

CENTERINGS



a quarterly publication of the 8th Day Center for Justice



Shari Smith LeMonnier

Micah 4: 2-4,6

“Come let us go to the mountain ... They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore... All the nations may walk in the name of their gods. We will walk in the name of . . . our God forever.”

The two are harmoniously blended into one shape on the mountain of God and their spears and swords are transformed into tools of prosperity and fruitfulness. In that day, as God has promised, the nations will work together, peacefully and without prejudice for the benefit of all. (Artist description October, 2001)

Immigration plan serves US economics

Ann Pratt, OP

In January, President George Bush outlined a plan for a sweeping overhaul of the nation's immigration laws to make it easier for foreign workers to enter the United States. Bush's plan calls for the creation of a guest-worker program that would open the US borders to immigrants seeking low-skilled, low-wage jobs.

Bush stated that "the current system is not working, and needs to become one that serves the American economy and reflects the American dream."

Long-delayed, the plan seemed to be timed to help Bush with Latino voters in the November presidential election. The move was also likely to improve Bush's relationship with Mexican President Vicente Fox.

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), is extremely disappointed with the plan which appears to offer the business community full access to the immigrant workers it needs while providing very little to the workers themselves. The plan apparently intends to appeal to Latino voters by purporting to establish broad and generous access to legal status. The details of the proposal, however, reveal that it is at best an empty promise and at worst a political ploy aimed at vulnerable immigrants.

Based on the premise that some of the jobs being generated in America's so-called "growing economy" are jobs

American citizens are not willing to fill, the plan would match foreign workers with US employers when no US citizens could be found to fill those jobs. The purpose of the program, according to Bush, is to provide a cheap labor supply for US employers in a way that is "streamlined, efficient, clear and workable."

The guest-worker program would be open to both undocumented workers currently employed in the US and perspective foreign workers outside of the country. Undocumented workers would be required to pay a registration fee to participate in the plan and show proof of employment. How the plan might apply to workers with multiple jobs is uncertain. Persons outside the US could apply in their native country if they have a job offer, and the registration fee would be waived.

Workers who register and are selected would be granted a work authorization document valid for a three-year period. During that time, the worker would be allowed to leave and reenter the US without fear of being denied reentry. One three-year extension would be allowed. Participants, who become unemployed, break the plan's rules and would be required to leave the US.

Dependents could accompany the worker if the worker could demonstrate that those dependents could be supported. Only dependents that were participating in the worker program could be employed. The plan would not lead to permanent residence in the US.

As an incentive to leave, workers would be able to use wages earned in the US to qualify for any equivalent social security program in a home country. Temporary workers would have the protection of existing labor laws, such as minimum wage

The President's proposal offers no meaningful access to permanent visas or a path to citizenship for those working, paying taxes, and raising their families in the US. Immigrants would be asked to sign up for what is likely to



Crosses along the US border at Tijuana, Mexico bear names of those who have died in attempting to enter the US. Approximately 400 died in 2000. (Photo: David Bacon)

be second-class status in the American workforce, which could lead to their removal when their status expires or is terminated. Under this proposal, workers would be vulnerable during their temporary status, and even more so when it expires.

Would this plan actually appeal to the average undocumented worker? Unlikely. Workers would probably not want to risk exposure, job loss, and possible deportation at the end of their three-year period for the limited benefits being offered. For instance, a temporary lay-off or termination would have to be reported to the Department of Homeland Security and result in the worker's removal.

It is uncertain if the worker would be given time to find another job or be able to switch employers without jeopardizing their job status.

Most undocumented immigrants do not trust governments of any kind anyway. Unless they expect a significant boost in wages, why should they step forward? To enjoy the benefits of US federal labor regulations? Workers will have to believe that they are potentially gaining more than they are giving up before they will be willing to enter the program.

In *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, a joint Pastoral Letter Concerning Migration from the Catholic Bishops of both Mexico and the United States, the bishops emphasize that human dignity is the primary concern in the treatment of immigrants. Bush's plan, however, focuses on economic issues rather than concerns of human dignity. □

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Iraqi Dominican dreams of peace

Luma Khudher, OP

Sometime in 2001, Sr. Marie Therese Hanna, the Prioress General of my community, St. Catherine of Siena, asked me if I would consider leaving Iraq for a few years and go to the US to learn English. I couldn't imagine going to a country that has bombed us, especially with the possibility of another war on the brink. After much praying and discerning I said "yes" for the sake of my community.

It wasn't easy for my family because of the history our country has with the US, but the words of St. Paul kept coming to my mind. "But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe unless they have heard of them? And how can they hear unless there is someone to preach? And how can they preach unless they are sent?" I felt God was calling me to come to the US to help others learn more about the people of Iraq and my country. So, in April, 2002, I arrived in Springfield, IL, with Sr. Rihab, another member of my community, to live with the Springfield Dominican Sisters.

At first, it was not easy to talk about Iraq because at the local college there were many people that thought the Iraqi people were terrorists and an enemy to the US. I believe that the media portrays us that way at times and so people tend to judge all Iraqis as bad people. After a few weeks in the US, our English teacher told us not to say we were from Iraq, so that we wouldn't cause any problems for ourselves.

As time went on, my English was getting better thanks to some of the sisters at the Dominican motherhouse who tutored me everyday. In the Fall of 2002, I started working at Marian Catholic High School in Chicago Heights, one of the Springfield Dominican Schools. I had taught high school in Iraq, so the Sisters thought Marian would give me an opportunity to work with high school students. Many of the teachers asked me to talk to their classes about my country. The students were very respectful. They asked a lot of questions and were willing to hear the truth from someone who lives in Iraq.

After a few months, there was more talk about a war with Iraq. Every day was very stressful waiting for it to actually happen. I was afraid that I would lose my faith in God. My whole life has been [full of] war and I couldn't imagine my country going through another one and my not being with my family or community.

Once the bombing started on March 19, 2003 there was no way to communicate with my community or my family. It was hard to look out the window at the clear blue sky knowing my family would only be seeing a sky filled with smoke. It was very hard living in the US at this time. I wanted to be home with my family and with my community, because I didn't know if they were dead or alive.

It wasn't until April 17, my birthday, that I received a call at midnight. It was my brother wishing me a Happy Birthday from my family, letting me know that they were all alive. It was the best birthday present ever. I know I could never have lived through this war without the support of the sisters. Their prayers and love were holding me at a time I

Prayer for Peace

May we be filled with the strength
to seek peace.

War will not end when the guns
are silent.

Violence can never lead to peace.

May we be filled with the courage
to seek peace.

We grieve for the harm to our own
country,

The degradation suffered here
and in Iraq.

The contagion of fear and distrust,

The restriction of freedoms,

The quashing of dialogue and dissent.

We grieve the terrible wounding

of those sent off to fight in a war

that is questioned all over the world.

We grieve the rupture of families here and in Iraq.

May we be filled with the compassion to seek peace.

We are members of one human family.

We grasp the horror of war in all its forms.

And we struggle to embrace the suffering of all

with love and compassion.

May we be filled with the endurance to seek peace.

Recognizing our weakness

We call on the God of mercy and compassion

to guide us in the days ahead.

May we be filled with the vision of peace.



*Ramiah (9mos.)
and Hamza*

(From the Fellowship Of Reconciliation Interfaith Prayer)
Courtesy Dominican Sisters Houston, Texas

could not pray. I was asking God why all this was happening to the people in my country who are innocent. I believe that the Dominican Family in Iraq survived because of the support and prayers of the Dominican Family and all the peacemakers around the world. With everything that is happening, I haven't lost faith because I know God never gives us more burdens than we can bear and with every morning God sends us new graces.

My blood sister gave birth to a little girl last month and I pray that she grows up in a different way than I did. I pray that war is not a part of her life like it has been for me. I never stop dreaming of peace, because it is the only thing that keeps me going every day.

Thanks to all of you who have prayed and will continue to pray for peace in Iraq. □

Sister Luma Khuder is a Dominican of the Mosul, Iraq Congregation, St. Catherine of Siena. Currently she is a guest of the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, IL ministering as a biology lab assistant at Marian Catholic High School in Chicago Heights, IL.

An Open Letter from the Arab-American and Muslim Community to the US Anti-War Movement

January, 2004

DEAR PEACE AND JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVISTS,

On March 20, 2004, the world will mobilize against war and colonial occupations. The significance of this historic day is evident to all and requires no further elaboration. The political clarity and character of this mobilization in the US, however, remains illusive.

This is where our community stands:

In confronting war, the people of Palestine and Iraq have paid dearly. They stand against the imperial project shoulder to shoulder with communities of color and the working class in the United States, along with great many subjugated peoples around the globe - from Afghanistan to Colombia, and from the Philippines to Vieques, and on.

Without a doubt, the Palestinian and Iraqi people are both welded together in an inextricable unity at the forefront of the global anti-war movement, transforming themselves as a whole as its embodiment and paying in its defense with the dearest of all - their very existence. Yet, despite every home destroyed, child murdered, acre confiscated and tree uprooted, town colonized and ethnically cleansed, wall built, refugee remaining nation-less, and incremental robbery of their self-determination, they remain the very antithetical formulation of empire and with a vision of justice for all.

In the United States, we, Arab-Americans and Muslims have been maliciously targeted, stripped of our rights, and positioned outside the constitutional framework of this country.

A new COINTELPRO has been unleashed against our homes and living rooms, as our fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters are plucked away and thrown into unknown prison cells. Thus, in a continuum of history, we stand with African Americans, Japanese Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and all others in the painful struggle for justice. From them all, we take our cue, for they are our predecessors and our partners in this long march.

Accordingly, we hereby declare that:

1. We do not accept delinking the struggle of the Palestinian people from the anti-war movement, and regard the struggle in Palestine, as it is viewed worldwide, to be central to any peace and justice mobilization.
2. We insist that the Palestinian right to return and to self-

determination are the key anchors of the Palestinian struggle, and that organizations that attempt to diminish, sidetrack, or abrogate these rights, regardless of any other position they may take on Palestine, are acting contrary to the will and aspiration of the Palestinian people.

3. We view all attempts to relegate our collective presence to the margin and to tokenize our participation in the movement to be racist in character. In its attempt to silence the Arab and Muslim voices for decades, particularly that of the Palestinian people, the movement in the US has stood alone in the global movement for justice. We see ourselves as full partners in leading the movement as signified in the heavy price we continue to pay along the way, and reject any attempt to objectify our presence.

4. We regard the positions that the "colonial occupation of Iraq must be internationalized", or that ending the occupation must be conducted over a period of time until the "Iraqis are able to secure their democracy", as implicitly colonial and racist. These are positions that are rooted in the construct of "manifest destiny" and the "white man's burden" to "civilize".

5. We call on our people everywhere to hold all organizations accountable to the positions they take, especially those that depict racist attitudes towards us, implicitly or otherwise, particularly those that tokenize and objectify our struggle. Any organization or movement that finds it acceptable to minimize or disregard for political expediency the struggle of any people should not be allowed to function within the global justice movement. Justice is neither selective, nor partial or conditional.

We are firm on these principles for the March 20th mobilization and beyond as we call on all communities and organizations to mobilize and stand in force under the following unifying five slogans:

Five slogans:

1. End all colonial occupations from Iraq to Palestine to everywhere!
2. Bring the troops home NOW!
3. No to internationalizing colonial occupations!
4. Stop the attacks on civil liberties!
5. Money for jobs, education, and healthcare not for war!

As we salute and stand empowered with sectors of the movement that have taken a principled stand on justice, we seek to participate in the empowerment of all as we call for a genuine global united front against war.

All out on March 20, 2004! ☐

The letter above was issued by 41 organizations and has received widespread support from across the US. More than 100 organizations, including 8th Day Center for Justice, have signed it. To register your individual or organization support, write to: rashmawi@sbcglobal.net.

Just world vision continues

Christy Lytle, CSA

In 1974 the planning of men and women from six religious congregations brought the 8th Day Center for Justice into being in a small office in Chicago's south loop area. Begun in the belief that "A Just World is Possible," the Center for Justice has flourished for 30 years. Today 35 Catholic religious congregations of women and men support a community that provides a critical alternative voice to systems that suppress the human community and environment.

How does the 8th Day Center for Justice provide this critical alternative voice? The center functions organically because it believes that the manner in which the board and staff work together for justice is itself the very justice the world needs. Its primary activities are analyzing, reflecting, educating, advocating, organizing, resisting and celebrating.

Analyzing and reflecting on contemporary realities begins with ears attuned to people who are poor or disenfranchised. This means analysis of housing issues follows listening to tenants and people without homes. Analysis of economics comes after hearing the unemployed, and the striking workers. Analysis of preemptive strike military actions arises from hearing the grieving families at home and abroad who bury their youngest, brightest family members. Reflecting on contemporary systems involves connecting the news stories with those in the independent press and the people who dissent. Stories from those falsely imprisoned must be balanced with those of police and judicial budgets. Stories from returning soldiers must be balanced with air show pizzazz. Stories of violence told in the deaths of congregation members who work in Latin America need to be compared with those of the stock benefits among the military contractors who militarize Latin America.

Educating wears many faces. The quarterly, *Centerings*, reaches more than 6000 readers. The 8th Day radio show is available 24/7 on the Center web site which averages 100 unique visits a day.

Organizing is often accomplished in coalition with a variety of justice groups. Resisting is a response to the Gospel call to prevent oppression of any sector of society.

Celebrating this 30th anniversary of the 8th Day Center for Justice reaffirms the belief that, "A Just World is Possible." It recognizes the founders, and the many other lay and religious staff and supporters over these 30 years. Like those earliest founders, the 8th Day Center for Justice staff and board members today plan effective ways to

ensure the mission of justice through the many cultural shifts observed in this millennium. A very structured strategic planning process helps the center to enhance the work of justice and ensure a future for justice work. The consultants of Leadership Systems of Atlanta, GA, are assisting the strategic planning process as directed by a committee of board and staff members.

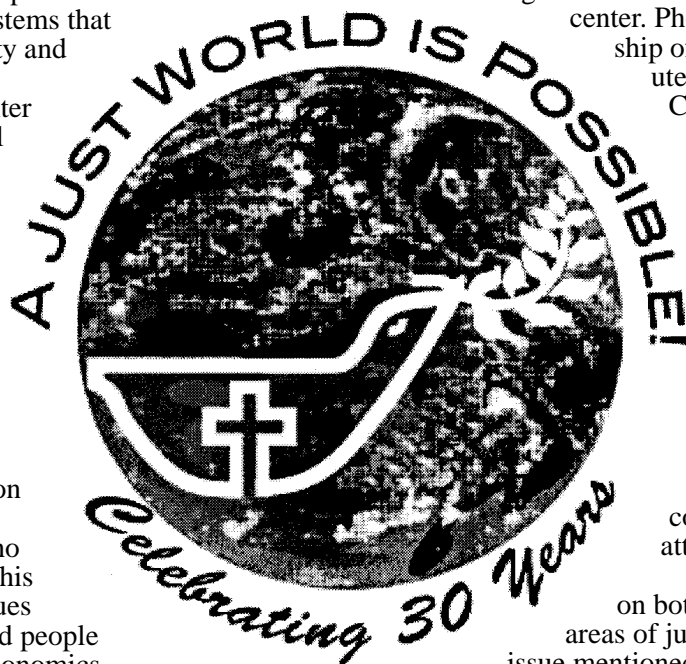
This planning process has distinct phases: information gathering and interpretation. Some information was gleaned from the historical records of the center. Phone interviews with the leadership of member congregations contributed additional information.

Current staff has met with the facilitators several times. Additional board activities helped identify the call coming from signs of our times.

One such activity, the Town Hall Gathering held in early 2004, engaged more than a hundred diverse justice workers in focused conversations. Twenty participant conversations were recorded and information from each conversation was distributed to all attendees.

Topics were broad and focused on both domestic and international areas of justice. Homelessness was the issue mentioned in more conversations than any other. Whether caused by mental illness, domestic violence, or imprisonment, homelessness touches both the person without a home and people throughout society who passively or actively make the lives of the homeless more challenging. The corporate control of the media and the repression of dissent advance the conservative agenda which dominates both government and church structures. The militarization of society affects the global economy. Human rights are involved both in the Palestinian, Israeli conflict plus in the areas of immigration and racism. The death penalty conversation fit right in with those about police brutality and wrongful convictions. On an even larger scale there were conversations about the intertwined roles of action and hope, systemic change and the vision of justice.

The critical alternative voice "A Just World is Possible," echoes in the religious congregations whose membership sponsors the center. This critical voice reverberates in the coalitions where Center staff members listen to the voices of others and share Gospel alternatives. It is heard and seen on the streets of Chicago, Columbus, New York, Washington, Baghdad, and Port Au Prince where the 8th Day Center advocates for the protection of human rights. In addition, this voice whispers through the Center office where staff and volunteers work together modeling the way they believe the future world will look. □



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Can one be a “good Catholic” and keep out of politics?

“Faithful Citizenship” document cites

Now that a new presidential election year has dawned, politicians of both major parties as well as independents have their eyes focused on Congress and the White House. But what do the US Catholic Bishops and other social justice groups see as the necessary focus for the elections?

“As Catholics, the election and the policy choices that follow it call us to recommit ourselves to carry the values of the Gospel . . . into the public square,” the bishops’ Administrative Committee said in “Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility.”¹

A similar document has been issued before every presidential election for the last 28 years.

Numerous Issues

A renewed commitment to faithful citizenship can help “heal the wounds of our nation, world and church,” the bishops state. In the document, they condemn euthanasia, cloning, the death penalty and the intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks. They call for a living wage for all workers, affordable and accessible health care, and increased child tax credits that are fully refundable.

On the international front, the document urges more generous US policies toward immigrants and refugees; action to reverse the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons; “consistent political and financial support” for the United Nations and other international bodies; and efforts to “humanize globalization” and address its negative consequences.

“Building peace, combating poverty and despair, and protecting freedom and human rights are not only moral imperatives; they are wise national priorities,” the bishops said. “Given its enormous power and influence in world affairs, the United States has a social responsibility to ensure that it is a force for justice and peace beyond its borders.”

Therefore, “we hope that voters will examine the position of candidates on a full range of issues, as well as on their personal integrity, philosophy and performance,” they stated.

Common Good

The introduction of the document centers on the notion of “common good.” Politics should be about the common good, the document emphasizes.

Pittsburgh Bishop Donald Wuerl notes, “We speak of the common good as the

recognition that we are not just individuals, but part of a wider community. As such, our rights must be considered in relationship with the rights of everyone else.”²

The central question for the election, the bishops state should not be, “are you better off than you were four years ago? It should be, “How can ‘we’ - all of us, especially the weak and vulnerable - be better off in the years ahead? How can we protect and promote human life and dignity?

They offer the simple image of a table and ask: “How can we secure a place at the table for the hungry and those who lack health care in our own land and around the world? How do we ensure that families in our inner cities and rural communities, in barrios in Latin America and villages in Africa and Asia have a place at the table - enough to eat, decent work and wages, education for their children, adequate health care and housing, and most of all, hope for the future?”

A table, they point out, is also a place where important decisions are made in communities, nation and world. Thus the bishops ask, “How can the poorest people on earth and those who are vulnerable in our land, including immigrants and those who suffer discrimination, have a real place at the tables where policies and priorities are set?”

Citizenship as Virtue

Responsible citizenship is a virtue, the bishops contend, a belief that is echoed by others. We must be “faithful to the values” our government was founded on, stated Mary Elizabeth Clark, SSJ, a lobbyist with NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobby based in Washington DC.³ We are responsible for harm by not participating in elections, she added.

Response to human need is a Gospel imperative. All are called to respond on three levels, she suggested, the personal, the interpersonal and the social. Personal activities might involve a charitable response to any emergency situation, perhaps volunteering or offering material goods or financial resources. Similarly interpersonal responses of service can be both immediate and for the long haul.

In the social realm, however, the virtue needed is not charity, but power that comes from working together and the time commitment is always for the long haul. It involves organizing, advocating and lobbying. Voting is only the tip of an

multiple issues for election focus

Mary Ellen McDonagh, BVM

iceberg that contains the broad issues NETWORK supports, such as affordable housing, a living wage and health care for all workers, fair and just taxation, and fair not free trade. It also involves reordering the fiscal budget to lessen spending on nuclear weapons and to increase spending on human needs both domestically and globally.

Apathy Not An Option

Former Colorado Sen. Pat Schroeder reflects on the apathy of many voters. "We've all heard people say elections don't make much difference, the major political parties are the same, politicians can't be trusted, so why vote? . . . This country is

influences elections and that those who run for office, consequently, come from the most moneyed elite and rarely have life experiences similar to those of most ordinary voters.

Nevertheless, by voting one attempts to insert values into the political process. One votes because too much power is already concentrated in the hands of a few. While many are still waiting for "liberty and justice for all," voting affirms the possibility of redemption and serves as a means to claim some measure of justice, however small, in the political system.

The dual calling of faith and citizenship means to seek a "place at the table"

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No, not really. Politics is one of the most important ways we bring the Good News of the Gospel to a world in pain.

"How can the poorest people on earth and those who are vulnerable in our land, including immigrants and those who suffer discrimination, have a real place at tables where policies and priorities are set?"

almost evenly divided, according to most polls, so votes really do count!"⁴

"Since the last election, our nation's foreign policy, developed over the last 50 years by leaders of both parties, has been radically changed," she reflects. "Could the stakes be higher than they are in 2004? How can anyone say their vote won't make a difference?"

Schroeder suggests voters ask questions such as: What are the choices and the options? What are the costs? What can be learned from both the past and other countries? She also suggests providing alternative solutions to problems.

Yet for some, the relationship between "faithful" and "citizenship" seems lacking. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public life reported last July in a survey that 58 percent of US adults say their religious beliefs don't often affect their voting decisions. In addition, its survey found that 53 percent of Caucasian Catholics and 55 percent of Latino Catholics believe churches should not express views on political matters.⁵

Another negative factor to voting is the fact that a tremendous amount of money

for all, both election years and in the years between them. □

¹For a copy of Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility, log on to www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/ or write to United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 3211 4th Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20017-1194.

²"Pittsburgh Prelate Outlines Importance of the Common Good" published in ZENIT December 19-20, 2003. See also www.diopitt.org/addresses_zenit1.htm.

³Presentation at St. Giles Parish, Oak Park, IL Feb. 1, 2004.

⁴"Election Year Challenge - Reclaim Our Democracy" Pat Schroeder Network Connection January/February 2004.

⁵"Religion and Politics: Contention and Censensus," Pew Research Center July 24, 2003.

Nonviolence: an articulation of criteria

Kathy Long, OP

“**I**n the depths of our consciousness we have seeds of both compassion and violence. We become aware that our mind is like a garden that contains all kinds of seeds: seeds of understanding, seeds of forgiveness, seeds of mindfulness, and also seeds of ignorance, fear and hatred. We realize that at any moment, we can behave with violence or compassion, depending on the strength of these seeds within us. (Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Practice of Peace*)

The nonviolence focus group at 8th Day Center has been studying nonviolence and attempting to articulate the criteria of nonviolence. Members of the group share this study, because it helps us to give more clarity in writing the criteria. Secondly, we request feedback from readers given their own experience.

Our reflections have challenged us to clarify how the value of nonviolence informs our experience of dissent. When we participate in rallies, protests, and the organizing of such events, we seek some clarity on that which is characteristically nonviolent. By explicitly informing ourselves and articulating criteria/elements of nonviolence we hope to make informed choices to be nonviolent in our relationships. We enumerate here some criteria of nonviolence.

The choices are ours

With our experience as activists and educators we want to be nonviolent in an ever deeper manner personally and in our social justice work. Thich Nhat Hanh writes that “our mind is a garden that contains all kinds of seeds.” With this wisdom we recognize the choices are ours, each day in every relationship.

How can we act nonviolently as we denounce and resist war, racism, military imperialism, economic oppression, free trade agreements, the trafficking of women, gender discrimination? How do we respond at times of violence against us, police brutality, impatient words, judgments, excessive prison sentences? With a war on terrorism across our globe, with a ten-foot wide wall of separation being constructed between Israel and Palestine, with the U.S. military budget exceeding \$400 billion, we are ever more committed to nonviolence as a way of being in relationship with others.

What determines nonviolence? What are the characteristics aligned with acts of nonviolent dissent?

- ♦ Love and respect for all creation, humans, the earth, all that inhabits the earth, the cosmos
- ♦ Solidarity with victims and survivors
- ♦ Compassion and love of the enemy, the perpetrator and organizer of violence - Gospel love
- ♦ Willingness to take on pain, self-suffering -

Gandhi’s ‘ahimsa’

- ♦ Seeking truth, truth in God - Gandhi’s satyagraha
- ♦ Desire for equality of all
- ♦ Patience, commitment, determination
- ♦ Transforming spirit and prophetic stance

Love for enemy

To be nonviolent in all our interactions and relationships we are invited to accept love, even love for the enemy, as the answer to violence and terror. The enemy is sometimes within - our own attitudes, judgments of others, our arrogance or stubbornness. The enemy is also outside of us - the evil of systemic violence, racism, war, materialism, gender bias, corporate domination, and military

imperialism. In nonviolent dissent we are challenged to love the enemy, the person caught in systemic cycles of violence. But we denounce the systems of violence, the evil which destroys. We recognize that the ‘evil’ is the preemptive war and its bombs, the abusive actions of torture, rape, kidnappings, the psychological warfare techniques, terrorizing of civilians,

economic sanctions, racial profiling. In response to this violence we act against the violence and not against the perpetrators, the human face behind the violent acts. We denounce the systemic violence and seek transformation of hearts. We advocate for change.

Violence is powerful, a power over others, a destructive power. To stand nonviolently for justice may mean we will be criticized, injured, imprisoned. There is also the possibility that we may be killed. Difference of world view and political opinion bring people into conflict. Risk of physical and personal harm is always a factor which those who choose nonviolence accept.

Our spiritual grounding guides us and empowers us to act nonviolently. In parallel readings we see this value of nonviolence expressed from two different traditions: Jesus says, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” Luke 6:27. and Buddha says, “Hatreds do not ever cease in this world by hating, but by love; this is an eternal truth.” Dhammapada 1.5” (*Jesus and Buddha, the Parallel Sayings*, Marcus Borg, ed., 2002) As Christians we identify with Jesus and the Gospel teachings and recognize the centrality of love. In other spiritual traditions love is also the essential characteristic.

Organizing for nonviolent dissent

Skills of nonviolent dissent call for sincerity and trust to counter the lie and seek truth. The lie is a tactic of the violent system. Untruth, manipulation, deceit are violent ways of control, and domination. In organizing for nonviolent dissent, participants expect one another to be sincere,

Community is essential;
it sustains, encourages
and nourishes.

i.e., genuine and honest in actions and in organizing. There is a mutuality of trust in the quest for truth. Skills are used in a process which has no imposed structure. Everyone continues to learn from the experience; no one has all the answers. The following listing of skills comes from experience with organizing nationally and locally with School of the Americas Watch and local Chicago organizing against the war in Iraq. Key skills and characteristics which have been effective in this organizing:

- ◆ Community building strategies
- ◆ Attentive, active listening
- ◆ Speaking with clarity
- ◆ Consensus decision-making
- ◆ Analysis of violence (linking the issues)
- ◆ Allowing all voices to participate (racial, gender, religious, age balance)
- ◆ Respect for all (working together for the desired outcome)
- ◆ Shared responsibility
- ◆ Explicit commitment to nonviolence (taking a vow, training sessions for nonviolence)

Solidarity within an affirming, supportive community and use of good skills enable us to embrace nonviolence and be active in nonviolent dissent. Community is essential; it sustains, encourages and nourishes. Each individual makes choices within the context of a community of resistance to pursue truth and justice. Resistance to violence unites people in solidarity with victims and survivors of violence. The stories of the victims disturb our hearts, our consciences and move us to creative expressions of dissent.

Analysis of violence informs the participants of the issue. To engage in nonviolent dissent, communities of nonviolence need to understand the evil they resist and denounce it. Speaking with clarity and knowledge from clear analysis engages the individual to deepen understandings of differences and be aware of the lies of domination and disrespect. Evil can be hidden under many covers. Analysis uncovers and clarifies seeking transparency and truth. Words can be deceiving and purposefully manipulative, i.e. 'promoting democracy' or 'institute for security cooperation.'

Nonviolent wisdom comes from the collective experience of trusting and sharing in the effort to counter violence. This weaving of relationships in nonviolent dissent nurtures the seeds of compassion, engaging persons in understanding, forgiveness and mindfulness. A well formed community finds its strength in one another as the struggle intensifies. Good skills will foster the building of community and empower all in nonviolent dissent.

Learning nonviolence

It has been noted above that community is an essential for cultivating nonviolence and spirituality is a base from which we draw strength and motivation. Given these two,

what else assists us in learning the way of nonviolence? Three well-seasoned ways to learn the wisdom and skills of nonviolence are to:

- ◆ Foster mentoring relationships
- ◆ Practice self-discipline
- ◆ Use the arts in creative expression

Mentoring puts us in direct relationship with the good experience of another. Mentors are contacted through study/reading, story telling and personal relationships. Mahatma Gandhi, Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King Jr., have mentored so many of us from a distance through their writings and their life experiences. We glean the wisdom of those who surround us. Discipline is a fine teacher.

The practice of nonviolence teaches nonviolence. Gandhi talked about this discipline toward nonviolence,



“The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might over sweep the world.” Creativity is another good teacher of nonviolence. Artists, musicians, puppetistas are mainstays in groups confronting violence in our world. The creative words, actions, gestures of these artisans transform and inform the participants. The imagination engages the spirit of each person in the song, the drama, or ritual. The artist taps the human need for inclusivity, touch, wonder, celebration, expression. Music and puppetista dramas denounce the violence in nonviolent dissent. □

This article has attempted to put in writing some detail of elements which determine nonviolence and skills needed in its practice. In California, in New York, or Texas, wherever you are, you are invited to reflect on nonviolence in your 'experiment' with nonviolence and truth, as Gandhi would say. Actions: 1) share this article with others, discuss it; 2) write down your ideas; 3) send your ideas to 8th Day Center for Justice, 205 W. Monroe St., Chicago, IL, 60640 or e-mail to 8thday@claret.org.

Patent laws support private profit over public health

Rosalind Sanders

“Every day in Africa, 6,500 people die from HIV/AIDS, 9,500 are infected with the virus and 1,400 newborn babies are infected during childbirth or by their mothers’ milk.”¹ Over 30 million people have died in Africa and the HIV/AIDS crisis has now reached pandemic proportion. Given these facts, one must ask, why aren’t anti-retroviral drugs being provided for those dying when evidence shows they prolong life?

The answer to this question is both simple while at the same time quite complex. The simple answer is that greed continues to dominate public policy. Pharmaceutical companies armed with the influence of the US government continue to place private profit over public health.

The more complex answers have to do with intellectual property rights. Defined as “rights given to people over the creation of their minds, they give the creator an exclusive right over the use of his/her creations for a certain period of time.”² There are two categories for intellectual property rights, copyrights and industrial property.

It is the latter that the large pharmaceutical companies are taking advantage of, patent laws that protect inventions. Under these laws, companies other than the patent holder cannot produce generic (and usually less expensive) versions of medicines such as the patented anti-retroviral drug and countries cannot export or import such medicines made by a company other than the patent holder under the TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement. To do so would mean possible sanctions upon a country thereby prohibiting its ability to trade with other World Trade Organization (WTO) countries.

Pharmaceutical corporations argue, “the exclusive right to market a product during the life of a patent allows the holder to recoup some or all of their initial investment, by charging more for the product.”³ The current TRIPS agreement allows companies to hold a 20-year ownership of the patent. This time period is unethical given the suffering and death of entire generations.

The TRIPS agreement, initiated by the WTO, requires all WTO member countries to initiate intellectual property rights, but allows for transitional periods. Defined by the WTO, “developed countries” such as the United States complied in 1996. “Developing countries” complied by 2000 and “least developed” countries must comply by 2006 or request an extension to January 2016. In special cases of emergency a country can apply for compulsory licensing from a pharmaceutical company. This is the “authorization given by a government, to use a patented invention without the consent of the patent-holder.”⁴

But even these extensions and the possibility of compulsory licensing are not as helpful as they may seem, because of the US government’s interference. It is currently “negotiating TRIPS plus provisions in regional and bilateral free trade agreements such as the US Singapore

agreement and by threatening countries with trade sanctions when industry complains that they provide what it considers inadequate protections of intellectual property.”⁵

So what is a country crippled by the HIV/AIDS pandemic to do? What of the thousands of children being made orphans and whole generations dying? Where is the hope? Faith points to the story of the daughter of Jarius and the nameless woman with the severe issue of blood in Mark 5: 21-43. After attempting all means available to her, she pushed her way through a crowd to seek healing. Likewise, Jarius did not give up. He waited patiently even after learning of his daughter’s death. Similarly, advocates for



Children such as these have been devastated by the HIV/AIDS virus in Kenya. (photo: © World Vision Jane Nandawula)

those suffering with HIV/AIDS must be both as persistent as the woman with the issue of blood and, when necessary, remain as patient as Jarius. □

Advocates must continue to lobby the big pharmaceutical companies and expose the greed of their choice for private profit over public health. For more information on how to help those suffering with HIV/AIDS, log on to one of these sites:

www.unaids.org, www.who.int or www.datadata.org.

¹ www.datadata.org/whyafrika/issueaids.php, The Aids Crisis

² www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/tripfq_e.htm, The frequently asked questions about trips in WTO

³ www.who.int/gb/EB_waha/pdf/waha56/ea5617.pdf

⁴ www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/tripfq_e.htm. The frequently asked questions about TRIPS in WTO

⁵ www.oxfam.com, Robbing the Poor to Pay the Rich

DOVETALES

★ Good News

Venezuela ceases all training at the (SOA/WHISC). Venezuelan Vice President José Vicente Rangel officially announced the decision to stop sending Venezuelan troops to the SOA in an address to the National Assembly in February.

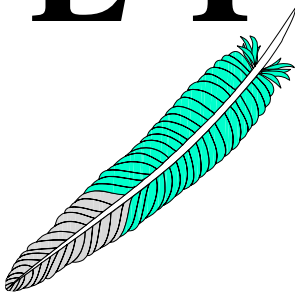
In a meeting with US human rights activists, Rangel stated that the SOA/WHISC is a training school for dictators, torturers and terrorists, and a country such as the US which considers itself to be a democracy should not have such a school on its soil.

World Watch Update: The Government of Peru has rejected a Canadian mining company's proposal to dig an open-pit gold mine where the town of Tamborgrande now stands. Most of the town's 16,000 people had vociferously opposed the project.

Christian Palestinian leader Dr. Hanan Ashrawi was awarded the Sydney, Australia 2003 Peace Prize for her commitment to human rights, justice, and the Middle East peace process.

★ Notable Quotes

“**Civil disobedience** is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience. Our problem is that people all over the world have obeyed the dictates of leaders. . . and millions have been killed because of this obedience. . . Our problem is that people are obedient all over the world in the face of poverty and starvation and stupidity, and war and cruelty. Our problem is that people are obedient while the jails are full of petty



thieves . . . (and) the grand thieves are running the country. That's our problem.” Howard Zinn

“The most effective weapon to maintain a people in captivity is to capture their imagination.” Lilia Solano, Colombian theologian

★ Resources

“**Globalization** and the impact on Women, Children and the Environment” is the title of a workshop offered July 23 -24 at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, IN. Participants will explore issues such as sweatshops, trafficking, and move to action. Cost is \$30. For more information, contact Jenny Howard, SP at jjhoward2spsmw.org. or 812-535-3131.

Simple living is safer, satisfying, saner and sustainable. Check it out at Alternatives for Simple Living. Log on to www.simpleliving.org or write to ALTERNATIVES for Simple Living, 5312 Morningside Ave., P.O. Box 2787, Sioux City, Iowa 51106. A Resource Guide is available at 800-821-6153. Comment and questions are also welcome at this e-mail address: Alternative@simpleliving.org.

★ Children at Risk

Unicef's 2003 report, *Child Poverty in the Developing World*, includes data indicating that more

than half of the children in the developing world are severely deprived and a third live in condition of absolute poverty.

Ninety-one million children under age 5 in developing countries suffer from severe malnourishment. One-hundred-thirty-four million between ages 7 and eighteen have never been to school. (Most are girls.) Some five-hundred million have no toilet facilities.

★ Tidbits

Micheal Moore's new book, *Dude, Where's My Country?* is dedicated to peace activist Rachel Corrie who was killed by an Israeli Defense Force bulldozer in March 2003.

Twenty-seven persons were found guilty of misdemeanor trespassing onto Ft. Benning during January trials in Columbus, Ga. Sentences ranged from probation to three or six months in federal prison. The group included one religious woman, five priests, one religious brother, a social worker, a Presbyterian Minister, a hospital chaplain, a special education teacher, and a retired firefighter.

Women make up 92 percent of Wal-Mart's cashiers and only 14 percent of store managers. The average amount men's salaries exceed women's is as follows:

Cashier \$700
Mgt. Trainee \$800
Asst. Manager \$2500
Co-Manager \$3200
Store Manager \$16,400

(Source: Drogin, Kakigi & Associates, 2003)

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Creating Just Language

Creating Just Language is an 8th Day publication. Kay Ashe, OP, reflects, "Just language -- language that reflects our changing consciousness about God, the universe, ourselves, class, gender relations, race, disabilities, and violence -- is essential if we are to overcome the injustices and hatred that obstruct peace, equality and harmony we long for." Copies are \$5 including postage for 1-9 copies and \$4 for ten or more copies. This is a valuable resource in these tenuous times.

Visit our web site for more resources: www.8thdaycenter.org

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