



On Earth Peace

Fall 2005

Imagine this setting:

An idyllic farm with rows and rows of sweet corn, tomatoes, squash, green beans, onions, garlic, and raspberries. Large maple trees with swings hanging from the branches and a picnic table in the shade. Chickens scratching the earth and enjoying kernels of corn. A porch swing with a cat lazing in the sun. A cool, shady hide-away in a spruce glen. A sturdy, wooden barn where garlic is drying and straw bales are stacked. The tree frogs echoing in the night.

Now imagine this setting with over two hundred people in it:

Children laughing as they swing on the swings, pick green beans from the garden, and feed the chickens. Youth playing four-square and lounging on the picnic tables. Adults sharing stories on the porch swing and in the shady glen. Healthy, delicious meals being prepared under the trees and eaten in the barn. Music harmonizing with the tree frogs. Dancing around a campfire. Tents and campers nestled among the trees and gardens. Laughter, tears, learning, being, worshipping God, playing, soaking up the abundance.

If you can imagine any of this, you can at least get a glimpse of the 2005 Heartland

& Story Fest "Rooted and Grounded in Love," co-sponsored by On Earth Peace. Planned by Ken Kline Smeltzer of State College, Pennsylvania, the ninth annual Song & Story Fest was held at Joyfield Farm, home of the Kindy and Gross families, near North Manchester, Indiana. The theme, based on the following paraphrased text from Ephesians 3:14-21, "May we always be rooted and grounded in love, together with all God's people, knowing the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of God in Christ," provided a grounding for the daily themes and programs for the week. The days included peaceful morning meditations, worship, workshops, recreation and rest time, jam sessions, story swaps, drumming circles, campfires, concerts, and folk dances.

As a co-sponsor, On Earth Peace provided workshops on prayer and peacemaking, being a Living Peace Church,

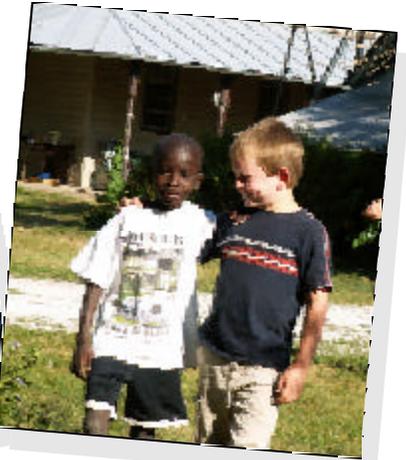
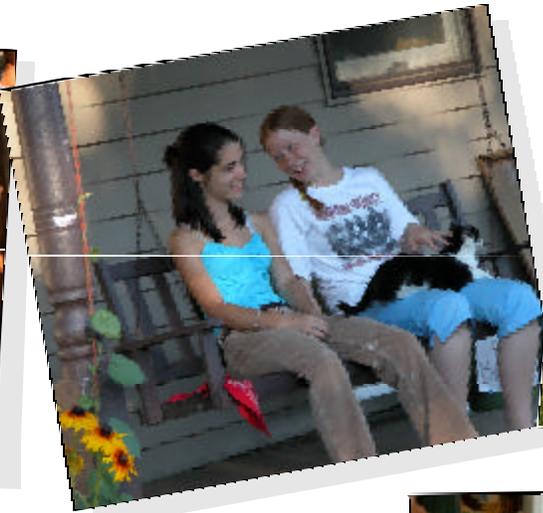
peaceful parenting, peacemaking and living in community, making a smaller footprint around the world, being a healing/welcoming/caring place for returning soldiers, ending the war in Iraq, and congregations as a base for peacemaking. Members of On Earth Peace's Peace Retreat Leadership Team, as well as the Youth Peace Travel Team, provided workshops all week for the youth.

As an added treat, youth from the Manchester Church of the Brethren performed "Seussical the Musical" for fest participants. Participants enjoyed the musical which shared Dr. Seuss' beliefs "in helping a friend, in not giving up, in keeping a promise . . . in the value and dignity of others, in working to preserve the fragile sweetness of the natural world, and . . . that peace is the ultimate ideal, among nations and in every heart." The message from this musical blended well with the fest's theme of being rooted and grounded in love.

If this has gotten your imagination flowing, plan to attend next year's Song & Story Fest, July 5-11, 2006, at Camp Pine Lake in Iowa, immediately following Annual Conference in Des Moines.

— Barb Saylor





Glimpses of Song & Story Fest



On Earth Peace is pleased to announce that Susanna Farahat has joined the staff in August as the new Coordinator of Peacemaker Formation. She will oversee an extensive peace education program which serves all ages, with an emphasis on youth and young adults. Susanna is a member of the York Center Church of the Brethren in Lombard, Illinois, and a recent graduate of Bryn Mawr College. She brings teaching experience and a strong sense of the educational process, along with a wide variety of community service experiences. She will be based in the New Windsor office of On Earth Peace.

Kim Stuckey Hissong, former Coordinator of Peacemaker Formation, begins graduate studies in social work this fall.

Together We Just Might Save the World

Excerpted from the speech given by David Waas at the 2005 On Earth Peace Annual Conference Breakfast (to read the speech in its entirety, visit www.brethren.org/oepa/2005BreakfastDavidWaas.rtf).

We who seek peace need to recognize and find creative ways to inspire a different vision of America:

- a vision of a church increasingly passionate in its commitment to peace, inclusiveness, and social justice;
- a vision of a nurturing, beloved community that enfolds, supports, and sacrifices for the common good;
- a vision of elected officials who have a renewed sense of being “public servants”;
- a vision of a confident citizenry with an informed awareness of the challenges a complex society and world present;
- a vision of a body politic in which even “the least of these” have a place at the table.

If we who seek peace want a foreign policy that is more humane, just, and peaceable, we must build upon our religious conviction to create the political will to re-shape America.

What are the Brethren to do? We are small in number. Few of us hold public office . . . So how do we as individuals start the change that we hope will come about? What can a small group of Anabaptists do to bring change in our communities, nation, and world? It’s a process that has to start right here where we are, and flow from our pens, from our computers, and from our mouths. We must realize that “we” – you and I – must do what is to be done. The Church of the Brethren has strong agencies: On Earth Peace, Brethren Volunteer Service, Brethren Witness/Washington Office – but it is we who must do the work.

What shall we do?

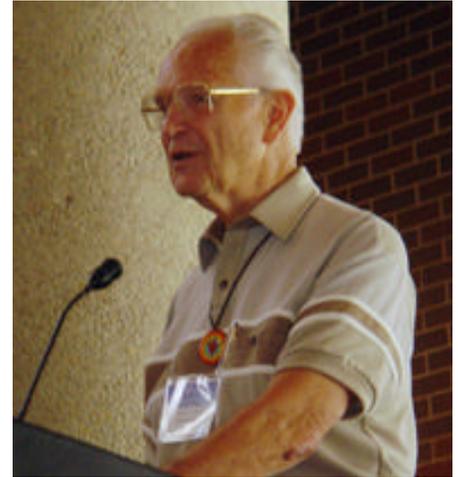
1. First, and by far most important, we must revitalize and strengthen our Christian pacifist base – that’s the challenge to which On Earth Peace is dedicated. In his book *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren*, Don Durnbaugh calls for renewal. Writing pre-9/11, he says that the way forward will be through a “strengthened peace witness and action to serve a world freed from many of the dangers of the Cold War but bedeviled by murderous ethnic hatreds and increasing levels of . . . violence.” He calls for “creative ventures in peacemaking” – understood both in the sense of broader social issues as well as the resolution of personal and family conflicts. . . .

2. Second, we need to reassess what our Christian faith says to responsible citizenship. I believe that our Christian faith and responsible citizenship are about caring and loving, about creating and sustaining a beloved community for which we sacrifice time and talent and resources. They are about nurturing others in the quest for health and well-being. They are about honing a vision of peace and acting upon it. Demonstrating a strong linkage between our Christian faith and responsible citizenship can transform congregations and governments into humane servants of humankind . . .

Those two observations are vague and sweeping. Try these:

3. Highlight our peace witness by making a presentation during a worship service of *Shoes of Peace* to high school students early in their freshman year and follow up with videos in church school that highlight some of the persons in the book. All are available from Brethren Press.

4. Provide books on peace and non-violence to your public library – and when they are ready for circulation,



David Waas

write reviews of those books in your local paper and see that they are highlighted in your church memo or newsletter. Provide subscriptions for your public library and for church and public school teachers to publications dealing with nonviolence and peace. A relatively small investment could have a wide ranging impact.

5. Create a peace scholarship for youth in your congregation or community to recognize students for creative activity in peacemaking or to support them in an internship with a local or national peace organization. We need to be vigorous in building human resources for the future – young people who have been nurtured in their convictions and introduced to ways in which they can work for peace.

6. Identify an issue for which you have a passion that links your Christian faith and public policy, and then express that passion by accessing the Washington Office’s legislative updates, forwarding articles on that subject by e-mail or writing letters to the editor highlighting information and encouraging debate – letters that are brief and to the point, respectful, and above all underscore your Christian faith. The Christian faith and social and political life and a more peaceful society are not separate issues they are in-separable.

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Together We Just Might Save the World

David Waas, continued from page 3

7. Are you in the generation we lovingly call seniors? What a tremendous resource you are!

- You can help organize Seniors for Peace in your community, congregation, or retirement home. On Earth Peace is eager to help with networking and programming ideas.

- Volunteer to talk with public and/or church school classes about your Civilian Public Service experience or as a veteran whose experiences have helped shape a vision for peace.

- Seniors are excellent lobbyists – work with the Brethren Witness/Washington Office and On Earth Peace on selecting topics, working on training, and Capitol Hill calling. Organize a district-wide training session for seniors who might be interested in lobbying...

- Talk seriously with your grandchildren about your passion for peace... Young people need ever more and frequent avenues through which they can establish a sense of connectedness to our peace heritage. You can be such a channel.

8. Join Christian Peacemaker Teams

or Brethren Volunteer Service as both a testimony to your faith and as a change agent in a place where injustice, violence, or tension is overwhelming.

9. Participate in an adult Christian Citizenship Seminar – there will be one in 2006 – and prepare now to send the youth of your church to the youth seminar in 2007.

10. Establish a sister congregation relationship with a church or mosque in another cultural milieu in your town, elsewhere in the country or abroad, and work at dialogue about what social justice and peace mean.

Last month our grandson, Michael Smith, was traveling in Guatemala and from there wrote, “It’s possible to hear the distant echoes of the greatness of this society, to picture these amazing structures in their newly-built glory . . . In these increasingly contentious days I am heartened by the feat of building Tikal . . . impressive a millennia later. I can imagine that it was considered an impossible task to complete, and yet it was. It’s a lesson for those of us who endeavor to create a peaceful future.”

Benjamin Rush, a reformer and signer of the Declaration of Independence

wrote, “Perhaps those German sects of Christians who refuse to bear arms for the shedding of human blood may be preserved by Divine Providence as the center of a circle which shall gradually embrace all nations of the earth in a perpetual treaty of friendship and peace.” Rush wrote that these sects are “repositories of a truth of the gospel, which must spread hereafter over every part of the world.”

Donald Durnbaugh writes, “The challenge is clear. It remains to be seen how Brethren will respond in the rapidly approaching twenty-first century.” That century is here and the challenge is even clearer.

Perhaps the plea of the psalmist can be ours as well? “Let thy work be manifest to thy servants, and thy glorious power to their children. Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.”

We who are devoted to peace face a tremendous challenge – but as William Sloane Coffin said, “Together, we just might save the world.”

Join our Monthly Donors Group!

Many friends of On Earth Peace have chosen to contribute monthly, and we are providing two easy ways for you to join them. You can authorize a direct deposit from your bank to ours, or you can approve a monthly charge on your credit card. Either way, your monthly gift of \$10, \$20, \$50 or more will have these advantages:

- you will no longer receive semi-annual appeal letters from us;
- you won't have to remember to write and send a check;
- the steady income will benefit On Earth Peace programs;

- you can express your support for reconciliation in a tangible, regular way.

If you're interested, it's easy to get started. Just check the appropriate line on the return envelope in this issue. You can also call (410) 635-8704 or e-mail oepa_oepa@brethren.org to let us know of your interest, and we will send a simple form to fill out. If you change your mind at any time, you can revise or discontinue your pledge with a simple phone call to us. And you have our assurance that all information will be handled in strict confidence.

Delegation to the Middle East Israel/Palestine January 12 - 24, 2006

Co-Sponsors
On Earth Peace and Christian Peacemaker Teams
Delegation Leader
Bob Gross, Co-Director, On Earth Peace



Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), a violence-reduction project of Brethren and Mennonite congregations and Friends meetings, has maintained a team of trained peacemakers in Hebron since June 1995.

This delegation will meet with Israeli and Palestinian peace and human rights workers. In addition, delegation members will join the CPT teams in Hebron and At-tuwani in daily patrols, accompaniment and documentation. They will also join in a public witness that non-violently confronts the injustice and violence there.

Participants should be prepared to

- Spend 12 days in Israel/Palestine
- Prepare for the trip by becoming familiar with the current conditions there
- Communicate their experiences to local congregations, groups and the media upon return
- Raise \$2000 to cover costs of the trip from a designated point in North America. (Includes international airfare, all in-country travel, simple accommodations, two meals per day, honoraria, and delegation fees.)

On Earth Peace will assist Church of the Brethren members in raising funds for the cost of the trip by offering ideas, networking and limited scholarships.

On Earth Peace
Bob Gross
260-982-7751 • bgross@igc.org
Christian Peacemaker Teams
Claire Evans
773-277-0253 • delegations@cpt.org

Ministry of Reconciliation Workshop Advanced Reconciliation Skills

*Applying the
Polarity Principles for Reconciliation
In Congregations*

November 16-18, 2005
Camp Mack, Milford, Indiana

Not every conflict is a problem to be solved. Some conflicts are natural polarities.

Learn:

- the dynamics of polarities
- techniques for helping congregations manage, value, and find the positive potential in their differences.

Leadership

Mike Crump, Ministry of Reconciliation Practitioner and Principal, Michigan Mediation Associates, and Bob Gross, Co-executive director, On Earth Peace

Fees

\$124 includes tuition and materials. Accommodations at Camp Mack are an additional \$76 per person and include all meals and two nights' lodging.

Continuing Education Units

Available for Church of the Brethren ministers through the Brethren Academy.

For more information or to register, contact

Annie Clark

260-982-8595, annieclark@mchsi.com



Support the
International Day of Peace
September 21, 2005

*Established by the
United Nations in 1981*

Visit www.internationaldayofpeace.org for details and resources.

Ten years after bringing Brethren history and Christian peacemaking alive for children, youth, and adults in Church of the Brethren congregations, schools, and camps across the country, JOYA regathered in 2004-2005 to help On Earth Peace celebrate 30 years of peacemaking through concerts in five areas of the country.

This CD, of which all proceeds go to help further the ministries of On Earth Peace, brings old and new gems together to exhibit JOYA's remarkable blend and tight harmonies.

To order this new CD, contact On Earth Peace at 410-635-8704 or djohnson_oepe@brethren.org.

Glimpses of Freedom JOYA

JOYA ('HOY-an') is an acronym for 'Journey of Young Adults,' and in Spanish, it means both a jewel and a gem (a precious person).



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Mission Statement

On Earth Peace Assembly is a movement grounded in the Church of the Brethren dedicated to following the teachings of Jesus Christ in renewing and living out our biblical and denominational heritage of peace. Our purpose, through religious and educational activities, is to empower people to discern the things that make for peace – in ourselves, within families, in our global environment, among nations – and to advocate peace and justice, seeking the realization of God's will on earth as it is in heaven.