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A Manifesto for Peacemakers

We are nonviolent, not because we are wimps,
But because we are lovers,
Part of a divine conspiracy
To soften the hardness of our hearts.

We are nonviolent, not because we are cowards,
But because we are fearless
In the face of hatred, carnage and death,
And we believe that nothing can separate us from
the love of God.

We are nonviolent, not because we are passive,
But because we are peace guerrillas,
Involved in spiritual counterinsurgency,
Using unconventional means.

We are nonviolent, not because we have given up,
But because we dare to hope for what seems impossible,
Dare to hope against peoples, generations and nations,
Who avenge themselves one upon the other,
In endlessly destructive cycles,
Dare to hope for a better way.

And in our loving, and our hoping,
In our subversive spirituality,
We are not righteous,
Because it is always also our own liberation we seek,
But we are confident.
We are confident.

—Bud Hayes—April, 2002

Rivers of Freedom, Oceans of Love

The “*Manifesto for Peacemakers*” introduces our first newsletter, and tells you the most important things about who we are. Our focus, our mission, our vision is nonviolence: the cultivation of nonviolence within ourselves, the practice of nonviolence in the way we are with others, advocacy for nonviolence as a guiding consideration in public policy and practice. While you will find protest and critique on these pages, anger and deep frustration, we define ourselves primarily by what we are for, not what we are against. We believe ourselves to be grounded in the primary reality of a love that will not let us go.

Many separate paths towards peace and nonviolence have been traversed by each as we have been brought to this point in our lives. The terrible events surrounding September 11 occasioned a convergence of those paths. The vast ground swell, reaching

around the globe, of protest against American militarism and affirmation that there is a better way has solidified that convergence. Many are feeling the need to reach out and join together in addressing violence in all of the forms that it takes. This newsletter is a manifestation of that worldwide, peacemaking impulse.

There are three guiding considerations which I believe will show up again and again in these newsletters. First I worry about those inclined to dismiss peacemakers as fuzzy-headed idealists, long on good will, short on good sense, out of touch with how the world really works and willing to expend enormous amounts of energy on things that come to nothing. To them I would like to say that there is an emerging technology of highly applicable skills and techniques which are proving to be effective in seemingly intractable situations. You will be hearing a lot about these techniques.

Mission Statement

Inner Peace World Peace 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.



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Secondly I want readers to understand that when we talk about love, it is not just a feeling or a sentiment, or an attitude or disposition that we have in mind. There is a complexity and depth in loving that goes beyond trying to achieve and maintain "feel good" states. Finally I believe that as we forswear violence for other means, we will become free in the deepest and truest

senses of that term, and that our capacity to give and receive love, to be in loving relationships, will expand. Picture the earth encompassed and nurtured by a vast network of water systems, flowing into one another. Think—rivers of freedom, oceans of love.

—Bud Hayes, Editor

The Evolution of a Group

Sleeping in on Saturday mornings no longer holds the charm it once did for me. Why? Because I've gotten involved in a group which studies and practices nonviolence. It took me a while to get there. I first started hearing about it ten months before I went to my first meeting. For a long time many other things, which have now faded away, seemed more important. Once I got there, I wished I had come a lot sooner.

The group is called Inner Peace World Peace and meets from 8:30 to 10 a.m. on Saturday mornings in the basement of First United Church of Oak Park, Illinois. Some who attend the group are members of the church but the group is open to anyone interested in nonviolence and it is quite an assortment of people. The premise of the group is that "*Peace begins with me.*" We believe that there is little hope of resolving the Palestinian/Israeli conflict or any of the many other

intractable conflicts around the world, if we can't control our own violent emotions and impulses. The core of our mission statement is as follows: "*We believe there is a necessary connection between inner transformation and finding effective alternatives to violence in the world.*"

At the time that I started, the group was just finishing its study of the book by Marshall Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication: a Language of Compassion*. The discussions had as much to do with how group members were applying the book in their own lives as it did with the book itself. I began to see that relationships were developing out of this kind of a process. The quality and depth of involvement was growing. From respectful questioning, patient listening and cautious sharing our group has moved to a place of deeper questioning, empathic listening, trustful risk-taking and courageous love. The negative and often lame-duck "shoulds" in my life are being transformed into something more positive and powerful. After I leave each meeting, I feel lighter, with a brighter outlook and hope more deeply grounded in the knowledge that love works.

—Mary Erkins

The Birth of a Peace Vigil

“If a single person achieves the highest kind of love, it is sufficient to neutralize the hate of millions.”

—Gandhi

For many, the attacks of September 11th mark a watershed time in their lives. For others, October 7th, the day we launched a massive attack on Afghanistan's desperate people, marks a significant turning point.

At the start of the war many of us felt sick with remorse. “Why?” we wondered. “Why are we trying to drive out violence with even greater violence? How many people must die in the flames of war and terrorism?”

The darkness of that bombing campaign demanded something of me. But what? In what I believe was an answer to prayer, the book *Gandhi The Man* by Eknath Easwaran came into my hands. Reading that book convinced me of the individual's potential to become a potent instrument of peace. Gandhi's humble beginnings do not foretell a life of supreme service to humanity, but

once he set his heart on the welfare of the whole human family, he unleashed a power that became all pervasive in its effect. In a quote that exemplified his life Gandhi wrote, “If a single person achieves the highest kind of love, it is sufficient to neutralize the hate of millions.”

Gandhi's life trumpets the challenge: each one of

us can do the same.

A whole host of “single persons”—Jesus, Buddha, Peace Pilgrim, Badshah Khan, Ety Hillesum, Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day—join Gandhi in expressing a love that extends even to the enemy. Guided by the example of these peacemakers, and excited by the possibility of working for peace,

I organized a weekly peace vigil in the aftermath of the attack on Afghanistan.

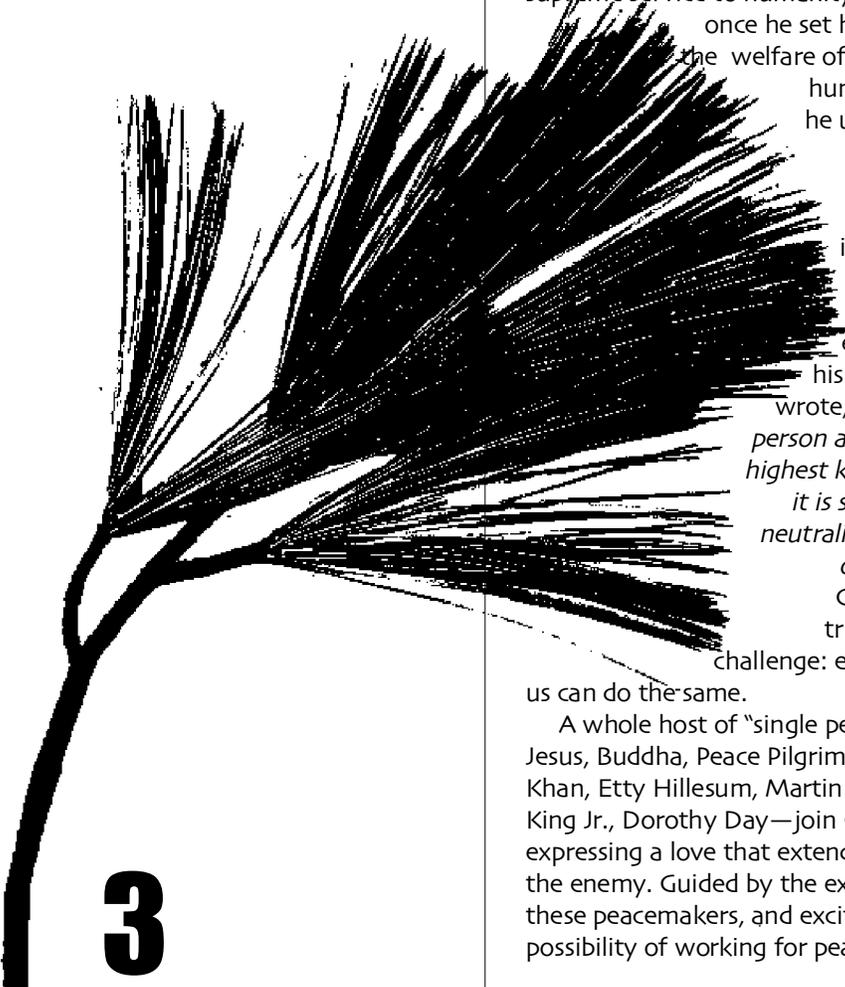
For whatever the shortcomings of our peace vigil, whatever the so-called ineffectiveness of standing on a downtown street corner, there is an unexplained power and preciousness in this coming together to witness peace. Rumi says: “Let the beauty we love be what we do.” To be sure, we love peace and we love holding up an ideal of peace like a lamp in the world: in broad daylight, in the dark of night, in every weather and season, on and on, so help us God.

Our power surpasses our small numbers, for indeed, blessings keep multiplying as we stay faithful to our witness. Among the blessings there is the knitting together of a community dedicated to the path of nonviolence, the fruitfulness of profound reflections, passersby who take heart from our example, others who yell obscenities (blessings in disguise as the good Lord gets tickled pink sending us “enemies” to test our mettle). The vigil helped birth the study circle *Inner Peace World Peace*, this newsletter and endless opportunities to bless the darkness, and not to curse it. However alone and outnumbered we may feel as individuals, together we are that small group of committed citizens that Margaret Mead credits with changing the world.

—Amy Abbott Pappageorge

The gravity of the terrorist attacks and the nation's mobilization for war moved citizens to form the Oak Park Coalition for Truth and Justice. In the last year they gathered thousands of signatures to support passing the Oak Park Village resolution against the war in Iraq, led marches and rallies, held town meetings on foreign policy and the Patriot Act, hosted open-mic peace performances, organized legislative actions, and built bridges with others who question war and seek alternatives to terrorism and violence.

Visit their website at www.opctj.org



When Peacemaking Gets Down to The Nitty Gritty

More than once I have shaken my head in disbelief, in sadness, and maybe with a touch of arrogance, when I have read about the violence between the Palestinians and the Israelis. How can people be so immature, I ask myself, that they can get stuck in these escalating power struggles when it so obviously leads to nowhere constructive?

One day this last summer I was reading a magazine interview with Israel's Ariel Sharon when my teenage son announced that he wasn't going to mow part of the backyard lawn as I had requested. I rationally explained why I was right and my son was wrong, but the effect was far less than desired.

I generally think of myself as a fairly easy-going guy who doesn't get caught up in power conflicts, but something about my son's attitude this day touched a nerve. Locking horns on our differing interpretations of what constitutes "mowing the lawn," we soon moved into rigidity, resentment and anger.

Even when I realized that I was making things worse, the path to resolution seemed nowhere in sight. Switching gears, I tried to step back to "just listen and understand," but all I could hear were demands that felt completely unacceptable. And when in frustration I floated a compromise that I didn't really want, my son treated it as inadequate, a suggestion unworthy of a reciprocal compromise. At that moment I felt completely stuck, trapped in a corner with no way out except the fantasy of hammering my son into submission, using the full weight of my authority.

This incident is trivial compared to armed world conflict, but the feelings were powerful and real. When Israeli and Palestinian leaders face off in rigidity, in angry defensiveness, in belief in the moral "rightness" of each of their positions, I know something of where they come from. Our world's leaders, and I too, have some maturing to do.

—Jeff Olson

**Love
Overcomes
Violence
Everywhere**

LOVE Works: A 1960s Lunch Counter Sit-in

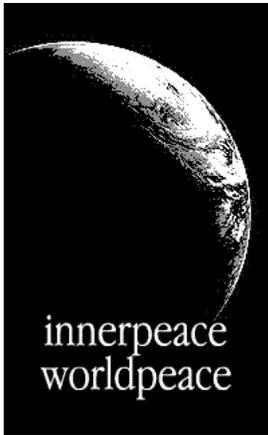
One of my friends, David Hartsough, who is white, was sitting in with a small group of civil-rights activists at a segregated lunch counter in Virginia in the early 'sixties. They had been sitting there without getting service for close to two days, and being harassed almost without letup by an increasingly angry crowd. As neither the sitters nor the proprietors backed down, tension increased.

Suddenly David was jerked back off his stool and spun around by a man who hissed at him, "You got one minute to get out of here, nigger lover, or I'm running this through your heart." David, who had had his eyes closed, repeating the twenty-third Psalm up on his stool, stopped staring at the huge bowie knife held at his chest and slowly looked back up into the man's face, to meet "the worst look of hate I have ever seen in my life." The thought that

came to him was, "Well, at least I've got a minute," and he heard himself saying to the man, "Well, brother, you do what you feel you have to; and I'm going to try to love you all the same." For a few frozen seconds there seemed to be no reaction; then the hand on the knife started shaking. After a few more long seconds it dropped. The man turned and walked out of the lunchroom, surreptitiously wiping a tear from his cheek.

From *Is There No Other Way? The Search for a Nonviolent Future*, by Michael Nagler.

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SPECIAL INTERVIEW

Interview: with Michael Nagler

by Amy Abbott Pappageorge

Amy:

Inner Peace World Peace's mission statement expresses the belief that in transforming ourselves we can become instruments of peace in the world. Can you speak to the connection between inner peace and world peace?

Michael:

Recognizing the primacy of this connection is the main feature of the peace movement's new wave. Now there is a much more widespread acceptance of the idea that there has to be a spiritual element in meaningful revolution, and a spiritual element means an inner change. Many of the new peace studies programs and institutions have a model that peace is in concentric circles. It starts with inner peace, and it spreads to interpersonal peace and then institutionalized peace in a given society, and then the peace of the international system where "peace" is normally applied.

How do you define nonviolence?

Nonviolence converts negative drives into their corresponding positive forms. For example, if I am enraged against someone and I convert that anger into its corresponding positive, which is love and compassion, I then put that force to work.

This can be done even if I don't feel the conversion. Say I am angered at some sort of injustice and one response I would have is to swallow it and just let it be. That's a violent response. Another response would be to act out my anger directly against the persons who are the instruments of that injustice. That's another violent response. A nonviolent response would be to look at the situation and ask, "How does it get cured, and how do I help the people doing it to stop doing it and see something better that they can do?" You do it through an attitude change and through your behavior. Once I can see that it's the problem I am against and not the person, the stage is set for a nonviolent response.

You have written the book *Is There No Other Way? A Search for a Nonviolent Future*. What do you hope to accomplish with this book?

I go around the country and the minute I start talking about nonviolence somebody is going to shoot up their hand and say, "You would've caved in to Hitler," as if nonviolence were appeasement and all those things that they so rightly fear and loathe. So there are these major misconceptions that have to be cleared and you need some models to understand how it works, and how to apply it and, very important, how to evaluate it.

Theodore Roszak says, "*People try nonviolence for a week and when it doesn't work they go back to violence which hasn't worked for centuries.*" Now why does that happen? People go into a confrontation where they intend to use nonviolence and they expect that they have to get exactly what they wanted right then or it failed. What they don't realize is that there is a deeper current that they've unleashed into the social system that will show up in very good results somewhere. Learning nonviolence requires training ourselves to trace those results.

I still don't believe that nonviolence can be learned out of a book. You can learn models so that you can understand what is happening, but then you put it into practice. You have to find those mechanisms in yourself, convert the negative into the positive, and then you have to understand what you've done and how it affects the social field. I distinguish between work without quotes, which means have an effect, and "work" in quotes meaning do exactly what I want right now. I say that violence sometimes "works" and never works, but nonviolence sometimes "works" but always works.

“All the media,
whether its news or
entertainment,
feed us false
information”

What advice can you give to a community like our little group that is trying to exemplify the practice of nonviolence?

The program I've developed is primarily keyed on the individual not on the group. You can discuss it in a group, but I actually believe that until you get to point five they are all things that you can do as an individual. Now the drawback is that individuals think they are small, but the great advantage is that you can do it now. You don't have to go out and convince people and organize them. You just do it.

The first step is to disengage our minds from the commercial mass media. This is essential. All the media, whether its news or entertainment, feed us false information and a false image of what we are as human beings. The individual has to decide to back out at his or her own pace. Now I have a co-director at a nonprofit in California, and we are developing a 12-day scheme for this step so that it will be doable. We identify where to get news and where to find entertainment; all that will be on our website—mettacentr.org. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this step. Everything you do after that will be purer if you have uncoupled your mind from that horrible propaganda that we have created in mass media.

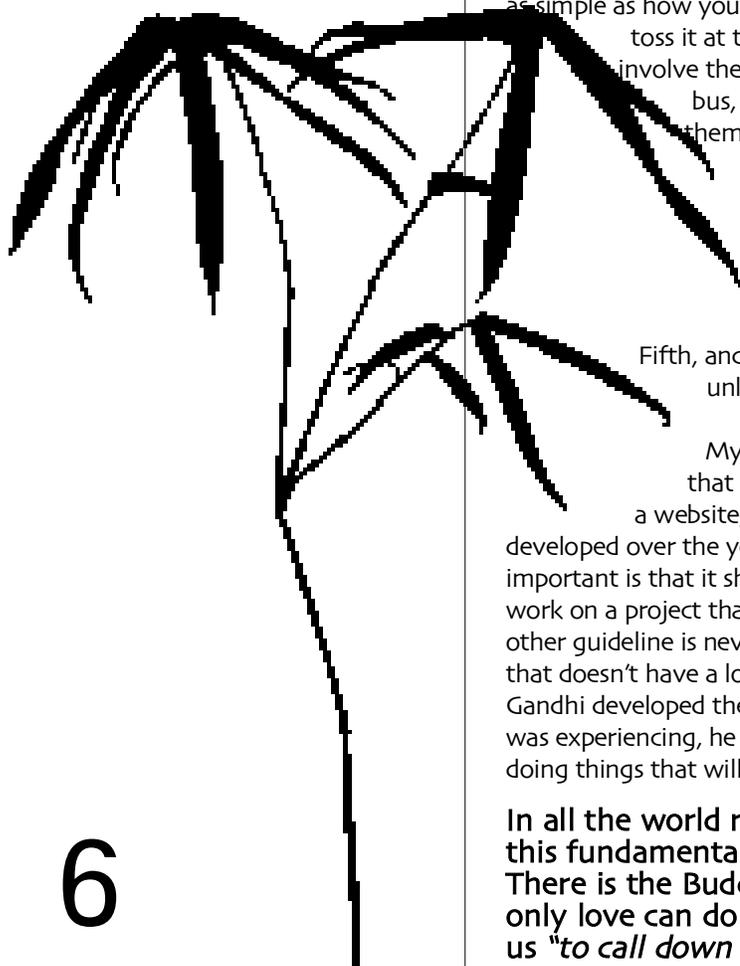
Step number 2. We have to deal with the negativity that we've already absorbed, and this is where a spiritual practice comes in, which I try not to go into too much detail because it is so individual. As you know I have a practice that I've been following for decades, and I can say that I know this practice works and that is available on another website: nilgiri.org. You need to have some kind of spiritual practice, not just a religious affiliation or health regimen.

The third element is to act out of the new consciousness that you are developing in these two practices: the negative one of abstaining from absorbing the negativity from the culture, and the positive one of a spiritual practice. This can be as simple as how you give a dollar to the person at the toll booth: whether you just toss it at them or you try to make eye contact and say thank you or even involve them in a little conversation. By the way you talk to people on the bus, the way you give them your full attention, the way you honor them as divine beings, no matter how they are behaving. The fourth is to learn about nonviolence. I have a book that I recommend: *Is There No Other Way?* It's nonviolence 101 for anyone. I took all the material that I learned how to present to Berkeley undergraduate students and converted it into a language which is accessible to anybody. Our website—mettacentr.org—lists many resources.

Fifth, and I put it fifth because I think you won't be able to really do well unless you've done all the other four, and that is to get involved in your community. Get involved in some peace-creating project.

My favorite one is *Third Party Nonviolent Intervention*. The group that I am working with is called Nonviolent Peace Force. They have a website, too: nonviolentpeaceforce.org. I have some guidelines that I've developed over the years for picking a peace project to work on. The most important is that it shouldn't be a project that stays in one little pocket. You want to work on a project that will resonate with other peace developing activities. The other guideline is never to sacrifice the future for the present. Don't do something that doesn't have a long half-life just because you want to have an effect right now. Gandhi developed the Constructive Program so that no matter what frustration he was experiencing, he was rebuilding India from the inside. We should always be doing things that will build into the future.

In all the world religions, among the mystics at least, you find this fundamental belief in the power of love to overcome evil. There is the Buddhist notion that hatred cannot drive out hatred; only love can do that. And in the Christian faith Christ encourages us “to call down



“...every person
can be regenerated
and restored.”

***blessings on the enemy, blessings not curses.* Can you touch on this ideal of love of the enemy?**

Even Euripides said, “*Never hate your enemy so much that he cannot become your friend.*” You always leave open the possibility for reconciliation. Wherever people were able to do this to a reasonable degree, as in South Africa, it led to marvelous constructive results. It’s partly a belief system. In religious systems they will go so far as to say that there is God in everybody. If not that, at least to believe that every person or almost every person is capable of being reached and is capable of regeneration. If you let that dehumanization happen to yourself then you are not going to cure somebody else’s dehumanization. You have to see them as human beings who are caught in a horrendous system, and you help to free them from that system. You can at least provisionally assume that human nature is good and that human nature exists in everyone and it can be reached; every person can be regenerated and restored. Then you put this into practice and see if it works. Chapter 6 of *Is There No Other Way?* talks about the criminal justice system and about the contrast between the present system that we have in the States, which is called retributive justice, and the alternative, which is usually called restorative justice. You just look around the world and you see wherever restorative justice programs have been tried, they work. That’s just good science. You take a hypothesis, you test it, it works, you deepen it and you go on to use it in other areas.

What are the signs of hope in the current world situation?

I like to think of this one book by Paul Ray and Sheri Anderson called *The Cultural Creatives*. These trained sociologists surveyed people to see where they stand, not on this outmoded left/right scheme, but rather in terms of what they really want in the world. A cultural creative is someone who sees the possibility of an entirely different future, one based not on violence but on nonviolence, one based not on competition but on trusteeship and cooperation, and one based not on materialism but on spirituality. Then they projected from their data to figure out how many such people there were in the U.S and they discovered that 50 million people are ready to go. They had to ask themselves: why isn’t this a tremendous political force? All of them together could totally turn this country around. Why don’t they? Really simple: they don’t know about each other. And that’s where your work and mine becomes important because we are connecting these people and giving them a voice and a vocabulary, as Marianne Williamson said. When I look into the present I see all the necessary ingredients, and then I get busy trying to make it happen.

Why do people buy into the myth that violence is a necessary evil?

It is certainly the easier idea to adopt than the idea that violence is unnecessary and nonviolence is possible. The minute you adopt that belief, you have to ask yourself: “What am I doing and how do I fit in? How do we do this?” Today we are deluged with propaganda about violence. Even an advertisement for a simple household product is going to be couched in the language: “If you buy this, you will be happy.” We know that a young person growing up in this country is exposed to 200,000 such commercial messages by the time they get to high school. Every one of those commercial messages is couched in the violence paradigm. I don’t think there’s much we can do in turning down the violence propaganda, but there is a lot we can do in turning up the nonviolence message. If we can get the nonviolence message out there much more clearly and loudly, I think the violence message will take care of itself. I have confidence in human nature. I think that people who buy into violence have no idea that there is an alternative. If you show them that there is an alternative and allow them to make their own choice, it is by far the most

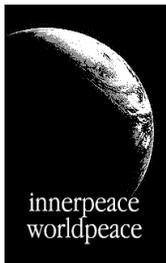
“You are awakening
reason, and when
reason is awake
it takes over.”

—Gandhi

Any final words of wisdom you would like to share?

This potential is out there and in here and we should be working very hard on developing it. I don't think we will be able to live with ourselves if we don't do anything about what is happening to our country. Many people are saying, "Look what happened to the Germans who sat around and didn't do anything and watched their country become totalitarianism." The ones who did something, even if they were killed, they were the lucky ones. We have tremendous resources that we are not used to thinking about and that means primarily going within and that means primarily spiritual practice. When we do this we'll see that it is indeed possible, as Gandhi says, to renew an entire civilization. It is our responsibility to work on it as hard as we can; it's not our responsibility to make it happen.

*Michael N. Nagler is Professor Emeritus of
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and the founder of the University's Peace and
Conflict Studies Program, and currently teaches
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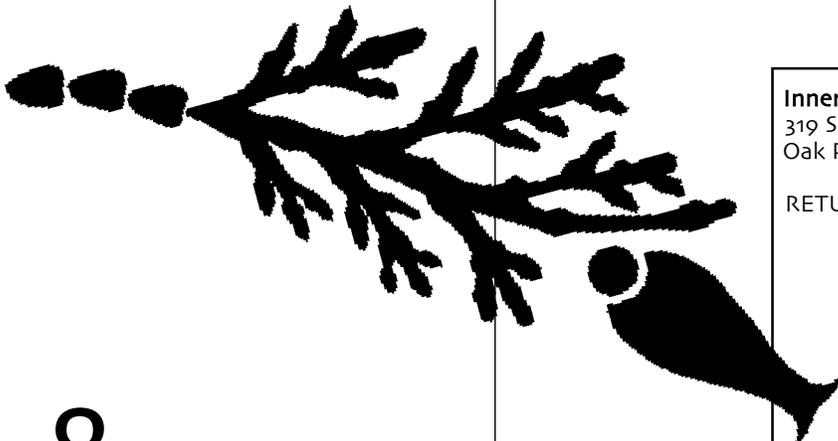
From Our Readers

We would like to hear from you. This newsletter is about conversation and dialogue about the things that matter most. All responses will be acknowledged. Some, with your permission, will be included in our newsletter as space allows.

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