

Olive Branches

Pacific Northwest Regional Peace Gathering

by Leo Hartshorn

The Peace and Justice Support Network, Mennonite Church USA and the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference Peace and Justice Committee are co-sponsoring a regional peace gathering at Albany Mennonite Church in Albany, Oregon on October 26-28, 2006. This is the second regional peace gathering PJSN has co-sponsored in an effort to connect with regional peace and justice work among conference peace and justice committees and Mennonite Church USA constituency. The first regional peace gathering was held in Columbus, Ohio in 2004.

Keynote Speaker



The keynote speaker will be Ched Meyers, theological animator for Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries and author of the landmark political reading of the gospel of Mark, *Binding the Strong Man*. Over the

past two decades he has worked with several peace and justice organizations and movements, including the American Friends Service Committee, the Pacific Concerns Resource Center and the Pacific Life Community. Ched is a co-founder and continuing board member of the Word and World School for faith-based activists (www.wordandworld.org), and of the Sabbath Economics Collaborative (www.sabbatheconomics.org).

Ched holds a Bachelors degree in Philosophy from the University of California at Berkeley (1978) and a Masters degree in New Testament Studies from the Graduate Theological Union (1984). He has served as adjunct faculty at Memphis Theological Seminary, Fuller Theological

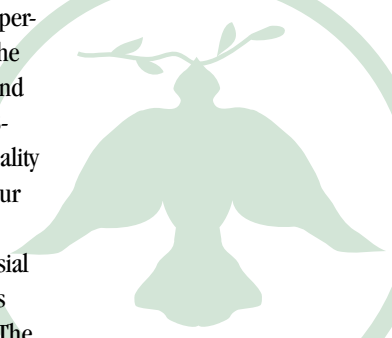
Seminary and Claremont School of Theology (where he was the 1998-99 Fellow in Urban Theology) and has taught at numerous other schools and seminaries.

Ched's books include: *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (1988), *Who Will Roll Away the Stone: Discipleship Queries for First World Christians* (1994), and *Say to This Mountain: Mark's Story of Discipleship* (1996, co-authored), all published by Orbis Books. He writes regularly for *Sojourners* and *The Other Side* magazines, and has published more than 100 articles and essays in various periodicals in the U.S., England and Australia. Ched travels throughout North America and abroad giving seminars and retreats, teaching, preaching and facilitating gatherings.

Ched's first session is entitled "From Lamech's Curse to Jesus' Challenge: Disrupting the Spiral of Violence." The biblical focus is Matt 18:21-35. Jesus concludes his teaching on "church order" with a difficult parable about the consequences of the culture of vengeance and exploitation. He thus defines peacemaking discipleship as both intensely interpersonal and unavoidably political. Session two is The "Ambassadors of Reconciliation? Peacemaking and Economic Injustice." biblical focus is 2 Cor 5:18-6:2, 8:1ff. The structural violence of social inequality is the greatest threat to the "paths of peace" in our world. Participants will look at Paul's strategy of wealth redistribution and mutual aid as an ecclesial response to economic apartheid. Session three is "Christ Has Broken Down the Walls of Hostility: The Peacemaking Church as Boundary-Crosser." The biblical focus is on Ephesians 2 and 6. Solidarity is at the center of our vocation to become the body of Christ in the world. In the real landscape of social division, this will mean both transgressing institutions of enmity and standing with the marginalized.

Mission Statement

The Mission of the 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)



Bible Study Leader



Bible Study Leader will be Perry Yoder, professor of Old Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in

Elkhart, Ind. and author of *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice and Peace*. Perry received his Bachelors degree from Goshen College in 1962 and Ph.D from the University of Pennsylvania in 1970. His writings include *The Meaning of Peace: Biblical Studies* (Westminster / John Knox, 1992), *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice and Peace* (Faith & Life, 1987), and *From Word to Life: A Guide to the Art of Bible Study* (Herald, 1982).

For two years, Perry worked in a traveling assignment as People's Teacher of the Word, 1975-77. He was Associate Secretary for Peace and Social Concerns for the General Conference Mennonite Church, 1977-78. He taught at Bluffton College, 1968-75; Bethel College, 1977-84; and Conrad Grebel College, spring 1983.

Perry joined AMBS in 1985. Recently Perry has served as a mentor for the Shalom Reconciliation Pilgrimage project of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, helping build their understanding of the meaning of the biblical term "shalom." Perry's Bible studies will be: 1) The Wisdom of Peacemaking; and 2) Keeping on the Path of Peace.

There will also be inspirational worship services, displays, youth and children's programs at the Albany peace gathering.

Further information and registration forms can be found on the PJSN web site: www.mennoniteusa.org/peace.

- **Exploring Diverse Practices of Restorative Justice**—Elaine Enns, Restorative Justice and Conflict Mediation Program and Ched Meyers, Theological Animator, Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries. They will explore a model of "four ways" for personal and political peacemaking, and share stories of contemporary faith-based practitioners.
- **The Fork in the Path: preparing youth to choose peace**—Titus Peachey, Peace Educator, MCC U.S. Does the message of peace have a chance in the face of the military's multi-billion dollar advertising and recruitment budget? Yes! Come prepared to share and to learn what congregations can do to prepare youth for a lifetime of peacemaking.
- **The Fork in the Path: military veterans choosing peace (Youth)**—Titus Peachey, Peace Educator, MCC U.S. Come and meet former soldiers who are now committed to Jesus' way of peace. Bring your questions about war, military service and how Jesus' way of peace works in a world of violence and terror.
- **Immigrants Journey to the U.S.**—Rebecca Jimenez Yoder, Director of Immigration Office, MCC U.S. Immigration is a very complex issue with no easy answers. In this workshop we will explore why immigrants leave their home countries. We will also look at what type of situations they face in their journey to the U.S. You will also learn about some of the border policies that make their journey more dangerous.
- **Strategies for Peacemaking**—Iris de Leon-Hartshorn, Director of Peace and Justice Ministries, MCC U.S. Participants will explore a model that uses strategic peacebuilding as a way to work toward just peace solutions in our work toward peace.
- **Peace and Mission: siblings or rivals?**—Leo Hartshorn, Minister of Peace and Justice, Mennonite Mission Network. Peace and mission are often at odds within the church. This workshop will explore that tension and how the work of peace and mission have been and can be reconciled.
- **Drumming for Peace: a joyful noise**—Leo Hartshorn, co-director, Drumming for Peace. Come join in a fun way of kinesthetically learning peace principles through drumming, rhythm and story. Through various drumming exercises using stick and plastic buckets participants learn about community, team-building and unity in diversity.
- **Global Warming, Local Witness**—Joe Blowers, a longtime environmental science teacher with Portland Public Schools. Global warming is real and it is upon us. Ice caps are melting, sea level is rising, and storms are becoming more severe. 2005 was the warmest year on record, yet many politicians, church leaders and citizens still act as if it's no big deal. Unfortunately, climate change will disproportionately harm poor nations and poor people, making it a justice issue as well as an affront to God's Creation.

This workshop will look at the latest scientific evidence, suggest practical steps for individuals to take, and examine strategies for mobilizing the church on this issue.

- **What if Christians Stopped Killing?**—Jon Yoder, Pastor, Pacific Covenant Mennonite Church, Canby, Ore. This workshop will explore the intersection of Holy Scripture, Christian tradition, and the Holy Spirit in considering additional questions such as "Why did Christians start killing in the first place?" "Is Christian killing any different than 'pagan' killing?" and "Why does killing have such a grip on the Christian mind?"
- **The Earth is Good—and that includes you**—Michael Schut, Education Director, Earth Ministry. In this interactive workshop we will explore some of the biblical and theological foundations for a creation-care ethic and how you can communicate that in your own life, including within your congregation; and, we'll explore how our economic system could shift to honor the goodness of creation. Finally, practical resources for use in your own congregation will be introduced.
- **Organizing a Local Community Peace Organization**—Sharon Gisler, Director, Albany Peaceseekers, Albany, Ore. This workshop will explore some of the dynamics of organizing a local peace organization using the Nagasaki Peace Delegation of 2005 as a model for developing partnerships among educational, civic, church, and not-for-profit groups. The workshop will invite a dialogue among attendees in an effort to discovering the "dos" and "don'ts" of organizing local community peace organizations.
- **The Role of Alternative Dispute Resolution at a Community Level**—Sharlee Johnson, Executive Director, Linn-Benton Mediation Services, Albany, Ore. This workshop will explore the role and impact a local community dispute resolution center has on our society and culture around us. Leaders will share the challenges and rewards of the work they do, as well as where they see the future of community mediation is headed.
- **Food for Body and Soul**—Cathleen Hockman-Wert, co-author of *Simply in Season: A World Community Cookbook*, Corvallis, Ore. This workshop will help at choices and the work of peace and justice. Developing relationships between congregations and local farmers can create a healthier earth, strengthen local economies and help to feed low-income neighbors.
- **CPT: Front-lines Peacemaking in the Middle East**—Matt Chandler, CPT leader (tentative). Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) places teams of trained peacemakers in conflict areas to reduce violence. We ask the question, "What would happen if Christians devoted the same discipline and self-sacrifice to nonviolent peacemaking that armies devote to war?" CPT has maintained long-term projects in Palestine and Iraq. What are the results of this kind of front-lines peacemaking in the Middle East?