



Fall 2006

## Blossom Into Wholeness!



Within five minutes of arriving at Camp Pine Lake, near Eldora, Iowa, the rolling green and fresh air lifted layers of Des Moines' grimy concrete from my skin and soul. The Wild Rose Song & Story Fest, six days of music, storytelling, playing, eating, learning, and visiting, was a joyous way to unwind from the business and rush of Annual Conference as we embodied the fest's theme to "Blossom Into Wholeness."

In the evenings there were concerts featuring some of the best Brethren musicians. The spotlight was continually shared as nearly every musician was on stage nearly every night, providing harmony and instrumentation:

– LuAnne Harley and Brian Kruschwitz cornered the oral tradition market in a concert brimming with creativity and particularly family-friendly stories and songs.

– Mike Stern's lullabies would have put us to sleep if it weren't for his hard-hitting, truth-telling political ballads.

– On Earth Peace co-director Barb Saylor opened with grace and with-child humor for Peg Lehman. I sat in the grass in front of the stage and felt like one of the schoolchildren Peg sings for in Chicago, full of wonder and inspired imagination.

– Quaker Bill Joliff kept us "evangelical" and with his wife Brenda got us to square dance. Bill's dry, self-abasing humor provided comic relief all week.

– The most local talent came on the final evening with the Button-Harrison family stepping on stage and treating us to an excellent concert with a heavy dose of original tunes.

Music is the bridge between church and nature – the only language both speak. Each should be able to comfort, challenge, inspire, and teach us. Stories teach us about the fruits of the spirit, whether they are the Parables told by Jesus, a love story by Jonathan Hunter, or a story about the Christian Peacemaker Team's accompaniment work in Palestine by On Earth Peace's other co-director, Bob Gross. These stories were invitations to self-reflection and awe at nature's small blessings and humanity's capacity to love. This was a living peace church – a theology of justice and a sanctuary of trees and cornfields.

Workshops, campfires, and concerts weren't the only chances to grow. On a lazy afternoon canoe trip my 17- and 13-year-old cousins Ben and Calista bonded with a 50-some-year-old stranger, Jim, when a sneaky, sunken limb capsized

their canoe. That night Ben and Jim, fundamentally different people, built the campfire to seal the deal of their new friendship. I cannot imagine any other event that would have brought these two kind souls together.

This was the largest family reunion I've ever attended and my first time got me hooked. These six days were a taste of intentional community: honoring each new arrival by name, kids running free and cared for by all, and nap time every afternoon.

Children were seen, heard, loved, applauded, and mentored. They provided jokes, songs, and scriptural interpretation for evening campfires.

Song & Story Fest found a child, a performer, a teacher, and a student in each of us. It's the best-kept secret in the church these days, but reserve your spot early for 2007 at Camp Inspiration Hills\* 'cause the word's gonna get out.

– Anna Lisa Gross,

*Richmond (IN) Church of the Brethren*

\* The 2007 Song & Story Fest will be June 24-30 at Camp Inspiration Hills, Burbank, Ohio.

### Looking for Resources?

Check out the three inserts which are resources created for Annual Conference Insight Sessions made available for your use. Feel free to use and copy, but please give credit to On Earth Peace!

# Glimpses of Song & Story Fest

## A Camel? Through the Eye of a Needle?

In a session with the children (ages 7-12) at Song & Story Fest, Bob Gross and Jim Lehman asked them to create their own metaphors for Matthew 19:24, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." Here are some of their thoughts.

*It would be easier for the Titanic to fly...*

*It would be easier for a fish to swim in the sun...*

*It would be easier for an elephant to pogo-stick up Mount Everest...*

*It would be easier for an ant to lift the Empire State Building...*

*It would be easier for a whale to waltz with a bumble bee...*

*It would be easier for a flea to squish a rhinoceros...*

than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God,  
than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God,  
than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God.



## On Earth Peace at Annual Conference

A large banner replicating our 2005 Annual Report poster with the message of “Passing on Your Faith and Peace Witness to Children” both in English



Enjoying peace books at the display

and Spanish towered over the On Earth Peace booth at the 2006 Annual Conference in Des Moines, Iowa. Adding to this message, there were photos of children and adults spread throughout the display, a bookshelf of children’s peace books, and comfortable chairs for reading and sharing together.

The On Earth Peace oral report to the delegate body began with a passionate plea from staff member Matt Guynn:

*Part of being transformed in God’s love means being willing to point out where the world is out of line with God’s intentions – speaking up about situations and problems where there is a lack of love. God has a dream of the life that we could have together. If we are transformed, if we learn, if we are changed by God’s love, we will speak up for that dream and bring it to life.*

Following Matt’s sharing, Denique Conner (Rochester, NY), a recent graduate of Juniata College and a former soldier who spent time in Afghanistan, shared her journey of being recruited to the Army and her attempt to retract her enlistment as she was

transformed by reflection on justice and peacemaking. At the On Earth Peace annual breakfast, Denique was joined by Deb Oskin, a minister of peace from the Living Peace Church of the Brethren (Columbus, OH), to share further about the practices of military recruiters and ideas about how to proactively encounter recruitment.

On Earth Peace also sponsored ten insight sessions throughout the conference. On this and the next page, as well as the inserts, are resources created for these sessions.

– Barb Saylor



Denique Connor speaking to the delegates

## Building Bridges – Working Together

How do you work with someone whose viewpoint seems to be the polar opposite of yours? Three pairs of committed Church of the Brethren leaders discussed exactly that question during a very popular insight session, which at times was humorous, touching, and serious. James Myer (Lititz, PA) and Esther Frey (Mount Morris, IL), Doug Reichenbach (Freeport, MI) and Nate Polzin (Richmond, IN), and Doug Archer (South Bend, IN) and Craig Alan Myers (Columbia City, IN), shared of their work together within the

church, the discovery of their working partners’ very different beliefs, and how they continue to relate well. They spoke of the lessons they learned from each other. Sometimes, with a light touch, they teased each other, to the delight of the audience.

What makes their relationships work?

- finding common ground – their commitment to the church and to the teachings of the Bible
- invoking a sense of humor
- speaking respectfully and lovingly toward the other
- learning from those with opposing viewpoints
- noting the other’s integrity

Participants spoke of how assumptions and fears divide the body of Christ, yet by anticipating bumps in the road, and communicating well, the pairs have worked through divisive circumstances. Jim Myer summed it up by noting that no matter where one finds oneself on the theological spectrum, the goal for those in the Church of the Brethren remains the same – finding the mind of Christ.

– Bob Gross

– Annie Clark

## Working for Peace in the Middle East

An overflow crowd filled the chairs, the floor, and the doorway to hear David Waas and Susanna Farahat speak of their first-hand experience in Israel and Palestine. Susanna and David were members of a joint On Earth Peace/ Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to the Middle East in January of this year, and Susanna is coordinator of peace education for On Earth Peace.

Political and historical contexts were interwoven with individual stories of persons the delegation learned to know in its travels in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, and the village of At-tuwani. In the delegation’s ten-day itinerary, it met with peacemakers, community workers, Israeli settlers, and residents on all sides.

For those interested in learning first-hand about the difficulties and opportunities in Middle East peacemaking, our next delegation to Palestine and Israel will be January 10-22, 2007.

# Annual Conference Wrap-Up



Sharing ideas at the insight session "Generation X Meets Generation X Box: Engaging Plans for Today's Youth Group"

Dena Lee shares reflections on scripture at the insight session "Words of Peace: Scriptures for the Journey."



## Domestic Violence: Spiritual and Holistic Responses as a Living Peace Church

Participants in this insight session, co-sponsored with Women's Caucus and Association of Brethren Caregivers, learned a variety of ways to respond to domestic violence as a living peace church:

- **Learn** as much as you can about domestic violence.
- **Recognize** that domestic violence, like any type of violence (in our schools, hate crimes, war, etc.), needs to be addressed as a peace church.
- **Speak out** and admit that this is happening in our churches and in our church families. Leadership needs to talk about the problem and pray for those who are victimized, as well as describe in sermons and other settings the violence many of our families face.
- **Educate youth** and spend time talking openly about date-rape and battering, and be open to hearing the youth's concerns and questions. Bring in a professional counselor or social worker to share facts and stories, and to answer questions.
- **Be a safe place** where persons can come for help, and take seriously Christ's mandate to protect those who are most

vulnerable in our midst.

- **Make referrals**, recognizing that the church and pastor many times don't have the professional knowledge available for the holistic therapy needed. Referring victims of abuse to outside resources can often provide a more confidential environment, greater safety, and more professional services when dealing with these difficult issues.

- **Bring justice** by believing victims and supporting them until they feel safe and secure. The church must help offenders to acknowledge and account for what they have done, then assist them in changing. And in the long run, when and if the victim and the offender are ready, work at reconciliation.

- **Be role models** in all relationships, being conscious of how we respect, talk, and listen to each other. Modeling this to others is a great learning tool. Also, in role-modeling nonviolent parenting skills, we not only demonstrate to our children, but also to others we are around, alternatives to the violence that we learn from our society.

– Barb Saylor

## Additional On Earth Peace Insight Sessions at the 2006 Annual Conference

**The Welcome Home Project: Offering Circles of Care for Returning Military Soldiers** (co-sponsored with Association of Brethren Caregivers) – Vietnam veteran Greg Helle and the Welcome Home Project Committee shared information on working directly with returned soldiers. [www.brethren.org/oepa/WelcomeHomeProject.html](http://www.brethren.org/oepa/WelcomeHomeProject.html)

**Transforming Conflict in Congregations: Utilizing the "Third Side"** – Participants learned about people who are bystanders to a conflict who use their skills and relationships to assist those who are in conflict. [www.thirdside.org](http://www.thirdside.org)

**Peacemaking and Jail Ministry** – Working with the fast-growing population of female prisoners, Rachel Gross, Judi Brown, and Annie Clark shared their experiences teaching Bible Study, jewelry-making, and parenting classes.

**Words of Peace: Scriptures for the Journey** – Ludovic St. Fleur, Verdena Lee, and Ruthann Johansen each reflected on a scripture that was formative in their own faith and practice of peace and reconciliation.

**Evangelism and Peacemaking** – Led by Jonathan Shively and Matt Guynn, participants explored the interconnectedness of these two aspects of a life of discipleship.

**Encountering Recruitment** – Participants learned about truth-in-recruiting and ways to confront military recruitment. [www.brethren.org/oepa/CounterRecruitment.html](http://www.brethren.org/oepa/CounterRecruitment.html)

**Generation X Meets Generation X Box: Engaging Plans for Today's Youth Group** – Youth advisors gathered to share thought-provoking activities for today's youth.

## Blue and Sparkly

Sparkle, my people, Sparkle

BLUE and SPARKLY  
is discipleship  
which breaks out of the  
normal way of living

BLUE and SPARKLY  
is coming alive (in Jesus)  
so much that you might  
seem odd to those  
around you

BLUE and SPARKLY  
is to be so awake  
to your inner belovedness  
that you shine

BLUE and SPARKLY  
is to love God  
and let it out  
through your pores

BLUE and SPARKLY  
is to challenge cultures  
of death, idolatry,  
and control

BLUE and SPARKLY  
is to speak up  
for the truth, with love

BLUE and SPARKLY  
is to wake up  
in Christ Jesus and  
refuse to be dead again  
– Matt Guynn

More than 3,700 youth gathered in Fort Collins, Colorado, for the Church of the Brethren National Youth Conference (NYC) which many describe as the spiritual high of their high school career. The possibility of a life-changing experience with God was in the air – and many people breathed it in!

On Earth Peace brought a skilled and energetic leadership team to NYC. Michaela Camps (Miami, FL), Carla Gillespie (Richmond, IN), Rick Polhamus (Fletcher, OH) and Daniel Radcliff (Elgin, IL) joined up with Susanna Farahat and Matt Guynn. The spirited team led two workshops each day, impacting well over 200 youth. In their roles as small group leaders, team members touched more than fifty youth on an intimate daily basis.

### Workshops!

The questions, “What is sparkling inside you?” and “What opportunities do we have to shine light through the cracks in empire’s walls?” framed discussion in **Blue and Sparkly: Living Outside the Grip of Empire**. While identifying the culture of command and control which often holds us in place today, this workshop created space for participants to envision living out



Speaking out and gathering as a faithful body, On Earth Peace staff helped with an NYC prayer vigil focused on Iraq and Lebanon, sponsored by the Brethren Witness/Washington Office. Pictured is Jonathan Ulrich, Richmond, Indiana.

“sparkly” alternatives of full-bodied and alive discipleship, and sought out ways to listen for God’s voice as we are called to live sparkly Christian lives.

More than fifty youth turned out for **My Life, God’s Life: Countering Military Recruitment**, including a row of young men in Naval Academy t-shirts, a handful of veterans, and many others! Strong and vigorous conversations included a debate about whether Jesus would have joined the Marines, the role of Christians in the military today, what military recruiters really promise, and exploring the questions: What are real nonviolent alternatives for the military today? What do recruiters promise and where is the line between truth and fiction? Are you

adequately supporting youth in your community to find alternatives for right livelihood?

In **Insiders/Outsiders: What Did Jesus Do?**, the session began with a look at how included people would feel at NYC if they were handicapped, from another country, spoke a different language, or if the people in authority positions at NYC,



Rick Polhamus, Matt Guynn, and Susanna Farahat invite participants to “blue and sparkly” Christian living.

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# National Youth Conference

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such as a workshop leader, abused their position. The group explored several scriptures, including Matthew 15:22-28 (the story of Jesus and the Canaanite woman), Luke 19:1-10 (the conversion of Zaccheus), Luke 8:26-39 (healing of the demoniac), and Mark 2:1-12 (healing of the paralytic), and discussed how Jesus interacted with love to the people regardless of their social position. Participants concluded that we need to follow Jesus' example in making sure people don't feel excluded and that all people are shown the love of God through our actions.

In the workshop **Living in a Blessed**

**and Broken World** the group took a few moments to notice the brokenness of our world and how we feel in the midst of it. Then, armed with prayer and assurance of God's promises to heal our land, they asked for God's guidance on responding to the issues surrounding us. Each participant chimed in responses on how God has equipped them to address issues in their communities. Together, in a unity circle, the group concluded the session with prayer asking God for the courage and hope to face our world and be a part of the blessing.

*Funny tidbit:* Isn't it funny that God chose us to be the vessels of healing for the world?

– Matt Guynn, Susanna Farahat, Michaela Camps, Carla Gillespie, Rick Polhamus, and Daniel Radcliff

## Additional On Earth Peace Workshops at National Youth Conference

Static on Sunday Night: Conflict Transformation for Youth Advisors

Can You Hear Me Now?  
Conflict and Communication

Creativity, Faith, and Peacemaking

Reading the Signs of the Times  
(Reading God's Ripeness)

For more information about National Youth Conference, visit [www.brethren.org/NYC2006](http://www.brethren.org/NYC2006)



At "Exploring Creativity, Faith and Peacemaking," participants connected to God through artistic meditation.



Michaela Camps, Carla Gillespie, and Susanna Farahat put their heads together while planning the "Exploring Creativity, Faith and Peacemaking" workshop.



Workshop participants prepare to draw their dream houses as part of an exercise in "Can You Hear Me Now?"

If we take a look around, we can see so many things wrong within our homes, our communities, our nation, and our world. Many of us have seen and noticed the brokenness of our society since middle school or earlier. Our world has become so broken, most of the times we lock ourselves in survival mode. But our calling as followers of Christ takes us beyond just noticing the brokenness and surviving in the midst of it. Our calling would have us draw upon our living source (God) and respond to the brokenness with prayer and the utilization of our natural gifts and abilities.

– Michaela Camps, Miami, Florida, member of On Earth Peace team at National Youth Conference

## NEW VIDEO RESOURCE!

### *WHO and WHAT ARE YOU RECRUITING FOR?*

On Earth Peace is distributing a new video on faith and military recruitment.

The ten-minute DVD is perfect for provoking conversation and reflection in youth groups and youth and adult Sunday school classes. Selected clips are also excellent for use in Sunday morning worship! The DVD includes on-the-street interviews, information about what military recruiters promise and testimony from youth who have been recruited.

Contact Matt Guynn at [mattguynn@earthlink.net](mailto:mattguynn@earthlink.net) or 765-962-6234, or visit our website for more information and to order a copy.

## Calendar

### **September 21**

International Day of Peace  
[www.internationaldayofpeace.org](http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org)

### **September 22-23**

On Earth Peace Board  
of Directors Meeting  
New Windsor, Maryland

### **October 20-22**

Shalom 2006: Seeking the  
Peace of the City  
2nd annual Pentecostal Charismatic  
Peacemaker Fellowship Conference  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
[www.pcpf.org](http://www.pcpf.org)

### **November 3-5**

Counter-Recruitment Conference  
Countering Military Recruitment  
with Gospel Nonviolence  
Sponsored by Mennonite Central  
Committee US  
San Antonio, Texas  
[www.mcc.org/us/co/counter](http://www.mcc.org/us/co/counter)

### **November 11**

Faith and Militarism  
co-sponsored by the Kansas City  
Metro Parish  
Kansas City, Missouri

### **November 15-17**

Advanced Reconciliation  
Skills II: Systems Thinking,  
Anxiety & Conflict  
Camp Mack  
Milford, Indiana

### **November 17-18**

Area 1 Shalom Teams Workshop  
Brethren Service Center  
New Windsor, Maryland

### **January 10-22, 2007**

Peacemaking Delegation  
to the Middle East  
Co-sponsored by On Earth Peace and  
Christian Peacemaker Teams  
[www.brethren.org/oeпа/  
PICConflict.html](http://www.brethren.org/oeпа/PICConflict.html)

**More information available on these programs  
and much more at [www.brethren.org/oeпа](http://www.brethren.org/oeпа)**

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## Board of Directors

October 1, 2005 - September 30, 2006

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**Phil Miller**

**Robert Miller** (At-Large)

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## Countering Military Recruitment with Gospel Nonviolence

November 3-5, 2006 • San Antonio, Texas

Join youth and adults to learn how to counter the lure of military recruiters who promise money for college or job training. With a special focus on areas that are heavily recruited such as communities of color and settings of poverty, the conference will

- provide good information on the realities behind military advertising and recruitment
- challenge and equip congregations to help youth find meaningful non-military opportunities for education, job training, employment, and leadership development
- discuss strategies for counter-recruitment work in public schools and other public settings
- lodge the work of counter recruitment in our commitment to Christ's way of peace and reconciliation through worship and biblical study
- provide good opportunity for networking and sharing resources

On Earth Peace staff member Matt Guynn will be there, and he is seeking other Brethren to join him for the weekend.  
***Will you join Matt in this important learning opportunity?***

It will be a great boost for all those ready to be inspired to take action about recruitment and the impact of militarism in our communities.

*More information on our website or at [www.mcc.org/us/co/counter](http://www.mcc.org/us/co/counter)*

## International Day of Peace

September 21, 2006

*Established by the  
United Nations in 1981*

### **What is it?**

In 2001, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution designating September 21 each year as a day for the world to observe peace and nonviolence. The World Council of Churches, with UN support, proclaimed the same day each year as an International Day of Prayer for Peace. This year's theme is "...and still we seek peace."



### **What can your congregation do?**

Check out these websites for faith-based and community resources and activities:

- [www.overcomingviolence.org/en/about-the-dov/international-day-of-prayer-for-peace.html](http://www.overcomingviolence.org/en/about-the-dov/international-day-of-prayer-for-peace.html)
- [www.internationaldayofpeace.org](http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org)
- [www.pinwheelsforpeace.com](http://www.pinwheelsforpeace.com)

## 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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