

Journal 9

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In a recent meeting of our InnerPeace/WorldPeace Saturday morning group, Dick Glennie talked about how his appreciation of beauty has a calming effect in his life. His experience confirms what Joyce Kramer says in her poem, "Open Your Life to Beauty."

What beauty have you seen today? Have you watched the sunrise? Have you listened to good and beautiful music? Have you observed beautiful flowers? There are many places to find beauty—in people, in nature, and in things. Wherever we are, we are able to perceive beauty if we are looking for it and are tuned in to the idea of beauty.

There is order, balance, harmony, and great beauty all around, but beauty is an inside job—inner awareness leads to outer perception. Beauty is a living, vibrant force—your passport to a more joyous life. You are an avenue, an instrument of beauty. Let the beauty of God and God's creation be expressed through you and in your life.

—Joyce Kramer, *Open Your Life To Beauty* —A Pause for Beauty

Fighting the Cancer of War

Walt Ziegenhals wrote the following for one of the weekly peace vigils held each Friday evening in front of First United Church of Oak Park, Illinois.

Dear Friends of Peace:

All of us, I feel certain, wonder at times about the effectiveness of these Friday night vigils. We are so small and fragile a cell for peace—shivering in the night air, holding up flickering candles and raising home made signs in hope that passing motorists will see and read them. We stand in stark contrast to the omni-present and seemingly all powerful military-industrial complex that feeds the war in Iraq and pumps up the patriotism of fearful Americans. We cannot but wonder how what we do here tonight effects the war launched preemptively three long years ago, a war that has become a cancer on us all.

It was Vicki Noble, feminist healer, author and teacher, who first introduced me to the thought that war is a cancer and that the "global body is suffering from terminal cancer." "A body with cancer," she writes, "is terminally ill", because the cancer cells have gone crazy. They split and increase in an aberrant, auto-nomous way, without keeping in mind the organism of which they are a part, Eventually through their sheer numbers and the speed of their blind growth, they take over and so weaken the immune system, that the body dies. The way Vicki Noble relates to cancer as a healer is not to fight or 'kill' the cancer cells, but rather to focus attention on the healthy cells. If the healthy cells can be awakened and enlivened so that they begin to vibrate at a higher level, the cancer has been

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known to miraculously and spontaneously leave the body for no apparent reason. Surely this global body is suffering from terminal cancer, war makers acting as the crazy cancer cells, taking up more and more space, and overpowering the organic process of life on earth. Nobel sees herself however, as a healthy cell in this poor sick body and wagers that we are, too. It seems to her that our responsibility as healthy cells, on a daily basis, is simply to raise our vibration and join together for health. We do this, she feels, "when thousands of us hit the streets together chanting and singing for peace, when we come together in healing circles, when we join together to drum and sing, awakening the sleeping cells in the body, and jump start the weakened immune system." (*Peace Prayers, Meditations, Affirmations, Invocations, Poems, and Prayers for Peace*, Vicki Nobel, p.94)

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the one I was riding.

—Eliana

Building Bridges for Peace

I was so intrigued and touched by the L.O.V.E Works excerpt from the InnerPeace/WorldPeace Journal # 8, that I sought and met with staff from the Building Bridges for Peace program when they came through Chicago. Eliana, a former participant and now a program intern, offered to write this piece for us on her experiences.

—Jeff Olson

When I was a little girl, I was afraid of Arabs. My parents had always told me that Arabs were like any other people, but my friends and the Intifada that was going on, told me otherwise. Arabs were the ones who hated Jews and wanted to kill us all. Arabs were the ones who randomly stabbed a woman on the street, just a few blocks from where I lived. If I'd see an Arab in the street when I walked alone, my heart would start pounding, and I'd cross to the other side and walk faster.

I remembered that fear one day, years later, when I was walking in Jerusalem. I had just gotten off a bus after hearing an explosion and watching heavy smoke coming out of the bus in front of the one I was riding. Another terror attack. As I was walking home about a hundred meters from where ambulances were now trying to save the lives of the injured, I saw something that I'll never forget. All the Arab women on the street who usually cover their hair were quickly taking off their covers. I realized they were afraid to be recognized as Arabs after such an event, and it suddenly struck me. Wait a minute... THEY'RE afraid of ME.

About five years ago, I attended a

summer program called *Building Bridges For Peace* is a program that brings young women from Israel, Palestine and the US to a summer program here in Colorado. The girls spend two weeks together, sleeping in the same rooms, eating from the same tables, and learning communication skills to help them express their own emotions and at the same time be able to listen to the other.

For me, this program was a consciousness raiser. For the first time in my life, I sat across from a Palestinian and listened to her story just the way she chose to tell it, without a journalist editing it or calling it a lie. I listened to the story of girls from Jenin, Bethlehem and East Jerusalem, and I realized there was a lot I didn't know about the world, or even about Jerusalem, the city in which I grew up. I found out that those people who live next to me, and of whom I was once afraid, usually have a much more difficult, dangerous, and unfair life than I have. This new discovery made me want to do something, to start being active. I couldn't bear the thought of going on with my normal life after hearing about people whose life was anything but normal in theirs. I decided that my first step toward being more active in ending the conflict would be to stay involved with the program and stay in touch with my new friends.

Having connections with Palestinian girls wasn't always easy. There is, of course, the distance and the checkpoints, but maybe the hardest problem I face is society. One of the Palestinian girls I became friends with through BBFP actually lived in Jerusalem, and we used to meet a lot and hang out together. One day, as we were walking in Jerusalem, we ran into

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two of my classmates. I went over and talked to them, and then I invited them to meet my friend who was standing a few meters from us. One of my classmates refused to come and talk to her. She refused to even be introduced to her because she thought of her as "the enemy." I never told my friend what happened that day. I was embarrassed, and I didn't want to hurt her feelings, but that incident strengthened my decision to come back to the program, this time as a counselor, and to try to give as many teenagers as possible the experience of meeting the other side.

Today, I work with Seeking Common Ground through the Interns for Peace program. My job is to lead workshops in American high schools and to work as an office intern. When

meeting with these high school students, I learn more about the problems and the conflicts here in the United States. My hope is to promote social and political awareness within high school students here and to influence some of them towards becoming more socially involved. As for myself, I hope to find the best way that I can change and influence, to find the best way for me to work toward social justice and peace.

—by *Eliana*

(last name withheld upon request)
Contact Seeking Common Ground at
info@s-c-g.org, www.s-c-g.org
303.692.2393. DVD available upon request.

Was it fair to share
my feeling that I did
not approve of his
decision to
join the army?
Was there any
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actually change
his mind?

—*Demetrios Pappageorge*

The Holiday Visitor

One of the very few pleasures of teaching high school during the week before the winter holidays is having visits from former students. While my current students are struggling to stay focused on their reading assignment, I am afforded a few sporadic minutes to hear about how some of my beloved former students are doing in their first months of college, trade school, jobs, or boot camp.

Though these conversations are all unique and quite enjoyable, they almost always have a similar structure. It usually starts with a big toothy grin from both of us and a big "Hey!" Next comes the hug or handshake "How are you?" or "How's it going?" follows quickly. Then we take turns sharing our highlights since last seeing each other. For the student, it usually includes one or more of their most interesting classes or most challenging situations at work. For me it usually consists of the drama productions I direct.

One sentiment always present is an implicit pride in their recent accomplishments. The student has this underlying desire to meet with my approval and to hear words of encouragement and praise for their growth. This is not only easy but truly a joy every time it occurs. With a student, however, this was not so easy.

His name is Andy. In our theater program, he worked primarily on

set-building, but we eventually convinced him to audition for roles on the stage as well. He played Will Parker in *Oklahoma!* learning to dance for the first time and daring the other boys to join as well. He also played Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which was doubly impressive. Not only did he handle the Shakespearean language like a pro, but he blended his big heart and strong masculinity to create a Demetrius that was believable and actually likable.

Whether backstage or on it, Andy's big heart and masculine playfulness were welcome elements, helping make any production a wonderful experience. So last December, you can imagine the grin on my face as Andy swung open my classroom door to say, "Merry Christmas!" We smiled and shook hands just like always; the structure of the conversation was all too familiar. What were unfamiliar, however, were my thoughts and feelings at a time when typically I am grinning from ear to ear. You see, Andy was telling me that he was home only for a few days before getting shipped off to Iraq and that he now drives a "PC" or personnel carrier. He also stated that he is so good at simulation games that he will soon become a gunner. So while he was doing what all of my former students do, beaming with pride over his latest achievements, I was not feeling the
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God bless Andy.
 God bless all the
 young men and women
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 sides. And God bless
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 friends.

—Demetrios Pappageorge

usual joy and ease in this conversation. In fact I was flooded with feelings I could not appropriately articulate in a ten-minute conversation while 28 freshman English students were working silently on an assignment within earshot.

Like all my holiday visitors, he was beaming with pride at finding his way in the world and waiting for my words of encouragement. Knowing Andy, I am convinced that the motivation for his choice to follow this path was his sense of honor, duty, and a desire to do good for humanity. Was it fair to share my feelings that I did not approve of his decision to join the army? Was there any chance I could actually change his mind? Was it right to criticize his choice just before he left for the war? It just didn't seem right, not in this context and not at this time. My mind screamed things like, "NOO - OOO!!!! This is so wrong! What can I possibly say to change your mind?!" and even, "Andy, get in my trunk, and I'll drive you to Canada!" Suddenly, from my years in the professional theater and by impulse, I snapped into actor mode and resorted to tricks to hide my real emotions. As if in an actors' improv exercise, I formulated the words of some other person, some gritty playwright like David Mamet, and my whole face smiled as I said, "Well, I wish you the best, Andy. Don't get your ass shot off over there. We all want to see you come back in one piece." I asked him to come and see me when he returned and to keep in touch via email or through his brother

and girlfriend. We slapped each other on the shoulder as we shook hands, and he left.

I think about that conversation all the time. How could I be so insincere?! Did I do the right thing? I knew I couldn't say words of approval or tell him to be the best that he could be. To me that would have been the equivalent of saying, "I hope you get really good at shooting and killing a bunch of people." That would have been a little too much acting, and, indeed, it would have been a lie.

Thanks to the invention of the cell phone, Andy has already kept in touch, but I often wonder if he will return alive so we can again talk face to face. If given that opportunity, perhaps he will have had experiences that might open the door for longer conversations about war. One thing I will definitely do if given the chance is let him know how I feel about war and the value of human life in a clear but sensitive fashion. I would also try to convince him to request a transfer to a humanitarian post in another part of the world. Above all else, I would let him know that I was very proud of him for being such a good person, and I would tell him how fortunate I feel to have taught and worked with him.

In the meantime I pray: God bless Andy. God bless all the young men and women who have been drawn into this war on both sides. And God bless their families and friends.

—Demetrios Pappageorge

Healing The Jewish-Christian Rift

The experience of writing this recently published volume (*Healing the Jewish-Christian Rift: Growing Beyond Our Wounded History*; SkyLight Path Publishing, 2005) has been transformative. Like all spiritual endeavors, it has engendered both delight and anguish. It has challenged my deepest resources, calling up reserves of love, patience and stamina in the face of frustration and fear.

The idea for the project originated some five years ago over lunch with Ron Miller, my friend, teacher, mentor

and co-author. I had been urging Ron to write such a book, the outgrowth of 30 years of steadfastly and courageously teaching this material to his students at *Common Ground* (an interfaith study center headquartered in Deerfield, IL) and Lake Forest College (where Ron is chair of the Religion Department). He insisted he needed a Jewish co-author (he comes out of the Catholic tradition, having been earlier in his life a Jesuit priest), and recruited me for the task. My background includes five years of training in a rabbinical seminary and more than a decade of spiritual seeking, writing and interfaith

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—Laura Bernstein

ministry. *I chose not to be ordained.*

Our plan was to examine the Christian Scriptures for anti-Jewish content and provide commentary. We initially thought to include all 27 books of the New Testament. When that became daunting in its scope, we decided to limit our inquiry to the four gospels. Ron instructed me to work my way through the gospels, making note of any word, phrase or idea that in any way rankled me as a Jew. This task underscores our first premise: what does not ring true to a Jew is not likely to have come from Jesus, himself most emphatically a Jew. To emphasize his Jewishness, we call him Jeshu (pronounced yay-shoo), from the Hebrew name Jehoshua (which translates Joshua; Jeshu would be, more or less, Josh). Since no one in first-century Palestine would have referred to him as Jesus, a name derived from the Greek, neither do we.

This examination of the gospels was painful but necessary. It encourages a Christian audience to notice what familiarity, immersion and deep affection make difficult to notice—that scattered throughout the spiritual jewels of these scriptures is an increasingly fierce polemic that has had devastating consequences for Jews (including Jeshu). Those consequences came thundering down on me as I began this work, and for a time it seemed that every anti-Semitic remark, incident, brutality and outrage of the last two millennia was pounding at my door. I began having nightmares and finding excuses to avoid working on the project. I did not know if I could complete the task.

But becoming aware of this polemic and how it degenerates into a pervasive anti-Jewish bias in the gospels is a crucial step toward mitigating the harm that has been done both to Jews and to Jeshu. Our second premise is that this extreme antagonism stems not from the heart and mind of Jeshu, but from the historical and cultural upheavals that occurred decades after his death.

Scrutinizing this distinction is an essential exercise. Far from lessening the power of these sacred scriptures, such scrutiny adds to their impact. It allows the universal truths of Jeshu's teachings to emerge in their fullness, unsullied by the atrocities that have been committed in his name. It allows

the connection between those atrocities and their antecedents in the gospels to be acknowledged and broken— by examining the bias, putting it into historical context, and teaching new generations of Christians how to understand this material. It opens the door to a much needed healing of the two thousand year rift between Christians and Jews.

An unexpected development enabled me to complete the task. While immersed in the “what rankles me as a Jew” analysis, and feeling increasingly oppressed by the dark night of the soul that it occasioned, I became aware of the imbalance of this endeavor. Something vital was missing. Just as night needs day to constitute a 24-hour-cycle in the earth's rotation, this work needed the light that pervades the gospels to be a counterpart to its darkness. What's more, I needed “the day” to continue my work on a project that was otherwise becoming unbearable.

Fortunately, “the day” was amply available in the presence of Jeshu, this God-intoxicated Galilean hasid (holy man) whose authentic teachings shine through the storm clouds of polemic that surround them. Once I began to examine the beauty and relevance of these teachings the sun came out and the heaviness lifted. The teachings are largely an extended midrash or commentary on Leviticus 19:18, the great commandment of Torah that tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves, It became clear that this book was being written for a Jewish audience as well, because it elucidates and celebrates the wisdom of a Jewish sage and mystic, who has been largely excluded (for understandable historical reasons) from the vast body of Jewish thought. Encouraging Jews to welcome Rabbi Jeshu back into the fold is another critical aspect of healing the Jewish-Christian rift.

When I put the day and night together, my commentary on the first gospel alone was some 400 pages. Ron and I then decided to limit our inquiry to the Gospel of Matthew, which paradoxically is the most Jewish and the most anti-Jewish book in the Christian Testament. Matthew contains the largest body of teaching material attributed to the historical

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Jeshu of the 20s, in the first century and at the same time is steeped in the polemic and propaganda of the 80s when it was written. Thus, it is particularly well-suited for our purposes.

After much editing of my original work to make the length manageable and the addition of Ron's response to my commentary, our book was completed. We include questions for reflection at the end of each chapter to

facilitate discussion and dialogue. After five years of loving labor, the book baby was born. I pray each day that she will do good in the world. Hallelujah!

—Laura Bernstein
ljbernstein@comcast.net

The booklet was reportedly required reading for leaders in the student movement that helped Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko win his contested election.

—Wayne Vanek

Nonviolence As A Political Weapon

Nonviolence is an evolving concept and by no means free of controversy. This is evident in the ideas and writings of Gene Sharp who, building on the work of Thoreau and Gandhi, has advanced our understanding of how nonviolence can be used as a strategy or technique to achieve political ends. Some say he is no peacemaker because he promotes "nonviolent disruption." Be that as it may, he has had tremendous influence on many recent nonviolent attempts to seize power from repressive regimes.

He advocates a muscular form of nonviolence, not to be confused with an abstention from violence based on ethical or religious beliefs. Sharp maintains that war has persisted because people believed that military means were all they had to prevent aggression and fight off attackers. We need an alternative and for Sharp that is strategic nonviolence which he believes can be employed and evaluated with scientific rigor. This belief is based on his understanding of political power. Like Thoreau and Gandhi he understands that governments depend for their survival on obedience and cooperation. This means that even the most repressive regime is vulnerable and can be dismantled if citizens decide to withhold cooperation and obedience. Of course it demands good planning.

Gene Sharp, according to the notes from his most recent book, is Senior Scholar at the Alert Einstein Institution in Boston, which he founded in 1983 to promote the study and use of nonviolent action. From 1965 on, for nearly thirty years, he held research appointments at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs. He lived for

ten years in England and Norway. He did advanced studies at Oxford University where he earned a Ph.D. in political theory. In Norway he held positions at the University of Oslo and the Institute for Social Research where he studied the unarmed resistance of Norwegian teachers to the Nazi occupation. He spent nine months in prison as a conscientious objector to the Korean war.

He is the author of various books and many other publications on nonviolent struggle, power, political problems, liberation struggle, dictatorships, and defense policy. His writings have been published in 32 languages. In the second volume his book, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, written in 1973, he lists 198 methods of nonviolent action. *Gandhi as a Political Strategist* came out in 1979 with an introduction by Coretta Scott King. *The Power and Practice of Nonviolent Struggle* was published in Tibetan in 1999. The *Forward* is by the Dalai Lama. His first book, in 1960, *Gandhi Wields the Weapon of Moral Power* included a *Forward* by Albert Einstein.

The most important thing about Gene Sharp is how his ideas have influenced so many people today working for democracy with nonviolent means. His book, *Civilian-Based Defense: A Post Military Weapons System*, helped shape the Baltic States' predominantly nonviolent liberation struggle. According to Sharp, in 1990 Audrius Buktkvicius, then Secretary of Defense for Lithuania, obtained a smuggled copy of the book and circulated 50 photocopies to states throughout the Soviet Union, including Latvia and Estonia. That year Sharp made several trips to the three Baltic capitals where "civilian-based defense" was adapted as government policy. All three states

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Sharp should get the
Nobel Peace Prize
because millions of
people have achieved
their liberation through
strategic nonviolence

—Wayne Vanek

**MISSION
STATEMENT**

InnerPeace/WorldPeace
advocates for nonviolence by
means of spiritual disciplines,
group meetings, education
and activism.

We believe there is a necessary
connection between inner
transformation and finding
effective alternatives to violence in
the world. We welcome dialogue
with others.

obtained their independence in 1991. Sharp called the campaigns in the Baltics “quite remarkable” given the odds. These were tiny countries, occupied by Soviet troops, with KGB and secret police still in force. Their nonviolent path was so different from Chechnya’s violent path.

In the early 90’s, his institution ran “jungle workshops” in Thailand and Bukrma (renamed Myanmar by the military dictatorship). They trained 700 Bukrinese activists. To assist the work, Sharp wrote *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation*. This 88-page booklet has since been translated into 30 languages and is Gene Sharp’s most popular work. The dictatorship reacted strongly against the activists. Just to have the booklet was evidence of treason. In the mid 90’s “jungle workshops” fizzled out, but by the late 90’s the booklet resurfaced. The student led movement in Serbia, OTPOR, was consulting the booklet, passing 4,000 copies around to its branches in the last months of the Milosevics’ rule. It seemed to confirm what the students intuitively discovered themselves, but in a structured format. Sharp’s colleague, Robert Helvey, gave training sessions for OPTOR activists.

The booklet was reportedly required reading for leaders in PORA, the student movement that helped Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko win his contested election and was also seen in Georgia during the Velvet Revolution. What makes this booklet so useful is that it is written in simple prose and identifies a dictatorship’s source of power and its weaknesses and how to

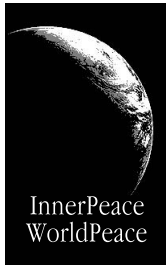
exploit them to bring about the regime’s end. He offers the 198 ways to do so. It also includes recommendations for preserving a “durable democracy” after the old regime is ousted. His latest book, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential*, published in 2005 is, according to Sharp, “the result of fifty years of study, observation, and reflection about the practice of nonviolent struggle and thought about its relevance and potential in a world of major violence used for political purposes.” He states in the Preface, “Some of my earlier perceptions about nonviolent action have over the years been modified, enriched, rejected and even reversed.” Part One offers crucial insight into political power. Part Two contains 23 cases of the application of nonviolent struggle in the 20th century. Part Three examines how the techniques work. Part Four offers ways in which wise strategies can be developed. Imagine how future nonviolent conflicts can now be more effective than the improvised struggles of the past by means of careful strategic planning.

Robert Helvey says that Sharp should get the Nobel Peace Prize because millions of people have achieved their liberation through strategic nonviolence.

—Wayne Vanek

(Material taken from Waging Nonviolent Struggle and Claire Schaeffer-Duffy’s article Honing Nonviolence as a Political Weapon in the National Catholic Reporter, October 21, 2005.)





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Out beyond the ideas of wrongdoing and righthdoing
There is a field. I will meet you there.
When we lay down in that grass
Our souls are too full to talk about.

—Rumi

I live my life in widening circles
That reach out across the world.
I may not ever complete the last one,
But I give myself to it.

—Ranier Maria Rilke

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