

Wake Up Before We Bleed to Death

"My judgment is, if we weren't in Iraq, they'd find some other excuse, because they have ambitions. . . . The best way to protect America is defeat these killers overseas so we do not have to face them here at home."

President Bush, commenting on the connection between US presence in Iraq and the growing threat of global terrorism in a press conference, September 26, 2006.

In one sentence, the president exposes a fatal flaw in analysis that has led his country into a place of unprecedented danger. The biggest threat to security, he believes, is a band of terrorists who seek the downfall of the US, if not the entire western world. They intend to do us in, regardless of our actions. We must destroy them, at any cost, before they destroy us.

Bush is right about the danger. What he fails to see, and thus feeds, is a far bigger danger: the growing likelihood that tens of thousands will join what until recently has been a tiny, marginalized movement of radicals acting in the name of religion.

Think of the radicals as a small cancer. What the cancer needs is a non-hostile environment and a stimulus to grow. Our every response must be well informed. What kind is it? How does it interact with surrounding tissue? What happens when we try to excise it? A surgeon who takes up the scalpel before understanding these questions will do more harm than good.

What the Bush policies have done is create a receptive environment among millions of Muslims who previously held the extremists in vast skepticism. Into this growingly sympathetic environment, the uncomprehending president's actions are now scattering thousands of highly energized extremists like the shreds of a metastasizing cancer. His bombs in Iraq, his policies of neglect in Afghanistan, his appearance

of being above law and world opinion have given the tiny cancer exactly what it needs to grow rapidly in many new places.

There is an alternative. Like physicians, we need to study the interaction between environment and disease. One hundred years ago, medicine paid little attention to this question. Bloodletting was thought to be life-giving. Illness was a result of bad agents in the body; excise them.

To restore security today, we need to direct more resources to understanding and limiting the interaction between the cancer of terrorism and its environment.

Eventually science learned to treat disease as more than an isolated object that can simply be removed. It is an entity that exists only in interaction with the rest of the body. This led to far more effective responses. We discovered we could shut down certain kinds of interaction between disease and host, leading to self-demise of the disease. We discovered we could strengthen the body's immune system, leading to the prevention of many diseases. We learned

to do surgery in ways that do not release pathogens into the body, and then usually as a last resort.

To restore security today, we need to direct more resources to understanding and limiting the interaction between the cancer of terrorism and its environment. This must happen at two levels, above and below the cancer.

We need to give higher priority to strengthening regional alliances and building good will among neighbors. There is no way that we can police the world. Logistically and financially it is exhausting us. Politically, it is alienating us from the entire world. Only regional bodies, backed when necessary by UN forces, can play this role.

We need to invest the billions we currently spend on violent interventions on the long, slow task of strengthening regional bodies. There are vast grounds on which to do this: trade, water management, transportation, technology, drug and law enforcement, healthcare, education. When regional cooperation is thriving, there will be a strong base for those bodies to stand upon in addressing terrorism.

We also need to invest large-scale resources below the cancer, to addressing the fears and desperation of the masses whom terrorists seek to swing in their direction. The goal of bin Laden, after all, is not to take down the US in a single swipe. Rather, as a master of unconventional war-

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fare, he seeks to provoke us into actions that will drive the masses into his arms.

We have all the resources of the world's largest economy at our disposal to frustrate him, if only we have the wisdom to understand what he is up to. Think how much good will the millions of dollars that buy one fighter bomber could create if strategically used to improve the life of villagers somewhere in the world. It is already

too late in the badly-played Iraq game to get quick results with such a strategy there. But not in most places in the world. And even in Iraq, the rapidly-fading chances for success require us to give high priority to such approaches.

Our president sometimes inspires with his defiant courage to employ drastic procedures in response to life-threatening danger. Unfortunately all indicators show his proce-

dures of choice are gravely out-dated. The patient is bleeding badly but appears to be awakening from slumber. Will we demand a different approach before it is too late?

By Ron Kraybill, PhD, September 26, 2006. Kraybill has twenty-five years of experience in peace processes in South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Burma, and other locations. For more of his writings, see his blog at www.RiverhouseEpress.com

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How Jesus Read His Bible

** Editor's note- Michael Hardin will be the Peace and Justice Support Network Bible study leader for the MC USA national assembly in San Jose 2007.*

One of the hallmarks of the Anabaptist tradition is following Jesus, or discipleship. For most Anabaptists, this term elicits notions of ethics and lifestyle. Yet, even as this is the case, many Anabaptists feel that the specific contribution of Anabaptist thought is being eroded by assimilation to Constantinian Christianity, a Christianity that has forsworn nonviolence and just peacemaking.

Constantinian Christians cannot appeal to Jesus for their just wars, nor for their justified retributive postures, they must seek a warrant for this in one of three places:

- 1 the Old Testament,
- 2 a 'violent' understanding of the atonement or
- 3 a 'violent' eschatology.

Taking these backwards in turn, we observe that a violent eschatology, where some go to

heaven and some go to hell, is being moderately challenged on the perimeters of Christianity, e.g., Randy Klassen's book *What Does The Bible Really Say About Hell?* The challenge to a violent approach to the atonement has received much greater emphasis with contributions by literally dozens of scholars this past decade. Preaching Peace and Every Church A Peace Church are sponsoring a Conference on the Nonviolent Atonement in January 2007 (for more info see www.preachingpeace.org).

But the major stumbling block appears to be how we Anabaptists interpret our Hebrew Bible. Some Anabaptists, as J. L. Burkholder noted, were functional Marcionites, they threw out or ignored the Old Testament. Yet both Jesus and the apostolic writers used the Old Testament because it bore wit-

ness to something absolutely new in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Our sessions at MCUSA 2007 in San Jose will explore passages in which Jesus used his Bible, looking for clues as to how he interpreted it and how we may follow him in the interpretation of our Old Testament. This is essential for us as we follow Jesus, for following Jesus means more than just exploring lifestyle options, it includes and is grounded in our first hearing the voice of God.

The questions immediately arise: why is there so much violence in the Old Testament? Why does God seem to command violence in some passages and exhortate it in others? Is violence an attribute of God? These are not trite questions for Anabaptists or Constantinian Christians, they are truly essential questions and as long as we do not answer these questions we will be left begging for answers to many other related questions that arise in our study of Scripture.

In our time together, we will explore several passages where Jesus makes interpretive choices as he challenges the theology of his contemporaries and continues to challenge our own theologies today. Come join us for an intense, life-giving approach to an Anabaptist way of rendering Scripture so that it is consistent good news that is proclaimed.

Michael Hardin is Director of The School of Peace Theology, and Education Coordinator for Every Church A Peace Church



Mission Statement

The mission of Peace and Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA is to proclaim and promote God's desire for justice (Micah 6:8), Christ's call to peacemaking (Matthew 5:9), and the Spirit's reconciling work (Ephesians 2:11-22).

The Peace and Justice Partnership Council meets in Elkhart, Indiana

A new reflective, leadership and coordinating structure, the Peace and Justice Partnership Council (PJPC) has met three times already this year, although the goal is one annual meeting. Members include executives from each Mennonite Church USA agency and Racial/Ethnic group, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Mennonite Central Committee US and the Peace and Justice Support Network. Susan Mark Landis and Ron Byler, Executive Leadership staff, bring the council together. PJPC has three main purposes:

- coordinate the peace and justice work of Mennonite Church USA agencies and ministries and related inter-Mennonite partners,
- set churchwide priorities and policies for peace and justice and

- assist Executive Leadership staff in their evaluation of peace and justice work in Mennonite Church USA.

Leo Hartshorn, minister of peace and justice, has provided two background papers for learning and discussion. "Meanings of Peace" highlighted 12 Christian perspectives on present in Mennonite congregations today and "The Many Faces of Justice" identified six specific forms of injustice: racial, sexual, political, economic, cultural and verbal. Each group represented also prepares a report for the meetings. For the August meeting, the group decided to research these questions:

- (1) What injustice(s) is your organization working on?

- (2) How does your agency deal with injustice within the organization?
- (3) What justice concerns are your constituents troubled about?
- (4) What is the connection between justice and anti-racism/white privilege?
- (5) How has white privilege shaped and impacted your agency?

After a vigorous discussion on various agency responses to immigration and May 1, the group agreed to work to identify principles and processes that the entire church can use as we discern calls for action. Members also tackled responsible investment issues and divestment from companies benefiting from the Israeli occupation.

Spread the Peace Grants

The Peace and Justice Support annually provides grants of \$500 and \$1000 to support new peace and justice projects initiated through MC USA congregations. The recipients of the Spread the Peace grants for 2006 were recently awarded to:

- **Judy Hoffhien**, Houston Mennonite Church, Houston, Texas, was awarded a \$500 grant to create a peace trunk for children to address issues of conflict resolution, respecting diversity, understanding other cultures, and developing inner serenity. The peace trunk will include non-competitive games, multicultural puppets, art materials, instruments, books, and CDs.

- **Don Kaufman**, Bethel College Mennonite Church, Newton, Kansas, was awarded a \$500 grant to assist with fees related to reprinting his book *The Tax Dilemma: Praying for Peace, Paying for War* through WIPF and Stock publishers.

- **Andy Piefer Nisley**, West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was awarded a \$500 grant as seed money for the West Philadelphia Mennonite Fellowship peace group to address issues of militarism and violence in the city.

- **Tom Kessler**, Cedar Falls Mennonite Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa, was awarded a \$1000 grant to assist in the establishment of a peace center, including sponsoring keynote speakers, peace and justice journal subscriptions, books, audio-visuals, and a Shalom Readers Club.

Applications for 2007 Spread the Peace grants can be found on the PJSN web site or by contacting Valerie Weidman, PJSN Assistant at 717-397-3855 or valeriepjsn@comcast.net.

Advent Advocacy for all ages

During Advent we tend to picture the Bethlehem of Jesus' time. We see an inn with no vacancies and a cozy cave where gentle, warm animals share their quaint eating trough with Jesus. The scene sparkles with our desire for a familiar Christmas setting 'with hearts all aglow.'

I visited Bethlehem in June, 2004 with both Mennonite Central Committee and Christian Peacemaker Teams. Towering walls and militarized fences now encircle Bethlehem, turning the 4,000-year-old city into a virtual prison for its 160,000 Palestinian citizens — both Christian and Muslim. As in Mary and Joseph's time, the land is occupied and registration with an occupying government is a constant requirement.

This advent, we invite you to join us as we learn about people who lived when Jesus was born and who live in Bethlehem today. We invite you to worship a risen

Christ, who cares how we live and worship and who invites us to do justice, especially during our cozy season of Advent.

Resources for free download:

- Five PowerPoints of Then and Now for Advent and Christmas Eve/Day:
 - o Mary and the women of Bethlehem
 - o Joseph and the olive wood carvers
 - o shepherds then and now
 - o the Wise Men and wise people who travel to Bethlehem now
 - o baby Jesus and the children of Bethlehem
- Accompanying the five PowerPoints are coloring pages for children
- Handout for adults with further information and advocacy ideas.

Unemployment is 60% in Bethlehem and many people have turned to crafts to earn desperately needed income for their families.



Your congregation and/or individual families might choose to purchase olive wood crèche sets from Ten Thousand Villages, www.tenthousandvillages.com, adding one piece each Advent Sunday. Perhaps the stories of carpenters who can't sell their wares, shepherds separated from their sheep and children living without peace will return each year when the crèche set comes out for advent.

For free downloads, visit the PJSN web-site, www.MennoniteUSA.org/peace.

Mug Someone for Peace

The Peace and Justice Support Network would like to encourage Mennonite Church USA congregational and conference peace centers and committees



to affirm and promote the work of peace and justice in your local area by honoring someone with a lifelong commitment to peace and justice by awarding them a peace mug. PJSN has commissioned potter Dick Lehman to create peace mugs, which we want to make available to centers and committees for such an event. Your financial support of PJSN has made it possible for us to offer these mugs as gifts.

Peace and justice groups can call for nominations from their constituency asking for persons who:

- have been involved in peace and justice work for a long period of time;
- have worked at educating, advocating,

- organizing for peace, justice, reconciliation and community building;
- have modeled a Christian lifestyle of peace and justice;
- have been a founder or leader of a church or community peace and justice organization;
- should be publicly recognized for their ongoing work

Present the peace mug at a public meeting, preferably at your conference's annual meeting. The larger the meeting the more people will be inspired for their own peace and justice work. If the mug cannot be presented at the conference annual meeting consider a presentation at a community banquet or a public meeting or worship service sponsored by your peace and justice group.

Make sure a photo is taken, which can be put in the conference newsletter or wider Mennonite publications. In the caption please give an explanation of the work the person has done and a note that the mug comes as a gift from Peace and Justice Support Network.

Send PJSN a photo and a story on the person you awarded the peace mug and we will put it on our web site. The awarding of a peace mug will not only honor those who have worked long and hard in peace and justice, but will serve to encourage others to continue in their local and global work

To request a peace mug to award to someone in your area, send us the following information for consideration:

- Name of the Mennonite Church USA related peace and justice committee or center and the congregation, conference, or region of your group;
- Name, address, phone number of the contact person;
- When, where, why, and on what occasion you plan to award the peace mug;
- When you need the peace mug by.

Send your requests for a peace mug to: Leo Hartshorn, Minister of Peace and Justice, Mennonite Mission Network, 202 South Ann Street, Lancaster, PA 17602, 717-399-9353, LeoH@MennoniteMission.net

Peace Pitcher Nominations

Greetings! The time is here to nominate people for the PJSN Peace Pitcher! The Peace Pitcher recognizes the outstanding work of a leader in peace and justice. Qualifications: Someone (may be an individual or a couple) who has had an important influence, both inside Mennonite Church USA and in our witness to the world, in the cause of peace and justice, over a lifetime. Past recipients include: 1997 — Atlee and Winifred Beechy; 1999 — Marian and Delton Franz; 2003 — Gene Stoltzfus; 2005 — Lawrence Hart.

The Peace Pitcher will be presented during the PJSN Bible study at San Jose 2007.

Information needed:

- Name, address, congregation of nominee
- Why you are nominating this person
- Your name, address, phone #, email

Your nomination must be received by March 1, 2007. Please mail to: Leo Hartshorn, Minister of Peace and Justice, 202 S. Ann St., Lancaster, PA 17602 or email your application to: Valerie Weidman, PJSN administrative assistance, at ValerieW@MennoniteMission.net Please call Valerie at 717-397-3855 with any questions.

Thanks for Your Support

The Peace & Justice Support Network Leadership Team gives thanks the 130 households and 15 congregations that have generously supported our work thus far this year. With these funds, Peace Minister Leo Hartshorn wrote and we sent Peace Sunday materials exploring the connections between peacemaking and faith to all Mennonite Church USA congregations. With these funds, Peace Advocate Susan Mark Landis recently prepared Advent Advocacy materials that are now posted on the PJSN website. With additional donations, PJSN will continue to provide you with what you need to help you to see more clearly, to urge you to advocate for the lease among us, and to stir the spirit within you. Please give generously to PJSN so that all God's children will not only imagine but experience the peace here on Earth.

— *Melonie Buller, PJSN Treasurer*

Upcoming Events at Lombard Mennonite Peace Center

- **October 4, 2006:** Leadership and Anxiety in the Church: A Family Systems, Perspective, Peoria, IL
- **October 9–13, 2006:** Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders, Pinole, CA (San Francisco area)
- **October 13–14, 2006:** Facilitating Healthy Pastor-Congregation Relations, Pittsburgh, PA
- **October 17–19, 2006:** Here I Stand: Leading Change Through Self-Differentiation, Glendale, AZ (Phoenix area)
- **October 23–25, 2006:** Advanced Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process, Hinsdale, IL (Chicago area)
- **November 1, 2006:** Leadership and Anxiety in the Church: A Family Systems, Perspective, Lee's Summit, MO (Kansas City area)
- **November 6–8, 2006:** Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process, Lombard, IL (Chicago area)
- **November 10–11, 2006:** Facilitating Healthy Pastor-Congregation Relations, Plymouth, MA
- **November 13–17:** Leadership in Church and Society: A Family Systems Perspective, Southern Methodist University, Plano, TX
- **November 27–December 1:** Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders, Clarence, NY (Buffalo area)
- **January 29–31, 2007:** Advanced Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process, Hinsdale, IL (Chicago area)
- **February 5–7, 2007:** Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process, Lombard, IL (Chicago area)
- **March 2, 2007:** Leadership and Anxiety in the Church: A Family Systems, Perspective, Warren, MI (Detroit area)
- **March 9–10, 2007:** Healthy Congregations, Brentwood, TN (Nashville area)
- **March 12–16, 2007:** Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders, Tulsa, OK
- **March 20–22, 2007:** Here I Stand: Leading Change Through Self-Differentiation, Portland, OR
- **March 22, 2007:** Leadership and Anxiety in the Church: A Family Systems Perspective, Albuquerque, NM
- **March 26–30, 2007:** Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders, Belleville, IL (St. Louis area)

For more information contact:

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