

Report of On Earth Peace

Following Jesus, Cultivating Individuals & Communities of Peace

Theme: Jeremiah 29 (NKJV)

⁴Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. ⁶Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. ⁷And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace. ¹⁰For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. ¹¹For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

Jeremiah is speaking to people who do not want to be in the place and situation they find themselves, but, instead of offering flight, God insists that the people work for peace where they are, “for in its [the city’s] peace you will have peace.” A full peace - peace within the city, within the exiled community, and within the hearts and minds of those who have been made captive - comes to those who seek it and pray for it.

For three years, On Earth Peace has focused its work through the teachings of Jeremiah 29. In 2012, verses 12-14 were held up as we worked to encourage prayer and peacemaking with congregational and denominational leaders and ecumenical partners: *“¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.”*

Many of the individuals, congregations, and communities with which we work feel captive as destructive conflict and violence dominate relationships, schools, work places, and churches. Through programs like Peace Day, Agape-Satyagraha Training, and the direct services of the Ministry of Reconciliation, On Earth Peace calls leaders to actively engage in conflict transformation and nonviolent social change. We proclaim that as we pray for God’s assistance, God listens and is willing to be found, and ready to help us to return from the captivity of empire and domination, helping us move into grace, shalom, and peace.

Continuing in the spirit of God’s promise of peace, future, and hope, now we are reminded that God listens and responds to our faithfulness. This year, we celebrate with those who have found, for the first time, or have returned to, God and the church through the ministries of On Earth Peace. We eagerly pray and seek God in our work and relationships with each of you.

Activities throughout the Church at All Levels

2012 Annual Conference

At the request of the Annual Conference Leadership Team, the On Earth Peace Ministry of Reconciliation (MoR) provided an increased level of service in St. Louis last year. MoR fielded a corps of trained volunteers – identified by bright yellow lanyards – throughout the entire conference to assist persons needing a listening ear or a mediating presence. Their offerings were well received, with many testimonials and wide recognition of a greatly improved spirit of fellowship and good will; MoR will continue this work in 2013. (An expanded report can be found below in the MoR section.)

In the exhibit hall, the On Earth Peace booth once again was a warm and inviting gathering place for a wide variety of conference-goers. Beyond providing information about our organization, our booth was a place where those interested in peacemaking and violence reduction gathered to exchange ideas, plans, and dreams.

On Earth Peace also brought together constituents at seven well-attended Insight Sessions led by staff and other selected leaders. Two particularly popular topics included “From Marine Sergeant to Conscientious Objector” and “The Science of Sexuality” – both of which drew capacity crowds to large-sized assembly rooms.

The On Earth Peace Annual Breakfast featured a message from our new executive director Bill Scheurer, along with a presentation by members of our Step Up! community of emerging adult peacebuilders. Bill also enjoyed spending time at other meals and events sponsored by a wide variety of church auxiliary groups like the Brethren Revival Fellowship, the Open Table Cooperative, and the Council of District Executives.

On Earth Peace also had a very productive special meeting with the Standing Committee to explore various concerns and affirmations regarding our Statement of Inclusion, leading to the “Way Forward” statement and a wonderful follow-up meeting with a special delegation at the fall meeting of our Board of Directors.

Youth Activities and Conferences

On Earth Peace also serves the Church of the Brethren through regional and national youth and young adult programs and conferences. In 2012, On Earth Peace was active at the National Young Adult Conference and at regional and district youth conferences.

District Conferences

From July through November, On Earth Peace staff and volunteers were present at many of the 23 district conferences, bringing displays and a variety of resource materials for conference participants. At 13 district conferences, On Earth Peace reported to delegates, and/or led workshops, insight sessions, meal events, and youth sessions, or assisted in other conference roles. Popularly requested session topics continued to include “Why it Matters to Teach Christ’s Peace” and “Dealing with Difficult Conversations.” To arrange for a session at your district conference, contact Leslie Frye at LFrye@OnEarthPeace.org.

Song & Story Fest

On Earth Peace again co-sponsored the sixteenth annual Song & Story Fest in 2012. The event was held at Camp Immanuel, in the Illinois-Wisconsin district, just prior to Annual Conference in St. Louis. The theme for the week was “All Aboard!” focusing on our rich heritage of railroads and trains and exploring ways that people physically (not virtually) connect in the world today. Planned by founder Ken Kline Smeltzer, Song & Story Fest is a truly intergenerational gathering -- a family camp where everyone is family. With a daily pattern of devotions, workshop groups, afternoon free time, evening campfires and concerts, the 150+ participants enjoyed a wide variety of musical styles and storytelling from perennial favorites and new performers. A major aspect of the week was the shared experience of coping with daily temperatures over 100 degrees. The swimming area was very popular.

Other Denominational Meetings and Events

On Earth Peace is active in many denominational events in addition to those described above. The executive director serves on the Mission and Ministry Board of the Church of the Brethren, and is joined by the board chair in the Inter-Agency Forum. In addition, several other short- and long-term denominational initiatives include On Earth Peace staff, board members, and dedicated volunteers as contributing participants.

Congregational Leadership and Interaction

Working directly with congregations is one of the primary avenues of ministry for On Earth Peace, through Peace Day (formerly, the International Day of Prayer for Peace), the Ministry of Reconciliation, Youth Peace Retreats, and other programs. In 2012, On Earth Peace provided programs at the congregational level in many districts across the Church of the Brethren, including preaching and other worship leadership, Sunday school teaching, church camp teams and events, workshops, retreats, and youth group programs. As On Earth Peace seeks to encourage and support congregations and individuals in their discipleship peacemaking, these opportunities to meet and work with local churches are very important. To request worship, preaching, or church school leadership, contact us at 410-635-8704 or OEP@OnEarthPeace.org.

New “Living Peace Church” Ministry

In 2012, On Earth Peace took up the work formerly carried out by Every Church A Peace Church to help catechize and support a network of local churches who choose to self-identify as living peace churches and share their stories. We convened a gathering of peace leaders from other denominations and organizations and began preparing resources for this ministry. In 2013, we will begin Living Peace Church pilot sites with several local churches, including a mix from the Church of the Brethren and other denominations. To look into adding your congregation, contact Bill Scheurer, executive director, at Bill@OnEarthPeace.org.

Print and Electronic Newsletters

On Earth Peace produces a print newsletter twice a year for friends and supporters, with spring and fall issues. The 2012 newsletters again focused on new and expanding program areas, sharing stories about how individuals, congregations, and communities apply our programs in their individual situations.

Our email newsletters reach constituents more frequently, in some cases with more specific audiences:

The Peacebuilder continues to be widely circulated among On Earth Peace constituents and peacemakers. This newsletter promotes upcoming activities, and carries reports of local ministries and inspiring stories of peacemaking. It is a place where constituents can read about one another's work and share their stories.

The **Step Up! Newsletter** is a bi-monthly mailing for youth and young adults who have made a commitment to becoming leaders in nonviolent community change.

Website and Online Resources

On Earth Peace continues to develop its website in response to the changing needs of our programs and technological advancements. In 2012, we simplified the website a bit to make our work more accessible to online visitors. We invite you to visit our website at www.OnEarthPeace.org.

In 2012, we also began shifting more of our online emphasis and activities to blogs and social/mobile media. Here are some of the places you can follow our developments, gain daily inspiration, and share with others:

Our Facebook Page:	https://www.facebook.com/onearthpeace	
Faithful Steward:	http://faithful-steward.tumblr.com/	(for staff reports)
Living Peace Church:	http://livingpeacechurch.tumblr.com/	(living peace church)
Praying for Ceasefire:	http://prayingforceasefire.tumblr.com/	(peace day events)
Step Up! for Peace:	http://stepupforpeace.tumblr.com/	(young adult group)
3,000 Miles for Peace:	http://3kmp.tumblr.com/	(peace journey blog)

You can expect blogs to come and go as we feature and support various initiatives with the changing times.

Youth and Young Adult Program

On Earth Peace provides educational retreats, training events, and volunteer opportunities for all who seek to develop their faith-based beliefs and skills as peacemakers. The Youth and Young Adult (formerly Peace Education) program is concerned with offering these opportunities to children, youth, and emerging adults in order to develop leadership for peace in each new generation of the church. On Earth Peace recognizes the strength that is gained when people of faith gather to share ideas with one another, learn new concepts, and practice techniques that can be taken into the world. This recognition is one of the foundations of peace education and youth and young adult programming. Congregations and districts can host peace retreats and training events by inviting On Earth Peace to provide leadership at local, district, and regional gatherings for youth and young adults.

As an effort to renew its dedication to the work of peace education, On Earth Peace continually renews our commitment to invite every youth in the Church of the Brethren to participate in a peace education event. Many of today's denominational, regional, and local leaders can point to an experience at an On Earth Peace event as an important part of their faith formation. Recognizing the importance of providing this foundation for today's youth of the denomination, On Earth Peace is committed to expanding the number of retreats and workshops in order to reach this ambitious goal. How might the church – and our world – be different in 50 years because of a renewed effort to teach and live Jesus' message of peace?

Peace Retreats

The goal of Peace Retreats is to provide a spiritual setting in which youth can learn about Jesus' message of peace in an interactive and fun atmosphere. By training youth in the biblical, historical, and faith traditions of peacemaking, On Earth Peace empowers youth to become active and thinking participants in the world, on behalf of Christ.

Peace Retreats are designed to address the issues that youth groups are challenged by in their lives and to encourage putting faith into action as they apply Jesus' teachings to these challenges. On Earth Peace works closely with local youth leaders to prepare each retreat. This year, peace education focuses included encouraging junior and high school youth to consider how they will work to eliminate violence in their communities including the violence of bullying, inviting young adults to "Step Up!" to actively stop violence and build peace through local initiatives, and intergenerational sharing of experiences and witness.

In 2012, On Earth Peace provided retreats and retreat leadership in the Mid-Atlantic and Southern Pennsylvania districts. Shorter workshops and sessions were provided for several churches in the form of Sunday school classes and meetings with youth groups. In addition, On Earth Peace was present at Bridgewater College's Roundtable and National Young Adult Conference of the Church of the Brethren.

Youth Peace Travel Team (YPTT)

Katie Furrow (Monte Vista (Va.) Church of the Brethren, Bridgewater College), Hunter Keith (Mexico (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, Indiana University Kokomo), Kyle Riege (Camp Creek (Ind.) Church of the Brethren, Manchester University) and Molly Walmer (Myerstown (Pa.) Church of the Brethren, Juniata College) were this year's dynamic Youth Peace Travel Team, jointly sponsored by On Earth Peace, Outdoor Ministries Association, and the Church of the Brethren, Inc. The goal of the Youth Peace Travel Team is to teach peers about peace issues and develop leadership for the denomination. Participation in the Youth Peace Travel Team is open to young adults, ages 18-23, in the Church of the Brethren. The team continued the tradition of traveling to Church of the Brethren camps to teach and stimulate discussions about peace and discipleship issues.

2012 marked the ninth year that YPTT members participated in the Church of the Brethren's Ministry Summer Service (MSS) program, giving team members a support network with other young adults working for the church for the summer and a larger sense of many forms of ministry. The MSS program also connected each team member with a YPTT staff mentor for the summer and provided the team with tuition grants. MSS, along with YPTT Orientation, prepares the team for their specific obligations during the summer.

This summer's schedule included work at the following camps: Mt. Hermon (Western Plains), Inspiration Hills (Northern Ohio), Swatara (Atlantic Northeast), Pine Lake (Northern Plains), Blue Diamond (Middle Pennsylvania), and Mack (Northern Indiana). This year's team also attended National Young Adult Conference in Knoxville, Tenn., Annual Conference in St. Louis, Mo., and a National Workcamp at Camp Eder (Southern Pennsylvania). The team used games, songs, skits, and simulations to talk with youth about various topics, from Brethren pacifism and alternatives to military service, to global justice issues and caring for our creation.

Agape-Satyagraha Leadership Training

"I didn't get in a fight today. A guy got in front of me in the lunch line. I was ready to push him out of the way, when I remembered how we had talked about cooling off first. So I counted backwards for a while. Then I said to myself, 'This isn't worth getting into a fight about and then getting suspended. I'll just let it go this time.'" --Agape-Satyagraha Participant

Agape-Satyagraha Leadership Training in Conflict Resolution is a program of On Earth Peace founded by Brethren Community Ministries (Harrisburg, Pa.). The program helps junior and senior high youth learn to deal with conflict without using violence, by presenting concepts and skills' training through the completion of five levels. The program teaches youth the heart of Christian peacemaking (agape love) and Gandhian nonviolence (satyagraha) and empowers youth to use agape and satyagraha together for nonviolent interpersonal conflict resolution and nonviolent social

change. In addition, the program trains adult mentors in the essentials of agape and satyagraha, and connects youth with mentors within their community.

Agape-Satyagraha mentors youth (ages 11-18) through five levels of skills training: understanding conflict escalation, anger management, de-escalating conflict, negotiation and mediation, and community social change. Adult volunteers coach youth individually or in small groups, using individualized techniques, allowing youth to pace themselves through each level.

In 2009, On Earth Peace launched a pilot program to share Agape-Satyagraha Training across the denomination. In 2012, the pilot program ended and On Earth Peace is now offering the program more widely. On Earth Peace provides support to local communities organizing to offer the program and those sites provide feedback as the curriculum is developed to meet the needs of diverse settings. As of this writing, six pilot sites are actively offering Agape-Satyagraha Training to youth: Modesto, Calif.; Trotwood, Ohio; Harrisonburg, Va.; Baltimore, Md.; and Harrisburg, Pa. Site coordinators from each location meet monthly to share about the program's achievements and workshop together.

Forty-one youth advanced a level this year and two graduated from the program having completed all five levels.

Kids As Peacemakers Mural Project

Kids As Peacemakers, a program begun by Merle Forney in New England, encourages schools, churches, and civic organizations to help their children learn to talk about and envision peace and peaceful living. As part of this process, children use a consensus process to design a peace mural that is painted on plywood and displayed so the community can witness how their children envision peace. On Earth Peace has developed a faith-based curriculum to accompany the program.

In 2009, On Earth Peace began a partnership with Kids As Peacemakers, Inc., to offer the mural project to communities beyond New England. Churches offer this program as part of Sunday school, children's church, and Vacation Bible School.

Step Up!

LEARN – LEAD – BUILD are three commitments made by every youth and young adult who joins the Step Up! movement. Step Up! networks youth and young adults through an e-newsletter, phone calls, action teams, and retreats to learn the ways of active nonviolence, lead efforts to advance justice, build peace, and eliminate violence, and build the movement by encouraging other youth and young adults.

Forty-one youth and young adults have "stepped up" as part of this program. They are working within their local communities to stop human trafficking and war, to build safe college campuses for LGBTQ persons, and to protect the environment. In addition, many participants are actively a part of other On Earth Peace programs including Peace Day and Youth Peace Travel Team.

Contact us today!

Youth and Young Adult peace formation programs are available to children, youth and young adults, agencies, congregations, and organizations who want to develop their faith-based beliefs and skills as peacemakers. Please call the Youth and Young Adult program director Marie Benner-Rhoades at Peace-Ed@OnEarthPeace.org or call at 607-387-3509, or visit www.OnEarthPeace.org for more information.

Ministry of Reconciliation (MoR) Program

Teaching and leading healthy, faithful responses to conflict

Christian peacemaking is rooted in the scriptures that exhort us to love one another (John 13:34-35; Romans 12:9-10), even our enemies (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27); and yet the reality is that our differences inevitably lead to conflict. The Ministry of Reconciliation is where On Earth Peace equips peacemakers to be peacemakers in all contexts (personal, family, church, community, world) by providing skills and processes that transform conflict. MoR is also where On Earth Peace models how differences can be settled by nonviolent and life-giving means, and where we accompany and support those who are committed to the hard work of reflecting Christ's peace in their ongoing relationships.

The main way MoR brings peacemaking skills to individuals, congregations, districts, and agencies is through workshops and training events. Rooted in Jesus' teachings, participants learn healthy responses to conflict and pro-active practices for generating understanding in the midst of diverse perspectives. Sometimes, however, even the best-equipped peacemakers need help, especially when a conflict is about an issue that evokes strong feelings or has been simmering for a long period of time. That is why MoR also offers facilitation, consultation, and mediation services.

God has been gracious to equip On Earth Peace to provide this ministry through the generosity of trained, skilled volunteers who comprise the MoR practitioner network. Because these gifted volunteers are willing to accept minimal remuneration for their services and because On Earth Peace and the congregations and individuals who support On Earth Peace subsidize the actual cost of services, MoR services are offered at significantly lower cost than agencies outside the Church of the Brethren engaged in similar work.

Ministry of Reconciliation Presence at Annual Conference 2012

It was expected that tensions at the 2011 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, Mich., would be high, so the business and many of the services typically offered were handled with particular sensitivity. Even so, we were not adequately prepared to formally confront a person who was an intimidating presence at one of the booths, nor to intervene when people were confronted in ways that felt hostile, nor to make the vulnerable feel safe in the midst of a death threat.

On Earth Peace's Ministry of Reconciliation (MoR) staff left Grand Rapids committed to forming a Team that would help make the 2012 conference in St. Louis different. Therefore, it was a blessing to be invited by Moderator Tim Harvey on behalf of the Annual Conference leadership to help set a tone of respect and to encourage one another to practice mature Christian behavior in the midst of our differences at the 2012 Church of the Brethren Annual Conference. Collaboration between Moderator Tim, Annual Conference officers, Annual Conference staff, table facilitators, Program and Arrangements Committee and the MoR Team set the tone and provided support for individuals to respond respectfully when they disagreed. Meetings with different groups prior to the start of Annual Conference informed large numbers of leaders about the role and value of the MoR Team.

Conference calls prior to Annual Conference helped the Team clarify their individual roles and the collective purpose of the work. Being guided by biblical words for peacemaking grounded and energized the work. Inspiration from the hymn *Will you let me be your servant?* deepened our understanding of the simplicity and power of what we were trying to do.

Highlights

- Wearing yellow lanyards was a helpful identifier that opened the door to conversations across the theological spectrum and to checking in with how others were experiencing Conference. Most people expressed appreciation for the role and an understanding of why the role was needed.
- It was helpful to have a team approach to respond to an unauthorized booth set up on Sunday. The brother expressed appreciation for the compassion and respect showed to him by MoR and members of Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Interests (BMC). He later expressed regret that the booth may have generated anger and made some feel physically threatened, and asked for help reviewing material in the future to help him edit for hurtful wording.
- It was also helpful to have a team approach to a theft at the SERRV booth. The manager was visibly shaken and MoR team members were able to support her until security arrived. They also helped monitor the booth in an effort to determine who was taking items. This scenario was not in our plans or expectations but we were able to be a calm presence in the midst of anxiety when it was needed.

Many thanks to the 2012 Annual Conference Ministers of Reconciliation Team! The team included Marty Farahat, Jamie Frye, Leslie Frye, Peggy Gish, Bob Gross, Dylan Haro, Reba Herder (co-coordinator/trainer), Audrey Hollenberg-Duffey, Jenn Hosler, Nate Hosler, Jan Long, Diane Mason, Sarah Neher, Larry O'Neill, Rick Polhamus (co-coordinator/trainer), Anne Price, and Gail Erisman Valeta.

On Earth Peace is committed to providing a needed visible ministerial presence at our annual meetings so that we can respond faithfully to the hurts, differences, and conflicts that come from the challenges of our call to continue the work of Jesus, peacefully, simply, and together.

2012 Workshops and Training Events

In 2012, MoR responded to 18 inquiries and provided eight workshops, insight sessions and training events to congregations, agencies and districts in five Church of the Brethren districts, one Church of the Brethren agency and at Annual Conference. Topics included Difficult Conversations; Camp Leadership Training; Conflict Coaching; The Science of Sexuality; Appreciative Inquiry; Faith, Family and Finances (with Brethren Benefit Trust); and MoR's flagship nine-hour Matthew 18 workshop. Rooted in Christ's teachings on reconciliation, participants in Matthew 18 workshops learn the biblical basis for reconciliation, how to deal with anger, a method of Christian conciliation and the impact of forgiveness.

None of these workshops, insight sessions and trainings would have been possible without On Earth Peace staff and MoR volunteer workshop leaders Marie Benner-Rhoades, Jonathan Frye, Bob Gross, Wanda Joseph, and Rick Polhamus.

Support for Congregations and Others in Conflict Provided in 2012

One of the most courageous and faithful things Christians can do is reach out for help to work through a difficult situation or a long-standing conflict. In 2012, MoR volunteers Celia Cook-Huffman, Marty Farahat, Nate Hosler, Jan Long, John Long, Jon Rudy, Samuel Sarpiya and Carol

Waggy facilitated a restorative justice process; facilitated a family mediation; worked with two congregations engaged in long-term “walks” toward reconciliation; and provided a reconciling presence at a potentially contentious congregational business meeting, in the spirit of the 2012 Annual Conference Ministers of Reconciliation Team. Four additional congregations pursued the possibility of an MoR facilitation or consultation.

Practitioner Network

In March of 2012, Leslie Frye, along with Mennonite MoR practitioner Charletta Erb, invited representatives from Mennonite Central Committee’s Office of Criminal Justice, the Kansas Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (KIPCOR), and Anabaptist conflict transformation practitioners with a range of ages, colors, and affiliations to join MoR practitioners in conversation regarding the potential of forming a sustainable network for the continuing work of reconciliation.

Hosted at the KIPCOR offices on the Bethel College campus in North Newton, Kansas, about a dozen participants took advantage of the rare opportunity to engage with a group of people doing similar work from a common faith perspective.

Over the day and a half together, they worked at articulating the values they share and the way those values inform the work they do, as a springboard toward exploring ways they might work together most effectively. They also discussed various potential strategies for connecting, equipping and utilizing practitioners to best resource faith communities who are facing conflict or change.

The current thought is that the network could be a place for building relationships and mentoring; enhancing collaboration and support; encouraging reflective practice and skill development; educating and resourcing the wider Church.

On Earth Peace Intern

On Earth Peace was pleased to have Dylan Haro join the staff as a Bethany Theological Seminary ministry summer intern with the Ministry of Reconciliation. Having just completed his second year in Bethany’s Master of Divinity program, Dylan provided essential staff support primarily during Annual Conference where he served as support for the MoR Team, served as an MoR Observer, helped lead a Peace Vigil for Young Adults and performed other general duties. Dylan also filled the pulpit for us in two congregations, represented On Earth Peace at National Young Adult Conference where he led an insight session, and at a district conference where he was spontaneously invited to lead a juggling workshop for youth, and helped with various projects. We wish him well as he finishes his studies and pursues ordination in the Church of the Brethren.

Contact Us!

Ministry of Reconciliation services are available to any persons, agencies, congregations or organizations needing assistance in dealing with conflict or desiring training in communication and conflict transformation skills. Please contact MoR program director Leslie Frye at LFrye@OnEarthPeace.org or call 620-755-3940 for more information, or visit www.OnEarthPeace.org.

Nonviolent Social Change Program

The Nonviolent Social Change program of On Earth Peace (previously known as Peace Witness) provides congregations with invitations and opportunities to address community issues through building capacity to reduce violence and build peace. The main focus of this ministry in 2012 was organizing congregations around Peace Day (the International Day of Prayer for Peace, September

21) and building our own capacity to help congregations and community groups get involved in speaking out about violence in their communities and the world.

From Peace Witness to Nonviolent Social Change

In 2012, On Earth Peace clarified the emerging vocation of this ministry and changed its name to more accurately describe its call. On Earth Peace's Nonviolent Social Change ministry supports community and congregational leaders to take powerful and principled stands on issues of violence and injustice. The Nonviolent Social Change ministry area provides training and accompaniment for those who seek to address issues of violence and oppression using the power and promise of nonviolent love. We work with congregations and community groups who want to proactively and powerfully respond to violence and injustice in their communities or in the world. We teach skills, provide inspiration, and build connections for people who are ready to take action on structural violence with the power of active nonviolence.

The Nonviolent Social Change ministry of On Earth Peace is rooted in the philosophy and leadership of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Much more than simply "not doing violence," nonviolence is an active, positive, reconciling force that seeks to build a hopeful future. Kingian nonviolence is a philosophy and a way of life, as well as a set of practical approaches to solve interpersonal and community problems. To address deep-rooted violence, poverty, and oppression, it's necessary to build or re-imagine community coalitions and to invest in leadership for the long haul.

Peace Day 2012

This year marked On Earth Peace's sixth annual campaign to invite communities around the world to participate in the International Day of Prayer for Peace (IDPP or Peace Day), September 21.

Over 170 congregations and community groups in 15 countries and 26 U.S. states partnered with On Earth Peace to organize prayer events for the week surrounding September 21, 2012. These groups joined thousands around the world marking Peace Day, September 21, which is recognized each year as the World Council of Churches' International Day of Prayer for Peace and the United Nations' International Day of Peace. Campaign participants represented more than 15 denominations or traditions.

On Earth Peace's 2012 theme for Peace Day was "Praying for Ceasefire." The locally identified focus of specific events included many faces of violence: gun violence, bullying, domestic violence, war, and hatred based on religious belief, among others. A list of participant groups, and many event plans and reports can be found on the campaign website, www.OnEarthPeace.org/PeaceDay.

On Earth Peace's 2012 campaign was co-sponsored by the United Church of Christ's Office of Justice & Witness Ministries and the Fellowship of Reconciliation (USA), and in association with the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA.

Many communities use Peace Day to connect people from various religious perspectives and cultural backgrounds. The Interfaith Coalition of Washington County, Pennsylvania, hosted a gathering including participants from nearly twenty different religious traditions, including Muslims, Jews,

Buddhists, Baha'i, Sufi, Roman Catholics and a number of Christian Protestant denominations, on the Antietam Battlefield in Sharpsburg, Maryland. The week of Peace Day marked the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, the bloodiest single-day battle of the U.S. Civil War. The commemoration of that event provided a backdrop for prayer and discussion around present-day violence in local communities and the world.

Other groups used Peace Day to address community violence. For example, in Miami, Florida, USA, the Miami First Church of the Brethren hosted a community forum to discuss Florida's "Stand Your Ground" handgun law. The homicide of local teenager Trayvon Martin brought this controversial law to the forefront in the community and across the country. The forum provided background information on the law, as well as an opportunity to discuss changes that could be made, while seeking common values.

Thandi Gumbi of Breakthru Community Action (BCA) and Breakthru Church International (Pietermaritzburg, KwazuluNatal, South Africa) reported that their observance would include "prayers for ceasefire in Afghanistan, which we've been praying about for the past twenty years. BCA's Kids Klub will also be praying this coming Friday and the lessons will be on Peace. We will also be visiting homes in the neighborhood spreading the message of Nonviolence." BCA is also reaching out to participants in their Peaceful Community Change workshops, inviting them to participate in prayers on Peace Day.

In Manassas, Virginia, Unity in the Community organized a community interfaith prayer service hosted by First African Methodist Episcopal Church, to seek what the organizers call "divine guidance in the face of international hostility, political confrontation, local intolerance, domestic abuse, teenage bullying and personal struggle."

Workshops and Trainings

Nonviolent Social Change director Matt Guynn offered two evening workshops in Portland, Oregon, on nonviolent direct action. An evening on April 10, co-led with Michael Colvin, was offered as part of the 99% Spring, which was a national effort to mobilize a broad segment of the public to speak out and act to name inequality and challenge corporate power. The second was a follow-up titled, "Making Direct Action More Powerful," with an emphasis on matching tactics to goals and focusing political action to create dilemmas for power holders.

Matt Guynn and national political organizer Paul Cienfuegos offered a weekend-length workshop on organizing for social change, June 30-July 1, in Portland, Oregon. Leaders from seven cities in the Pacific Northwest participated in the training, which focused on building capacity within the community rights movement, a specific approach to asserting local community power over corporate power. Many participants were fired up about their issues, but newer to the multi-faceted aspects of social change organizing at the community level. This workshop was intended to help connect community rights activists to a broader heritage of social movement contexts, expanding their capacity by connecting to philosophy, history, frameworks, and skills drawn from the heritage of nonviolent social change and community organizing.

Growth and Outreach

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Board of Directors Report to Annual Conference 2013

The On Earth Peace Board of Directors is dedicated to supporting and growing the fundamental mission and ministry of peace and justice within our denomination, our communities, and our world.

Our volunteer Board convenes twice a year, usually at the On Earth Peace headquarters in New Windsor, MD. These Spirit-led and -filled meetings are conducted using consensus, a process of collaborative decision-making that reflects and draws upon the creativity, concerns and ideas of all involved.

Board members, who are called by On Earth Peace constituents and the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference, reflect the beauty and diversity of all of humanity. The Board includes individuals of African American, European-American, and Amerasian racial and ethnic backgrounds – with ages that cross generations, from individuals in their 20s to those in their 60s. Board members come from all across the United States, and a variety of socio-economic, professional, and ideological backgrounds. Our differences are a gift from God, and we celebrate the peace of Christ, which binds us together.

In 2012, the On Earth Peace Board of Directors welcomed the organization's new Executive Director, Bill Scheurer, as well as new members, Cindy Weber-Han of Chicago, Ill.; Melisa Grandison of Wichita, Kan.; and Jordan Blevins Bles of Lexington, Ky.. We also celebrated with thanks our outgoing board member, Doris Abdullah (Brooklyn, N.Y.), and longtime supporter and volunteer Fran Nyce (Westminster, Md.), for their service to On Earth Peace over the years.

At the 2012 Annual Conference, the Church of the Brethren Standing Committee issued its "A Way Forward" paper, which included concerns about On Earth Peace's statement of inclusion (issued in 2011). In the spirit of Matthew 18, the Board of Directors welcomed a delegation from Standing Committee (Moderator Bob Krouse, Kathy Mack, and Steve Sauder) to our fall 2012 meeting to talk about these concerns.

The meeting with Standing Committee was filled with a spirit of listening and respectful dialogue. As we move forward, On Earth Peace will continue to find ways to continue the conversation with individuals and congregations within the denomination regarding our statement of inclusion. Our desire is to have open and honest dialogue with all of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Other major items of business in 2012 included approving the organization's budget for the 2013 fiscal year and exploring new ways to enhance program services.

On Earth Peace continues our work to address issues of racism both within and outside of the organization. Plans have been made to work with representatives from Crossroads. In 2013, the Board and staff will participate in anti-racism training and begin work on a racism audit for the organization.

In addition to the time and commitment of our Board and staff members, the work of On Earth Peace would not be possible without our volunteers. We appreciate and thank all the individuals, families, groups, and congregations who share our vision and are engaged in conflict transformation, youth education, and justice advocacy. We are also grateful for our representation with other global organizations, including the United Nations and Christian Peacemaker Teams. Together, we are building peaceful communities both locally and globally, and spreading the love of Christ.

Board listing

Blevins Bles, Jordan
Gibbel, Joel
Grandison, Melisa
Knight, Louise
Leiter, Benjamin (Secretary)
Mason, Carol
Metzger, Madalyn (Chair)
Meyer, Lauree Hersch
Miller, David
Miller, Robbie (Vice-Chair)
Mitchell, Don
Ronk, Patricia
Valeta, Gail Erisman
Weber-Han, Cindy
Wenger, Ken

Financial Report

Overview of 2012

Thanks to the steadfast commitment and generosity of our individual and congregational supporters, On Earth Peace has continued to thrive throughout the prolonged recession of the past four years. Your gifts provide the capacity for On Earth Peace to serve all those who call upon us with a “no person, congregation, or group left behind” approach to program delivery. New donors continue to join our work, and dedicated long-time donors continue to increase their support, for which we are very thankful. Nearly 85% of all operating funds come from individual and congregational gifts.

This amazing support, combined with careful budget management by staff while continuing to carry out all programs and projects, resulted again in a positive balance of income and expenses for 2012.

We are pleased to report on our stewardship of the funds entrusted to On Earth Peace.

Financial Report for January 1, 2012, to December 31, 2012

Our audited financial report is available under separate cover.

Income sources:

Individual gifts (818 donors)	\$337,353
Congregational giving (227 churches)	98,199
Income from program services	24,846
Foundation grants	5,500
Income from endowment and savings	55,608

<i>Total Income</i>	<i>\$521,506</i>
<i>Total Expense</i>	<i>\$516,855</i>
<i>Net Operations</i>	<hr/> <i>\$ 4,651</i>

The staff and board join in thanking all who have supported the peacemaking ministries of the church through their contributions to On Earth Peace. As some sources of support are decreasing with the economic recession, we ask congregations and individuals who are able to increase their support to prayerfully consider how they can strengthen their investment in this work of the gospel.

Contact Us!

For information about making a current or future contribution to On Earth Peace, contact development director Bob Gross at BGross@OnEarthPeace.org or 260-982-7751.