (the media says 90%) approve of our "War on Terrorism". It isn't popular to suggest different ways of looking at things, or calling US foreign policy into question. So we continue, the richest country in the world, bombing the poorest country in the world. Yet people still ask for alternatives. It would do no good to tell me that my pole beans aren't growing correctly. I have observed the same. Rather, give me some suggestions about how to go about it differently. I echo the sentiment heard in some circles that bin Laden should be tried as a criminal in the World Court. It is, after all, a crime against humanity. Let us put our faith in justice rather than force.

Who can win a war on Terrorism? We had a war on drugs once, and my neighborhood is still feeling the devasta-

tion and fall out. Most drug abusers, as you know, are white males. In contrast, the "War on Drugs" put an unbalanced number of young black men, 90 some percent of the convictions, into prison. Was the Taliban the answer for government in Afghanistan? No way! Their treatment of women and outright violations of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights prove that they are unfit for rule. Let us not, however, forget that we (yes, that means **our** government) put the Taliban in charge of Afghanistan to deal with the Communists and the drugs. (Who can forget

***"God bless America" is incomplete unless accompanied by, "And God bless Afghanistan." While we're at it, "God bless Everyone!" For God's reign is not for only one part of this world and, as our friends in Mosaic Community's shirts read, "For God so loved...THE WORLD."***

Billy Joel's song, "We Didn't Start the Fire" with the perhaps prophetic stanza, "Begin, Reagan, Palestine, terror on the airline. Ayatollah's in Iran, Russians in Afghanistan"? George W. Bush was quoted as saying, "Every known terrorist camp must be shut down!" However, one such camp exists right here in the United

States: the US Army Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISC – Also called the School of the Americas or SOA). This school trains Latin American soldiers in terrorist-type tactics. Graduates are responsible for some of the worst human rights abuses in Latin America. My partner, Michelle, and I recently went south to Georgia to join a vigil in front of this school. We marched for three hours in front of the fence while singers read off names of people known to be killed by graduates of this school. We solemnly sang, "Presenté" after each name, standing in solidarity with victims of US sponsored, tax-dollar supported violence.

"What you sow, you shall also reap"

And so, we respond to violence with violence. How I wish Dr. King were still here with us. He once uttered these words, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Violence cannot drive out violence, only love can do that." And quoting Gandhi

said, "An eye for an eye will leave everyone blind." You see, in this day and age, it is even more imperative that people take up the mantle of love, clothe themselves in truth, light and be willing to speak truth to power; whether that power is the US government, the Taliban leadership, the church, or even Cardinal Bevilacqua. (Bevilacqua, Philly's archbishop, vocally supports the war.)

Recently, a bunch of people in our community and neighborhood gathered for a discussion about the biblical mandates to "submit to all authority". (There are tapes of the conversation, so call us if you want to hear it.) I won't go into too much detail except to say this one thing: Those Christian aid relief workers sure weren't submitting to the Taliban authority when they preached to the Afghans. When the church did submit to authority in history it resulted in the deaths of thousands of Jews during the Nazi occupation of Europe. We should all continue to look at these passages and ask for discernment before they are used as a blanket statement in support of human destruction.

It's no secret. Things aren't new. Though the events of the past few months changed lives, ripped families apart, unified us under a banner that has all but blinded us to the truth. What truth? The truth that "vengeance is mine" is only half the verse. The rest speaks, "Says the Lord." The truth that "What you plant, you shall also reap." Truth that

## Dialogue

**WHY?** This quarterly journal is a gift to everyone who wishes to be a part of the ongoing dialogue we share in Christ that forms us and deepens us as a real church. Whether you just arrived or have been with us from the beginning, we want you to be part of the conversation and an informed member of the team. We hope you will work with us to build a safe place to experience and share the love of Jesus Christ. Dialogue is a crucial part of that.

If you would like to respond to any of the articles printed, that would be great. We have never turned a response away, yet – but we reserve the right to do so.

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I believe these seeds of violence have been sown for a long time, and must be pulled out at the root, whatever dirt and bugs and ugliness come with it. We may be forced to come face to face with the violence in our own lives. It could have a profound effect on how we shop, worship, raise our kids, and watch TV. Next year I get another chance for pole beans, nature is graceful in her second chances. Hopefully, I can coax these beans up a pole, producing a nourishing crop. The work will not be any easier. Also in this next season, I pray we can end this cycle of war and violence. I pray for the rains of Truth, soil of Faith, fertilizer of Justice and the son of Love to wither the violence and grow in its place a peace plant whose branches are far reaching and leaves are wide spread. Thanks be to God.

Mike Brix

## Why Care About Restorative Justice?

I am sitting in a coffee shop in West Philadelphia, worried. My husband lost his wallet somewhere between last night and this morning. We moved to Philadelphia a week ago with no savings and in search of the perfect jobs. The \$20 in the wallet matters and the little bit of possibility left that about-to-be-cancelled-if-we-can't-find-it Visa card could mean the difference between having phone service installed or living off the cell phone.

Did I mention that I am sitting in a coffee shop? Yes, that does mean that I just threw down \$1.25 for a cup of coffee. Cell phone, you say? Oh, another \$50 per month to never miss a call. At least this way we can call the credit card company while we sip our joe.

Though Philly is the fraud capital of the United States, my thoughts concerning the AWOL wallet are mostly that the money was not fully ours. Having moved twice in the past four months, we have

certainly fallen behind in our tithing. If that wallet were snatched, the one who came across 'our' \$20 probably needed it more than we do. This is not to say that we do not need to be responsible with our money. However, we do need to be aware of the needs of those living in sustained poverty around us.

It reminds me of the opening scenes in *Les Miserables*. Jean Valjean, a just released convict, is seeking lodging in a small village. The villagers turn against him, warning one another that an ex-con is wandering in the town. As Valjean seeks a warm bed, he is told to try just one more door, the home of the bishop. Bishop Bienvenu takes him in, giving him the benefit of the doubt, a hearty meal and a bed with clean linens.

Valjean, tempted beyond consolation by the abundance of silver, swipes several plates from the cupboard and flees into the night. In the morning on hearing that the silver has been swiped, the bishop merely reflects, "I have for a long time wrongfully withheld this silver; it belonged to the poor. Who was this man? A poor man evidently." And when given the chance to have him arrested, he goes on to give him the silver candlesticks as well.

Bienvenu practices the principles of Restorative Justice with the same attitude that I hope to attain. He recognizes that justice must be based on intention and the knowledge that our lives as human beings are interconnected.

How did I arrive at this understanding? I was raised on pacifism, taught to turn the other cheek. I was required to love my enemies and to pray for those who persecuted me. This I did out of spite, with pride. Obviously if I were capable of overcoming the injustice against me enough to walk a second mile, I was a better person than the one who harmed me. Or so I believed. I failed to see that we were interconnected, and that my bitter pride could

further ignite indignation.

Vengeance goes beyond exacting revenge. There is vengeance in giving the shirt off your back, if your intent is to humiliate. When I swam in the pride of giving to the evildoer, I exacted my own intentional brand of revenge.

This is where I encounter Restorative Justice at a personal level. It informs my intention.

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Monseigneur Bienvenu does not intend to bask in the proud knowledge that he gave his cloak when only his coat was required. He recognizes his part in the encounter. The money that bought the silver belonged to the poor. He had not acted as a good steward. He had committed an injustice against the poor and he chose to acknowledge Jean Valjean as their emissary.

Due to this recognition of their interconnectedness, he intends to restore the balance of justice.

If crime causes harm, justice most restore that harm. To cause greater harm only furthers the cycle of injustice. This is the essence of Restorative Justice.

If justice is based on restoration as opposed to retribution, the cycles of violence, the repetition of history can be altered. Justice of a restorative nature recognizes that we, all humans, are interconnected.

This is where I encounter Restorative Justice at a global level. Economic strategies implemented in the global North have a direct effect on people in the global South. As individuals we are interconnected, so much more than nation-states, and international corporate entities.

These organizations do not give with the intent of never seeing their cloak again. Instead, programs like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) offer loans to developing countries in need of support. And then they expect to receive their money back with interest, regardless of the country's ability to repay their debt. By

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demanding that these nations pay a greater amount to the IMF than to their budgets for health and education, they humiliate those with whom they are interconnected.

This is where I encounter Restorative Justice at a domestic level. My desire to see suffering cease in the global South can only come through teaching alternatives in the global North. Presently U.S. corporate and government bodies implement strategies in developing countries that will ultimately devastate and humiliate the citizens of their targets. The individuals of Iraq do not deserve the sanctions now placed on them because of Saddam Hussein, a leader they have not chosen. These sanctions cause the starvation and deprivation of millions of Iraqis. Having learned in the aftermath of September 11 that we cannot bear the devastation of 5,000, why do we insist that others endure such suffering?

Everyday throughout the world due to global and domestic policies, 35,615 children die of starvation a number too staggering to broadcast, a number so routine its monotonous broadcast would cause boredom. We, the consumers of the media, intentionally overlook our interconnectedness to the humanity out there by not seeking to hear the news from out there.

As we seek justice in these coming months and years, we must keep the principles of restorative justice at hand. While we recognize that a horrible crime has been committed, and recompense is due, we must acknowledge that our nation has committed horrible crimes throughout the world, and begin to reconcile our offenses. If we say that the actions of these terrorists were unmerited, then we must also admit that our counteractions are unwarranted as they destroy the lives and lands of innocent men and women. We must teach that justice is the restoration of harm, or we will perpetuate the unending cycle of injustice.

*Megan Scott*

## Abu-Jamal and Faulkner: Race and Peace in Philadelphia.

**F**orty-eight years ago the U.S. Supreme Court decided Brown vs. Board of Education, and thirty-eight years ago Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, yet we still live in one of the most segregated Cities in the United States. Nothing symbolizes the chasm that exists between racial groups more than the mere mentioning of the name Mumia Abu-Jamal. Ask most white people and their response will likely be that Mumia received a fair trial and should be punished. Most people of color on the other hand feel that Mumia was railroaded through a racist criminal justice system, and that he epitomizes what happens to hundreds of thousands of young men of color every year. In the midst of this you have people who do not know what to think.

Admittedly, the criminal justice system is racist. Let's face it, we live in a society whose history wove racism into the fabric of our lives from the very beginning. Our Constitution was founded on the principles of the Declaration of Independence which boldly proclaimed that "All Men are Created Equal" — that is unless you were a black slave. If you were a slave, then you only counted as three-fifths of a person, and you certainly weren't free. Well, the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments (outlawing slavery, guaranteeing the equal protection of laws, and giving African-Americans the right to vote) were intended to remedy the mistakes of our past. However, systems of racism still live on. Racism permeates our society and can be seen in small glimpses every day. One of those glimpses, perhaps not a small one, is the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. In this article I want to present to you an overview of what happened on December 9, 1981, what happened in the trial and in Mumia's subsequent appeals. What I am writing is my best effort to wrestle the truth from the rhetoric of both the "Mumia Camp" and the "Faulkner

Camp." Both sides suffer from a sort of myopia — one that allows them both to proclaim that they are seeking justice while the other is seeking injustice. It is this myopia that must ultimately be cured if there is any hope of actual justice. Here's what I know:

Mumia Abu-Jamal (formerly Wesley Cook) began his journalism career in the mid 60's with the Black Panther Party. At the age of 15 he was Minister of Information for the Philadelphia chapter. After the Panthers fell apart in the early-70s Mumia turned to broadcasting, and by age 25, he was one of the top names in local radio, interviewing such luminaries as Jesse Jackson and the Pointer Sisters and winning a Peabody Award for his coverage of the Pope's visit. In March of 1981, Abu-Jamal was fired from his part-time job as a reporter for Philadelphia's NPR (National Public Radio) affiliate station, WUHY-FM, (now WHY) in Philadelphia. (There is a whole story behind Mumia's firing too. It is connected to his relationship with the MOVE group, and its leader John Africa, but that's another article). After his termination from radio Abu-Jamal got a job as a cab driver. This is why he was on the corner of 13th and Locust Streets on December 9, 1981.

At 3:55 AM on December 9, 1981 Daniel Faulkner, a twenty-five year old police officer observed a light blue Volkswagen driving down 13<sup>th</sup> Street (a one way street) the wrong way and then turning east onto Locust Street. Officer Faulkner pulled the Volkswagen over and, according to police radios tapes, prior to leaving his car, Faulkner radioed for a police wagon to back him up. Officer Faulkner exited his vehicle and approached the driver's side of the Volkswagen, which was being driven by Mr. William Cook (Abu-Jamal's brother). Officer Faulkner asked Mr. Cook to exit his car. Witnesses at Abu-Jamal's trial stated that they saw Mr. Cook punch Officer Faulkner in the face. The officer responded by striking Cook, apparently with his flashlight, and then turned Cook towards the car.

Coincidentally, sitting in a taxicab across the street and watching the events as they unfolded, was Mumia Abu Jamal. According to witnesses, Abu-Jamal exited his taxi and ran across the street toward the Officer and his brother, William Cook. While Officer Faulkner was distracted by Mr. Cook, with his back turned to Abu-Jamal, Abu-

Jamal was seen raising his arm and then firing one shot that hit Officer Faulkner's back. Officer Faulkner was able to draw his gun and fire one return shot at his assailant. This bullet was later extracted from Abu-Jamal's upper abdomen. Having fired this shot, Officer Faulkner fell to the sidewalk. Four witnesses then testified at trial that they saw Abu-Jamal stand over Faulkner and begin to fire at the officer's upper body, ultimately killing him with a shot to the head.

The aforementioned is what the testimony at trial produced, and is what led to Abu-Jamal's conviction and death sentence. However, there is another version of events as well. Abu-Jamal and his brother assert that there was a third person present at the time. Abu-Jamal agrees that he was there and that he attempted to intervene on behalf of his brother because he felt that Faulkner was attacking him. The witnesses who testified at trial stated that it is possible that someone else had been there and fled. They were unsure what they saw because it was nighttime. Recently, an individual, Arnold Beverly, stated that he was that person and that he was the one who killed Officer Faulkner on behalf of the Philadelphia Mob.

There were problems and disagreements at the trial as well. Without getting into the minutiae of the legal processes that went awry it is safe to say that the trial was defective in two aspects. First, the jury selection process was legally suspect. Ordinarily, counsel for each side, with each side having a fixed number of strikes to remove an individual from the jury pool, conducts the questioning of jurors. However, in this instance, half way through the process Judge Sabo took over the responsibilities himself because he believed that Abu-Jamal, particularly his appearance, was intimidating the potential jurors. While this is within the discretion of the judge, it is only done in extremely rare cases and usually at the request of both parties, not on the judge's own motion.

Second, at the end of the trial, when Judge Sabo was instructing the jury, his directions were very confusing. In criminal cases a defendant must be convicted of the crime charged by a unanimous jury and beyond a reasonable doubt. However, when it comes to sentencing, each individual juror can take mitigating and aggravating circumstances into account. Judge Sabo's instructions did not present this distinction clearly. As a result, there is a real possibility that the jury felt as if it had to come to a unanimous decision with regard to sentencing. This is important be-

cause it directly affects whether the death penalty is imposed.

Many would say that there were other problems with the trial as well; for example: Abu-Jamal's counsel was ineffective, the make up of the jury was racially imbalanced, and the Judge was a former police officer and a member of the Fraternal Order of Police. Even so, no appeal has been effective. Since Abu-Jamal's conviction in 1982, eleven different judges, other than Judge Sabo, have reviewed his claims of innocence, police coercion and court wrongdoing. None of these judges has found any merit to Abu-Jamal's claims.

***Most of you are aware that there is international support for Abu-Jamal. He has become the poster child for the anti-death penalty movement. I read recently that there is a street in Paris named after him, and that he is an honorary citizen of France. On any given week there is bound to be a "Free Mumia" rally at some place in the city.***

The United States Supreme Court declined to hear his case for the second time in 1999.

Abu-Jamal has now been in the Federal Habeas Corpus appeal process for over two years. It is this proceeding that allowed Federal Judge Yohn, in December 2001, to overturn Abu-Jamal's sentencing because of the irregularities that I mentioned above. Both sides have appealed this decision, with Abu-Jamal saying that he should get a new trial, and with the government saying that the sentencing instructions were fair and unambiguous. We shall see what happens.

Again, this is what I know about the case. Most of you are aware that there is international support for Abu-Jamal. He has become the poster child for the anti-death penalty movement. I read recently that there is a street in Paris

named after him, and that he is an honorary citizen of France. On any given week there is bound to be a "Free Mumia" rally at some place in the city. Lest we think the politics only comes from the "Mumia Camp," there have also been countless counter-demonstrations, and the rhetoric that comes from the District Attorney's office is enough to make any political science professor proud.

My job was to inform you of what happened and what is happening. Undoubtedly many of you have more information than I do, so let's share it with one another. Dialoguing about issues like this one may be charged, but they are necessary in order to keep the issues of race and peace in front of us. This city is divided along many lines and the "Mumia divide" is a representation of the larger issues of racism, police misconduct, crime and poverty that haunt us. I am not sure what the resolution to the "Mumia divide" is, or even if there is one. But what I do know is that how we choose to respond to this issue is crucial. Responding in love is the only hope. What would the response be if Mumia had apologized to Maureen Faulkner, even if he didn't do it, or if Maureen Faulkner would have told Mumia that she forgives him even if she "knew" he was guilty. Galatians 6:7 says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." We as a society and as a city, have sown slavery, greed, power, and corruption. We therefore reap racism, crime, poverty, and injustice. Let's begin to break this cycle by sowing love, justice, community, and anti-racism.

Helpful resources for finding our more about what both sides are saying:

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

[www.danielfaulkner.com](http://www.danielfaulkner.com)

Or go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) (or your favorite search engine) and type in Mumia Abu Jamal or Daniel Faulkner.

*Patrick Cicero*

**L**ast week, Bob and I spent eight

## The Way of Peace

days in the magical state of New Mexico. In Abiqui we hiked the red mountains that Georgia O'Keefe painted, drove the 100 mile enchanted circle through the ski mountains around Taos, and were wrapped in steamy herbal towels and received massages at a Japanese spa in the hills surrounding Santa Fe. It was unquestionably one of my more relaxing weeks.

We also spent three significant days in Albuquerque at the Center for Action and Contemplation (CAC). We studied the connection between inner peace and world peace, the ever-so-necessary centeredness in Christ that we need in order to be social activists who will make a real difference in this world. Both the meditative and motivational writings of Gandhi, Thomas Merton and Dr. Martin Luther King made sense sandwiched in the middle of such a peaceful week.

But then on our last day we arrived at the airport to go home. We found ourselves waiting in long lines to go through the metal detectors. Tension was high as just the day before the airport had adopted an even stricter policy about checking passengers and their luggage. We were now subject to being investigated at numerous points throughout the airport. In addition, all baggage that we checked had to go through an even more intensive search process--all in the name of our War Against Terrorism.

Being pregnant I did not want to go through the metal detector, so after causing a small scene, an army man in fatigues escorted me to the manager who proceeded to frisk me. At the same time, our bags started piling up at the end of the conveyor belt. Despite Bob's best effort to dive and save them as they began to fall off of the short ramp at the end, they tumbled on top of each other, and our favored souvenir crumbled.

Before I even processed fully what had happened I pounced. I pounced on the army man demanding an explanation for the conveyor belt man's irresponsibility. I pounced on the manager demanding restitution. And in response to my ferociousness, they pounced back, blaming me for this and that and the other. I finally stomped away in the middle of the manager yelling something at me, leaving behind in my tracks even more tension, anger and violence.

Now I know what you are probably thinking. The conveyor belt man did not make me violent because circumstances in our lives never "cause" us to become angry. It was, and is, a statement about me - my internal stirrings. I know that. I also know the rules for conflict resolution and good listening skills and that I should forgive and all of that stuff. And yet in that moment of feeling like I was grossly wronged, none of my knowledge mattered. My desire to crush others in order to protect myself runs deep. It is compulsive, and certainly not coming from rational thought.

I used to think this ability to stand up for myself and not be taken advantage of was a real strength of mine. It meant I had a strong sense of justice, which I thought was at the heart of God. I believed that my anger and protests against social injustices were justified; I had been gifted with a strong sense of what is wrong with this world. Recently, though, the more I listen to the Taliban, or conservative right-wing folks, or the USA government, I hear

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the same God-ordained sense of justice backing up their perspectives as I do from those of us on the left. It does not make sense, then, why there is so much global unrest, violence and war if everyone is supposedly acting in the name of justice.

Here's my revelation. I am starting to hear, really hear for the first time, other parts of God's heart: the peace, and the love your enemies stuff, the words of God that are so radical and counter-intuitive that most of us do not take them seriously. We love the justice part. In fact, it makes sense to most people on all sides of an issue. And, if you are like me, it often feeds your anger, cynicism, and analytical

mind. Then we pray that peace will follow once there is justice. After all, are we not killing Iraqi and Afghan women and children in the name of justice so that peace will one day ensue? And in the airport, I would have gladly loved the army man, manager and conveyor belt man once justice was done (which in my mind was them getting me a new souvenir.)

However, I am learning that God has a different perspective on the way of peace. Psalm 85:10 says, "Mercy and truth have met together; Justice and peace have kissed each other." There is an integral relationship between justice and peace that I have had backwards. Let me explain. The Hebrew definition of shalom (peace) is having right relationships with God, other people and the earth. The Mennonite Central Committee states it this way:

*The Biblical vision of justice and of peace is based on the health and wholeness of the community, so that administering justice involves restoring community and repairing relationships that have been broken. Thought of in this way, peace becomes the method and justice the goal. Our slogan then might be something like "Justice depends on peace."*

So, peace must come first. But here is the second part of it: we cannot have world peace without individuals who have inner peace. My violent contribution to the War Against Terrorism (in the airport) is a perfect example of that. This means that I -- a social-justice-seeking liberal democrat -- have been as much a part of the problem as I have been the solution! When my protests and fight for justice include violence--even just in my heart--and lack love for my enemies then I am not working for world peace.

Well, this is not an easy revelation to be having. Nevertheless, every once in awhile, I get a glimpse of what I think the way of peace in the Kingdom of God may look like--action flowing out of contemplation; nonviolent protests arising from a love for our enemies; justice and peace kissing. And it sucks me in. So, as a person realizing the crucial need for inner peace, here are some of my most recent longings, which I believe may somehow be keys to a peaceful world.

I wish that my personal agenda did not always get in the way; that I was able to fully participate in an Agenda beyond my own; that my center was outside of myself and my issues. Can you imagine the freedom in that?

I want out of the trap of liberal self-righteousness; to not be on the social-justice bandwagon but instead to radically love my enemies, especially those with whom I disagree.

I long to be free from the paralysis of my mind in order to act; to not be so caught up in analyzing and judging and making sure that I am "right" so that I am able to take radical risks.

I want to give up control and finally be able to rest in, to collapse into, to awaken to God and God's Agenda which is already taking place in this world.

Perhaps Proverbs 3:5-8 will become my mantra. It says to trust in God with all of your heart and not rely on your own understanding. Then in verse 8 it concludes that this will be a healing for your flesh and a refreshment for your soul. Like the mystics say, only when we allow our minds to sink down into our hearts can we then give up control and choose to participate in God's Agenda. This brings healing and freedom to ourselves which in turn brings healing, peace and ultimately justice to the world.

In conclusion, let me reiterate a few things. First, if we want social justice, then we must work for peace. And second, if we want a peaceful world, we must first have inner peace. Of course, it is a both/and. We need both contemplation and action, both inner peace and the guts to fight for social justice. But the way of peace is one that flows out to the world from within, ensuring that our actions are filled with love and healing for a violent world.

*Pam Rowen Herzog*

### Jesus and the Use of Violence

#### The Biblical Basis

Since the time of Christ many Chris-

## *From:* Basic Peace Lesson

tians examining the Bible have concluded that Jesus offers a dramatic alternative to the violence so common in all human societies. The life and teachings of Jesus create a new community in which love reigns supreme. This new community today forms the bride of Christ, the church.

Jesus' life repeatedly shows expressions of love instead of violence. When religious leaders demanded the execution of a prostitute (John 8:8), Jesus agrees—providing the first stone is cast by one without sin. No one in the angry crowd qualified!

Jesus taught most frequently through stories. The story of the good Samaritan (Luke 10) dramatically illustrates the point that those who seek to follow God reach across the divides separating people. The despised Samaritan ministered healing to one he might have considered an enemy.

Only rarely did Jesus resort to point-by-point lists in his teaching. But those few times he did, the words are very clear. He teaches with these words: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9). Jesus further develops this idea with the words, "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also" (Luke 6:28 & 29).

Even at the most crucial time of his life, Jesus did not resort to violence. As soldiers approached Jesus to arrest him before his crucifixion, he refused to fight. Jesus instructs a violence-prone disciple, "Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Matt. 26:52)..

Many Christians remain convinced that the way of Jesus refuses violence. It embraces love and acceptance. It seeks good for others above the good for oneself. It cannot bring itself to harm or kill another person, also created in the image of God.

### Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Positions

Early Christians put these teachings of Jesus into immediate action.

They did not participate in military activity and other forms of violence. This changed three hundred years after Christ's death when the Roman Empire declared Christianity to be the official religion. For the next 1200 years, many Christians joined their non-Christian neighbors in armed conflict. Some of this armed conflict, such as the Crusades, was done specifically as a religious exercise.

During the Protestant Reformation in Europe 500 years ago, some of the reformers re-discovered the ancient belief that Jesus brought a message of peace to humankind. These reformers refused military service. They refused to participate in acts of violence. This belief, along with several other beliefs, could not be tolerated by government authorities and leaders of the dominant churches. The refusal to act violently brought violence on many individuals. In the sixteen and seventeenth centuries, many peace-loving Christians were killed for their faith. This persecution provided one of the major motivations for some of these peace-loving Christians to move from Europe to North America. Around the world today these people are known as the Mennonites, the Brethren in Christ and the Amish.

Large segments of these churches have refused to participate in military activity over the last five centuries. The belief that the ancient understanding of the gospel — that it is a gospel of peace — persisted throughout the wars in North America. During World War II, for example, thousands of young men from Mennonite and BIC churches refused induction into the armed forces of the United States. These men were assigned to civilian tasks which bettered the lives of others. They worked in mental hospitals, in soil conservation and in agricultural research.

Nearly all Mennonite and Brethren in Christ denominations today officially endorse the traditional peace position of the early church of the apostles. They, along with the church of the Brethren and the Quakers, are sometimes called the historic peace churches.

*Kenneth Sensenig*  
MCC East Coast  
Assistant Director

## Goal Check

**T**his is a regular feature of this publication. We want everyone to have some facts so we can have authentic dialogue! We adopted these goals in October of 2001 and January of 2002. Every quarter we evaluate our progress toward meeting them.

### Network Goals

- **Deepen our skills for growing our cell network and encouraging the process of coming to faith in Jesus Christ.**

*The recent Cell Leaders retreat focused on this.*

- **Assign Circle Venture to help us share our resources.**

*Our new CV Director, Pam Rowen-Herzog, is ready to dig into this goal.*

- **Create more mission teams to lead us in particular aspects of ministry.**

*We have activity on these teams forming right now: an Art Show Team, The Shalom House Team, The Venue Team, The Frederick Douglass School Adoption Team. The Computers Partners Team is re-forming.*

- **Develop our capabilities for helping new and old believers to mature in Christ.**

*No significant activity.*

- **Perfect the means we use to grow love and connect our mission as a network of cells and congregations.**

*The pastors are scheduled to begin sharing duties in both locations at the PM.*

- **Increase the activity of our Damascus Road Team in overseeing our structures and training further people.**

*No significant activity.*

- **Better organize our people to extend the kingdom by reimagining the communication of our vision for a network of cells and congregations lead by a team of Cell Leader Coordinators and**

### **Pastors.**

*The recent retreat deepened our Cell Leaders' ability to pastor. We are in the process of publishing our completed map for 2002. We have refined the "circlelist."*

- **Hold quarterly training times based on an updated version of our "Public Meeting Plan."**

*We have reassigned Devin Greenwood as PM Facilitator. He is planning on the next quarterly meeting and improving our web sharing capabilities.*

### Congregational Goals

#### Center City

- **Organize a series of events that get us out of our "box."**

*Various protests help us get out of our box last quarter, as well as a Night of Celebration in Kensington.*

- **See a visible increase in our diversity through the work of our Damascus Road Team and our united attempts to help everyone bridge barriers.**

*The team did a great job during New Humanity Month. The entire set of observances helped meet this goal.*

- **Be ready to move or expand our location by February, when our present lease ends.**

*We have a deal working on 1212 Chestnut, which is still in process. As it turns out we had a clause in our lease that automatically renewed our lease for 2002-3, so we don't have to move in February and can spend more time.*

- **Initiate experiments in corporate prayer, and experience the work of gifted intercessors organized for regular prayer.**

*Patrick Cicero has begun organizing us for Lent prayer times.*

- **Raise \$120,000 for our Common Fund from October 2001 to September 2002.**

*In October-December we received \$29,490. Right on target.*

- **Show compassion in Center City in new, practical ways under the**

### **leadership of Circle Venture and Circle Counseling.**

*The Saturday program at Frederick Douglass worked out very well.*

- **Improve the tools we use to work together and improve the means we use to tell people about how they can share their time, money and gifts.**

*Our emphasis on starting mission teams resulted in a lot of movement. We changed the way we did our monthly mailings..*

### Northwest

- **Cultivate relationships with the surrounding community – including the people, schools, businesses, churches and community organizations.**

*The Harvest Celebration was a successful step in this direction. The Computer Partners work also made contacts.*

- **Continue to build a sense of community among the current membership.**

*The process of having the worship time scheduled for Sunday morning gave a final sense of togetherness.*

- **Expand the number of covenant members.**

*No new members at the October Love Feast.*

- **Continue to improve the quality of the building. This would include having at least one kitchen operational.**

*No significant progress but significant planning.*

- **Build an effective ministry to youth and young adult.**

*A Youth Mission Team is in the works. We are getting ready to host the CCDA Youth Convention this summer.*

- **Increase the level of security during the public meeting.**

*No significant action.*

- **Continue to develop an effective worship time that is rich and dynamic and that allows us to experience God in a deep and meaningful manner.**

*Slowly but surely pieces have been added to the PM puzzle.*