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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EMO honors The Rev. Dr. William Apel with religious education award

The Rev. Dr. William Apel will receive the Louise Hunderuup Religious Education Award on May 6, 2008, at Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's (EMO's) Annual Community Awards and Celebration Dinner. Named for the former director of Christian Education for the Greater Portland Council of Churches, the Louise Hunderuup Award is being presented to Apel in recognition of his outstanding commitment to the development of religious sensitivity and enquiry through education, interfaith dialogue and spiritual renewal.

Apel, professor of religion at Linfield College since 1975, has devoted his life to pursuing peace, social justice and interfaith understanding. He organized two major international peace conferences at Linfield and was the driving force behind the founding of the Oregon Nobel Laureate Symposium at Linfield College. The symposium is one of only five such symposia in the world, sanctioned by The Nobel Foundation. As symposium manager, he directed six Nobel Laureate Symposia, including over a dozen Nobel Prize winners.

Apel's passion for social justice extends beyond Linfield and Oregon. He advocated nationally for women in ministry and for the full inclusion of gay and lesbian Christians in the American Baptist Churches, USA. He was interviewed for the PBS program, "The Lehrer NewsHour" on issues such as "Gays and God" and "War in Iraq." He led a Baptist peace delegation to the former Soviet Union and traveled to Israel with Catholic, Protestant and Jewish university chaplains to study social conflict in Israel. He organized the "Children of Abraham" Conference following Sept. 11, 2001, and he is associated in spiritual friendship with the Trappist monks of Oregon where he lived the monastic life in January 2004.

Teaching in the college classroom is Apel's main joy. "Just give me some students and room," he has said, "and that is all I have ever needed to complete my life's calling and true joy." In addition to his teaching duties, he also spent 20 years as chaplain at Linfield. He mentored scores of college students in discerning their call to Christian ministry and led Linfield students in spiritual pilgrimages to Ireland and Italy. He supported and participated in the opening of Africa University in Zimbabwe.

Apel hold a B.A. with honors from Muskingum College, a M.Div. from Garrett Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. in the history and literature of religions from Northwestern University. He is ordained in the United Methodist Church and that ordination is recognized by the American Baptist Church, USA. He is a member of the International Thomas Merton Society and the International Bonhoeffer Society.

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MEMBER DENOMINATIONS

African Methodist Episcopal Church ■ African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church ■ American Baptist Churches ■ Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Christian Methodist Episcopal Church ■ Church of the Brethren
Community of Christ ■ Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon ■ Episcopal Diocese of Oregon ■ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ■ Greek Orthodox Church ■ Presbyterian Church (USA)
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) ■ Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland ■ United Church of Christ ■ United Methodist Church ■ Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

Apel was named a 2007-08 Shannon Fellow by the International Thomas Merton Society. The society is dedicated to the study of issues in religion, culture and community. The Shannon Fellowships are awarded to scholars in various parts of the world who do primary research on the life and writings of the American writer and monk, Thomas Merton. As a Shannon Fellow, Dr. Apel works at the Merton archives at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Ky. His research involves correspondence to and by Merton regarding social justice, which Apel plans to include in an upcoming book, "Seeds of Hope: The Social Justice Letters of Thomas Merton." That book will be a sequel to "Signs of Peace: The Interfaith Letters of Thomas Merton" (Orbis Press 2006).

The EMO Annual Community Awards & Celebration Dinner will be held at The Governor Hotel, 614 SW Eleventh Ave., Portland. A reception and silent auction to benefit EMO's ministries will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m. and the dinner and award presentations will begin at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$60 per person and table sponsorships are available for \$600. For more information, call Carla Starrett-Bigg at (503) 221-1054 or csbigg@emoregon.org.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is a statewide association of Christian denominations—including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox bodies—congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians through community ministry programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, environmental ministry and public policy advocacy.