

PEACEBUILDER

SUMMER 2007

CENTER FOR JUSTICE AND PEACEBUILDING

EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY



Next 13 Years May Be Even Better

Transitions. Change. New opportunities. Challenges. Anticipation and hope.

These are in our minds and hearts as we embark on a year of saying good-bye to long-time, tried-and-true colleagues at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP), while treasuring those who remain. We also will be welcoming new people, bringing energy and fresh ideas.

My co-director, Ruth Zimmerman, will shoulder different responsibilities in September when she moves from CJP to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). She and husband Earl will be living in Calcutta, India, while co-directing MCC's work in Afghanistan, Nepal and India. As explained in the article on page 14, Ruth is the last of the founding group of CJP to move to other employment related to peacebuilding. I will sorely miss her exceptional contributions as administrator and leader.

Ruth's departure has prompted us to seek an executive director who would combine into a single portfolio the duties now shared by Ruth and me. Once that person is on board, I will happily shift my attention to restorative justice projects that I have not had the time to focus upon. I will remain a faculty member of CJP.

Pat Hostetter Martin, who has guided the Summer Peacebuilding Institute for more than a decade, plans to retire at the end of the 2007-08 school year. We already can see the legacy of Pat's work in the global influence of SPI alumni – working in locations as varied as prisons, refugee camps, universities and government ministries – along with the half-dozen peace institutes sprouting around the world, modeled on the one here in Harrisonburg.

Amid these changes, the hub of CJP – its faculty and staff – continues to roll forward. New books will be coming off the presses by Barry Hart, Nancy Good Sider, Lisa Schirch, and others – including a book on organizational management co-authored by Ruth Zimmerman and David Brubaker. These will add to the three dozen books by CJP faculty, staff and alumni that are in use by peace and justice advocates from Turkey to Japan.

STAR, under the Practice Institute, is widening its impact, as attested by the remarkable stories on pages 2 through 5. Concepts promoted under the 3D Security Initiative (www.3Dsecurity.org), led by professor Lisa Schirch, are becoming widely referenced by decision-makers in Washington, D.C., and by military leaders. This year, CJP professor Barry Hart completes his tenth summer as academic director of an important European center for peace education and discussion, the Caux Institute in Switzerland. And professor Jayne Docherty is serving on the governing council of the International Peace Research Association.

CJP is well positioned to be in the forefront of addressing the role of religion in both conflict and in building peace. EMU as a whole is exploring, with an Islamic university in Iran, the idea of launching a Center for the Study of Abrahamic Religions, linking the study of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. CJP is also seeking to deepen and widen its work on organizational conflict and on care for the peacebuilder (notably, how to avoid “burn out”).

The next decade at CJP promises to be very interesting indeed. Come take classes, send support, stay in touch. It's been a great first 13 years, but I think it might be an even better second 13 years.

Howard Zehr
Co-director

P.S. from Ruth Zimmerman: When I began working at EMU 13 years ago, CJP was just a gleam in a few people's eyes. My time here is now over. I bequeath the vision and direction of CJP to the next generation of CJP leadership. I will always be grateful for the privilege of serving many of you in this position and at this place. My door will be open in India too.



Howard Zehr and Ruth Zimmerman

PEACEBUILDER is published by the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP) at Eastern Mennonite University, with the collaboration of the Development Office: **Kirk L. Shisler**, vice president for advancement; **Phil Helmuth**, executive director of development; associate directors of development **Art Borden**, **Karen Moshier-Shenk**, **Phoebe Kilby** (for CJP), **Tim Swartzendruber**, and **Sam O. Weaver**.

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Cover photo
Sasha, whose father spent time on death row. More info on page 7. By Howard Zehr

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The Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP) is rooted in the Mennonite peace tradition of Christianity. CJP prepares and supports individuals and institutions of diverse religious and philosophical backgrounds in the creation of a just and peaceful world. CJP is based at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and offers a masters-level degree and certificate, as well as non-degree training and skill-building through its Summer Peacebuilding Institute and its Practice Institute. The latter also offers expert consultancy. Donations to CJP are tax-deductible and support the program, the university that houses it, scholarships for peace and justice students, and other essentials. More information on CJP at www.emu.edu/cjp.



Vesna Hart

STAR in New Orleans

Help for Youths to Overcome Loss

These kids have all lost something.

“I have an 8-year-old referred to me for depression, anxiety, not sleeping and not eating,” says Nanette Katz, a psychotherapist in New Orleans.

This boy’s home, she explained, was swept away like everything else in the 9th Ward.

What’s more, she says, “his story is typical.”

That was a year and a half ago, when hurricanes first drowned their city. Slowly, New Orleans is recovering, rebuilding, rebounding - but people need restoration, too, Katz says.

That’s where a group from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) hopes to make a difference.

“Trauma happens in all of our lives,” Hart says. “You can’t avoid it. But we can all do something to help.”

Vesna Hart spearheads a program created to help youth heal from the trauma in their lives, whatever its source may be.

It’s called Youth STAR because the program branched off EMU’s Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR), a trauma program for adults.

The program’s latest training has focused on the needs of New Orleans. STAR has partnered with local organizations, hosted a youth retreat - and perhaps most importantly - trained others to spread its comprehensive approach to trauma healing, Hart said.

For that, Katz says she’s grateful. She consults with one of those partner organizations. That’s how she knows the needs of these kids. She’s seen the depths of their struggles.

That same boy, she said, also lost his dogs in the storm.

“They drowned. This is what haunts him,” Katz said. “He can’t sleep alone; he can’t have lights out.”

Things are no better outside his home. The third-grader is failing math, like 10 others in Katz’s caseload.

The reason? “Math requires a high level of attention that so many of these kids cannot practice,” she said. “I walked into a classroom last week, and there were 8-year-olds sleeping on their desks, sucking their thumbs. ‘Please help them!’ the teacher asked me.”

A Healing Spirit

There’s hope for these kids, Hart says.

“Trauma happens in all of our lives,” Hart says. “You can’t avoid it. But we can all do something to help.”

Community involvement is a core tenet of the program. “We believe everyone has a role in supporting youth who were traumatized,” Hart says.

At the most recent training, the curriculum was taught to a group of 18, mostly teachers, religious leaders and community workers, said Susan Landes Beck, marketing manager at EMU’s Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, where STAR began.

The group met twice, once in February 2007 and again in March.

For school counselors like Patrick Tubbins, the curriculum



Participants at a training in New Orleans

revealed hands-on tools suited for the situations he faces working in a New Orleans “recovery school.”

“I always look for tools to help children,” Tubbins said. Those tools include role-playing, artistic expression and conversation. They’re everyday things, but they help, he said.

Katz agreed.

“Listening, just listening to these kids helps,” she said. “The experience of empathy helps the children heal. Their biggest help is their own resilience. It’s amazing how the human spirit can heal.”

Stopping the Cycle

Recovery is happening “very slowly,” Katz said.

Tubbins has seen it at his school, where he counsels 15 youth a day. Bit by bit, he’s seen a few kids open up.

“You could really see the trauma she experienced,” Tubbins said of a teen who lived in the Superdome for a few days.

Too often, though, he said the kids stay silent. “Even though you may not be hearing the stories, we’re in crisis,” he said. “Trauma can be passed from generation to generation. We want to stop the cycle.”

Often, parents don’t know how to help their kids because they’re learning to deal with their own trauma, Katz said.

“Families are very busy rebuilding their homes, dealing with new jobs and new neighborhoods and they don’t have time or emotional resources to deal with their depressed or anxious children,” said Katz, who, like many of her clients, still lives in temporary housing.

“The storm changed everything,” she said. “We are trying to not give up.”

Origins of STAR

EMU’s trauma training program was born in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001. With funding from Church World Service,

religious leaders and caregivers from New York City were brought to EMU’s program to help them deal with their traumatized constituencies.

Since 2002 STAR has grown to address healing after genocide, abuse and natural disasters - whatever the cause of trauma, said Elaine Zook Barge, the program director.

Alumni of the adult programs requested the youth-based derivative, said Hart, the youth program’s coordinator. The youth-based version has been tested and refined on teens around the globe. In addition to the New Orleans sessions, the material has been used in Hart’s native Croatia; in Hebron, Palestine; in four locations of Sierra Leone; in Harrisonburg with a class at Eastern Mennonite High School; and in Kenya (see box). Other countries where EMU-trained people are using parts of Youth STAR are Pakistan, Colombia, Lebanon, Serbia and Sri Lanka.

From Katrina to Kenya

Reporting from Kenya, Anne Nyambura, MA ’06, wrote: “My 2006 summer’s work in Kakuma (refugee camp) and Kibera (Nairobi slums) with the youth, using the Youth STAR manual, was received with a lot of eagerness. It was an eye opener on the need for this training in the region. The challenge of the trauma that HIV/AIDS has brought in the slum areas was real. The program particularly affirmed the goals/objectives of the curriculum, which was mainly to pass on the message on the cycles of violence. This helped to build further the confidence I had in the curriculum we had developed. The program proved its relevance in the region.”

For more information on Youth STAR, including how to bring it to your community, visit www.emu.edu/cjp/star.



Virginia Foley

‘I Wanted to Know What Brought Them to Commit Murder’

Terrorism Survivor Virginia Foley:

With speeches of appreciation and affection, a group hug, and more than one tear, STAR (Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience) came to a close. Participants from Uganda, Rwanda, Bosnia, Zimbabwe, Ecuador, Cambodia, and the United States gathered up pens and notebooks, group photos, and keys to their residence hall at Eastern Mennonite University, preparing to go

home. Seven days of stories of trauma and lessons for healing were over June 20, 2006. After telling my own story and listening to others, I was tired. I was also sorry that this remarkable experience was now behind me.

My life as a U.S. Foreign Service spouse ended when shots rang out in Jordan on Oct. 28, 2002, and the killer of my husband ran around the corner of our house. I had no preparation for giving up Larry – my best friend, partner for 34 years, and the father of our three children. While on assignments for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in South America, Africa and the Middle East, we never saw ourselves as potential targets for terrorism. We thought of ourselves as symbols of America’s desire to improve the quality of others’ lives. After Larry’s death, I was unprepared for the onslaught of trauma I was about to receive at every level. My journey from Amman, Jordan, to STAR in Harrisonburg, Virginia, had been a long one.

Our family is one of several American families identified as victims of assassins recruited and paid for by Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, a name which means father of Musab from the town of Zarka, Jordan. “Why don’t you hate us?” some Jordanians asked.



Virginia and Larry Foley in Jordan in 2001

“When personal trauma is not healed aggression and increased violence may be the result,” STAR teaches.

My answer is that Jordanians are victims too; they shared my grief, as did all who worked with Larry or who knew him. “We are all connected,” teaches Dr. Howard Zehr, frequently referred to as grandfather of the field of restorative justice. “Communities are impacted by crime, and in many cases should be considered stakeholders and secondary victims,” Zehr writes in his *Little Book of Restorative Justice*. Under restorative justice, both the needs of the victims and offenders must be considered and addressed.

My 35-year-old daughter Megan and I wrote to His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan, asking that the men who killed Larry not be executed. We did so not wanting to contribute to the cycle of violence that led to his murder. “When personal trauma is not healed,” STAR teaches, “aggression and increased violence may be the result.” This is true of societies as well as individuals. We heard this message in the stories told by Rwandan and Northern Ugandan participants in STAR. We have seen it in societies and cultures where violence seems to have no end. Unhealed trauma commonly leads to “justified aggression” and “dehumanization” of whomever/whatever is seen as the enemy. Yet there was another reason I didn’t want this killer, and his co-conspirators, executed. I wanted them to know that our family is not a plastic symbol for American policies, but real people. I also wanted to know who they were as real people and what happened in their lives that brought them to commit murder.

They were executed despite our appeals. We were prevented from partaking in the healing from a restorative justice process.

Criminal justice focuses on punishing the offender. Zarqawi is

now dead, along with many of his recruits. His perpetuation of violence has ended on one level. So too has ended any opportunity for restitution or accountability, for victim participation in the justice process, for understanding why this man named Father of Musab made the choices he did. I am left with an overwhelming sadness. Restorative justice asks: Who has been hurt? What are their needs? Who has an obligation to address these needs? Transformational justice asks: What circumstances and structures permitted this behavior and what measures can be taken to correct, prevent, or reduce future occurrences?

During the days after my husband brought me a cup of coffee and left for work – that day when the almost-innocent pop, pop, pop outside my window turned out to be the sounds of a gun – I was hardly prepared to think about restorative justice. Today I feel fortunate to have learned that the concept exists and is actually being practiced in New Zealand, Canada and even parts of the United States – in victim/offender meetings made possible upon the request of the victim and in circles where community and stakeholders can talk about “making things right.” If vengeance can’t heal our trauma, perhaps accountability can.

The support of family, of friends from all over the world and loved ones, of USAID and the U.S. State Department, of His Majesty King Abdullah and Her Majesty Queen Rania and other spokespersons for the Jordanian people, has given me strength to search for a perspective for my tragedy that might be helpful to others. STAR and restorative justice have provided a context for that perspective.

The ABCs of ‘RJ’

Going Far Beyond the Criminal Justice System

Do a Google search for the phrase “restorative justice” and you will get over a million “hits” – and this for a term that was virtually non-existent 25 years ago. Ask what “restorative justice” means and you may get a variety of answers.

For many, it implies a meeting between victims of crime and those who have committed those crimes. A family meets with the teenagers who burglarized their home, expressing their feelings and negotiating a plan for repayment. Parents meet with the man who murdered their daughter to tell him the impact and get answers to their questions. A school principal and his family meet with the boys who exploded a pipe bomb in their front yard, narrowly missing the principal and his infant child. The family’s and the neighbors’ fears of a recurrence are put to rest and the boys for the first time understand the enormity of what they have done. Restorative justice does include encounter programs for victims and offenders; today there are thousands of such programs all over the world.

Restorative Justice as a Movement

But restorative justice is more than an encounter, and its scope reaches far beyond the criminal justice system. Increasingly schools are implementing restorative disciplinary processes, religious bodies are using restorative approaches to deal with wrongdoing – including clergy sexual abuse – and whole societies are considering restorative approaches to address wrongs done on a mass scale. Of growing popularity are restorative conferences or circle processes that bring groups of people together to share perspectives and concerns and collaboratively find solutions to the problems facing their families and communities.

Restorative justice emerged in the 1970s as an effort to correct some of the weaknesses of the western legal system while building on its strengths. An area of special concern has been the neglect

of victims and their needs; legal justice is largely about what to do with offenders. Restorative justice has also been driven by a desire to hold offenders truly accountable.

Recognizing that punishment is often ineffective, restorative justice aims at helping offenders to recognize the harm they have caused and encourages them to repair the harm, to the extent it is possible. Rather than obsessing about whether offenders get what they deserve, restorative justice focuses on repairing the harm of crime and engaging individuals and community members in the process.

Restorative Justice Is Common Sense

It is basically common sense – the kind of lessons our parents and foreparents taught. This has led some to call it a way of life. When a wrong has been done, it needs to be named and acknowledged. Those who have been harmed need to be able to grieve their losses, to be able to tell their stories, to have their questions answered – that is, to have the harms and needs caused by the offense addressed. They – and we – need to have those who have done wrong accept their responsibility and take steps to repair the harm to the extent it is possible.

As you might imagine with so many Google references, the usage of the term varies widely. Sometimes it is used in ways that are rather far removed from what those in the field have intended. So when you see the term, you might ask yourself these questions: Are the wrongs being acknowledged? Are the needs of those who were harmed being addressed? Is the one who committed the harm being encouraged to understand the damage and accept his or her obligation to make right the wrong? Are those involved in or affected by this being invited to be part of the “solution”? Is concern being shown for everyone involved? If the answers to these questions are “no,” then even though it may have restorative elements, it isn’t restorative justice.

Examples of Restorative Justice Programs

Many forms of restorative justice programs have emerged around the world. In New Zealand, in fact, the juvenile justice system has been re-oriented so that restorative approaches are intended to be the “default” approach for serious crime, with courts serving as a backup.

Restorative justice is concerned with the harms caused by, and revealed by, wrongdoing. This includes the harms to families of those who offend. Sasha, pictured here and on the cover, is one of those children. She is featured in the project, “When a Parent is in Prison,” described below.

The best known of these programs within the justice system involve processes that bring victims and offenders together. Led by a trained facilitator, they allow participants to tell their stories and express their feelings, to get answers to questions and, in many cases, to develop agreements for restitution. They take a variety of forms – one-on-one mediations, conferences, circles. Although initially used for so-called minor crimes, today 19 states (of the 52 in the U.S.) have official protocols for meetings between victims and offenders in the most serious kinds of cases including murder.

A study of such programs in England and other countries, recently released, is very positive. It found reduced trauma and fear by victims, reduced repeat offending, high satisfaction rates by participants, and reduced costs as compared to the usual criminal justice process. Surprisingly, perhaps, the study found that these effects tended to be greater with more serious crime. The study concludes, “The evidence on RJ is far more extensive, and positive, than it has been for many other policies that have been rolled out nationally” and calls for its adoption on a wider scale.



Children of Prisoners Need to Be Heard

Sasha, the girl on the cover of this magazine, is one of 2,400,000 children in the United States who have a mother or father in prison.

“These children have committed no crime, but the price they are forced to pay is steep,” writes journalist Nell Bernstein in *All Alone in the World* (2005). “They forfeit, too, much of what matters to them: their homes, their safety, their public status and private self-image, their primary source of comfort and affection. Their lives are profoundly affected. The harm children experience is sometimes referred to as one of the collateral consequences of America’s policy of mass incarceration.”

Howard Zehr, co-director of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, and Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, director of Mennonite Central Committee’s office on crime and justice, are documenting some of these children’s stories in their “When a Parent is in Prison” project.

Sasha’s story: “I was three when he got locked up. I have some memories – like we were at the circus and we were riding on an elephant. It had to be a dream.

“When he was in prison I had this grudge against him for not being there for me. When I finally got a chance to talk to him, and he let me know what really happened, I’m like, ‘Oh, I didn’t know that.’ I had jumped to so many conclusions. I had a new-found respect for him, and I realized he really did love me.

“Sometimes now I dream about a situation that has happened to me – I know he wasn’t there, but he’ll be there this time. He’ll be talking to me, like my conscience. He’ll be the person that takes the mask off everything and tells me how it really is.”

Sasha’s father was on death row, until his conviction was overturned. Five years after he was released, he died of untreated hepatitis.



Howard Zehr

‘Old Geezer’ Aims to Pass the Baton

In my restorative justice class at the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, I require my graduate students to try to explain restorative justice to someone who knows nothing about it. Moussa was one of these students. He was Muslim, from Rwanda, and had lost his family in the genocide. He decided to explain restorative justice to his Catholic-Rwandan wife. He was just getting wound up when she broke in with a laugh: “You came all the way here, spent all this money, just to learn what every African already knows?”

When I was writing *Changing Lenses* in the late 1980s I thought I might be laughed at. But that hasn’t happened, perhaps because I was pulling together ideas already deeply felt. This is certainly true for people from many indigenous or traditional systems, but it is also true for many of us.

This article is adapted from a speech that Howard Zehr, PhD, co-director of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP) and professor of restorative justice, gave last October at Hamline University in Minnesota on the occasion of his receiving the 2006 Journal of Law and Religion Lifetime Achievement Award. It was Zehr’s fifth major award in three years for his role in founding the field of restorative justice and popularizing it. Wishing to spend more time in restorative justice work, Zehr will step down as co-director of CJP in 2007, but will remain active as a resource person, communicator, and professor based at EMU.

On my first visit to New Zealand, in 1994, their restorative youth justice system was only five years old. I was asked to speak throughout the islands, on radio, on TV, in community settings. At the end of the visit the chief youth judge, who was Maori, told me, “You don’t know how good it is to hear you articulating all this in a way that Westerners can understand. People want to write our system off as Maori.”

In my view, restorative justice resonates with biblical justice. Paradoxically, though, one of the biggest challenges has been to get Christians to rethink their assumptions about punishment and to recognize the restorative themes in their tradition.

The metaphor that has guided most of my work life has been that of a “journalist of justice.” As I got into this work 30 years ago, I set out to be an interpreter, to conceptualize and communicate what was going on. Whatever theory or conceptual framework I have contributed was motivated by a desire to communicate what we were doing and why.

All this is not a path that I consciously chose. My academic background was in European history, of all things, but then many paths began to converge: my commitment to communication and popular education, my history of science background (that contributed paradigm theory), my history training, my dissertation research in historical crime, my advocacy for prisoners and defendants in the 1970s, my faith, even my photography. Indeed, *Changing Lenses* is essentially the story of my journey to that point.

But it took an “act of God,” a fire (a biblical image!), to open my eyes and set me on the path of restorative justice. It was when the halfway house I was directing burnt that I (reluctantly I must admit) got involved in bringing victims and offenders together, and that was my conversion experience. It was then that I began to truly understand what was wrong with justice as we commonly know it and to realize there was another way.

Over the past three decades, the field of restorative justice has expanded beyond my wildest imagination. As I look out on these

Zehr using image theater to explore the dynamics of severe violence mediation/ dialogue during the first session of SPI 2007.



developments, my enthusiasm about these developments is in tension with my concern about the possible – indeed, inevitable – distortions and misuses of the concept. I always tell my students that all interventions have unintended consequences, all will go astray, regardless of our good intentions. Thus it is essential to hold in tension idealism and realism; indeed, I am much more concerned about the true believer than the skeptic.

Our critics point out that we tend to be like butterfly collectors, focusing on the best specimens. But we also must learn from our mistakes. As one of my former students, Craig Spaulding, has put it, we need to tell both butterfly and bullfrog stories. This isn’t easy to do. I was in a workshop where we went around the circle telling stories. Each person had a beautiful story of hope and reconciliation to tell. When it was my turn, I told of a disastrous circle in which we did everything wrong. To use a phrase stolen from someone else, my story went over like a skunk at a garden party. The group went back to their butterfly stories.

One of the many debates in the field is whether restorative justice is or should be transformative justice. Some say these are two different approaches. Some say they are the same under a different name, and some say that restorative justice is a way station on the road to transformative justice. All three of these positions are true in some sense; my hope is that restorative justice will ultimately lead to the transformation of not only individuals but society as well.

It gives me hope when I hear people talk about “restorative marriage.” It’s exciting to hear women at Muncy prison in Pennsylvania supporting and holding one another accountable with a simple question: “Is that the RJ way?” I know something is happening when a police commander in a restorative justice training comes in the next day and tells me that when his daughter wrecked the car the night before, he dealt with her much differently than he normally would have – because of restorative justice.

“When former student Tammy Krause takes restorative justice into the unlikely arena of death penalty litigation, I see the baton pass. When Barb Toews works with prisoners to develop restorative justice from their perspective, the baton passes.”

Today I see myself near the end of my formal career and I’m trying to proactively embrace old-geezerdom. At this point, I believe my primary responsibility is to pass the baton to others. And I’m in a wonderful place to do that. With “students” (my former colleague John Paul Lederach called them “colleagues masquerading as students”) who are practitioners from all over the world, my job, as someone has said, is to “create a space where wisdom can come forth.” Much wisdom does come forth and they go on to take restorative justice into arenas and applications that I never could have imagined. When former student Tammy Krause takes restorative justice into the unlikely arena of death penalty litigation, I see the baton pass. When Barb Toews works with prisoners to develop restorative justice from their perspective, the baton passes. When former students apply restorative justice to help address justice issues in inter-community conflicts in Ghana, the baton has passed.

Through all this, I seek to find balance and personal space in my life, and to encourage my students to do so: to be half-hearted fanatics. I take seriously the admonition of naturalist Edward Abbey: “Do not burn yourself out. Be as I am. A reluctant enthusiast and a part-time crusader. A half-hearted fanatic. Save the other half of yourselves for pleasure and adventure. It is not enough to fight for the west. It is even more important to enjoy it, while you can, while it’s still there.”



Rabbi Maurice Harris, author of this article, in black and white along with 2007 SPI participants.

Lessons from the Summer Peacebuilding Institute

If We Can Handle Fires, We Can Handle Conflict

The Summer Peacebuilding Institute, or SPI, is an intensive program in which students from many religious backgrounds and nationalities investigate the social science of conflict transformation, or, to use the term some in the field now prefer, “peacebuilding” – a word that’s so new I had to add it to my Microsoft Word dictionary as I wrote this. The various courses offered at SPI deal with different aspects of violence – from domestic violence to warfare. Students come from literally all over the world.

I was there in June 2006 for a week-long seminar, and I talked politics with a priest from the Philippines, shared breakfast with an Iraqi woman, wept with a Laotian who has lost relatives to American cluster bombs from the Vietnam era, and celebrated Shabbat with an Israeli Jew and several American Mennonites. And that only begins a much longer list.

The Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University sponsors SPI, and I was deeply struck by their core values statement. The first value they list is Shalom/Salaam/Ubuntu – a Hebrew word, an Arabic word, and a Zulu word. The definition they offer for these words is “the awareness of our interconnectedness and the importance of right relationships.” I was impressed that they didn’t simply define *shalom* as “peace,” as is commonly done. (The core values statement can be read at www.emu.edu/cjp/corevalues)

At SPI I discovered an institution where people study current research on which choices, actions, and planning activities tend to lead either to violent outcomes or to peaceful ones, which choices tend to repeat destructive social patterns and which ones build the social infrastructure that creates genuine societal *shalom*.

Before I go on, let me say that I’ve fallen victim to my fair share of cynicism over the years about the prospects of human beings creating a much more peaceful and just world. I think I’ve often interpreted the famous verse from Ecclesiastes that states “there is nothing new under the sun” to mean that the location of empires

and the sophistication of technologies may change from one era of human history to the next, but the same human foibles are too much for us as a species. Greed, short-sightedness, lust, narcissism, and ignorance reappear in one guise or another and keep the world in a permanently sorry moral state.

SPI gave me some new cause for hope. I had never before seen the disciplined study of the practical aspects – or as we say in Yiddish, the *tachlis* – of how peaceful societies work. There’s a need for much more research and study, but already scholars in the field are developing theories based on what they’ve seen work. One of the take away lessons from my small brush with this relatively new field of study was that we have real choices – moral choices of course, those will never go away, but also practical choices about how we organize our towns and our institutions, and these choices can increase or decrease the likelihood that we’ll dwell in peace or in the midst of violence. After SPI, I developed a new take on that verse from Ecclesiastes. “There is nothing new

“Why do we have fire departments, fire drills at schools, smoke detectors, and fire codes? Because there will always be fires, and because fires are too dangerous to take chances with. It’s the same with conflict. What we’ve done to prepare for and control fire can teach us about what we need to do for conflict.”

under the sun” now signifies for me the idea that all the tools that we need to solve the puzzle of how to achieve a more peaceful and secure human society are here with us and have always been. We just need to do some homework.

So what are some of these practical peacebuilding choices? Like many other things in life, the data seem to show that one of the most effective things we can do to build peaceful societies is to prepare and train people for conflicts before they occur. This goes for conflicts between neighbors, neighborhoods, and nations. For example, there are already studies that show that in neighboring towns with a cyclical history of warfare, when community leaders formed local peace-keeping committees that met regularly in order to anticipate potential conflicts and prepare non-violent ways to respond in advance, fewer violent conflicts resulted as compared with other similar trouble spots. Other data seem to show that when local business and union leaders – people who stand to lose a lot from periodic ethnic battles between communities – make up part of peace-keeping committees, they are apparently even more effective. Not so much because of altruism, but because of self-interest being channeled into a well-planned piece of social infrastructure that helps nip emerging violence in the bud.

This brings me to my next point. A big part of preparing and training for peace involves building infrastructure. As the SPI seminar continued, it started seeming more and more common-sensical for every society to have a peacebuilding infrastructure. After all, nobody would build a new town or city without infrastructure to control and minimize fires. Why do we have fire departments, fire drills at schools, smoke detectors, and fire codes? Because there will always be fires, and because fires are too dangerous to take chances with. It’s the same with conflict. What we’ve done to prepare for and control fire can teach us about what



2007 SPI participants

we need to do for conflict. Through a multi-layered infrastructure that includes a group of specialized professionals who are entrusted to handle the cases when fire does erupt, as well as a program of education that extends into our schools, our offices, and even our homes, we prevent a huge percentage of fires from ever happening, and we lose fewer lives and suffer less loss as a result of fires. Stop and think about this for a second. This is a remarkable human achievement.

The bottom line is that we handle fire better than we handle conflict and its potential for violence because we have learned a whole way of thinking about fire. We began learning this way of thinking as small children in school. We train our citizens to think according to certain tested patterns and principles in advance, and then we respond, when needed, based on that training. The theory is that it can be the same with peacebuilding. It's about learning a different way of thinking, and educating ourselves and our kids according to methods and patterns that work to curb violence.

It's asking for a massive cultural change, but it's do-able. Why do I think so? Because peacebuilding is a learnable skills-set that can be built into societies through deliberate choice. And because we've already succeeded many times at these kinds of large-scale social training and education projects. In addition to the example of fire safety, think about what it took to educate an entire nation in creating our automobile culture. Building millions of miles of roads, training generations of citizens in the traffic laws, developing regulatory bodies to improve the safety of the cars themselves, requiring schools to teach drivers' education, testing and re-testing and licensing. Only a few generations ago, no one had even invented the car! When we want to, we're capable of massive education for change.

Because Eastern Mennonite University is a religious institution, its faculty in the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding are especially interested in the role religion plays in violent conflict and in peacebuilding. The Summer Peacebuilding Institute deliberately seeks to bring people of many faiths together to examine why religion plays the role it does in inspiring violence, and how to take advantage of the role it also sometimes plays in creating peace.

The professor who taught my seminar, which was called, "Religion: Source of Conflict, Resource for Peace," argued that one of the things religious leaders need to do in order to play a positive role for peacebuilding is to tell the truth about their religions – to own up to the dark side as well as the light. Professor Ron Kraybill writes that "most people of faith have little awareness of the dimensions of their own traditions that are most commonly used to justify destructive actions and attitudes towards others. ... People of faith have an obligation to become informed about the full extent of the damage done in their name. Survival of our world requires 'an end to assumed innocence' on the part of religions."

"The Summer Peacebuilding Institute deliberately seeks to bring people of many faiths together to examine why religion plays the role it does in inspiring violence, and how to take advantage of the role it also sometimes plays in creating peace."

During the course of the seminar, three presenters – a Christian scholar named Dr. Nancy Heisey, a Muslim Imam named Yahiyah Hendi, and an Orthodox Jewish studies professor named Dr. Robert Eisen – analyzed how their religions have been used to justify violence and what tools they offer in the cause of peacebuilding. Professor Heisey analyzed the history of Christian imperialism and militarism following Emperor Constantine and connected it to militant expressions of Christianity today, such as the embrace of the war in Iraq by the Christian right.

Imam Hendi presented and analyzed the major Qu'ranic verses that Osama bin Laden has cited in promoting a violent version of Islam, and described a contest of interpretation taking place within Islamic society in which Imams like him are fighting for traditional readings of the Qu'ran that defy the narrow vision of the modern-day extremists. Imam Hendi, by the way, is a Palestinian Muslim who, during the Second Intifada, was one of the first Imams to publish an Islamic legal ruling – a *fatwa* – prohibiting suicide bombing as contrary to Islam.

And finally there was Professor Eisen. He opened his analysis of Judaism as a source of conflict and of peace by saying, "I'm going to tell you lots of terrible things about Judaism in the next hour. And then I'm going to show you how many of the same texts [that are sources of violence] ... [can be] sources of peace. And in the end I hope that you will be very confused."

He then went on to describe how core concepts in Judaism, like chosenness, war, messianism, historical memory, and even monotheism itself have been marshaled in the cause of violence or hatred of the Other. He also shared his ideas about how those concepts have been – and have the potential to be – interpreted and handled so that they act as peacebuilding tools. One thing he said really stuck with me. He told our class: "If you are not prepared to be honest with your own tradition, you are not prepared to be a peacemaker."

Because the authority granted to religious leaders is so great,

the potential is huge for influencing millions of people to harm others in the name of religious piety. As my friend Mark Hurwitt has said, few things are as potentially destructive as masses of people doing the wrong thing while they believe they are doing right. The people who crashed the planes into the Twin Towers believed they were doing the right thing. So did the Popes who launched the Crusades. And so did Yigal Amir when he murdered Yitzhak Rabin.

I think we need to not only be honest about our religions, but also about our countries. I'd like to share an example about how that realization dawned on me. When I arrived at SPI, knowing that a very small number of Jews would be there, I expected that I would be constantly aware of my place in the world as a Jew. What surprised me was how much more I learned about myself as an American, and about the shocking amount of power, influence, hope, and disappointment that America generates for people around the world.

After SPI, my wife and I traveled to Israel for most of the month of June, where we spent a day in Bethlehem, on the West Bank, visiting a Palestinian Muslim man I had met at SPI. Husam Jubran holds a master's degree in conflict transformation from Eastern Mennonite. Upon his return to Bethlehem in 2004, he organized workshops on nonviolent resistance and political activism for Palestinians. In that year alone, over 600 people attended the workshops.

After experiencing SPI last summer, I returned to my home in Oregon inspired to learn more about peacebuilding, about the research and the practical aspects of how it works. I came back with a sense of excitement about the idea that a more peaceful world isn't just a wish we repeat in our prayers, but that it actually can happen and that we can use some of the same tools we've applied to other challenges – like improving medical care or fire safety – to learn how to make a more peaceful world. This is do-able. Let's get to work.

Leadership Shifts at CJP

Zimmerman Accepts New Challenges

The last member of the triumvirate who founded the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP) is leaving Eastern Mennonite University this summer.

CJP co-director Ruth Hoover Zimmerman, MA '02, is moving with her husband Earl to Kolkata (Calcutta), India, in September. The couple will be the regional representatives for Mennonite Central Committee for India, Nepal and Afghanistan.

In her personal and professional life, Zimmerman has broken barriers in multiple ways. She is the only college graduate of eight children born to her parents, and she is one of the longest-serving administrators at EMU, overseeing what is now the largest departmental budget.

Ruth Zimmerman started in 1994 as an administrative assistant under CJP's first director, Dr. John Paul Lederach. Quickly proving herself, she was tapped to be chief administrator as the program expanded.

In 2001, Dr. Howard Zehr lobbied for Zimmerman to receive a promotion from "administrator" under a PhD-holding director holding to "co-director" of CJP in conjunction with himself, a PhD-holder.

"I didn't think it was fair for Ruth not to receive the pay and status commensurate with her actual responsibilities," said Zehr. "It seemed like a role that is too-typical for females – to do the work and not receive the credit."

Giving Ruth Her Due

Zehr made it a package deal. He said he would oversee CJP's academic program only if Zimmerman were named his co-director, responsible for the administration of the masters degree program, the Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI) and the Practice Institute.

Under Zimmerman and Zehr, the co-director system worked well for its first four years, though the work responsibilities were heavy for two sets of shoulders. In 2006, the Zehr-Zimmerman co-directorship was enlarged by a group known as the "Leadership Team," consisting of the heads of each branch of CJP – Dave Brubaker for the MA program, Jan Jenner for the Practice Institute and Pat Hostetter Martin for the Summer Peacebuilding Institute – plus long-time administrative assistant Janelle Myers-Benner.

When Zimmerman began in 1994, CJP had two faculty members and two masters students. Today it has six full-time and three part-time faculty members and 18 other employees, shepherding nearly 100 masters students, plus dozens of others who come for training each year.

"Ruth's administrative abilities have made possible much of the

success of CJP," says EMU provost Dr. Beryl Brubaker, who has directly supervised Zimmerman for the last four years.

Zimmerman trained and supervised CJP staff. She also planned and monitored CJP's budget, which grew from \$30,000 in 1994-95 to \$2.2 million in 2006-07. Zimmerman was the main person who handled sensitive personnel issues, ranging from divorce to serious illness. She facilitated CJP functioning as an extended family or network of support. Toward this end, she participated in more than 120 potluck dinners where CJP faculty, staff and students mingle; she sent hundreds of messages for both joyous events – birthdays, weddings, and births – and for sad occasions marked by trauma and death.

Pat Bird, who works at Wake Forest University's school of medicine and who has taken classes at SPI, said Zimmerman's "calm influence" would be missed. "I was particularly impressed with the way Ruth handled the situation the first time the group from Iraq came to SPI, right after we had just invaded their country!" Zimmerman offered an apology at a public assembly, which was then posted on the CJP website.

Welcoming Presence

Zimmerman gave a personal answer to almost every e-mail she received pertaining to CJP or its worldwide family of 3,000 alumni. On one random day in April, her e-mail inbox included pleas for financial assistance to study at CJP, encouraging news about Christian-Muslim cooperation in the Philippines, a marriage announcement, a worrisome report about violence in Sri Lanka, an article to edit from a staff member temporarily in Turkey, a request for additional budget figures from a top administrator at EMU, a reminder that a report is due to the Fulbright Commission, graduation exercise plans, news about the upcoming Summer Peacebuilding Institute, and staff reaction to the idea of a new marketing brochure for CJP.

Yet if one had phoned Zimmerman on this day, it is likely that she would have managed to answer the call – or return it soon – amid the deluge of e-mails, scheduled meetings and drop-in visitors. Her office door at the entrance to the main CJP building was usually open, welcoming anyone who wanted to talk with her. "Ruth is someone that all of us knew we could absolutely count on," said co-director Howard Zehr.

In a far-sighted strategic move in 2001, Zimmerman wrote the winning proposal for EMU to be the first (and only) university to receive cohorts of Fulbright-supported students of peace from the Middle East and South Asia. Zimmerman mentored the Fulbright program at CJP for its first six years, through two renewals of the Fulbright contract. Fifty-two Fulbright students have come through CJP under this program. The seven-year Fulbright program has cemented EMU's position as a world-renowned peace center.

Two other Zimmerman initiatives: (1) securing a full-time fundraiser for CJP, which has raised the level of support for CJP to \$2.2 million in endowments and \$200,000 in annual funds; and (2) seeking a building under which CJP's functions and staff could be unified.

"These two quilts could be called 'bookends' of my life my past and my future. The one on the left is handmade by my mother using pieces of dresses I wore as child. The one on the right is a gift from a student from India a few years ago, long before I imagined I would be living in that part of the world," says Ruth Zimmerman.

This last initiative remains unrealized. "I have lobbied for larger and consolidated facilities since 2000, and I regret that I am not remaining at CJP long enough to see this vision come true, but I feel it will in the next few years, with the help of donors," she says.

Where It All Began

Ruth Zimmerman's trajectory to the leadership of CJP began in an unlikely location.

Ruth was one of eight children born to a traditional Mennonite farm-family in the Lancaster area of Pennsylvania. When Ruth was growing up, most of her family and friends spoke Pennsylvania Dutch, a language preserved for over 200 years from their country of origin in Europe. Dress was "plain," with the women wearing head covering and modest dresses that extended to their calves. The community was insular, preferring to keep its distance from outsiders and suspecting the practices of other Christians. Ruth's group was modern enough to drive cars rather than horses and buggies, but the cars had to be soberly black and not flashy, with even the bumpers painted black.

"Mine was a safe, secure childhood on a large diversified farm that grew corn, potatoes and tobacco," Ruth recalls. "It was a very German type of household – cleaning, gardening, family and friends, good food, hard work and wholesome play. Of course, we had to honor our parents and church leaders."

Ruth was an avid reader, which caused her to want to attend school beyond the socially acceptable level of grade 8. Her mother called her "strong-willed." Yielding to her pleas, her parents allowed her to complete high school through correspondence



courses and to enter a one-year program to be a licensed nurse.

Of her four sisters and three brothers, Ruth was the only one who sought and obtained a higher education. In 1994, she completed a bachelors degree at EMU, followed by a masters degree in conflict transformation in 2002 from EMU.

"Education was my way out of the traditional prescribed role for women in that community, where most were married by age 20 and had born eight children by age 40."

Actually Ruth did follow the prescribed role in one way: she married her teenage sweetheart, Earl, at age 20. Earl had a similar traditional Mennonite background and also wanted a higher education, yet his family pulled him out of school at age 15 and put him to work doing construction with his father.

By the time they reached their late 20s – with three children of their own – Ruth and Earl were eager to leave their "cocoon of community, family and faith." They took a mission assignment in the Philippines and moved to a place that was "challenging beyond compare."



Ruth Hoover Zimmerman, age 6, and Earl and Ruth at their wedding in 1972; the quilt was made by her mother from childhood dresses.

Philippine Ties

From the large farmhouses and spacious land of Pennsylvania, they packed themselves into a small space in Manila, a city of 10 million people in a climate where the temperature could exceed 100 degrees F., with humidity of 100%. The Mennonite church to which they were assigned was fractured by corruption, autocratic leadership and economic problems. The larger society was beset by natural disasters (volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, typhoons), poverty, pollution, energy and food security issues, labor strikes, upheaval among government leadership, and murders by armed fighters representing a variety of factions.

The many non-government organizations in the Philippines which aspired to work for peace and justice lost valuable time squabbling among themselves rather than maintaining a strategic front to address the large problems in the country.

“One regret about our eight years in the Philippines is that I didn’t have the degree in conflict transformation that I now have,” says Ruth. “I needed more tools and skills to help understand what I was seeing and living in and to ascertain what I could do to make a positive difference.”

From age 30 to 50, both Ruth and Earl pursued higher education, often through distance learning. While serving as co-pastor of Shalom Mennonite congregation near EMU, Earl earned his doctorate in religion and culture (2004). He also taught religion and peace courses at EMU, wrote a book on John Howard Yoder, and co-edited one on the spiritual journeys of a sample of modern Mennonites.

Last year Ruth visited the Philippines and saw for herself that great progress had been made since her family’s residency in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Part of that progress is due to the work of two dozen peacebuilders directly trained through CJP – especially through the Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI) each May and June at EMU. In turn, these peacebuilders have shared their knowledge and skills with hundreds of others in the Philippines.

The Philippines now has two peace institutes modeled after SPI, the largest being the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute. Launched by Catholic and Mennonite alumni of SPI six years ago, Mindanao annually hosts more than 100 participants from at least 10 Asian countries. Among other projects, these people train soldiers in “a culture of peace,” build bridges between Muslims and Christians, help women emerge from poverty through micro-financed projects, and teach schoolchildren alternatives to violence.

The work has progressed to the point that Mennonite Central Committee pulled its last two staff members from the Philippines last year, believing that their presence was no longer essential, with a relatively strong civil society and well-prepared Filipino peacebuilders.

Words of Appreciation

In reaction to Ruth’s announcement of her departure, 70 people in CJP’s global family have sent her messages, all expressing appreciation or support in some way.

“We envy the region you are going to serve,” Gopar Tapkida, MA ’01, wrote to Ruth from Nigeria. “We wish it was Africa so that you will be a lot closer to us.”

He added, however, that he was certain that Ruth and Earl were following God’s call “to practice what you have learned and been teaching at EMU. Go boldly and the Lord will see you through.”

Cynthia Sampson, a staff writer at CJP in the late 1990s, wrote to Ruth from Wisconsin: “You’ll have a ready-made network of great contacts and colleagues from CJP/SPI in South Asia. You have made such a deep and integral contribution to CJP every step of the way. At the same time, you are leaving CJP with much depth and breadth – the true definition of resilience.

“One mark of your leadership (and followership) is that the program is well equipped to carry on.”

Donors Make CJP Possible

Upwards and onwards. That’s the direction of fundraising for the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP).

Donations to CJP set a record this year, as measured both by contributions to CJP endowments and to its annual fund. Donation dollars jumped 38% from fiscal year 2005-06. This means more scholarship funds, more support for faculty stretched thin by demands on their time, more funding for explaining our lessons on peace and justice to the world. *(Thank you, donors!)*

Donations to CJP Annual Fund Year-to-Date (as of March 2007)		
2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
\$ 96,984 from 143 donors	\$109,383 from 147 donors	\$150,739 from 218 donors

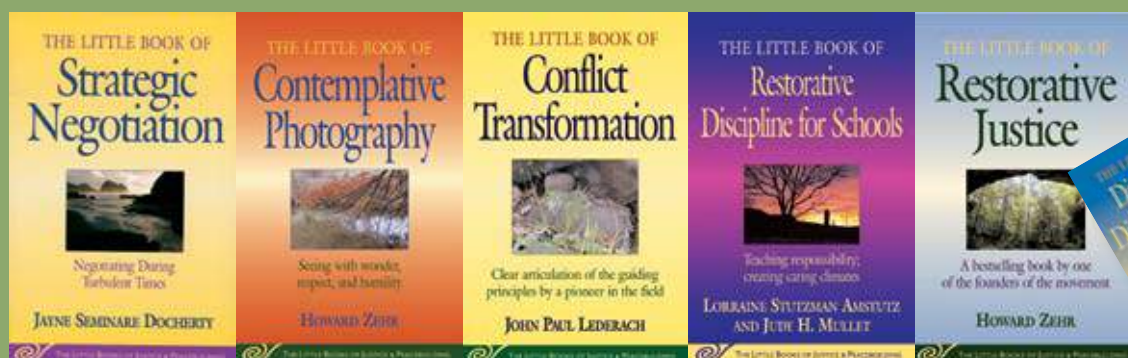
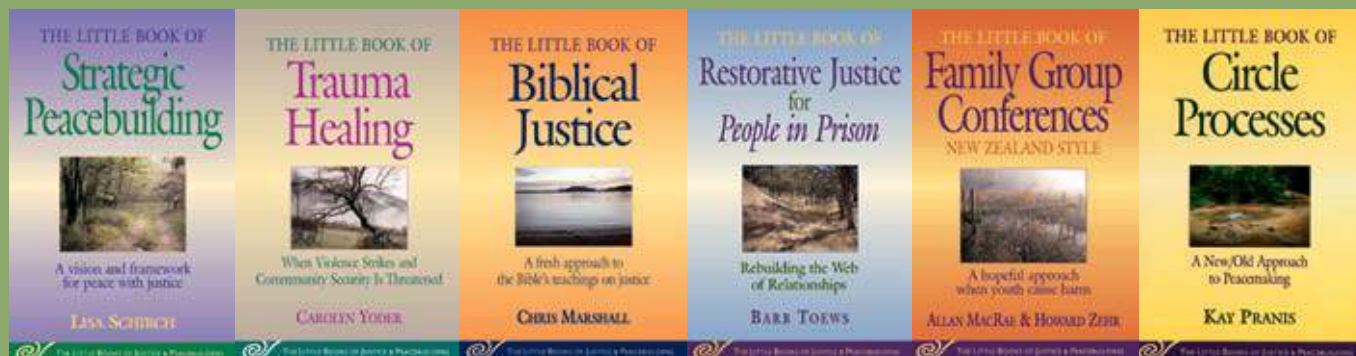
Three new endowments were added, offering permanent support so critical to the long-term viability of CJP.

New Endowments in 2006-07 (as of March 2007)		
Endowment Name	Amount Contributed in 2006-07 to date	Initial Stated Goal Amount within Five Years
Payne Creative Initiatives	\$150,000	\$300,000
Alper Family Scholarship	\$10,000	\$50,000
Donald L Goodwin Scholarship	\$12,990	\$50,000
Totals	\$172,990	\$400,000

Prior to this year, generous donors established 10 other endowments for CJP. Many of these endowments support student scholarships. Others provide general support for the center or provide funding for faculty to pursue research and writing opportunities. CJP’s endowments now total \$2,063,275, a significant amount for a relatively new program, but not nearly enough to meet the need, particularly for scholarships.

New donors are contributing and others are increasing their support because they recognize that CJP can only be effective if it is secure in its annual funding and is able to increase its endowments for scholarships and creative new peace and justice programs. To join this group of donors who share our vision of expanding peace and justice throughout the world, please contact Phoebe Kilby, associate director of development for CJP, at 800-368-3383 or phoebe.kilby@emu.edu.

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