



# Seek & Pursue Peace

Fall 2010

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## A Legacy and an Inheritance

*Ministry of Reconciliation Celebrates its 20th Anniversary*

“Good people leading good process.”

“Culture of Peace has blossomed and borne fruit.” These are just two of the phrases used last summer when twenty-five people at the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference gathered to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Ministry of Reconciliation, the interpersonal peacemaking ministry of On Earth Peace. Participants ranged in age from eighteen to eighty and included district executives, moderators and pastors, current and former On Earth Peace board and staff members, professional mediators, and those who only recently have felt the call to interpersonal peacemaking.

The Ministry of Reconciliation has a strong legacy to celebrate. We have provided conflict consultation and skills training in hundreds of congregations across the country; trained staff in effective conflict skills in church camps from coast to coast; and shared new models for making decisions, communicating effectively, and helping conflict be seen as a normal part of life.

This legacy from the Church of the Brethren heritage, and from those who envisioned healthier and healing conflict transformation, is also an inheritance waiting for congregations to receive. Participants in the 20th Anniversary Celebration anticipated a time when congregations and other groups intentionally schedule regular conflict transformation education events such as Matthew 18 workshops and deacon training as part of a routine “wellness plan” (see inside for more). They anticipated a time when it is normal and expected for people and organizations in conflict to immediately and openly seek out the services of a Ministry of Reconciliation Practitioner.

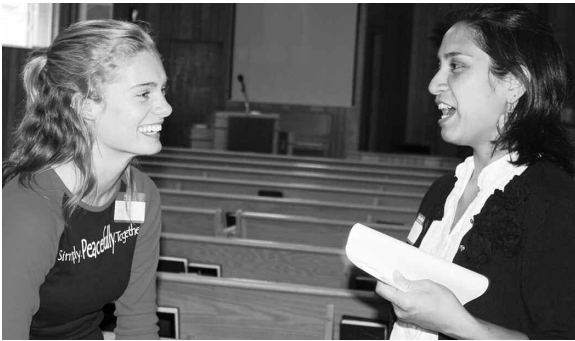
In the coming months, On Earth Peace will be working to crystallize the vision and lay the foundation for the Ministry of Reconciliation’s next twenty years.

On Earth Peace answers Jesus Christ’s call for peace and justice through its ministries; builds thriving families, organizations, and communities; and provides the skills, support, and spiritual foundation to face violence with active nonviolence.

[www.onearthpeace.org](http://www.onearthpeace.org)



## Congregational Wellness Plan: An Idea Whose Time Has Come?



‘Open Questions’ and empowering others through active listening were new.” Building on Jeff’s idea, On Earth Peace is exploring the concept of a “wellness plan” that could “prescribe” regular and intentional ways a participating congregation or other group could be introduced to healthy skills

workshops, coaching and/or consultation needs to be adjusted depending on the context. But just like a personal wellness plan, healthy diet and exercise are always essential. It’s just that in this case the “diet” consists of nutritious concepts and the “exercise” is the opportunity to practice effective skills. Also like a personal wellness plan, it’s always more cost-effective to prevent disease than to cure it.

When the Prince of Peace (PoP) Church of the Brethren recently hosted a Matthew 18 training in Denver, Colorado, it wasn’t the first time an event like the popular Ministry of Reconciliation workshop had been offered to the congregation. PoP’s Ministry Coordinator Jeff Neuman-Lee explained that he believes a congregation needs a refresher course in interpersonal peacemaking skills about every five years.

MoR Practitioner Rick Polhamus who facilitated the training agrees, “There were some folks there who were very familiar with the material and appreciated the refresher, while for others concepts like the power of

and patterns, and then receive routine “booster shots” in order to strengthen and maintain their effectiveness.

Of course, the most effective combination of regularly offered

Want to explore what a “wellness plan” could look like in your congregation? Contact Ministry of Reconciliation program coordinator Leslie Frye.

### A typical Congregational Wellness Plan might have a cycle that looks like:

#### Year 1

Matthew 18 workshop for the congregation

#### Year 2

Team Building and Communication Styles workshop for leadership

#### Year 3

Healthy Congregations workshop for the congregation

#### Year 4

Deacons as Leaders in Times of Conflict training

#### Year 5

Matthew 18 workshop

## A Place to Start: The Matthew 18 Workshop

The Matthew 18 Workshop is designed for congregations wishing to learn healthy patterns of communication. Rooted in Christ’s teachings on reconciliation, participants learn

- ◆ to communicate with one another fairly and honestly
- ◆ the biblical basis for reconciliation
- ◆ how to deal with anger—others’ and your own
- ◆ basic mediation tools
- ◆ the impact of forgiveness

For more information contact Ministry of Reconciliation program coordinator Leslie Frye at 620-755-3940.



## Kids as Peacemakers

*This project taught me that you don't have to be a certain kind of person to be a peacemaker; you just have to be a peacemaker.*

—Elizabeth, age 12,  
Cincinnati Church of the Brethren



Peacemaking was the theme, and murals were created by children attending summer education and outreach programs at a number of congregations throughout the summer. Congregations in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, North Carolina, and West Virginia used the Kids As Peacemakers curriculum and mural project to guide their children's summer offerings in VBS and Sunday School.

Children from the Cincinnati Church of the Brethren created six murals, now displayed on the outside wall of their church building, sharing a message of peacemaking with their community. Morgantown

Church of the Brethren joined with a local Friends Meeting to engage in a week of learning and creating together. Mt. Carmel Church of the Brethren (Scottsville, NC) developed four- to nine-year-old peacemakers through Vacation Bible School.

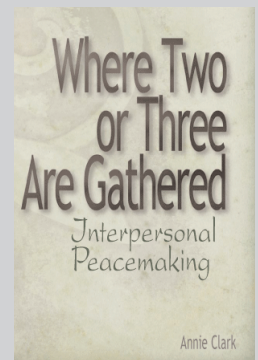
The Kids As Peacemakers mural project includes a five-session curriculum for grades 1-3 and 4-6 as well as instructions for creating the mural. For more information, contact Marie Benner-Rhoades at [peace-ed@onearthpeace.org](mailto:peace-ed@onearthpeace.org) and begin planning your children's Sunday School and summer peace education.

## Reconciliation Resource For Such a Time as This

At a concise 32 pages, *Where Two or Three Are Gathered: Interpersonal Peacemaking*, the second book in the Shalom Series from On Earth Peace, is an excellent resource for those who value unity as the Body of Christ and are willing to work for it even in the midst of significant differences.

Written by Annie Clark, it includes stories of real people who have stretched out their hands to clasp those of others with very different beliefs; practical ideas for communicating positively with people you may not understand, including resources for engaging in difficult discussions; and advice for dealing with conflict. Also included is a list of resources for building interpersonal peacemaking skills and understanding.

To order this or the first book in the Shalom Series, *Shalom: Christ's Way of Peace* by Lani Wright and Susanna Farahat, contact On Earth Peace at 410-635-8704 or [oep@onearthpeace.org](mailto:oep@onearthpeace.org). The cost per book is \$2 plus \$2 for shipping and handling. Discount rates for bulk orders available.



## BVS Announcement and Peace Retreat Invitation

This fall, Chelsea Goss is joining the staff of On Earth Peace as Peace Retreat Coordinator through Brethren Volunteer Service. Chelsea is from Richmond, Virginia, and a graduate of Bridgewater College. She served on the 2009 Youth Peace Travel Team. Chelsea brings a vibrant personality to her work with youth and is excited to share her passion for peacemaking with others. She will be living in a

BVS community house and working from On Earth Peace's Portland, Oregon, office.

On Earth Peace works with congregations, districts, and organizations to design peace education weekends to fit the needs of their youth groups. Topics include introductions to Christian peacemaking, listening and communication, interpersonal peacemaking, understanding systemic violence, and envisioning for peacebuilding. These interactive retreats provide opportunities for youth to learn while growing as a community and nurturing their spiritual development. For more information or to schedule a retreat, contact Chelsea Goss at [peace-ed@onearthpeace.org](mailto:peace-ed@onearthpeace.org).

## Peacemaker Profile

Magdy and Marty (Wieand) Farahat are peacemakers in their daily lives. "We have been so blessed experiencing the richness that diversity brings to our lives. Working for peace is a way to help foster in our communities the possibility of appreciation, instead of fear and distrust, of people and ideas that are unfamiliar."



Marty is a musician and mediator, frequently serving in the Ministry of Reconciliation program of On Earth Peace. She also volunteers with Children's

Disaster Services and in local and church-based mediation programs. A retired engineer, Magdy serves on the board of the co-housing community where the couple lives in Oceano, California. This role "continually provides challenges in finding ways to blend diverse opinions into a cohesive program."

Why do the Farahats support the work of On Earth Peace? "We appreciate the extraordinary commitment of each member of the staff and the thoughtful, prayerful, and careful approach to challenges and opportunities to serve. We also appreciate the challenge On Earth Peace makes for each of us to live in right relationship with each other and our world."



## Trained by On Earth Peace, Living Peacemakers in their Communities: Embedded Peacemakers

*"Jesus' call to peacemaking has a global component. It also has a component that is very close to home. Christian peacemaking affects the way we speak to each other in our families, the way we hold meetings and make decisions in the church, and the way we manage our differences."*

Bob Gross quoted in Messenger Dec 1995  
"Ministry of Reconciliation: It's Solid Gold"

What do you get after decades of teaching interpersonal peacemaking skills at hundreds of Youth/Young Adult Peace Retreats and Ministry of Reconciliation workshops? What you get are people of faith who are not only grounded in the call of scripture to love their neighbors – and even their enemies – but who also have the tools to live out that love by listening and speaking with compassion, by approaching conflict constructively rather than destructively. As one person who recently participated in the twentieth anniversary celebration of MoR commented, you get people who truly "walk the talk."

You get the district executive with the wisdom and courage to confront the congregation crippled by years of chronic, under-the-surface conflict; who helps them see how a long-term consultation with an MoR practitioner can enable them to do the hard work of transforming old destructive patterns and systems into life-giving energy for ministry.

You get the board chair who takes what he learned at an MoR workshop to stop conflict before it starts by preparing well for meetings and by helping participants to prepare as well.

You get the pastor who learns about anger at a Matthew 18 training, so that when she hears the deep emotion behind the cutting

remark she uses the encounter as an opportunity to initiate an open, frank and non-anxious conversation.

You get the parent who attends the same Matthew 18 training and afterward works out a "family mediation process" for when her two school-aged children have a disagreement.

You get Youth Peace Travel Team members willing to engage persons with differing views in respectful, relationship-building dialogue.

You get Agape-Satyagraha graduates teaching the skills learned by mentoring for the program and by using conflict resolution strategies in their daily life.

You get teachers and school counselors noticing that a particular student is more calm when in arguments, less eager to fight, and more willing to engage in conversation.

You get a preschooler who attended a Kids As Peacemakers program wanting to be seen as a peacemaker, and who is concerned when he is not.

*You get embedded peacemakers who impact their families, their congregations, their communities, and the world in powerful if not always overt ways because they have been well-equipped through their participation in On Earth Peace interpersonal peacemaking programs and events.*



## Reconciliation and Peacemaking Tools in Your Relationships

Step Up! is a new program of On Earth Peace for youth and young adults, inviting them to take the next step as leaders for peace and nonviolence. People 14-35 years of age Step Up! to do three things in each of three years: 1) commit to studying the principles of conflict transformation and nonviolent social change, 2) take specific action to reduce violence in their communities, and 3) support peacemaking efforts

beyond their work through giving and invitation.

This network of peacemakers is connected by monthly emails, learning opportunities, and sharing stories to inspire and motivate the continued work of peace building.

For more information about Step Up! or to sign up, visit our website at [stepup.onearthpeace.org](http://stepup.onearthpeace.org) or email [stepup@onearthpeace.org](mailto:stepup@onearthpeace.org).

### Deepen the Spirit

*Pledge for Nonviolence  
from Step Up!*

With God's Help,

I will not kill!

I will seek peace and pursue it.

I will not use violence of fist, tongue, or heart

I will love my enemies and heal what is hurt

I will not support militarism or go to war

I will resist violence in all its forms

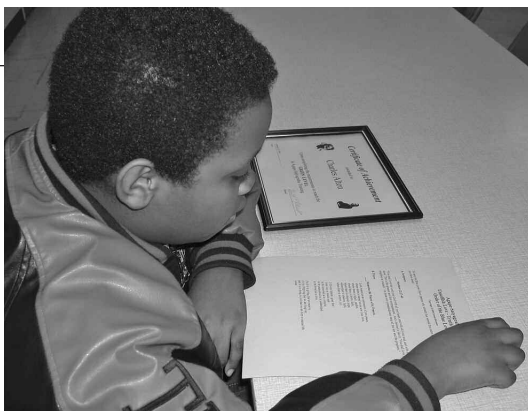
I will interrupt injustice

I will overcome evil with good

I will use active nonviolence

I will honor God's image in all people

I will follow Jesus!



## Training Program for Future Embedded Peacemakers

Agape-Satyagraha Leadership Training for Youth in Conflict Resolution and Social Change is one of the programs in which youth learn skills for interpersonal nonviolent communication. On Earth Peace is entering its second year of this program by welcoming three new pilot sites: Wilmington (DE) Church of the Brethren, Center for Peace and Nonviolence through Project

Impact (South Bend, IN), and in Canton, IL. Each of these sites has spent a year in conversation with On Earth Peace as they organized to offer this weekly opportunity for youth. They join five other sites offering Agape-Satyagraha in Modesto, CA; Lima, OH; Union Bridge, MD; and Harrisburg, PA.

To learn more about developing a site in your area, contact Marie Benner-Rhoades at [peace-ed@onearthpeace.org](mailto:peace-ed@onearthpeace.org).

## International Day of Prayer for Peace 2010

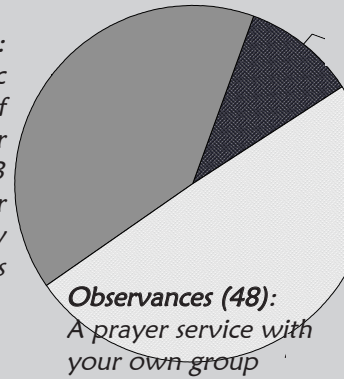
Over one hundred congregations and community organizations in twenty states and three countries took part in the fourth annual International Day of Prayer for Peace (IDPP) campaign of On Earth Peace. Many vigils and observances this year focused on bringing peace in a climate of rising hostility between Christians and Muslims in the United States and elsewhere.

For more on stories about IDPP celebrations around the world, visit our website at <http://idpp.onearthpeace.org/>.



Mona Dakrouri participated in prayers in the vigil of Durham Congregations in Action in Durham. This was the third year that the North Carolina Council of Churches has held an IDPP service, and the director Spencer Bradford reports, "We had a great service with about fifty people in attendance [and] collected \$420 for relief work with Pakistani flood victims to be used by the Church World Service and its partner NGOs in Pakistan." Other congregations and groups in the United States held interfaith services including Christians, Jews, and Muslims, including in State College, PA, Manassas, VA, and First Church of the Brethren in Carlisle, PA.

**Vigils (39):**  
A public time of prayer with 2-3 other community groups



**Listening Initiatives (10):** A focused outreach effort to gather stories about what's happening in your community, building up to September 21

**Observances (48):**  
A prayer service with your own group



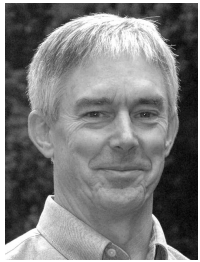
In Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, Breakthru Church International, and its ministry partner, Breakthru Community Action, sent thirty people door-to-door wearing bright orange t-shirts to ask about obstacles to peace and signs of hope in preparation for an IDPP prayer service, and to invite neighbors to a later community meeting to build a sense of positive momentum and shared investment in their community.



### Board of Directors

October 1, 2010, through September 30, 2011

Doris Abdullah (Treasurer)	Madalyn Metzger (Chair)	Don Mitchell
Joel Gibbel	David Miller	Donna Shumate
Louise Knight	Phil Miller	Susan Starkey
Ben Leiter	Robert Miller (Vice-Chair)	Gail Erisman Valeta
Carol Mason		



## Letter from Bob Gross

In this  
newsletter we  
have focused on

the 20 years of Ministry of Reconciliation provided by On Earth Peace. Over that time, dozens of gifted, committed volunteers and staff have served hundreds of congregations, families, church programs, and communities. We are thankful to God for the opportunity to serve in this way, and for the inspiring new directions this reconciling work will take in the future.

In many ways, On Earth Peace as a whole is now positioned much like the Ministry of Reconciliation. After decades of steady growth and service, we are taking stock, and we are organizing and equipping ourselves to serve in a wider and deeper way.

•The Agape-Satyagraha program is expanding to seven communities

this year, providing leadership training and equipping youth to turn away from violence and gangs.

•On Earth Peace is the primary organization providing leadership in the United States for the International Day of Prayer for Peace.

•Congregations from Illinois to South Africa are digging in to reduce violence and build peace in their communities.

•Through our new Step Up! campaign, youth and young adults are committing themselves to Jesus' way of peace in a warring world.

I want to offer you my personal thanks for the part you play in this inspired ministry. Your support means a young person you may never meet will have the opportunity to choose the way of the Prince of Peace rather than the way of violence. Your participation means a congregation somewhere will be supported to change their community through active nonviolence. Every gift, every prayer, every volunteer brings us closer to the wholeness of God's Shalom.

Thank you. *Bob Gross*



(left to right):  
back—Michael Colvin,  
Samuel Sarpiya, Bob Gross;  
middle—Darlene Johnson,  
Gimbiya Kettering,  
Matt Guynn, Jim Replogle;  
front—Marie Benner-  
Rhoades, Leslie Frye.

On Earth Peace staff met together at the Brethren Service Center in New Windsor, Maryland, for their annual week-in-office. This year, they were joined by Jim Replogle, the new Operations Director, who will handle daily operations, creating and implementing long-term strategy for the organization, supervising paid and volunteer staff, expanding program income and constituencies, and providing leadership in developing program and financial plans and objectives. "I believe in On Earth Peace," says Replogle. "I believe in its mission and its ministry. The work of On Earth Peace makes a real difference in the lives of so many people in our world. I look forward to helping the organization move forward in new directions."

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## Change for Peace

*We've sent 1000 - Want to be #1001?*

Through **Change for Peace**, you and your congregation or community group can reduce violence and build peace. Change for Peace combines spiritual practice with practical support for peacemaking initiatives in your community and around the world!

**How Change for Peace works:** Take time daily to pray for peace and deposit your pocket change in a Change for Peace container. (We've already distributed 1000 CFP labels!) Select a local justice and nonviolence initiative to receive two-thirds of the change collected, with one-third sent to support peacemaking around the world through On Earth Peace. Suggested seasons for collection are Christmas week, Easter week, and the International Day of Prayer for Peace.

For more information: 503-775-1636; [onearthpeace.org/cfp](http://onearthpeace.org/cfp)

Right: "This is a picture of our Change for Peace pots. There were cups, plastic containers, open glass bowls, glass jars, Kleenex decorator boxes, etc. Everyone just chose what he or she had! Mine is the wooden chalice in the back. It was handmade for me about twenty years ago from a member of the congregation I then served as pastor." -Karen Carter of Daleville, VA



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