

The Peace Memo

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Volume 3, Number 9-10



November 2011

OVERWHELMED

Since we last published, an overwhelming amount has happened. Too much to address in one issue, but with this issue we try to get back to cutting the prize-winning pumpkin into bite-sized pieces.

First, [PIET](#) has a new director, Mike Henry. We are delighted, and look forward to working with him.

Then there was the tenth anniversary of the day a small group of terrorists attacked the United States using commercial aircraft. So much about that act and our response to it is wrong that many feel overwhelmed before they even begin. The observation of the tenth anniversary was hyped for some purpose other than just reflecting on terrible violence and loss. Many, if not most, of the [Families of September 11](#) distanced themselves from the organized events. Many of the events were used to present rousing calls to patriotism and protecting “the Homeland”. Was the point of the whole spectacle to encourage military enlistments? To boost economic activity? To take Americans’ minds off their crushing debt load and further cuts they’re being asked to make?

Then came the Occupy Movement. A broad cross-section of people camped, first on Wall Street, later across the globe. Practicing nonviolence, street theater, and the power of distributive decision making. Even when police used unnecessary force on protesters, there has been no retaliatory violence.

This is a breath of fresh air to people who are weary of war and our elected officials’ systematic destruction of the society we thought we were building. So Occupy is our focus in this issue.

For those who say the Occupy Movement is too vague and fragmented to be effective: Occupy has only one demand: Let every citizen be subject to the same laws, rights, and responsibilities. It really is that simple. And long overdue.



WELCOME TO MIKE HENRY

A warm welcome to Mike Henry, who has taken the helm of the Peacebuilding Institute of East Tennessee ([PIET](#)). Mike comes to us from Chicago, where he works with Women Out of the Night, a ministry to women and girls who make their living on the streets. He has brought this ministry to Knoxville and was one of the presenters at our Conference on Violence in Knoxville last June (see [The Peace Memo](#) for July). We are grateful for his experience and willingness to serve on our Steering Committee.

FOOLS FOR CHANGE



Street theater is succeeding where marches just invite authoritarian intervention. And the message is getting out. “A worldwide shift in revolutionary tactics is underway right now that bodes well for the future,” proclaims [Adbusters](#), the initiators of Occupy Wall Street. A key part of this re-channeling of tactics has been a move away from either angry protests or passive waiting-to-be-clubbed-by-police-batons to [age old carnival](#)-style antics. A festive atmosphere

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has reigned supreme in all of the successful pro-democracy uprisings of the past two decades. In Poland, Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, Tunisia and Egypt, music and humor were everywhere,” says Wayne Gytting in [Waging Nonviolence](#).

SAGE* THOUGHTS

In recent issues we have looked at ways political and economic changes can help to create a more peaceful and just world. Here we summarize ideas on the “how to” of this process.

I moved from learning about the relationships between economics and faith some years ago to a conviction that making such a world depends on creating economic justice. This certainly seems true regarding world peace. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to the same conclusion about progress in racial justice. Theologian Marcus Borg, in his [The God We Never Knew](#), also describes economic justice as the central political issue of our time.

The means of bringing more economic justice to our lives has many avenues. After reading [Rediscovering Values](#), by Jim Wallis, and [Agenda for a New Economy](#), by David Korten with the discussion group (Church of the Savior-UCC in Knoxville, TN), I became more convinced that change will require efforts beyond our own spiritual development. I liked Wallis’s emphasis on this. But I felt he provided a weak model for bringing change. Korten provides more information about our economy and recommendations for changes in the economic system. He writes from a perspective of shared American values. Together these two books can begin to provide a recipe for change.

But as Mike Henry, a fellow parishioner says, we cannot begin to liberate others from

economic injustice without liberating ourselves from our own materialism.

Our own spiritual development is the foundation and essential starting place for building economic justice. When compassion becomes more important than our comfort we are off to a good start.

Beyond this foundation are at least six other levels. The first is an understanding of how our economy really works. Books like Korten’s can help here. Henry notes we won’t get far if we don’t recognize how our own over-consumption supports injustice. Second is the recognition that creating economic justice requires reducing the power of big money in politics. Third is realizing that this reduction requires long-term political changes in how we elect and lobby our office holders, and in the legal status of corporations. Fourth is joining and supporting organizations like Public Citizen that are working toward political reforms like these. Fifth is the recognition that (despite some support from big money) most efforts to create a more humane and sustainable world are also limited by the dominance of private money in public policy. Examples include efforts to improve labor rights, achieve environmental justice, and reduce world poverty. Sixth is the need for unity among non-political groups (including religious ones) working for a just world. If many are willing to allocate a small part of their financial and staff resources to a joint effort to either reduce domination by big money or convert it to an ally, change is likely to be more rapid.

I am not sure what the role of religious organizations ought to be in this building project. But I have no doubt that they need to be considerably more involved than they are now.

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Part of their challenge is to expand their social justice activities (particularly those aimed at basic changes in our political system) while trying to maintain their charitable works. This may lead to getting involved in political issues beyond the present comfort level of many. (But support for laws changing our election system for example is far different than supporting candidates.) To achieve the Kingdom of God on earth we must recognize the need for basic structural political and economic changes.

If we really want justice, our challenge is to get involved in the long term, complex job of creating a democracy that reflects people power more than money power. Building this requires both personal change and much stronger organizations. There are many ways to go. But without reducing the dominance by wealth on our public policies, the odds of creating economic justice (and all the changes that could flow from this) look bleak to me.

Bob Rundle
7-15-11

*SAGE is the Institute for Spirituality and Global Economics, one of the Institutes of the Peacebuilding Institute. You can find us on the web at:
http://www.peacebuildinginstitute.org/global_economics/spiritualityglobaleconomics.htm

RESOURCES FOR ACTIVISTS

For an idea of the scope of the [Occupy Movement](#), or the nearest meet up, see their website. They also have a [Twitter Feed](#) and a [Facebook](#) page.

[CANVAS](#), the Centre for Applied NonViolent Action and Strategies, was established in 2003. Their trainers and consultants support nonviolent democratic movements through transfer of knowledge on strategies and tactics

of nonviolent struggle. CANVAS Supporting Active Network in four countries advocates and promotes battles for democracy worldwide.

[Dream of a Nation: Inspiring Ideas for a Better America](#) is a new book dedicated to bold solutions and quickening the pace of change. Contributors include leading including Alice Walker, Paul Hawken, Geoffrey Canada, and Al Gore. “The work brings complex issues to life and explores how we must put politics aside and share the task of rebuilding the economy, strengthening community, re-imagining business, removing money from politics, re-establishing more media integrity, revitalizing education, repowering America, ending poverty, waging peace and much more.”

FRAMING THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT

[George Lakeoff](#) introduced many of us to the concept of frames, the way in which we see and interpret that which we see. He reminds us continually that the one who controls the frame controls the message. Occupy Wall Street asked him to make suggestions for how to frame the movement. Although he generally refrains from doing this for others, as the movement is maturing he thought it might be helpful to start a discussion of ways the movement might think about framing itself. “It’s a general principle: Unless you frame yourself, others will frame you — the media, your enemies, your competitors, your well-meaning friends.” Read “[A Framing Memo for Occupy Wall Street](#)”.

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10 WAYS TO SUPPORT THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT

1. Show up at the [occupied space near you](#).
2. Start your own occupation.
3. Support those who are occupying.
4. Speak out
5. Share your story.
6. Be the media.
7. Name the meaning of this moment.
8. Insist that public officials treat the occupations with respect.
9. Study and teach nonviolent techniques.
10. Be resilient.



GLOBAL DAY OF LISTENING

Every month, we have an opportunity to listen to, and talk about, what it is like to live in war-torn countries & about the wish to live without wars. [The Global Day of Listening](#) team includes individuals and groups who believe that we can change to a non-violent way of living with each other - if we get to know each other better. In November, the conversation is with young people in Afghanistan. You can listen live at [their web page](#).

They also have a page of [#Occupy news](#).

TROY DAVIS EXECUTED

On September 21st, shortly before midnight, the state of Georgia executed Troy Davis for a murder he may not have committed. In the absence of physical evidence linking him to the murder, and with seven of nine key witnesses recanting their testimony, the state went ahead.

The Supreme Court justice responsible for reviewing capital cases from Georgia, Clarence Thomas, refused a last minute stay. Ultimately, this case is not about Troy's guilt or innocence; it is about justice. The burden of proof for a death sentence is that the evidence must convince the jury "beyond a reasonable doubt". Does it cast a "reasonable doubt" when one of the two witnesses who has not recanted is himself a suspect? There is so much wrong with this case, so much injustice, it's hard to know where to begin.

There are many articles that analyze Troy's execution. Andrew Cohen, writing for [The Atlantic](#), says, "When the state kills those whose guilt is in serious doubt, or when the state kills those to whom it has not given fair justice, it doesn't just perform an injustice upon the individual, the rule of law, and the Constitution. It also undermines the very legitimacy of the death penalty itself, for its continuing use as a sentencing option derives its civic and moral strength mostly from the fiction that it can be, and is, credibly and reliably imposed.

[Amy Goodman](#) adds, "The state of Georgia took Davis' body to Atlanta for an autopsy, charging his family for the transportation. On Troy Davis' death certificate, the cause of death is listed simply as "homicide."

UPDATE: THE CHARTER FOR COMPASSION

The Charter for Compassion is a document that transcends religious, ideological, and national difference. Supported by leading thinkers from many traditions, the Charter activates the Golden Rule around the world. [Read the Charter](#). To learn about the Charter, watch this short video on Karen Armstrong on [TED](#). Find updates and news of events near you [here](#).

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THE SPARROW SINGS

“Do I refocus and put my energy into exposing the on-going crime of medical negligence in these jails? Do I begin a campaign to highlight the illegal starvation diet in the Blount County jail, for which no one has been arrested? Do I join the effort to condemn the practice of overcharging mostly dirt poor inmates for phone calls, and commissary, so that corporations and counties receive greater kickbacks? Should I add my voice to those in this courthouse who show up protesting unjust sentences for nonviolent conspiracy charges? Or should I spend all of my time researching how many prosecutors, judges, attorneys, court clerks and law enforcement personnel who hold stock in the private prison industry, commissary companies, phone providers or medical contractors in these human warehouses? I see so many literal and moral crimes, and I’m just one person. My final answer is none of the above. I will continue to resist the ultimate crime of nuclear weapons and their production here and around the world.” This quote is from a good friend of ours, Bonnie Urfer, who works at [NukeWatch](#) in Luck, Wisconsin. She just received the maximum penalty of eight months in prison for her nonviolent civil disobedience action of “trespassing” at the Oak Ridge, Tennessee nuclear weapons plant. Those of us who have spent time in jail know of the hidden injustice that occurs each day to inmates, especially to the many who suffer from psychological illness. It is symptomatic of how our society deals with people. If you have unmet needs, it is your own fault. If you fail to conform to the mandates of society you are condemned to physical and mental punishment since the belief in our society is that the way to change people’s behavior is to physically or mentally mistreat them. Then they will learn

right from wrong. This is a far cry from the belief of Christ, Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day and so many others who believe that only the power of love and kindness changes people to be better people. If you want a person to be loving and compassionate, you must love and forgive that person the wrong he or she has done.....even when he or she has not apologized. The [Alma Center in Milwaukee](#) attempts to do this by taking people just out of jail and giving them a place where they are treated with respect, dignity, and love. Most of the inmates have been born and bred in the midst of violence and poverty and, as a result, often go in and out of jail as a matter of course. They are merely responding to their unmet needs with the violence they were taught throughout their lives. They were taught that violence gets you what you want. The [Casa Maria Catholic Worker](#) community, the Alma Center, and other communities are trying to teach that only nonviolence and the power of love will change people to be better. To terrorize the terrorist is being a terrorist. --Don Timmerman

September 21 is recognized by the [United Nations General Assembly](#) as the International Day of Peace. The purpose of the day is for “commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples.” On the 2011 International Day of Peace, the Air Force scheduled a test launch of a Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile from Vandenberg Air Force Base. The United States has chosen not “to honor a cessation of hostilities,” but rather to implement a very visible, \$20 million test of a nuclear-capable missile. -- [Nuclear Age Peace Foundation](#)

Troy Davis of Georgia was executed after he claimed to have killed no one, and there was no physical evidence to show that he actually did.

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Execution is a violation of the U.N. [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), as well as a violation of God's command to not kill.

"Christians were forbidden to be in the Army or to participate in capital punishment." -- Archbishop Robert M. Bowman in [Return to the Catacombs: Reintroducing the Nonviolent Jesus](#)

Fewer jobs are created through military spending than through civilian spending because military spending is capital intensive. For every billion dollars, either 25,000 military jobs could be created OR 47,000 health care jobs. Consequently, tax money spent to create military jobs means more unemployment. -- [War Resisters League](#)

Every day America wastes enough food to fill the Rose Bowl, the 90,000-seat football stadium in Pasadena CA. We squander between a quarter and a half of all the food produced in the U.S. That means about 160 billion pounds of food are squandered annually. Each American on average creates almost 5 pounds of trash per day, and a half pound of that trash is food. Per capita in the U.S. food waste has increased by 50% since 1974. -- [AlterNet](#), 9/15/11

The solar industry employs more than 100,000 Americans. They work at more than 5,000 companies in all 50 states. The solar industry grew by 69% this past year, making it one of the fastest growing sectors in the economy. The price of solar panels has dropped by 30%, and costs continue to fall. The U.S. exports solar products, even to China. Solar power now exceeds 3,100 megawatts (MW), enough to power more than 630,000 homes. -- [Solar Energy Industries Association](#)

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Calendar

So far, the only scheduled meeting for November is [PIET](#), which meets on the second Sunday of each month at [Church of the Savior](#), 934 N. Weisgarber Rd., Knoxville, Tennessee. Meetings begin at 2 PM and usually run no more than two hours. Current business includes planning for the second annual Conference on Violence in Knoxville. All are welcome! Contact [Mike Henry](#) for more information.

PLEASE submit all calendar items, by the 20th of the month, to thepeacememo@gmail.com.



MISCELLANEOUS

The Peace Memo now has eleven followers on Twitter. [Following](#) us will alert you to events you won't want to miss.

Our followers:

[oyunsiten](#) (Individual)

[ahmetmuratsgl](#) (Individual)

[ACRgroup](#) ACR: The Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR) is a professional organization enhancing the practice and public understanding of conflict resolution. [CAEMLCMidwest](#): Official feed for Conflict Analysis and Engagement & Management and Leading Change Grad Programs of Antioch University Midwest.

[NewYorkPeace](#): New York Peace Institute, formerly Safe Horizon Mediation, is a leading conflict response organization.

[WelcomingUSA](#) Welcoming America: National, grassroots-driven collaborative that works to promote mutual respect and cooperation between foreign-born and U.S.-born Americans.

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Peaceforce: Nonviolent Peaceforce prevents violence and protects civilians with unarmed civilian peacekeeping. Projects in Sri Lanka, South Sudan, the Philippines.

hecksign (Individual): CEO, New York Peace Institute ([@NewYorkPeace](#)); Adjunct Prof, NYU Center for Global Affairs. **Unrestmag**: Unrest is a web-based magazine pushing a critical approach to the study and engagement of violence, conflict, and peace.

CatoInstitute: "The Cato Institute is the foremost upholder of the idea of liberty in the nation that is the foremost upholder of the idea of liberty." – George F. Will

MEsule (Individual)



Welcoming Tennessee – National Award Winner

Welcoming Tennessee, the first Welcoming campaign – and model for all subsequent campaigns – won the Migration Policy Institute's E Pluribus Unum award for exceptional immigrant integration initiatives in 2009.

Welcoming Tennessee is a collaboration of concerned Tennesseans from all walks of life – business, law enforcement, community and faith – who are proud that Tennessee is a welcoming state, and are working to continue that noble tradition by increasing understanding of how

new Tennesseans share our values, contribute to our economy, enhance our combined culture and strengthen our communities.

In 2006, the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition launched a public education and communications campaign to foster constructive public dialogue in a state facing profound demographic change with a more than 300 percent growth in its immigrant population over 15 years. The Welcoming Tennessee Initiative creates opportunities for Tennessee residents, native-born and immigrant alike, to discuss the effects of immigration, its historical and national contexts, and how to develop strategies for strong, inclusive communities.

The Initiative has created welcoming committees in Nashville and Shelbyville (a small community that has experienced a large influx of Latino and Somali immigrants) to facilitate conversations about immigration; recruited and trained more than 70 "ambassadors" around the state to organize welcoming committees and facilitate discussions; launched public education campaigns through billboard ads; and held community forums and presentations at churches, universities, civic clubs, and other sites. The Welcoming Tennessee initiative has inspired similar efforts in 13 other states.

For more on TIRRC's Welcoming Tennessee Initiative, visit: www.welcomingtn.org

