

Peace Resource Guide

Christian perspectives: How to overcome barriers to peace

"We are different so that we can know our need of one another, for no one is ultimately self-sufficient. A completely self-sufficient person would be sub-human." These words, spoken by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, articulate the reality of our world.

than doubled between 1990 to 2000, from 318,241 to 735,090. Increased mobility is creating plurality in our state, the nation and the world.

With these changes, come challenges. Hate crimes have threatened the lives and security of many who live in Oregon. Crosses were burned at a Portland park within the last few years. Rocks marked with swastikas were thrown at Temple Beth Israel last October. And, since September 11, Arab Americans and Muslims have been targeted for crimes of hate. In some Oregon mosques, women were asked to stop wearing their scarves for fear that violence might be committed against them.

It is important for Christians to make meaningful connections with people from diverse cultures and religions—those Christ calls "our neighbors." In a

series of interviews with Christian leaders in Oregon, this topic of interfaith and intercultural dialogue was explored. As much as the leaders agree that a meaningful dialogue between diverse cultural religious groups is necessary, certain barriers work against our best efforts towards living in peace.

Lack of knowledge

"A lack of knowledge, of information, misunderstanding, miscommunication and misperception," creates real barriers to interfaith dialogue, states Johncy Itty, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon. "This is all fueled by a lack of intentionality in learning about other cultures, traditions and perspectives. A lot of the barriers would not



be barriers if we had direct contact with diverse peoples in a regular way."

Itty is passionate about the work of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. Before moving to Oregon this summer to take the role as Bishop, he served as Canon Residentiary at the Episcopal Cathedral in Garden City, N.Y., as a Social Justice Officer for the Episcopal Church and as a Human Rights Officer for the Anglican Communion Office

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Walking both sides in a multicultural world

Psalms 133:1 reads, "*How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity.*" In reality, it is often not that way. What does it mean to live in unity? Living within a particular religious or cultural group in the midst of a larger, multicultural society is increasingly the challenge faced by many Oregonians. And, it is a difficult one. Is it possible to maintain a sense of your own cultural and religious heritage and still actively participate—even "fit in"—to the culture beyond your own?

Ramona Soto Rank is a member of the Klamath Tribe

in southern Oregon. She is also a Lutheran pastor at Augustana Lutheran Church in northeast Portland. She finds that maintaining one's cultural identity in a multicultural society is a fight. "Many people find it odd that you can be both Native American and Christian. Twenty-five years ago, you had to give up being Native American in order to be a Christian." It was only in 1978 that the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was signed, making it possible for Native American people to worship openly in their

traditional manner.

Soto Rank's mother was just five when she was taken from her family to a religious boarding school miles away from her home. The children were not allowed to speak their native language or practice their native religion. Still, her mother found some value in her education there. Although she met some cruel people at the school, there were also kind ones. Her mother taught Soto Rank to "never forget who you are and the value of who you are." But, she also emphasized the need to be educated in the

non-Indian way. "That way," she pointed out, "you've got both of the cultures to draw from." Soto Rank adds, "Times are changing. Now the church is better equipped to allow the worshipping community to be both." Still, at times, the larger culture does not understand. "Being a Native American," Soto Rank states, "means that you must walk on both sides."

Daniel Isaak is a Rabbi at Neveh Shalom congregation in Portland. With parents who were refugees from Nazi Germany, he grew up with a

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Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

- Matthew 5:9

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Historic peace churches

"We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatever; this is our testimony to the whole world."

So begins the Quaker Declaration of Pacifism, quoted to Charles II in 1660. These firmly held convictions, holding as central Jesus' call to love our enemies and not resort to the sword, convey the beliefs held by the historic peace churches. The Mennonites, Church of the Brethren and the Religious Society of Friends refuse to engage in warfare or to support theological definitions of a *just war*. This historical, non-violent stance has led to the distinction that continues to shape their theology even today.

All three movements were birthed out of the Protestant Reformation in Europe. While their following is fairly small, the impact of these determined denominations has reached far beyond their relatively small numbers. The term *historic peace churches* came about as the result of a meeting held by the three communities in 1935 in Newton, Kan., and resulted in a series of peace conferences. Although each church has

its distinct view of Jesus' call to live out the gospel in the world, they are united in their commitment to peace.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

- Isaiah 2:4

The Mennonites believe in trusting God, who is sovereign, and not the "gods of war and military technology." (source: www.goshen.edu) They follow Christ's way of peace by doing justice and reconciliation work and historically have practiced non-resistance. The Church of the Brethren holds to principles of non-violence, and they have no other creed than the New Testament. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) has historically promoted

social change—especially in their early stance against slavery—and has a tradition of opposing war, following the beliefs of the early Christian movement that was strongly pacifist.

Since World War II, the historic peace churches have been involved in efforts directed towards peace education, dialogue and theology. Most recently, the churches worked for a peaceful resolution to the conflict with Iraq before the war began, and each is currently involved in humanitarian relief for the Iraqi people in the aftermath of war.

Taken altogether, these denominations include a range of theological beliefs—from liberal to conservative—yet, they are connected by their deep Christian commitment to peacemaking. Their efforts to prevent and alleviate human suffering have made a profound difference for many in war-torn areas throughout the world.

Sources: Lindner, Eileen W., ed. *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*. New York: Abingdon Press, 2002; www.brethren.org; www.wfn.org; www.afsc.org; www.mcc.org; www.reliefweb.int; www.peacemakers.ca; www.longeneckermennonite.org; and www.peacetheology.org.

About the *Peace Resource Guide*

A tool for peacework and interfaith dialogue

The *Peace Resource Guide* is meant to give people in our state who are working for peace and interfaith dialogue practical information to help them network and educate others about what is happening around us as we work together for peace. The guide also celebrates peacemakers in our state, who share their perspectives on the topic.

The guide was created in collaboration between EMO and Jan Elfers, a graduate student at Marylhurst University, who is working on her master's degree in Applied Theology. She has completed a practicum at EMO, focusing on peacework and interfaith dialogue in the state of Oregon. As part of her practicum, Elfers researched and contributed the writing for the *Peace Resource Guide*.

Multicultural world

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strong sense of what it means to be a minority. Isaak believes fighting stereotypes is an important component in building bridges between diverse groups. He has been involved in joint efforts with Christian and Muslim organizations for much of his career.

In the aftermath of September 11, Isaak — along with Rabbi Daniel Wolfe and Wajdi Said, the executive director of the Muslim Educational Trust—formed an interfaith group seeking to create dialogue between the Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities. For about the last two years, more than 20 people have been meeting for dinner, conversation and trust building. They are seriously involved in working together on a number of projects. Isaak comments, "People simply do not have experience with those who are different than they are. So, when disaster happens, we tend to paint all people of an ethnicity with the same stripe." He feels that a

top agenda item should be that "we know others and that others know us."

Wajdi Said, a Muslim from Yemen, also has been active in the community working to build connections. His work at the Muslim

Educational Trust in Tigard involves education about Islam—not only within the Muslim community, but also in the non-Muslim community. He says, "For the Muslim, constructive dialogue is not only permitted, it is commendable. This comes from a deep conviction that human beings are one family, and that Allah cares for all people." Said believes that increased communication with each other is necessary for a better understanding and helps to remove stereotypes, hatred and violence.

Arturo Fernandez is interim pastor of La Casa Metodista, a Hispanic ministry in Woodburn. His parents were born in Mexico, and they passed down to him a strong sense of pride in their Hispanic heritage. Along with this pride came a security in his personal identity within the context of the predominant culture. Fernandez believes that a person must be strongly anchored in his or her own cultural values, "not in a romanticized way, but rather, 'This is where I come from, and who and what I am is affected by that.'" From this foundation, he continues, "a person can try to work within a new reality and a new context in which you are living." He adds that having an understanding of one's personal roots makes it possible to bring some of the past into the present, which enables us to gain a new understanding.

Fernandez has a ministry of reconciliation and peacemaking through serving as an advocate for the Hispanic community. Much of his ministry

is related to farm worker issues, but it also involves youth and children's programs, distribution of food and clothing, referring people to social services and immigration work.

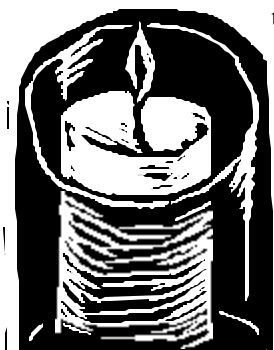
Hogen Bays is a Zen Buddhist co-abbot in the community of Clatskanie, Ore. He has been a practicing Buddhist for 35 years and has lived in the Portland area for 20 of those years. Seventeen people live in the converted schoolhouse—now a Buddhist monastery—on the outskirts of town. When the monastery was first established, it was not without controversy, with some community members not wanting the monastery in Clatskanie. To help in the transition, between 200 and 300 people who live in the area were invited to tour the facility and meet the monastery's residents. Bays lives his philosophy: "I see no enemies." As for the concept of religious tolerance, he says, "I just talk to people. Some like me, some don't. I just try to see people."

Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

In this spirit, on Aug. 8 and 9, the Great Vow Monastery held a 24-hour interfaith chant for peace. The Zen community's intent was to gather people from the Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, Christian and Muslim faiths—all united in their commitment to peace. They also hold regular classes on meditation and began a class on non-violent communication in September. Bays maintains, "We cannot create peace unless we know peace."

All five religious leaders are active outside of their own cultural and religious communities. All five live in the world of their particular culture or religious tradition and in the world beyond. And, all five have found meaningful ways of making connections, as well as finding common ground, between these worlds.



The cost of peacemaking

The phone rings each Tuesday evening in a northeast Portland home. Bruce Huntwork drops everything to answer it. On the other end of the line is Ann, his wife of 45 years, calling him from prison. They have 15 minutes to talk. Sometimes the couple misses their opportunity to say goodbye because the phone call just fades away ...

Ann Huntwork is 71 years old. She is serving six months in a minimum-security prison in Dublin, Calif. Her crime? Protesting at the School of the Americas (SOA) in Fort Benning, Ga. She was arrested for trespassing on the United States government property in November of last year. The military school was recently renamed the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISC) and is funded entirely by United States taxpayers. Protesters say the school trains Latin American soldiers in combat, counterinsurgency and psychological warfare. Its graduates, they maintain, are responsible for returning to their home countries and using the skills they learn at the school to commit human rights abuses against their own people.

Many of the people involved in protesting against the school are members of religious communities who feel compelled to speak out against the purported activities of the estimated 60,000 graduates of WHISC. In October 1999, the Disciples of Christ passed a "Sense of the Assembly Resolution" at their General Assembly meeting, calling for the elimination of all

funding and training at the school. And, on March 13, 2003, House Resolution #1258, sponsored by Representative James McGovern, was introduced in the U.S. Congress to close the institute. The resolution had 83 co-sponsors. It was referred to the Commission on Armed Forces on April 11, and is currently in sub-committee.

One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, but that it is a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Huntworks have been involved in peace work for all of their married life. Bruce is a physician and surgeon; Ann is a medical social worker. Together, they have spent over a decade in Iran, working in medical clinics in the north to bring medical aid to the Iranians. The Huntworks also helped Iraqi refugees who escaped to Iran during the war in the early 1990s. Most of their work has been done through the Mennonite Central Committee—an organization

concerned with peace and relief efforts. Bruce and Ann also helped establish the Metanoia Peace House in northeast Portland, are past-presidents of the organization and lived there for two years. They are members of the Westminster Presbyterian Church.

About 15 years ago, the Huntworks were introduced to the practices of the SOA by a pastor at their church. Since then, they have taken part in the work of the SOA Watch—an organization that keeps the public informed of the activities at the school. Every November, thousands of people gather in front of the institute for a four-day vigil. They mainly carry signs and make symbolic gestures. Some participants climb trees on the property and yell through megaphones into the center of the facility. "Last year," Bruce says, "70 people were arrested and imprisoned for protesting at Fort Benning." Ann was one of the 70.

Sometime in early October, Ann will be released from prison. When she returns home, she and Bruce will continue to work on their efforts for justice and peace and creating positive change in the world. And, this November, when the protesters gather once again in front of the School of the Americas, Bruce and Ann will be there.

Sources: www.osaw.org; <http://thomas.loc.gov>.
Footnote: The full text of the Disciples of Christ resolution is in the *Yearbook and Directory of Christian Church, Disciples of Christ Year 2000*, page 273, Sense of the Assembly Resolution #9913.

Christian perspectives

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in the United Nations. He has seen firsthand the benefit of different peoples working together on a common issue, irrespective of their religious traditions. Itty believes that human beings want to do good, and there is much that can be done if we harness that energy. "We must find common ways of working together with people who see things differently, because the space and light we share, we share in community."

A small world view

"A small world view," is another barrier we must work against, says Dr. Cecilia Ranger, SNJM, and professor at Marylhurst University. "If I want to listen to others, my world view must get stretched and stretched and stretched. We have a fear of listening and changing." She adds that sometimes we "keep what is uncomfortable because we know it. It is painful to change."

Ranger believes that interfaith dialogue and peace work are very closely connected. "Fifty of the current world conflicts have at least one element that is religious. Interfaith dialogue is absolutely essential." Her work in interfaith dialogue has been extensive. When she returned to education after work in other areas, Ranger envisioned a program at Marylhurst that would "reach the hearts and souls of people." With this in mind, she designed an interfaith master's program that helps individuals practice their spirituality and focus on their commitment to service. Ranger also founded the *Interfaith Spiritual Center*, a community of interfaith professionals who provide counseling, workshops and classes for those of all faiths.

Theological conflict

"Conflict on theological and doctrinal issues is a barrier to dialogue even within the Christian framework," states Rev. Dr. LeRoy Haynes, Jr., senior pastor at Allen Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in northeast Portland. "When you add differences in doctrine to a shared history of tension with one another, meaningful dialogue becomes especially difficult. Religious communities often inherit divisions and animosity that have been passed down through the generations by years of injustice."

Haynes notes, "Even in Portland, the most segregated hour in America is at 11 a.m. on Sunday morning." He adds that the church in America was born in segregation and carried that legacy within its walls since the beginning. Haynes, like Bishop Itty, believes that we break down these barriers when people come together and work on common issues that affect our daily lives. He says that it takes "more than just dialogue on faith issues to break down the walls that separate our people from each other. Issues such as peace, justice and civil rights can bring people together with a common vision and shared goals. It takes an intentional effort to bring people together." Haynes contends it is best not to force the dialogue on faith issues first, but rather start with the "commonality of human issues and work from there."

Guidelines to overcoming barriers

Current Dialogue, a publication of the World Council of Churches, has set out some guidelines for dialogue and relations with people of other religions. Among other points, the article states, "We have come to recognize that the mystery of God's salvation is not exhausted by our

theological affirmations.

Salvation belongs to God. We therefore dare not stand in judgment of others. It is important to those of another religious tradition

posture of deep respect for the other's faith journey and to remember that the image of God is implanted in the souls of all people. In acknowledging one another as equals, people of diverse beliefs are able to listen openly, and conversations become an opportunity to learn. This involves a transformation from self-centered seeing into Christ-centered seeing. When we do this, both interfaith and intercultural dialogue can become mutually empowering.

Perhaps the best way to both know our neighbors and be known by them is to become partners in the work of peace and justice—those pursuits that bring good to all people. The church must make intentional efforts to bring diverse peoples together. It will not happen unless we make it happen. Yes, as Desmond Tutu states, we know our need for one another through our differences. But, as we work side by side, we also begin to see the many ways we are alike—we share a common humanity and the same dream of peace for ourselves and for our children.

For more information on Oregon demographics: <http://quickfacts.census.gov>.



Peace Resource Guide

Resources

Oregon is blessed with a wide range of organizations devoted to peace. The following list is merely a sample of peace-related organizations and is not intended to be comprehensive.

Peace Organizations

Eugene PeaceWorks
454 Willamette
Eugene, OR 97401
(541) 343-8548
eugpeace@efn.org
www.efn.org/~eugpeace

Forum for Peace Education
(Eugene)
(541) 345-9122; (541) 913-3982
kripkov@oregon.uoregon.edu

Human Dignity Coalition
P.O. Box 6084
Bend, OR 97708
(541) 385-3320
www.humandignitycoalition.org

**National Conference for
Community and Justice (NCCJ)
Pacific Northwest Region**
319 SW Washington, Suite 301
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 231-2436
www.nccjpacificnw.org

North Coast Peace Coalition
(503) 717-1387
peace@NorthCoastPeace.org
www.northcoastpeace.org

*Lead me from death to life,
from falsehood to truth.
Lead me from despair to
hope, from fear to trust.
Lead me from hate to love,
from war to peace.
Let peace fill our hearts,
our world, our universe.
Peace, peace, peace.*

- Mother Teresa

Oregon Peace Institute
P.O. Box 1058
Portland, OR 97207
(503) 725-8192
orpeace@colormyweb.com
http://orpeace.org

Oregon Peaceworks
104 Commercial Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
(503) 585-2767
www.oregonpeaceworks.org

**Oregon Physicians for Social
Responsibility**
921 SW Morrison, Suite 206
Portland, OR 97205
(503) 274-2720
info@oregonpsr.org
www.oregonpsr.org

Peace and Justice Works
P.O. Box 42456
Portland, OR 97242
(503) 236-3065
pjw@agora.rdrop.com
www.rdrop.com/~pjw/

**Peace and Social Justice Center of
Southwest Washington**
(360) 260-8937

Wholistic Peace Institute
P.O. Box 1067
Canby, OR 97013
(503) 266-8996
garyspanovich@hotmail.com
www.wholisticpeaceinstitute.com

World Affairs Council of Oregon
620 SW Main, Suite 333
Portland, OR 97205
(503) 274-7488
www.worldoregon.org

Ecumenical & Interfaith Organizations

**American Friends Service
Committee**
(503) 230-9427

**The Center for Spiritual
Development at Trinity
Episcopal Cathedral**
147 NW 19th Avenue
Portland, OR 97209
(503) 478-1218
www.center-for-spiritual-
development.org

**Christians for Peace & Justice:
the Public Policy Advocacy
Network of EMO**
0245 SW Bancroft St., Suite B
Portland, OR 97239
(503) 221-1054
pwong@emoregon.org
www.emoregon.org

Friends of Sabeel—North America
SabeelSeeds@aol.com

Gorge Ecumenical Ministries
Asbury United Methodist Church
616 State Avenue
Hood River, OR 97031
(541) 386-2578

**Interfaith Council for
Greater Portland**
Contacts: Héctor López, (503)
228-3178; Wajdi Said,
dzws@pdx.edu

**Interfaith Ministries of Central
Oregon (IMCO)**
P.O. Box 7553
Bend, OR 97708
(541) 389-1895
faithhh@coinet.com

Interfaith Spiritual Center
3910 S.E. 11th
Portland, OR 97202
(503) 233-2626
isc@spiritone.com
www.spiritone.com/~isc/

**Institute for Christian Muslim
Understanding**
Contacts: Wajdi Said,
dzws@pdx.edu; Chuck Cooper,
Vermont Hills United Methodist
Church, (503) 246-1213

**Lane Institute of Faith and
Education (LIFE)**
An affiliate of TRIM
Contact: Dan Bryant
dan@heartofeugene.org
www.heartofeugene.org/LIFE/

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Portland promotes justice and peace

The Archdiocese of Portland's Office of Justice and Peace, in conjunction with the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, forms two dimensions of the work of the Archdiocese: to encourage the Catholic community of western Oregon to reflect on the living tradition of Catholic social thought and to work to stimulate and network creative social action for the common good. To this goal, they sponsor the following annual events.

- *Inner Peace Retreat*—makes connections between social action and prayerful contemplation
- *Peace-ing It Together Conference*—features scholarship and theological developments as a guide and challenge for ongoing work for justice and peace
- *Parenting for Peace and Justice Family Camp*—nurtures and empowers families for more justice and peace in our hearts and social structures
- *Tobin Lecture*—held in honor of the late Monsignor Thomas Tobin who worked on a host of Catholic social justice concerns

For more information about the Office of Justice and Peace and/or its annual events, contact Anthony Granados, coordinator, at (503) 233-8361 or justiceandpeace@archdpx.org.

Metanoia Peace Community
2116 NE 18th Ave.
Portland, OR
(503) 281-3697
www.tearsoup.com/metanoia

Pax Christi
St. Phillip Neri Catholic Church
2408 SE 16th Ave.
Portland, OR 97214
(503) 231-4955
www.pdxpax.org/paxchristi

Presbytery of the Cascades
Don Shaw, Peacemaking and Social
Justice Advocate
(503) 235-7389
peaceandhunger@cascadespresbytery.org

*Then Jesus said to
him, "Put your sword
back into its place; for
all who take the sword
will perish by the
sword."*

- Matthew 26:52

**Two Rivers Interfaith Ministries
(TRIM)**
Contact: Irwin Noparstak
ihnoparstak@yahoo.com

Colleges & Universities

**George Fox University
Center for Peace Learning**
414 N. Meridian
Newberg, OR 97132
(503) 554-2680
rmock@georgefox.edu
www.georgefox.edu/offices/
peace_learning

**Oregon State University
Peace Studies Program**
Department of Speech
Communication
Corvallis, OR 97331
Contact: Gregg Walker
(541) 737-2461

**Pacific University
Peace and Conflict Studies**
2043 College Way
Forest Grove, OR 97116
Contact: Michael R. Steele
(503) 352-2806
steelem@pacificu.edu

**Portland State University
Peace and Resolution
Conference Program**
Contact: Robert Gould
(503) 725-3502

**Southern Oregon University
International Peace Studies
Program**
1250 Siskiyou Blvd.
Ashland, OR 97520
Contact: Magdalena Staniek
(541) 552-6288

**University of Oregon
Peace Studies Program**
308 Chapman Hall
Eugene, OR 97403
Contact: David Frank
(541) 346-4198

