



On Earth Peace

Winter 2004/2005

Praying for Transformation

In the last several months I recommitted to the practice of having an altar in my home. I spread a green cloth over a low table in my bedroom, and covered it with fragments of scripture, items from the natural world, symbols, and tokens of grace. In the morning, I light the candles there and pause, allowing each object to remind me in fullness about the abundance of life found in the heart of God, and the grace and love freely available to me in each moment of my day.

The connection between prayer and peacemaking is intimate, an inner deepening and renewal. In prayer disciplines, we have the chance to extend our spiritual roots further into God, and explore how grace can inform our daily activities. We ask for strength and resilience. We give up to God the drive for results, and ask for openness to God's activity in the present moment.

I struggle with hardheartedness against those I judge or dismiss. My morning prayers give me space to remember that I am loved, by opening myself to the movement of God in my heart. It also gives a chance for the fresh waters of grace to soften my hardhearted dismissal of others.

What would it be like if, instead of praying for victory for our causes (inside

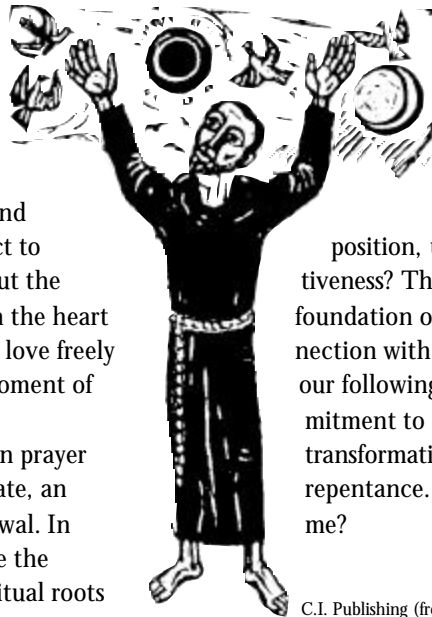
the church or out, progressive or conservative), we prayed on a daily basis to understand the heart of God's grace at a personal level?

What if we each prayed that we might fall in love with all those we meet – regardless of politics,

position, usefulness, attractiveness? This builds on the foundation of one's personal connection with Christ, and deepens our following of Jesus. It is a commitment to our own continued transformation – turning – repentance. Will you turn with me?

Matt Guynn

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What's inside...

In this final issue of five which address the Living Peace Church Resolution from the 2003 Annual Conference, we look at the following commitment: "We will pray individually and together for transformation and courage as we struggle to extend our love for our neighbor to include our enemy." Here's what's inside:

- Ideas about prayer disciplines
- Interviews with peacemakers who risk for their faith, and how prayer gives them strength
- Reflections from across the denomination on how prayer and peacemaking interact

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love; when there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand, to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying [to ourselves] that we are born to eternal life.*

Prayer of St. Francis

The Breath Prayer: A Ceaseless Prayer



Helen Beery

“Be cheerful no matter what; pray all the time; thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you, who belong to Christ Jesus, to live.”

I Thessalonians 5: 16-18, *The Message*

How does one adhere to such instruction? A lot of the time we excuse ourselves from even trying because everyone knows it's impossible. And yet, we are also aware that we desire to live in such a manner. We do want to try to “pray all the time,” to “pray without ceasing.”

“The Jesus Prayer is the traditional practice of ceaseless prayer in the Christian tradition. The usual form is ‘Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ The longer form is ‘Jesus, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me, a

sinner.’ Several shorter forms are ‘Jesus, have mercy on me’ or ‘Jesus, mercy’ or ‘Kyrie Eleison.’ The shortest form is simply ‘Jesus’” (Mary Margaret Funk, *Tools Matter*, p. 93).

Ron DelBene practices ceaseless prayer in a form he calls “The Breath Prayer” (*Into The Light*, pp. 32-34). This way of praying is more personal than the Jesus Prayer in that you choose the words of the prayer according to your need. The method is simple:

- At a time and place in which you can become quiet and meditative, begin this process.
- As you settle into the calm and quiet, consciously remind yourself that you are in God's presence. Close your eyes. Become aware of your breathing. Establish a gentle rhythm. Imagine that God is calling you by your name. “(Your name), what do you want?”
- Respond with what comes from your heart. It could be a single word, such as peace, forgiveness, patience. It may be a phrase or sentence such as, “I want to feel you with me.” This response becomes the heart of your prayer.
- Next choose your favorite name for God. God, Jesus, Holy One, Spirit, or Christ are commonly used.
- With your name for God and with your response to God's question, “What do you want?,” you now have your prayer.

Often you need to try out various possibilities to get to what you really want. The prayer you choose answers the question, “What do I want that will make me feel most whole?” Once you determine this, work with the phrasing until you have a prayer of six to eight syllables. Say it several times so that it flows smoothly and rhythmically when said aloud or expressed silently. Some examples of breath prayers are, “Let me feel your peace, O Lord,” “Father, let me feel your love,” “Jesus, let me feel you with me,” and “Renew me with your Spirit, God.”

Though it may seem awkward at first, as in any new learning, the more you do it, the easier and more natural it becomes. At the beginning, you must consciously work at repeating your prayer over and over. Do it in rhythm with your breathing. The Hebrew word for breath is “ruach.” Scripture tells us that “God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7 NRSV).

We are living beings and the breath of God is in us. By discovering your breath prayer, you will have found one way to follow the I Thessalonians 5 instruction “to pray all the time, to pray without ceasing.”

Helen Beery is a Spiritual Director and a member of the Manchester (Indiana) Church of the Brethren.

Author of Peace, we thank you for the community of faith and the love of saints, which we claim even as we struggle with the terror and horror of war. Surprise us with your presence! Supply us with your Spirit so that we will be strengthened to live out your will in love and peace. Use us to become reconcilers.

Often we want to run away from the seemingly impossible task of emptying ourselves for others as You did. Remind us often that we are commanded to love as You did, giving

yourself for others. Make us eager to overcome evil with good, never desiring vengeance on our enemies, but loving them into your kingdom.

Instead of living by “an eye for an eye,” teach us to value each other as children of God, even when we may be persecuted for Your name's sake. Help us to endure any pain that will bring peace. In your name. Amen.

Lorene Moore is pastor of the Springfield (Missouri) Church of the Brethren.

Being Available to God

Going places where I don't feel I belong has never been easy for me. I recall a time years ago when I was really challenged and it took a step of faith for me to be obedient.

I had been a room mother periodically for our children. At that time, they were in junior high school and the situation concerning the community (including myself) was a teacher's strike that was getting heated. Before I left for my scheduled activity of the morning, I spent time in devotions and prayer. I prayed for the people involved and then opened myself to the leading of the Spirit. As a result, I felt a call to go to the school that morning and offer my prayers, a hope for reconciliation, and "anything that I could do."

To my surprise, the principal invited me into his office and then asked if I would speak to the teachers and staff the following morning. All along I had resisted getting involved like this and I complained to the Lord about it! But I did go back to more prayer and then got busy preparing, being very nervous about this new assignment.

At the teacher/staff meeting, I was obedient to what I was called to do. I spoke my heart and hope. One never knows the consequences of a testimony or an action. What I did know was that I grew in faith and trust. I was reminded of the saying that God is more needful of our availability than our ability.

Joyce Parker is a member of the First Church of the Brethren, Ashland, Ohio.

The Relationship Of Prayer



Becky Ullom

In West Virginia last summer, the General Board drafted a resolution on Iraq that was subsequently passed by Annual Conference delegates. The resolution opens with Jesus' words from Luke 6:27: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who abuse you." Following this Gospel message, here are some excerpts from the resolution:

"In the wake of the war in Iraq, and the subsequent scandal of prisoner abuse, we as a church call all people to prayer and repentance."

The General Board calls upon "congregations and members to be in steadfast prayer and petition."

"Our deepest prayers of confession, our compassionate prayers of care, and our faithful prayers of hope are the strength we find in the realities of this day."

This resolution clearly calls us to rec-

ognize prayer as an essential tool for peace building.

Why is prayer given such a prominent role in our life as a "living peace church"? In some sense, that seems like a rhetorical question. To be living is to be changing, and prayer encourages change through relationship. During prayer, God touches the relationship between the person or persons praying and the topic of the prayer. And all people, not just those with economic power or intellectual prowess, can invite God to work in their hearts and minds through relationship in prayer. When we as individuals and groups invite God to work in our hearts and minds, God's presence will be reflected in our lives. It stands to reason that God's presence would then also be reflected in our communities and systems of relationships – from congregational dynamics to local economics to international politics. Although one can pray about things other than peace, it is difficult to imagine one's ability to make peace without the transformation prayer provides. Prayer is a tool that can and must be used in all stages and expressions of making peace.

For a complete copy of the Iraq resolution, visit www.brethren.org/ac/ac_statements/2004Iraq.html.

Becky Ullom is the Director of Identity and Relations for the Church of the Brethren General Board.

The church is called to be a community living out the peace of Christ in the midst of a broken and fallen world; the task is huge. Without prayers expressing the hope of Christ and narrowing the focus of the task that God may have for us as individuals (or a community), we may stray off course and miss opportunities where we might be useful vessels. Prayer is essential whether we are on our knees or lifting momentary pleas for help or giving thanks. Praying through scripture is a good practice, too, but open communication with God and asking for guidance seem like basic tools for peacemakers.

Joyce Parker

Living By Faith, Sustained By Prayer

On the morning of September 29, 2004, Israeli settlers attacked Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) members Chris Brown and Kim Lamberty as they accompanied Palestinian children to school in the village of Tuwani, near the city of Hebron in the West Bank of Israel. CPT had been asked by the parents to accompany the children because of previous settler harassment.

Five settlers came from an illegal outpost of the nearby settlement and attacked Chris and Kim with a chain and bats. They pushed Chris to the ground, whipped him with a chain and kicked him in the chest, puncturing his lung. Kim suffered a broken arm and knee. Both were hospitalized. The settlers also stole Kim's passport, money, and cellular phone. All of the children escaped injury.

Chris has now returned to Tuwani. During a phone conversation, Rick Polhamus, a CPT member from the Pleasant Hill (Ohio) Church of the Brethren, interviewed him about issues of prayer and faith.

Rick: From where do you draw your faith to work in areas where you are at risk?

Chris: *My faith comes from trying to live the teachings of scripture. Many times I go back to those scriptures that others dismiss because it makes them uncomfortable. For example, the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus says to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," wasn't taught just for show, but as a requirement for how we are to act. Jesus taught that "blessed are those that mourn, blessed are the meek and merciful, and those that hunger for righteousness." He taught that "blessed are the peacemakers." We need to understand that this is a mandate not just a suggestion.*

Rick: When you are on a CPT project, what does it mean to you that people

here are praying for you?

Chris: *It's always nice to be held in the light. It gives me strength and helps me feel connected to God's bigger plan. But it's easy to pray for someone that you know. I would ask, "Are you also praying for the oppressed and vulnerable? Are you praying for settlers, like those that beat me up? Are you praying for political leaders who are making the policies that oppress and destroy people? Is your prayer life leading you to action?"*

Rick: Do you find yourself praying for the settlers?

Chris: (laughs) *I struggle with that sometimes. My first time back out after being beaten, I was praying for God to give me the courage and the strength to continue the work and for protection for the people here. Then I realized that I needed to pray for the settlers too. And sometimes I get really angry with the leaders like (Israeli prime minister) Sharon. Then I remember that he is a child of God, just like I am.*

Rick: For who or what else do you pray?

Chris: *I often pray for God to remove the apathy of people back home. So many people don't care what is happening to others. Or they will say, "I can't do these things that you do." Well, I don't have any super powers. It's a matter of trying to live out your faith. We are called to help the less fortunate and to ease the suffering of others. We are called to be Christ's body in the world. I can understand if people are unable to travel here, but that doesn't excuse them from working for justice. They can contact their representatives and hold them accountable for the policies that cause injustice. And if they don't respond, we have a right to fire them when it's time to vote. People can hold the media accountable to cover all sides of the stories.*

Rick: What would you say about the faith of the people there?



Chris Brown accompanying school children in Hebron.

Chris: *I am really impressed with the faith of the Palestinians, whether Muslim or Christian. They live with the strong belief that no matter how much suffering they are going through now that someday God will make it right. They say no matter what injustice is done, you have to follow the teachings of your faith. CPT also has many Jewish friends that are doing good work in living out their faith and in trying to right the injustices. Rabbi Arik Ascherman of Rabbis For Human Rights is one who really works from a Biblical perspective and inspires others to take their faith seriously. It is people like that who bridge the conflict and help transform situations that would lead to more violence. Micah 6:8 says, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" The Bible is filled with calls to peace and justice. If you aren't filled with a desire for peace and justice, what good are you?*

Rick: Anything else you would like to say about prayer?

Chris: *Well, it is always easy to be asking something of God. Why not praise and thank God too? We need to constantly evaluate our prayer life.*

Prayer Gives Us Daily Peace

Prayer is the cornerstone of our days and keeps us grounded and sane for the day's journey. Morning prayers before rising give us inner peace to start the day, but must be continued to keep this peace and for the workplace to stay at peace.

As owners of a catering business, there will be days (and sometimes they are many) that our inner peace is shaken by the actions of others. Oftentimes there are hundreds of little one-sentence prayers to get through the day peacefully. Employees don't show up at work, causing us to be short-handed. A customer having a bad day mistreats one of our employees. Two trucks run out of food and by the time more arrives, it may be too late to keep the factory workers happy. Someone runs a stop sign and hits one of our trucks, flipping it over and injuring the employee. And when things like those mentioned above have happened all in one day, we hang on by a prayer. A prayer for inner peace and a prayer to treat all the people with whom we come in contact that day with compassion.

Not every day is like the days mentioned above. There are many days in this life when we are able to pray for others – personal peace, for peace in the city with no gang slayings or robbery killings. And many times our prayers extend to being a people at peace. But our largest prayer is always for world peace. No matter how far from reach it appears, it will make it into our prayers by nightfall.

Dan and Yvonne Schwartz are members of the Rock Run Church of the Brethren, Goshen, Indiana.

Peace, Prayer, and Healing

How might we connect “prayer” and “peacemaking” in the context of the caring ministries? A helpful starting place would be to determine the things that make for peace, and a useful scripture for this is Micah 6:8, “*He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*” When justice and loving kindness are functional expressions of our faith, peacemaking is well served.

Justice and kindness not only make for peace, but are healing as well. A hallmark of the Association of Brethren Caregivers’ (ABC) caregiving ministry is its advocacy for the marginalized. Our churches, like our society, have members who are vulnerable. They are victims of abuse and those who struggle with mental illness. Some may have a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS or have a family member in prison. A physical disability and an inaccessible church building may keep some from joining fully into the life of the church family. Often these people and their concerns are invisible to the rest of the church – doubling the pain of their wounds. When we stand in solidarity with brothers and sisters on the margins by working for justice and extending the loving kindness of Christ, healing begins.

The Micah passage also underscores the importance of walking “humbly with your God,” which includes taking time



Scott Douglas

for spiritual nurture. This is where prayer intersects with our peacemaking. Prayer can be expressed in a wondrous variety of ways. It may be praiseful and energetic or silent and contemplative. Most importantly, in prayer, we enter into the presence of God, and we are renewed.

Peacemaking and caregiving are demanding ministries in which we would quickly “burn out” without prayer. With the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit, we are able to recognize that it is ultimately God and not ourselves who makes the peace and brings the healing. The prayer of the ABC staff is for the healing of injustice that our world might enjoy a lasting peace.

Scott W. Douglas is the Director of Older Adult Ministries for the Association of Brethren Caregivers.

Living as a Christian in the world is to experience all of the frustration of delay and silence in the prayer requests we make. But faith, if it's really faith, lives with the limits, settles down with the silence, and keeps knocking on God's door, trusting that on the other side is the Someone who knows my name.

Christy Dowdy is co-pastor of the Stone Church of the Brethren, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. Excerpted from a sermon “Losing Heart?” which can be read in its entirety at www.brethren.org/oeпа/newsletter.html.

The Energy of God



Carrie Fry-Miller

Let's get something straight. Contrary to popular belief, being on the Youth Peace Travel Team is not as easy as it seems. I began to learn quickly the great deal of energy required to meet new people, plan and lead sessions, and travel from camp to camp every week. As my energy level was dwindling toward the end of the summer, frustration and exhaustion were becoming normal

feelings. While we were at Camp Swatara, the last camp on our schedule, I was feeling this exhaustion even more.

I was taking a nap one evening, and was awakened by the calming sound of rain outside. I went and sat on the porch and watched the rain. The green leaves on the trees were glazed by the falling raindrops, and the gentle breeze made the leaves shimmer in the evening air. I was experiencing GOD in this moment. Through this prayer I was able to let go of all my frustrations and let myself be comforted, held, and embraced by the arms of the Spirit who gives new Life. This gave me the energy I had been seeking all summer. I learned the importance of letting go and letting GOD be present as I seek to share Her Peace.

Carrie Fry-Miller is a student at Manchester College, and a member of the Beacon Heights Church of the Brethren, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Taking The Time To Listen and Pray

My husband and I completed a three-year term with Mennonite Central Committee last year as peace workers in the war-torn Acholi region of Uganda. We were partnered with the local churches. I worked with the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, a peace effort being made by the region's Catholic, Anglican, and Muslim leaders to mediate between the government and the rebels, to encourage rebels to give up their weapons and come home, and to prepare the local population to accept the rebels back into their communities.

The work was life-threatening, with two priests killed and several injured in our stay there; stressful, as hundreds of thousands of displaced people turned to these leaders for strength, resources, and a voice; and terribly draining, as the war has gone on for nearly twenty years. The courage and resiliency of these leaders

were a daily witness to us, but one story of prayer really caught our attention.

The Catholic Archbishop Odama, a humble, articulate, and warm man, made a point of spending every Thursday in silent meditation and prayer. No matter how busy his schedule or how many important visitors wanted to see him, he carefully reserved an entire day every week to focus and pray. We were astounded, we who can barely take one hour out of each day to listen and pray. We kept asking him how he did it, and he would smile and say, "I cannot afford NOT to do it, especially considering the work that I do."

May God bless the peace efforts of Northern Uganda.

Kathryn Smith Derksen attends Evergreen Mennonite Church in Bellevue, Washington.

Namaste

Envision it...
trees and flowers
babies
bees
motorcycles
coffee pots and computers
banks
books and
waterfalls
military officers
whales
gates and buttons
school children and
puppy dogs
roots
stars and
clocks
grandparents
windmills
weavers and workers
colors
sound
movement and
space
tanks and
even bombs

still
quiet
at peace
folded in prayer
for the whole world

for the whole world
for the whole wide world.

Envision it
with a
wide, open heart
and
a soul
willing to breathe
the
final
Amen
to war.

Kathy Fuller Guisewite is a member of the Richmond (Virginia) Church of the Brethren, and wrote this in honor of International Day of Prayer for Peace, September 21, 2004.

A Witness of Faith

Brenda Wilkinson is a member and minister in the Germantown (Pennsylvania) Church of the Brethren and is also a member of the On Earth Peace Board of Directors. Her ministry work focuses on the challenges of peace-making in an urban environment. Here Kim Stuckey Hissong talks with Brenda about prayer and peace.

Kim: Tell me about some of your passions in ministry.

Brenda: *I worry about young people so much because I don't want them to be the lost generation. I'm a minister at Germantown and I work with the youth as much as I can. I have a passion for them. We're all so busy day-to-day that we're not concerned about the stability of young people in Christ. There are so many things that are before them that teach them to live the wrong way.*

I don't want them to grow up in a system with so much violence that they don't know about peace. Because peace is faith. Period. Romans tells us that our faith gives us peace. So, we have to find new approaches to introduce what peace is to the young people. They're scared to go home, to go to school, to go to the movies. We need to let them know that God gives us peace.

Kim: In the work that you do, what risks are involved?

Brenda: *One of the biggest risks is being misunderstood. When people misunderstand the message, then you aren't effective. I pray, before I do anything, to let the Lord speak for me. How can I bring this message in the best way. If no one tells you about God, then you don't know. We need to help youth understand who they are before we show them who they are in Christ. I try to always be prayed up and studied up before I do anything.*

Kim: Do you have any special prac-

tices for keeping your self grounded such as some kind of prayer discipline?

Brenda: *I have morning devotions and prayer for myself every day. Our church has corporate prayer on Thursday night and a prayer box for concerns for the church and individuals – if I have prayer concerns I make sure I bring it before the rest of the congregation.*

I'm in prayer constantly. I could pass an accident on the road – prayer is always needed... When I read things in the paper, I pray for them. Everybody needs prayer. Prayer is the only thing that will help us. Some people take it lightly, but I don't.

Kim: Have you ever felt discouraged in your work?

Brenda: *The human body makes you that way sometimes. I get discouraged, when I try to do things on my own, instead of looking at the goodness of what God has done. Then I start to examine myself – am I doing this for God or for me?*

I try to remember what Paul said – to be content in whatever situation I'm in. Then I don't get as discouraged. I try not to look back when things aren't going the right way. I think of what Paul said that God has His time, that's not necessarily my time. I try to remember whenever something [negative] happens, there is something that God is trying to show me. Sometimes I don't grasp it right away.

God is a protector. I take care of everybody else because God takes care of me. We get weak and that's when God is strong. God is always God and doesn't fail us in anything. That keeps me from getting discouraged.

Kim: Tell me about a powerful experience that you have had where you knew prayer and God were at work.

Brenda: *The most powerful testimony I ever heard was when I had to go sing at a little church in South Philadelphia and there*



Brenda Wilkinson

was a lady in the front row so happy and full of the Lord. She got up and testified about a deacon in the church. She was a prostitute and he used to tell her that he was going to come and get her and take her to church. He prayed and the church would pray for her. And then he didn't see her for a while. Just as he was going to a Bible study one night, he saw her walking up the steps of a building. He asked where she had been and she put a gun in his hand. She was getting ready to go inside her house and commit suicide. This is the power of love and showing that you care that can change people.

Kim: How do prayer and peace interact in your life?

Brenda: *First of all, in order for us to survive and show the love of God, we have to have peace and the only peace we can get comes from God. We have to show our love to everyone else. People ask me how I can sleep at night [with all the violence in the world]? We have the peace of God and we know who controls this world, regardless. It goes hand in hand. The more I pray, the more peace I feel. When I'm out at night or on the bus and I feel scared, I just pray. Prayer and peace go hand in hand. All of it comes from our faith.*

Peacemaking and Prayer: The Place for Rage

Having witnessed the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem and endured the despair of the Exile, the psalmist raises up his prayer:

*By the rivers of Babylon –
there we sat down and there we wept
when we remembered Zion.
On the willows there we hung up our harps.
For there our captors asked us for songs,
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”*

The sorrow that lives in the hearts of those yearning for peace finds free expression in prayer. The challenge to peace is not the sorrow itself, but the rage it veils. The psalmist may begin his prayer with melancholy longing for his homeland, but he ends it calling for vengeance:

*Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites
the day of Jerusalem’s fall,
how they said, “Tear it down!
Tear it down! Down to its foundations!”
O daughter of Babylon, you devastator!
Happy shall they be who pay you back
what you have done to us!
Happy shall they be who take your little ones
and dash them against the rock!*

We deceive ourselves to think we can enter in where the yearning for peace runs deep and long and not feel the rage. Peacemaking while enraged is impossible, yet denying the anger will not make it go away. God is greater than our rage and stands waiting to hear our honest confession of even the most dreadful thoughts and emotions. Prayer allows us to place that rage at the feet of God.

We are called to peacemaking precisely because there is no peace. Prayer affords us the freedom to feel the rage of injustice and pass it on, so that, unburdened, we may take up God’s challenge of peacemaking.

Carol Scheppard is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Bridgewater College and a member of the Lebanon Church of the Brethren, Mt. Sidney, Virginia.

Peace Distilled

*Attention from distraction I turn.
Prayer focuses, distills
primal elements for view.
I, creature, need relationship.
I, creature, am not God.*

*In the stillness I
breathe out held weight
of my misperception;
In the stillness I
breathe in renewed recognition:
I am called simply to be
with the Creator, lighter now.
From the stillness
finding motion in the turning
to make peace with my own
creatureliness
once again. I raise my eyes
to see the Other as part
of the same prayer,
focused in peace
distilled.*

Tracy Knechel is a massage therapist in Lafayette, Indiana, and a member of the Richmond (Indiana) Church of the Brethren.

Everylight, Inc.: A Prayer For Global Cooperation

I was raised in the Church of the Brethren and believe that God speaks to individuals whose insights are rooted in the Gospels and anchored in the faith community. It is within this climate that I developed a life of contemplation which led to the call to create Everylight, Inc.

Everylight is a seed. It is not a grand plan but a simple prayer. The hope of Everylight is that uniting the light of our individual interests can create the synergy we need to fill the world with the joy of understanding, delight, and compassion. This ministry is based on just one belief. We do not need to agree with each other in order to cooperate, but we must be able to cooperate in order to survive and thrive.

As people of faith, we need to respect and care for others; we do not need to approve of them. This is necessary for the miracle of global cooperation to occur. The task seems impossible. The prayer is always possible. Having faith is to let our prayers

be acts of change that move us toward the impossible. Jesus shows us how to do this. On the cross, in complete despair, he reached out with words of compassion for everyone, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

The world needs the example of Jesus so that we can let our lives become prayers of hope for humanity.

To find out more about the ministry of Everylight, Inc., log onto www.everylight.org.

Reba Herder, who was recently ordained to the ministry of prayer and peacemaking, is a member of the La Verne (California) Church of the Brethren.



Praying for Peace

On September 21, the World Council of Churches called for a Day of International Peace. Many persons planned vigils and worship services. In Kent, Ohio, Verdena Lee, a member of the On Earth Peace Board of Directors and the Water Street Church of the Brethren, planned a 24-hour vigil. Here are her reflections:

I think that yesterday ranks as one of the best days of my life in this world. People had an opportunity to see Christians host an event for all people to practice peace. We had people of all faiths attend and



Candles were lit near flags of many nations at war.

gain understanding of Christ's perspective on peace in conversation, reading materials... even in moments of conflict with an angry attendee who walked away with feelings diffused after we found common ground on which to agree.

Several adults and children read poetry and histories of countries with current armed conflict at the beginning of each hour. With the exception of two to three hours on either end of the vigil, someone was there with me in peace every hour. Two others stayed with me through the whole night.

Thank you for all your prayers and support for this important international project.

Without your good will in this earth, this event could not have been possible.



Verdena Lee

Prayerfully Surrendering Ourselves

From 1954 to 1957 I was serving in Brethren Volunteer Service as Student Exchange Representative in Germany. As part of my work, I helped arrange for a young woman from Germany to spend the year at a Brethren-related college. For reasons unclear, she was not able to adjust to American college life and became despondent. As it became apparent that the best solution was for her to return to Germany, she was taken to the Brethren Service Center to begin the trip home. There she took her own life.

A few weeks later Dietmar, the student's brother, visited Brethren Haus in Kassel to learn about the organization that had "taken his sister" from them. On the day that he was able to come, no one with advanced German language skills was available to talk to him. The task fell to me. I was aware that my German was woefully inadequate to discuss death with a bereaved person. I

wouldn't even have known what to say in English!

Then, remembering Jesus' statement that we should not worry about how to defend ourselves in difficult situations because the Holy Spirit would teach us what to say, I trustingly threw myself upon God's mercy. I took Dietmar from office to office and explained as well as I could in my broken German what each of the programs was trying to do. I told him about material aid to refugees, Heifer Project, international workcamps, student exchange, and the volunteers who were working in refugee camps, kindergartens, and hospitals.

It appeared that my prayer to be a channel of God's message was answered with a miracle. Dietmar caught the vision of the loving service in Christ's name which Brethren Service was carrying out! Because his contact was through me, I became to him the symbol of Brethren Service, and he expressed a

desire to keep in touch with me.

Thus, for some 35 years we exchanged small remembrances each Christmas. Then, I did not hear from him for several years. When he wrote again, he reported that he had been struggling with mental illness and that because of this struggle, he had finally gained some understanding of what had probably occurred for his sister.

The delicate wood carvings Dietmar sent through the years remind me regularly, whether I am talking to soldiers in Hebron, accompanying indigenous people in Chiapas, awaiting arrest at Fort Benning or the San Francisco Federal Building, or writing to my legislators, that God is able to use our feeble efforts for divine purposes if we but prayerfully surrender ourselves.

Esther Ho is a member of the Fellowship in Christ Church of the Brethren, Fremont, California, and is active with "Mustard Seed," a local faith-based affinity group.

Calendar

January 7 - 9, 2005

Jubilee Troupe Retreat Weekend:
Spiritual Energizing and Skill-Sharing
through Sacred Arts
New Windsor, Maryland
Led by Chris Fitz, Paul Grout, Matt
Guynn, Arlene Kiely, Gloria Newton,
Holly White and YOU!

January 7 - 9, 2005

Youth Peace Retreat
Spring Creek Church of the Brethren
Camp Swatara
Bethel, Pennsylvania
Led by Kim Stuckey Hissong and
congregational youth leaders

January 10 - 13, 2005

On Earth Peace Joint Staff Retreat
with Association of Brethren
Caregivers
Camp Harmony
Hooversville, Pennsylvania

January 21 - 23, 2005

Youth Peace Retreat
York Center Church of the Brethren
Lombard, Illinois
Led by Bob Gross

March 4 - 6, 2005

Pacific Southwest
30th Anniversary Event
([www.brethren.org/oepa/
30thAnniversary.html](http://www.brethren.org/oepa/30thAnniversary.html))

March 4, JOYA concert, Modesto
Church of the Brethren

March 5, Conflict Transformation for
Congregational Leaders Workshop,
Empire Church of the Brethren

March 6, JOYA concert, La Verne
Church of the Brethren

March 11 - 12, 2005

Peace Skills for the Family Workshop
Presented by the Northern Ohio
Peace Task Team
Camp Inspiration Hills,
Burbank, Ohio

April 14 - 16, 2005

On Earth Peace Board of Directors
New Windsor, Maryland

May 14, 2005

Peacemaking & Ministry Formation
Southern Pennsylvania &
Atlantic Northeast District Training
New Windsor, Maryland
Led by Barb Saylor

Praying with the Whole Body

You've probably heard many times, "Never underestimate the power of prayer." But what does it mean? What is prayer? Are our words always honest expressions of our deep spiritual desires? In a culture where science and technology reign supreme, how do we escape the trap of thinking that we always know? One eternal answer may come from an eternal blessing that we all share, our bodies.

If our whole bodies – not just our minds and mouths – are the temples of a Greater Power, then surely our whole bodies are for its prayer.

It is hard to describe all this in words. That's why I am making a special invitation for you to join us at our Jubilee Retreat weekend, January 7-9, 2005. We will move. We will play. We will share stories. We will listen together. And together, we will pray with the Whole Body. Will you join us?

The Jubilee Troupe, an independent project sponsored by On Earth Peace, is a new ensemble exploring interactive forms of drama, dance, and song as ways of praying – as one body, one community, one church. We seek to energize embodied ideas for prayer, worship, and outreach to the larger world in churches and gathered groups across the country this spring. We welcome invitations from your church to share interactive arts that can catalyze a renewing spirit in your body and the Whole Body around us.

Christopher Fitz, founder and director of Jubilee Troupe, is from Washington, DC, and York, Pennsylvania. For more information, call 1-888-228-4491, or visit www.jubileetroupe.org.

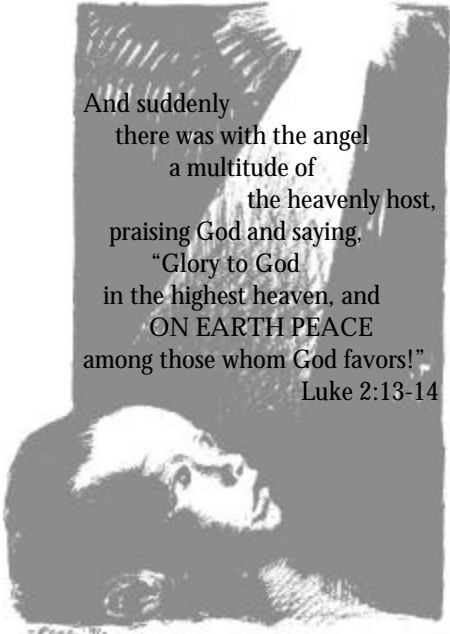
In addition to a monetary offering for On Earth Peace, participants at Western Regional Youth Conference also collected a food offering to be donated to the San Francisco Food Bank.

Youth and Young Adults Support Peace

This past summer, offerings at two different conferences raised support for the work of On Earth Peace. In June, 255 young adults gathered in Colorado for the first large-scale National Young Adult Conference. During an offering time, the group gave \$752 to support the ministry of On Earth Peace. In August, youth at Western Regional Youth Conference (WRYC), which brings together youth from Arizona, California, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington, donated \$400 to On Earth Peace.

Thanks to all who gave generously at these events!





And suddenly
 there was with the angel
 a multitude of
 the heavenly host,
 praising God and saying,
 "Glory to God
 in the highest heaven, and
 ON EARTH PEACE
 among those whom God favors!"
 Luke 2:13-14

Rene Boldt (from "Alternatives'
 Spirit of Simplicity," 800-821-6153)

In a time when peace can seem impossible, we enter a season of hope. Let us hold on to this precious image of a tiny baby with eyes of wonder, as we strive for a peaceful world.

The staff and board of On Earth Peace greatly appreciate your prayers, support, and commitment that enable us to carry out a spirit of hope throughout the year. Many blessings to you and your families in this season of peace.

As you think about gift-giving this season, consider a gift to OnEarth Peace in the name of a friend or family member. Such a gift will benefit many persons and will provide a sense of satisfaction to your loved one.

Many of the programs and services of On Earth Peace are offered at no cost to those served, thanks to the generosity of our individual and congregational supporters. Some programs, such as training workshops, do generate some income, but in all cases the actual costs exceed the income realized. Your gift can make all the difference.

- A gift of **\$20** will underwrite the cost of one participant at a Matthew 18 Workshop.
- A gift of **\$35** will provide telephone consultation for a pastor seeking guidance in a difficult conflict situation.
- A gift of **\$50** will make it possible for one youth to attend a Peace Retreat.
- A gift of **\$100** will cover the costs of our Peace Witness Action List e-mail network for a month.
- A gift of **\$200** will provide support and resources for starting one local peace action support group.
- A gift of **\$300** will enable us to assemble a new Peace Basket full of books and resources to share with congregations.
- A gift of **\$500** will cover the cost of an entire Matthew 18 Workshop.
- A gift of **\$1,500** will provide the stipend for one member of next summer's Youth Peace Travel Team.

To acknowledge this gift, we will send a beautiful card with the image shown above to your friend or family member to let them know they have been honored with a gift from you to help create PEACE ON EARTH.



Yes, I'd like to make a gift in honor of a friend or family member in the amount of \$_____.

Person being honored _____

Address _____

Phone _____
 E-mail _____

My name _____

Address _____

Phone _____
 E-mail _____

Are you ready for the Jubilee?

Invite Jubilee to your
community this spring ...

Call 1-888-228-4491
chris@jubileetroupe.org

www.jubileetroupe.org

An independent project sponsored by On Earth Peace

A unique ensemble of
sacred drama,
dance and
song



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.



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