

April-June 2016

# BAPTIST PEACEMAKER

The Journal of BPFNA - Bautistas por la Paz Vol 36 No 2



Over the last Christmas break, young adult leaders of BPFNA - Bautistas por la Paz, la Fraternidad de Iglesias de Bautistas de Cuba and the Alliance of Baptists convened in Cuba for a friendship tour (See "Postcards from Cuba" on page 12). The reflections were written by Fred Dean (back, center) and Anita Peebles (front, right). Photo by Anita Peebles.

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Testificando sobre la paz de Dios enraizada en justicia - Trabajando hasta que llegue.

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*Baptist Peacemaker*, published quarterly, is sent to BPFNA members and depends on donations from its readers. To receive a trial subscription, simply send us your name and address.



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# BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz Forms Working Group on Centering Black Lives

by Allison Paksoy

In February 2016, BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz formed a “Working Group on Centering Black Lives in Pursuit of Racial Justice.”

For at least one year, the group will assist the BPFNA board and staff in its work to prioritize centering black life in the organization in pursuit of liberation for all.

The Centering Black Lives Working Group (CBLWG) grew out of a trip in which BPFNA sent delegates to Ferguson, MO, in August 2015, to participate in events surrounding the anniversary of Michael Brown’s death.

“A little more than a year ago, on February 2015, BPFNA applied for a Shield-Ayres Foundation grant to support a delegation to visit Ferguson,” said BPFNA Executive Director LeDayne McLeese Polaski.

“At our Summer Conference that year, five BPFNA young adults were particularly key in planning the trip and decided that it should coincide with the anniversary of Michael Brown’s death. These young adults—Alison Amyx, Kadia Edwards, Nathan Watts, Reese Rathjen and Gretchen Honnold—became known as the Selection Committee.”

From September 2015 to January 2016, the Selection Committee created an application process and selected the Working Group members. There were a total of 16 applicants, and seven were chosen for the Working Group:

Teresa Diewert  
Greg Jarrell  
Toussaint Liberator  
Brooke Rolston  
Alexis Tardy  
Sydney Webster  
Treonisha West

Allison Paksoy will serve as the staff representative to the group.

“If we assume racism is built into the system, then even ‘good, progressive’ organizations like BPFNA need to examine themselves and the harm they may be causing, even if that harm is unintentional,” said Polaski.

“We hope the Working Group will help us to recognize—within our programming, within our publications, within our staffing, within our entire structure—how we may be unintentionally promoting systems of white supremacy and oppression that cause harm.”

BPFNA does have a four-nation identity and seeks to respond to injustices affecting all peoples within the nations of Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the United States.

While this current work is predominantly focused within the context of black lives in the US, the intent is to “strike directly against the roots of latent white supremacy and militarism.” Black

and brown bodies are under attack globally, and these systems of oppression cause harm on the global scale.

The BPFNA see this work ultimately affecting all four of our member nations and beyond. The ultimate goal is to work to eradicate these systems worldwide and to achieve true liberation for all.

The staff and Board of Directors would like to thank everyone who applied. We received an excellent group of applicants and would have loved for everyone to be in this group. We hope everyone feels included in the work of racial justice and we hope to work with more people in a variety of capacities who have a passion for this work.

the BPFNA staff would also like to give a HUGE THANK-YOU to the selection and planning committee who did the bulk of the work to make the trip to Ferguson and the working group a reality: Alison Amyx, Kadia Edwards, Gretchen Honnold, Reese Rathjen and Nathan Watts.

—Allison Paksoy is the BPFNA Communications Manager.

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And remember that current members receive four issues annually of our journal **Baptist Peacemaker** - either by paper or electronically.



# No Longer Strangers: Crossing Borders for Peacemaking, Part 2

## The Invitation to 'Naming'

*A Bible Study by Doris García-Rivera*

*Texts: Genesis 2:19-20, Luke 24:13-35*

**E**ditor's note: The following is Part 2 of a series of Bible studies given by Doris García-Rivera during the 2015 BPFNA Summer Conference in Harrisonburg, VA, last July. In Part 1, "Created in God's Image: Defining Ourselves," Dr. Garcia discussed the divine image in the ancient Near East and in our globalized world of today and the Bible as an intercultural document.

**T**oday we will discuss the power of naming. The Spanish word is *apalabrar*. Communication is an invitation to give word to or understand reality.

God, *Elohim*, in the creation story, becomes the foundation of dignity for human beings by sharing that which is divine. *Elohim* gives a living breath to the human image (*tzelem*) and likeness (*kidmutenu*) that is so elusive to definition.

*Elohim* invited human beings into a common (together) naming (understanding) of the world. We are all created in the image of the divine, with unconditional dignity. Do we really believe that we are all worthy, all the same? What is the definition of dignity in the Bible?

While the question of what constitutes the image is an important one, the answer is complicated and requires more space

than is available here. The biblical writings consistently refrain from explicating the image of God in terms of *specific likenesses* to God.

When humans become arrogant about the *Imago Dei* we are awfully misguided. All humans beings reflect God in one way or the other, but, at the same time, we are very different from God. This is our struggle, privilege and gift. This gives us the opportunity to value the gift that God has placed in us.<sup>1</sup>

One of the qualities of the human being is the ability of "naming" the world and "naming" oneself. We try to interpret reality and we give names to things. We try to systematize our surroundings.

To give name, "to define," in the Hebrew world was also to take control (power) and to understand that reality that you name. Gen 2:19-20 describes how this divine and powerful quality of naming was given to us during the creation of the world:

*God formed every beast...and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. (Gen. 2:19-20 NIV)*

*Elohim* gave the human being the opportunity to participate in the naming of reality.

So, "naming" defines a reality and gives us understanding over that reality, but it is also a participative action. *Elohim* named the light and darkness and named the heavens, earth and seas (Gen 1:5-9). Then *Elohim* invited the human being—a stranger, a newcomer—to do the same, to name, define and understand the world.



*Left: Rev. Dr. Doris García-Rivera led the morning Bible studies at the BPFNA Summer Conference in Harrisonburg, VA, last July.*

*Photo by Steve Hammond.*

## Global Migration Today

In 2013, there were 232 million migrants in the world. That year, 3.2 of the world's population lived outside their country of origin. In the past two years, the world has been in turmoil. In 2014:

- 59.5 people were forcibly displaced.*
- 38.2 million had been internally displaced by war, violence, conflict and famine.*
- 13.9 were newly displaced that year.*
- 42,500 people were forced to flee their homes every day.*
- 1.8 million sought asylum that year.<sup>2</sup>*

## Migrants, Immigrants and Refugees

A migrant is a person who moves within a country or outside of a country regularly in order to find work, escape poverty, provide for family or live in a free and secure environment. An immigrant is a person who moves from his or her own country and comes to live permanently within another country.

A refugee is a person who is forced to flee his or her country due to war, violence, famine, persecution or political oppression. Refugees have recently come from Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Colombia or Ukraine. There were 16.7 refugees at the end of 2013 and 19.5 million at the end of 2014.<sup>3</sup>

Economic migrants are fleeing their countries because of poverty and persistent unemployment. They are escaping poverty, gender violence, hopelessness and lack of opportunity. They are fleeing from the dangers of human trafficking, sexual abuse, extortion and kidnapping. Then, when they arrive, they face hostility and disrespect from their host societies.

The most vulnerable (the “least of these”) are women and children. More than 50 percent of refugees are children. In 2014, 67,338 children (unaccompanied minors) entered the US from Central America.

## Invitation to a Stranger

Now, let's talk about an invitation to a stranger in Luke 24:13-35, the resurrection story involving the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. The key words are “stranger,” “bread,” “eat,” “invitation,” “refugees.”

The “naming” done by the disciples is not the same as the naming done by Jesus. The disciples were fleeing in fear, searching for security and protection. They were in the midst of a political crackdown. They became refugees, strangers.

In verses 19-21, the disciples express their expectations: “We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.” They constructed a discourse, an interpretation of reality that responded to their dreams of national unity.

“And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.” They are implying, “And nothing has happened.” They constructed a discourse, an interpretation of reality denying and doubting the promise of Jesus.

In verses 22-24 they say, “Well, there were these crazy women saying that He is alive..., but then *some of our companions* went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did

not see Jesus.” They lifted up a wall between themselves and their “female companions,” doubting their testimony. They named their reality in fear.

Then Jesus erupts into that reality as the disciples accompany each other in the walk of discipleship, and share bread and hospitality with the stranger. In the same way, Jesus erupts into our reality unexpectedly as we accompany each other in the walk of discipleship, and share bread and hospitality with the stranger.

Jesus declared a different story in verse 27—the memory of a God who accompanies Israel. Then, in verse 29 comes the invitation: “Come and stay with us.” They share bread together (*cum + panis*, “bread with,” “company”) in verse 30. Their eyes are opened and they recognize him. He is no longer a stranger.

**‘One of the qualities of the human being is the ability of ‘naming’ the world and ‘naming’ oneself. We try to interpret reality and we give names to things. We try to systematize our surroundings.’**

Then, they run back to Jerusalem. The reality there hasn't changed, but their perception has. They have crossed over.

Language and communication are powerful because they create an interpretation of reality that reflects the values of those who communicate. That interpretation of reality, that “naming,” depends on culture of origin; family, community and national or historical experiences; discourse and codes defined by groups to interpret reality.

In summary, following these two biblical texts from Genesis and Luke:

1. The invitation to name is an invitation to reflect the divine “Let us.” It shows the humility of a God who invites his/her creation to participate in the naming of reality. It shows how valuable “community” is for God in re-creating a new reality. We all have a social need—especially in difficult times—of belonging, feeling secure, sharing a bond with one another.
2. The invitation to name is a call to transcend ourselves by seeking our deep human/divine exchange. This is a call to dialogue with *Elohim* in and within our own souls and spirits, to deepen our spirituality that has been blinded by the dehumanizing processes of society (persecution, threats to our wellbeing). It is a call to extend the perimeter and include the stranger. It is an invitation to a dialogue based in the shared dignity we all have.
3. The invitation to name is to dialogue with ourselves, with others and with nature.

Please see ‘Bible Study’ on page 6.

## Invitation to 'Naming'

continued from page 5

### Communication as a Powerful Tool

Communication, naming reality, *apalabrar la realidad*, is a powerful tool to create or destroy. Violence against autochthonous [indigenous] nations and peoples as well as people different from us (color, language, religion, physical, etc.) has deeply systemic and colonial roots. Dominant representations of culture, race and gender allow the creation of narratives whose discourse and meanings erode the *Imago Dei* and prepare the ground for violence to grow.

In Luke, the communication between Jesus and the two disciples reinterpret a discouraging reality. The stranger brought a different vision, brought possibility and hope. The disciples turned and returned to their place within their community, where again the Stranger met them to eat and share bread.

Renaming reality can work against dehumanizing ways of relating to the stranger (an immigrant, a woman, person of a different ethnic group or different race, a gay person, a person with other capacities, etc.). It can work against imperialistic and Eurocentric ways of doing mission.

The first border to cross is the one defining our humanity. The second border to cross is the one of communication/interpretation of reality, the reinterpretation of the stranger and his/her reality.

—Doris García-Rivera, President of the Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, previously served as an American Baptist Missionary at the Seminario Bautista de México in Mexico City and at the Mayan Intercultural Seminary in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. She is a longtime friend of the BPFNA.

### Endnotes

1. John F. Kilner "Humanity in God's Image: Is the Image Really Damaged?" *JETS* Vol 53, Num 3 (September 2010): 601-617.
2. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
3. Ibid.



**Featuring Dr. Saundra D. Westervelt**  
Professor of Sociology, UNC Greensboro  
Co-author of *Life after Death Row: Exonerates' Search for Community and Identity*

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General Assembly

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# Beyond Hiroshima: Thomas Merton, Hiromu Morishita & a Future of Peace, Part 2

by William Apel

**E**ditor's note: Last summer, as the 70th anniversary of the dropping of an atomic bomb on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki approached, William Apel began the finishing touches on what he has titled "Beyond Hiroshima: Thomas Merton, Hiromu Morishita and a Future of Peace." This document is based on 11 hours of interviews conducted by Apel in Hiroshima with Hiromu Morishita, a friend of Thomas Merton.

The piece is divided into three parts. The first section, "Hiromu Morishita and the Bomb" which returns the reader to 1945, the year of the bombing, was printed in *Baptist Peacemaker*, Vol 36 No 1, January-March 2016. The second section, "The Hibakusha Come to Gethsemani," about the 1964 meeting of Merton and Morishita at Kentucky's Gethsemani Abbey, is below. Watch for the third section, "A Future of Peace," in the next issue of *Peacemaker*. With Merton and Morishita as guides, Apel will explore what might be the first steps in moving us beyond Hiroshima to a future of peace.

## Hibakusha Come to Gethsemani

**I**n the aftermath of the dropping of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima in 1945, Hiromu Morishita was counted as one of many thousands who survived. Known collectively as *Hibakusha* (blast-affected people), they soon became the "lepers" of post-war Japan. Japanese society wanted to move forward, but the Hibakusha were a constant reminder of the war people wanted to forget.

Many arranged marriages were cancelled, if one of the parties was Hibakusha. People feared the A-bomb disease (radiation poisoning) and did not know what its effects might be on future generations. Many people would avoid physical contact with the Hibakusha altogether.

This fear and shunning of the Hibakusha was an everyday reality for Morishita. His situation was mitigated, to some extent, by his father's influence and respect within Hiroshima's educational system.

This helped Morishita's entry and graduation from the university. He was able to become a teacher, marry a non-Hibakusha and have children. His physical appearance, however, served as a constant reminder to himself and others that he was Hibakusha.

In the early 1960s, Morishita's life was to take another turn, when he met a remarkable woman named Barbara Reynolds. She was an American Quaker who resided in Hiroshima. Unlike most others, she accepted the Hibakusha as equals. As a Quaker, she believed that every person is a child of God and each human

being, including the Hibakusha, had infinite worth and value.

She made the bold decision to open her home to as many Hibakusha as possible. She wanted to give the Hibakusha a safe place to meet, somewhere they could begin to share their stories with one another without fear of recrimination. It was not long before Morishita started to meet with the Reynolds group.

For Morishita, now in his early 30s, it was truly the beginning of a new day—a new day that would soon be made even brighter because of an unexpected encounter and friendship with Thomas Merton.

In 1963, Reynolds began arranging for a delegation of Hibakusha to travel on a world tour as Ambassadors for Peace. They would visit all the countries that possessed nuclear weapons. This, of course, included the super-powers of the day—the United States and the Soviet Union. Their purpose would be to listen and learn from their host nations, and share their own powerful witness against war and the existence of nuclear weapons.

Much to Morishita's surprise, Reynolds asked him to be a part of the delegation. He recalls telling her that he was in no way ready for such a trip. But in the end, Morishita could not say "no" to the loving persistence of Barbara Reynolds.

The Ambassadors for Peace were to consist of Hibakusha from both Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They were to represent various walks of life. Morishita was an ideal candidate for the peace delegation.

He could represent several vocations, since he was a teacher, a poet and a calligrapher. He had only one major limitation: he knew no English and, in the US and Britain, he had to rely on the delegation's English translators.

The delegation arrived in the United States in the spring of 1964. They split into three smaller groups in order to visit as many cities as possible during their six-week stay. Morishita was assigned to the group with Louisville, KY, on its itinerary.<sup>1</sup> From there it was a short trip to the Abbey of Gethsemani, where the group intended to meet the famous monk and peace activist, Thomas Merton.

Merton, as early as 1962, had published a short book entitled *Original Child Bomb*, a lengthy prose poem that placed him in solidarity with the traveling Ambassadors for Peace, while placing him at odds with much of American Catholicism. It represented Merton's public opposition to war and his call for the elimination of all nuclear weapons.



Unlike many others in his peace delegation, Morishita himself had never heard of this “holy man” of peace. He told me he thought Merton must be something like the Buddhist monks he knew in Japan.

However, he would soon discover that Merton was no ordinary monk. To use William Shannon’s phrase, Merton was “something of a rebel.”<sup>2</sup>

Shannon, a Merton scholar, observed that, as a Trappist monk dedicated to a cloistered life of prayer, Merton struggled with the propriety of making statements about contemporary social issues. Shannon wrote that Merton must have wondered:

*Should I, as a monk of Gethsemani vowed to silence and solitude, speak out against the terrible violence of war that threatens the very life of the planet, or should I keep a discrete silence as the appropriate stance for a monk?*<sup>3</sup>

“Merton, as early as 1962, had published...a lengthy prose poem that placed him in solidarity with the traveling Ambassadors for Peace, while placing him at odds with much of American Catholicism.”

Merton, of course, chose not to remain silent about life and death issues like war and peace. In addition to the publication of *Original Child Bomb*, he also sent a mimeographed article entitled “Target Equal City” to a large number of his friends.<sup>4</sup>

He intended to publish this powerful article, which unequivocally argued for the abolition of war and nuclear weapons. Merton opened his essay in dramatic fashion:

*There is one winner, only one winner in war. The winner is war itself. Not truth, not justice, not liberty, not morality. These are the vanquished. War wins, seducing them to complete submission. He [war] makes truth*

*serve violence and falsehood. He causes justice to declare not what is just but what is expedient as well as cruel.*<sup>5</sup>

Merton noted in the article that it took only five years of all-out modern warfare to turn the Church’s “just-war theory” inside out. War must simply be abolished. Period. And the Church needed to lead the way. There was no compromise in Merton’s position. The stakes were too high.

However, leadership within the Trappist Order did not agree with Merton. His was too radical a statement and too naive a proposal. Besides, it was not the sort of thing that monks should be writing about.

Therefore, Merton was ordered by his superiors not to publish “Target Equals City.” The result was that it remained unpublished in his lifetime.

The same fate awaited Merton’s book *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*. Merton, however, continued his prophetic work for peace. He circulated mimeographed reflections on war and peace, later known as the “Cold War Letters,” to many of his friends. He also supported those within the small, but growing, Catholic Peace Fellowship, and developed a broad correspondence with peacemakers from various religious tradition around the globe.<sup>6</sup>

Merton believed that the call to be a peacemaker was central to his Christian faith—as he thought it to be within the other great religious traditions. In the idiom of his Christian life and thought, Merton professed:

*Christ our Lord did not come to bring peace as a kind of spiritual tranquilizer. He brought to his disciples a vocation and a task: to struggle in the world of violence to establish His peace not only in their own hearts but in society itself.*<sup>7</sup>

Please see “Morishita” on page 10.

*Right: When Hiromu Morishita visited Thomas Merton at the Abbey of Gethsemani in 1964, he drew this sketch of the Abbey. He later gave it to Bill Apel. It appears here courtesy of Bill Apel and Hiromu Morishita.*



## Morishita, continued from page 9

For Merton, God's preference for peace took priority over any kind of human reasoning to the contrary.

This, then, was the Thomas Merton that Morishita and the Hibakusha met on the afternoon of May 16, 1964. This was the one and only meeting between Morishita and Merton. After all these years, Morishita maintains a vivid memory of his arrival at the Abbey of Gethsemani.

The group turned down a small country road, and suddenly, the monastery appeared almost like magic. Its beautiful green surroundings brought a deep sense of peace to Morishita. The Abbey, he said, reminded him of one of Japan's ancient castles.

Upon arrival, he sketched a picture of the Abbey in his travel notebook. Later, in the same notebook, he would record the talk Merton was to give at his hermitage. Morishita wrote down Merton's words as they were relayed to him in Japanese translation.<sup>8</sup>

I was surprised when Morishita handed me a copy of his notes of Merton's brief comments, which he recorded in his own Japanese handwriting. I was even more surprised, and deeply moved, when he tore from his 1964 travel notebook the original of his drawing of the Abbey. This gracious act tied us together as peacemakers—I, too, was included in his story—and maybe Merton's as well.

After a warm greeting at the gatehouse, Merton invited his visitors to join him in a walk to his hermitage. Morishita remembers what he called the "little cottage" as being behind the Abbey, about a mile up a hill, and located in a delightful forest setting.

The beautiful walk itself inspired Morishita. His artistic and spiritual sensitivities were fully awakened. He remembers hearing the chiming of the Abbey bell as he walked. Once they arrived at the hermitage, the Hibakusha were joined by a few additional monks. Merton offered his guests something to drink, and then began his brief talk. He knew this was his moment to communicate heart-to-heart with the Hibakusha. And according to Morishita, that is exactly what he did.

We know, from Merton's journal entry of May 17, that he included within his comments a reading from his poem "Paper Cranes."<sup>9</sup> This poem reveals Merton's close identification with his guests, whose lives were so profoundly affected by the bomb.

The poem alludes to a well-known story about Sadoku, a young Japanese girl, who died after a long period of illness caused by exposure to A-bomb radiation. She spent her final days making paper cranes—a Japanese symbol for peace and healing. She had hoped to complete a thousand cranes, but died before she could reach her goal.

After Sadoku's death, thousands of children and adults from around the world began folding paper cranes in Sadako's honor in order to keep hope for peace and healing alive. This practice (certainly a spiritual practice) is continued to this day by thousands of children and adults all around the world.

Before the Hibakusha departed from Gethsemani, a woman from the group silently placed a paper crane in Merton's hands. He was deeply moved by this simple but eloquent communication of peace. In similar way, Morishita handed Merton one of his poems shortly before the group's departure.

Without question, the Hibakusha were deeply touched by Merton's hospitality and spirit, but none more than Morishita. Merton had reached into Morishita's spiritual core and unlocked the door to his buried self. Morishita had been awakened from the nightmare that had brought him so low, so close to a retching spiritual death.

Morishita had seen in Merton a wholeness that he truly admired. I remember Morishita telling me with a wry smile, "Perhaps Merton was a Buddha."

**"Without question, the Hibakusha were deeply touched by Merton's hospitality and spirit, but none more than Morishita. Merton had reached into Morishita's spiritual core and unlocked the door to his buried self."**

He had discovered in Merton a complete person. He was someone who seemed to understand the deep suffering of the Hibakusha. He appeared to Morishita to be someone who had himself suffered much, and could identify with the suffering of others.

Most importantly, for Morishita, was the fact that Merton refused to allow himself to be defined by his suffering. Merton had an inner peace about himself, and his compassion and openness to others was completely transparent.

This kind of love seemed to carry Merton's spirit far beyond himself. Morishita said what was most memorable about Merton was not so much what he said and did. It was in his very being itself and his compassionate heart.

However, the Gethsemani encounter was not simply a one-way street. Morishita and the Hibakusha also had made a deep impression on Merton. In a rather lengthy entry into his personal journal on May 17, Merton is careful to mention each of his Hibakusha guests by name.

In addition, he is very intentional about writing something specific about each visitor. Merton understood profoundly that the Hibakusha had been terribly dehumanized by world events. He was determined that this not happen again—especially not at Gethsemani.

It was central to Merton's way of seeing reality, to his Christ-centered personalism, that the well-being of the individual person always be placed first. He rejected any attempt to depersonalize individuals by relegating them to any form of collective system or to any kind of abstract grouping.

However, Merton's personalism was nuanced and was not to be confused with individualism. Individualism isolates.

Personalism unites. Merton made a very careful distinction:

*Personalism and individualism must not be confused. Personalism gives priority to the person and not the individual self. To give priority to the person means respecting the unique and inalienable value of the other person, as well as one's own, for a respect that is centered only on one's individual self to the exclusion of others proves it to be fraudulent.*<sup>10</sup>

The “inalienable value of the other person,” which the Hibakusha had so often been denied by others, was the very thing that Merton wanted to affirm. This, I think, is why Merton was so careful to write something personal and specific about each of the Hibakusha.

For example, in addition to Mrs. Tayoshi (Chie Tayoshi), the woman who had given the paper crane to Merton, there was Dr. Takua Matsumoto, the group's leader. Merton, with much appreciation, calls Dr. Matsumoto the “affable and kind” leader of the group.<sup>11</sup>

From the promotional brochure printed for the 1964 journey of the Peace Ambassadors, we learn even more about Dr. Matsumoto. He was a college president in Hiroshima who lost his wife, 350 of his students, and 18 of his faculty members in the A-bomb explosion.<sup>12</sup>

Merton's soon-to-be-friend, Morishita, is identified by one of his distinctive physical characteristic—his “burnt chin.” In his journal entry, Merton used Morishita's burnt chin to remind himself and others of the awful reality of the Bomb's destruction. It reminded Merton, in a very personal way, never to forget the thousands of burnt bodies of Hiroshima.

Merton also made note of Morishita's “immense shyness,” and in gratitude, Merton noted that Morishita “gave me to read a poem.” Finally, regarding Morishita, Merton expressed his regret that he and Morishita did not have time to talk about calligraphy. However, two years later, this discussion would happen in their exchange of correspondence.<sup>13</sup>

The door to peace, once opened, never closes!

The final example we take from Merton's journal entry of May 17 is the story of Noboyu Yamada. Merton writes that Yamada “saw the Singai calendar” on his hermitage wall and told him about the “spiritual principles” on which Idemitsu (a Japanese company) runs its oil company. Merton wrote that Yamada practiced a “traditional Buddhism.”<sup>14</sup>

Although this was not the form of Buddhism Merton favored, he let that point pass without further comment. His knew his entry was not about himself and his spirituality, but about Mr. Yamada. In short, the lives of the Hibakusha mattered. They should never be permitted to fade from view—else the war and the bomb would have the final victory and humanity the final defeat.

—Bill Apel, now retired, was chaplain and religious studies professor at Linfield College in McMinnville, OR. He is a member of First Baptist Church in McMinnville, a BPFNA Partner Congregation, and is a longtime friend of the BPFNA.

## Endnotes

1. Interview with Hiromu Morishita, April 6-8, 2013 in Hiroshima. Hereafter identified as Interview/HM.
2. William H. Shannon, *Something of a Rebel: Thomas Merton His Life and Works* (Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Press, 1987) p. xi.
3. Ibid., p. 2.
4. Thomas Merton, “Target Equals City,” *Passion for Peace*, ed. Robert Daggy, (New York: a Crossroad Book, 1995), p. 28.
5. Ibid., p. 28.
6. William Apel, *Signs of Peace: The Interfaith letters of Thomas Merton*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), p. xvi-xxi. This is a brief introduction to Merton's development of a worldwide apostolate of peace. Each chapter is about Merton's relationship with an interfaith friend. Hiromu Morishita should be added to that list. Also, a must read is *Cold War Letters/ Thomas Merton*, eds. Christine Bochen and Willam Shannon, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2006), p. x- xvii. The excellent Foreword by James W. Douglass gives a historical context to Merton's concerns for peace and is written by a peace activist and friend of Merton.
7. Thomas Merton, *Passion for Peace*, p. 3-4.
8. Interview/HM.
9. Thomas Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life*, ed. Robert Daggy (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 105.
10. Raymond Bailey, *Thomas Merton on Mysticism* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1974), p. 130.
11. Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life*, p. 106.
12. Interview/HM.
13. Merton, *Dancing in the Water of Life*, p. 106
14. Ibid.





## Postcards from Cuba

Over the last Christmas break (Dec. 26 through Jan. 3), young adult leaders of BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz, la Fraternidad de Iglesias de Bautistas de Cuba (FIBAC) and the Alliance of Baptists convened in Cuba for a friendship tour.

“Crossing Borders as Young Leaders” included a retreat and travel to several churches and areas of ministry related to FIBAC. The trip was designed to develop friendships, nurture existing relationships, seek ways to work across cultures for justice for all of God’s creation and empower young adults to become leaders in cross-cultural and international work in our broader faith community.

Accompanied by April Baker and Thomas Conner (both former BPFNA board members and longtime BPFNA members) and Kim Christman (a longtime BPFNA friend who recently spent a year in Cuba), the US group first traveled to the Verde Molina Finca (Green Windmill Farm) outside of Havana, for the initial retreat.

Then they went to Matanzas and to Santa Clara, where they met with a farming community and worshipped with Iglesia Bautista de Alberto de Diaz, the sister church of Glendale Baptist in Nashville, TN (a BPFNA partner congregation). The US and Cuban young adults built a labyrinth together, worshipped together and honored multinational symbols together. They laughed and danced and celebrated birthdays.

The following are reflections from two of the US young adults who participated.

## ¡Miren que bueno, que bueno es!

by Anita Peebles

*Swimming in a tidal pool with a freshwater spring bubbling up from below, jumping off coral formations and telling family stories. Listening to reggaeton while sitting on the Malecon. Barefoot salsa dancing. Stories being shared about the struggles of being a gay man in a machismo culture. Translating jokes from Spanish into English and back again. Digging deep into theologies of peace and justice. Talking about learning to be an ally in the #blacklivesmatter and Standing Up for Racial Justice work in the USA. Praying and walking and singing and worshipping and loving together.*

Visiting Cuba with young adults from the BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz and the Fraternidad de Iglesias Bautistas de Cuba (FIBAC) in late 2015 was a gift. Leaving my family at home in Michigan and traveling to this neighboring country at Christmas did not make me feel homesick, because I learned that I felt at home in Havana, Matanzas and Santa Clara with our Cuban brothers and sisters.

During the first three days, the group from the BPFNA was welcomed with open arms at a retreat center in Guanabacoa, outside of Havana. With gracious translation by Kim Christman and Nathan Watts, we were able to communicate in two languages in a group of about 25 young people from the US and Cuba.

During daily seminars, we talked about the realities of life for young people in both nations, including the pressures facing young people through family, work, church, school and political engagement. In the



*Left: A banner at the Verde Molina Finca (Green Windmill Farm), outside of Havana, reads “Bienvenid@s/Welcome” for the young adults visiting from the US. Photo by Fred Dean.*

# YOUNG ADULTS CROSSING BORDERS

afternoons, we visited local centers for justice and peacemaking, like the Martin Luther King Center in Havana. At night, we ate a lot, sang Beatles songs around a campfire and taught each other traditional dances from our countries.

Throughout the trip, it occurred to me that we were visiting friends, taking part in building the next generation of relationships within a decades-long story of connection between the Alliance of Baptists and FIBAC. BPFNA young adults shared stories of summer Peace Camps [BPFNA Summer Conferences]: “Prom for All” and field trips and workshop leaders and laughing late into the night over karaoke.

Together with our Cuban friends, we shared our dreams of living and loving well in a world characterized by justice and peace. We breathed deep the breaths of life with the stars over the island and with our newfound siblings in Christ. When it came time to enter the Havana airport and begin our travels back to the United States, we hugged our friends close, promising we’d see them again soon. God willing, with some help, we will live up to that promise.

*¡Miren que bueno, que bueno es!!*

## A Whiff of Pineapple

by Fred Dean

A whiff of pineapple caught my nose the other night as I finished cleaning some dishes. Ordinarily, I’d be too hurried to notice, hurried to my next responsibility in a busy culture that won’t stop.

I hadn’t stopped. I came home from Cuba and hit the ground running into all the things I had been wanting to do afterwards. Cuba was a place where I could slow down and listen. It wasn’t that slow, really. I slowed down long enough to speed up to a pace of community forming with young peacemakers from the United States and Cuba.

The memories were as fresh as the pineapple and papaya on my breakfast plate

*Young adults from the BPFNA visited the Yabu farming community near Santa Clara, Cuba, and with members of Iglesia Bautista de Alberto J. Diaz, the sister church of Glendale Baptist Church in Nashville, TN.*  
Photo by Evie Davis.

at Hostel Elida in Santa Clara. Memories of ministry that was simple, yet profound.

*The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything that I need.* I have everything that I need, but it isn’t enough. In Cuba I found that I had everything I wanted, and was unsatisfied. I found a hunger for peace that brought people out of their stories and wrapped them together in a deep love that knew more than one homeland.

“Together with our Cuban friends, we shared our dreams of living and loving well in a world characterized by justice and peace.” –Anita Peebles

I had been afraid of this love when I arrived, and yet this love called to me strongly. It had been a voice that busyness had tried to shut out. It was a love that called for me to recreate my life in its wonder, in its nonviolence, and in its hope. It was a homecoming and a homegoing that made me desire to know and be more careful with what it takes for peace, the seed that opens with love.

—Anita Peebles is a first year Masters of Divinity candidate at Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville, TN, and is a member of Glendale Baptist Church. She is a Youth and Young Adult representative to the BPFNA board. Fred Dean says he “wonders about the possibilities of peace” while studying health science and anthropology at the SUNY College at Brockport outside of Rochester, NY.

### Endnotes

1. Behold how good; how good it is!





# Embracing 'Black Lives Matter'

by Bob Tiller

About 18 months ago, as a response to events in Ferguson, MO, and elsewhere in the United States, the church that I attend erected a large "Black Lives Matter" banner in front of the church building. A few days later it was vandalized, with the word "Black" crossed out and replaced by "All."

We got it repaired and put it out again, with a stirring ceremony reaffirming our commitment. It remained in place for several months, but then vandals hit again, tearing it and leaving notes with generalized threats.

The damaged banner now resides temporarily in a closet as we consider our next steps.

The church is on a major suburban street, close to the Washington, DC, Beltway, so thousands of drivers pass it each day. Many church members want to reclaim this important component of our public witness, refusing to back down in the face of vandalism and threats. I am confident that the banner will soon be repaired and returned to its prominent place on the front lawn.

Prior to placing the banner, the congregation had a vigorous debate about proclaiming "Black Lives Matter" vs. "All Lives Matter." Those who supported the latter wording argued that every life is valuable and that we should not overlook anyone who suffers an unwarranted and untimely death at the hands of law enforcement officials.

Those who supported the "Black Lives Matter" wording said that African-Americans are far more vulnerable to violence and humiliation than people of any other race, whether the violence and humiliation occur at the hands of vigilantes,

government officials, police officers, college fraternities or anyone else. This has been the reality of black individuals and communities in the United States for centuries, and it continues today.

Last October, the Democratic candidates seeking the US presidency met for a televised debate. One of the moderators asked all of them, "Do 'black lives matter' or do 'all lives matter'?" This is a crucial question that each of us should consider carefully, not just presidential candidates.

It is one of the searing issues of our time. We cannot escape it. Every person must ask and answer it, especially those of us who want to be Christian peacemakers.

To take the question on its face, apart from any contextual reference, we would be likely to answer that, of course, "all lives matter." No other answer would be reasonable—if we had just awakened from a 500-year slumber and had no news of what has been happening. But we haven't just awakened; we have been here all along, eyes wide open.

The context from which the question arises cannot be ignored. History cannot be ignored. Today's news cannot be ignored. Patterns of daily life cannot be ignored.

I count myself firmly on the side of saying that we must embrace "Black Lives Matter" as a slogan, as a concept, as a movement—indeed, as an imperative. For decades, many of us have striven to live out the dream that Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of: that we "will one day live in a nation where [people] will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

We have fervently labored for a color-blind society and a color-blind world, but the reality is that it isn't here and it isn't going to be here for a long, long time. Yes, some significant changes have occurred since Dr. King uttered those words, but we are far from seeing his dream fulfilled in our reality.

Let me outline three reasons why we should all see ourselves as part of the "Black Lives Matter" movement. First, every person in the United States (and perhaps in some other countries too; I am not qualified to say) lives in a racist society. As I wrote previously in these pages, racism is at the core of who we are as a people, not only 200 or 100 years ago or 50 years ago, but today.

It is embedded in our communities, our workplaces, our institutions, our commerce, our politics and our laws. (Some scholars and politicians, including US President Barack Obama, have found it helpful to label racism as our "original sin." It is

## About the 'Black Lives Matter' Movement

"Black Lives Matter" may be best known as a slogan on banners, but it is much more than that, and much more than a concept as well. It is simultaneously a campaign of national and international scope, and also an organization that pre-dates the troubles in Ferguson.

It began in 2013, largely in response to the shooting death in Florida of Trayvon Martin and the acquittal of the man who killed him. Still only three years old, it has picked up momentum and spread widely, with chapters across the US and Canada.

Although the veterans of the civil rights movement have been slow to embrace it, many young people have found the organization and the movement refreshing, forward-thinking and inspiring.

—Bob Tiller



catchy, but I don't use it, because it may tend to undercut our responsibility to acknowledge the reality and to make lasting changes.)

Racism is much more than a viewpoint or an attitude. It is the heritage of every person in the US. We are all recovering racists, every one of us, regardless of our skin color. And one way to facilitate our recovery and lessen the grip of racism on all of us is to take anti-racist steps, like declaring publicly that "Black Lives Matter."

Second, many police officers in the US perceive black men as a threat, without regard to the behavior they exhibit or the presence of weapons, and the result of that perception is frequently tragic. A recent article in the *Washington Post* revealed that unarmed black men—yes, *unarmed*—are being killed while in police custody at the rate of one every nine days.

**"I count myself firmly on the side of saying that we must embrace 'Black Lives Matter' as a slogan, as a concept, as a movement—indeed, as an imperative."**

In 2015, forty percent of all the unarmed people killed by police in the US were African-American men, even though they constitute only six percent of the US population.

This is not a condemnation of all police officers. The vast majority of them accept difficult challenges and do heroic work to keep us safe. Rather, it is to say that we are all still in the thrall of racism, including our police departments, and we must not ignore that fact.

Police officers are the people we allow to use weapons openly, based on their judgment and training, so we must insist that police officers everywhere receive training and supervision that assures that they do not treat people differently because of race.

To declare that "Black Lives Matter" is to say that the role of police officers is to keep *all* people safe, and that includes black people who are currently at the greatest risk.

Third, despite everything that has happened in the last 50 years—including federal civil rights laws, affirmative action, breaking of employment barriers, and conscious efforts by many people of goodwill to effect change—African-American people are on the bottom rung of society by just about every measure.

Black unemployment is higher than any other race. Black educational achievement is lower than any other race. Black life expectancy is shorter than any other race. Black people receive harsher prison sentences than others for the same crimes. Black students are suspended and expelled from school at higher rates than all others. Black motorists are stopped by police at higher rates than all others and

also arrested at higher rates than all others. In short, African-Americans are still wondering why their lives matter less than all others' lives.

Furthermore, slurs and insults against black people are still tolerated in mainstream society. Last fall, we saw race-related upheavals on campuses across the US, with major disruptions occurring at the University of Missouri and Yale University, as well as numerous other colleges and universities.

Many of these convulsions were fueled by policies, statements, exclusions, graffiti and other actions that are expressly against African-American people. Tolerating such anti-black statements creates a framework within which violence against black people is also tolerated. To join ourselves to "Black Lives Matter" is to stand with oppressed and downgraded and marginalized people—precisely where God calls us to stand.

My dream is not only that my church will put its banner back where it once stood as a proclamation that "Black Lives Matter," but that every church in the United States will erect a "Black Lives Matter" banner.

These are times that call for courageous action, no less than in the bygone days of the civil rights movement. With God's help, we will begin to clean up the brutal cesspool of racism that envelops us.

—Bob Tiller, who lives in Silver Spring, MD, is a longtime member of the BPFNA is a former member of the BPFNA Board of Directors. He is a frequent and award-winning contributor to the pages of Baptist Peacemaker.



**Black  
Lives  
Matter.**

# Born in Sin, Upended in Grace: George Williamson's New Book

*reviewed by Ken Sehested*

**N**othing can be known that isn't a risk to know, isn't surrendered to, lived out. Westerners don't 'know' that way. (p. 35)

**A**gain! Again!! If you've spent much time around toddlers, you know the *Again! Again!* supplication. You finish reading a favorite book, or bouncing on the knee, or any number of assorted other forms of play, and your charge squeals an insistent request to continue. *Again!* and *again!* to the point where you have to devise some distraction in order to catch your breath.

Because of a long and close association with George Williamson, many (though not all) of the stories in this memoir are familiar. But my response in reading is still *Again! Again!*

Books of stories are inherently more fun to read but also harder to review. Where to start? Probably with the title itself, "Born in sin, upended in grace," an odd one for an urbane audience, unaccustomed as we are to reference "sin" in daily conversation—except maybe in jest, in poking fun at backwater folk.

I'm sure George laughed, too, when the title first occurred to him. (And his laughter is infectious, by the way. It's unlikely you've experienced the rapture of laughter until you've laughed with George.)

George is serious about sin, though not in its weak-kneed association with "dirty thoughts" or willful cruelty. Sin is what the Black Lives Matter movement is about: unearthing the unseen privilege associated with particular racial (or a host of other) assumptions, social depositions, entitlements and prerogatives.

Like a fish, which has no concept of water, so are we, in various ways—every one of us, some more, some less—complicit in arrangements of power of which we are clueless. In fact, the "cluelessness" is frequently the

best synonym for what the Bible means when it speaks of sin.

Thankfully, George is also serious about grace and its upending, bruising, disorienting (often frightfully so) but ultimately delightful consequences. And his story, indeed the Bible's story, details how one is imprisoned ("I am the image of God, spoiled." p. 136) in the former and released in the latter.

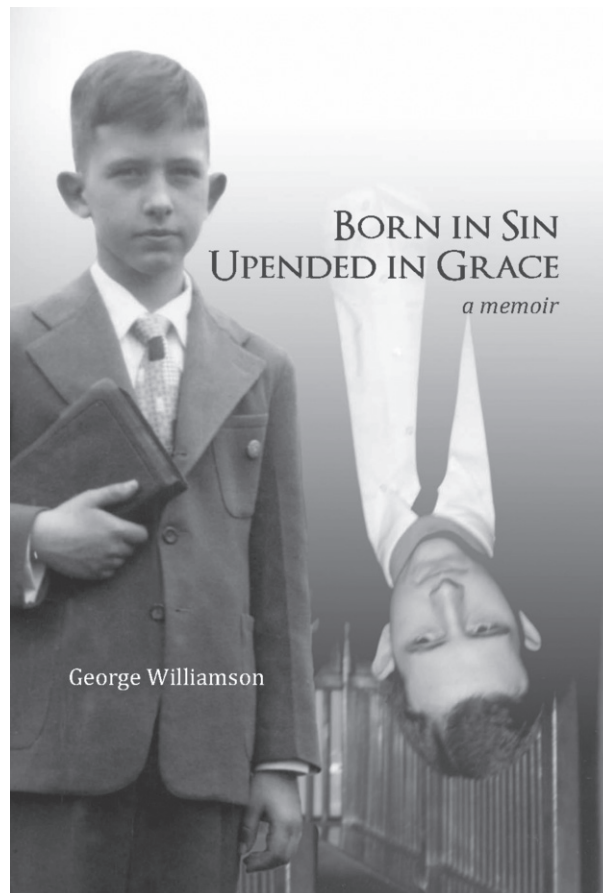
Grace, he writes, has "been a shock of unexpected ordeals, snatching me up, devouring existing values and commitments, hurling me upended into the roaring front end of rushing currents." (p. 159) Also, I believe he is exactly right in saying this transformation is more like an exorcism than a tune-up—and more than a little scary.

*Born in Sin* documents a cascading progression of confrontations with assumed privilege, but the grit of George's spiritual journey began, innocently enough, with a piety-gripped adolescent's stand against dancing and its carnal implications. (I refrain from laughing because I did the same thing.) But then, in college, "fairness" surfaced as an act of conscience, and George gave up not-dancing.

Things only escalated from there. In a moment of spontaneous adventure, he joined a group of Wake Forest University students who joined the Greensboro, NC, sit-in movement, the first white people to do so, and this before "sit-in" was even a word.

His college mentor, Mac Bryan (of blessed memory—he's the one who taught George how to cackle), bailed him out, introduced George to the words "civil disobedience," and launched him into a lifetime addressing our nation's hideous racial history.

With this dawn's crack, a larger horizon of corruption became illumined. He saw the specific threat of nuclear weapons and, more generally, the nation's warmongering habits and imperial impulses. He saw our inherited



and reinforced patterns not just of sexual discrimination but outright misogyny.

Then he embodied an increasingly conflictual, prophetic engagement with the forces of homophobia (especially within the church) and a devoted pastoral presence within the LGBTQ community. (It wasn't, by the way, until 1972, when "homophobia" was first coined, that we even had an explicit word for this form of violence.)

"Grace," George writes, "before it is anything else, is the crack inherent in the otherwise ironclad, unbreakable laws of nature and history. Grace is the capacity for unchangeable things to change...." (p. 182)

**"The stories in this book of adventures in faith are vast: from a Woolworth lunch counter to the apartment of Soviet dissidents during the Cold War, to Bangkok hotel gatherings with insurgent leaders in South Asia, to Central American jungles, to Saddam's parade grounds and the Warsaw Cathedral during Solidarity's ascension."**

I should have confessed at the beginning the incomparable debt I owe to my companionship with George Williamson via the Baptist Peace Fellowship. I'm probably not the most unbiased candidate to review this book, but I jumped at the offer to do so. Of the many insights I've received at his hand, let me highlight two.

The first is covered extensively in the book, having to do with how we read the Bible which, verse for verse, is profoundly more violent than the Qur'an. The Bible, George says, is "the story of the breakthrough of God in human history." The challenge and burden of reading, and living, the text involves discerning what is "breakthrough" and what is merely "history."

The second greatest insight I absorbed is not explicitly stated in this book, though is everywhere implicit: That the peace, the peaceable kingdom, the Beloved Community, for which we long and to which we are oriented is, in the end, a miracle. Not in the sense of an abrogation of supposed "laws of nature," but miracle in the sense of surprise, a reality beyond human prediction, an achievement beyond human manipulation.

Not that our devoted efforts, however fallible, are insignificant or even futile. The stories in this book of adventures in faith are vast: from a Woolworth lunch counter to the apartment of Soviet dissidents during the Cold War, to

Bangkok hotel gatherings with insurgent leaders in South Asia, to Central American jungles, to Saddam's parade grounds and the Warsaw Cathedral during Solidarity's ascension. There is abundance here.

What I think George would want you to know is that these stories don't belong to him, at least not in the terms of our culture's gangster-capitalism values. The worst thing you could mine from this memoir is a comparison test. These stories, your stories, our stories—the very meaning of our Eucharistic practice—is that we belong to each other, feeding each other, being fed together, baptized as we are into one body "in Christ" rather than in separate investment portfolios. Here is George's summation:

*In the end, what constitutes, what hounds and thrills me, is inescapable suspicion that I suffer a Calling from God. This isn't something I'm proud of or can document. It isn't in any sense a singling-out. It's just there, light from behind, warming my backside, narrowly lighting the way ahead, casting a shadow toward where I'm bound when, occasionally, I'm in it. (p. 183)*

Our only reliable hope is that we do not get what we deserve but submit to being upended in grace.

—Ken Sehested, founding director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, is the editor of *prayer&politics*, an online journal at the intersection of spiritual formation and prophetic action. You can purchase a copy of *Born in Sin, Upended in Grace* from the BPFNA bookstore at <http://bit.ly/BPFNAstore-books>. Receive a discounted rate when you buy two or more copies.

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While you're reading, keep in mind that all our work was only possible because of **you** and your support.

We are truly grateful! Thank you for an incredible year!



# Colonialism: Two Books that Will Open Your Eyes

by Karen Turner

**C**olonialism: *The policy or practice of a wealthier and more powerful country acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers and exploiting it economically.*

**C**olonialism is a term that has been in the English dictionary for a very long time, but it seems to me that, up until recently, it was a basically neutral term referring to the process of settlement of the “new world,” and that the dark underbelly of its meaning has only recently been generally acknowledged.

The shameful history of violence, oppression and genocide of indigenous people by white, Christian Europeans was ignored or whitewashed in popular media, government policy and education for over 200 years.

The core reason for this, it seems to me, is a serious “point of view problem”<sup>1</sup> whereby the cultural biases created by fictions—such as the US notion of Manifest Destiny, and the older European-based Doctrine of Discovery—allowed otherwise good and faithful people to think that what was being done to indigenous people was acceptable.

Both of these Eurocentric notions created an almost universal belief on the part of white settlers, completely supported by most versions of the Christian church, that white European Christian culture and religion were, without question, superior to that of any “pagan” indigenous people they came across in their exploration and expansion.

The Doctrine of Discovery was set in motion by a couple of very significant papal bulls<sup>2</sup> in the 15th century. They were based on this apparently God-ordained superiority, which held that these newly “discovered” lands were *terra nullis*, or “empty land.” The inhabitants didn’t count as people, and whichever Christian European nation “discovered” the land

could claim ownership and the right to whatever they found there—including the people.

Of course, the God-given task of the Christians was to convert these pagans to the true faith, while taking the land and resources, and if these unfortunates refused, they could be subjugated and/or destroyed.

The truth is that, whether they converted or not, they could still be subjugated and/or destroyed. Obviously, the indigenous peoples of the lands in question had a very different point of view, but that didn’t count either.

This notion unleashed a genocide around the world—in Africa, Asia and the Americas—of a magnitude perhaps unparalleled in human history. The remnants of the Doctrine of Discovery and its appalling social, political and religious consequences continue to this day around the world.

In North America over the past few decades, both indigenous and non-indigenous voices are becoming louder and more insistent, naming this outrage for what it is. I’d like to call us, as Baptist peacemakers, to join our voices to this growing chorus calling for justice for aboriginal people.

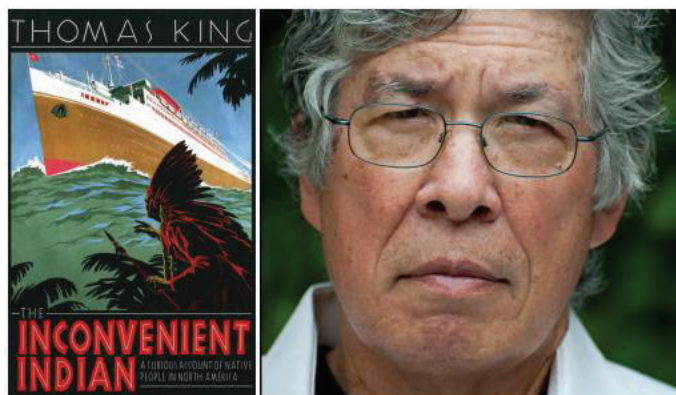
This past fall semester, I audited a course at the Toronto School of Theology, called Engaging Indigenous Theologies. This experience changed forever the way I view both the history of North America, and my faith.

There is a growing body of writing informing this movement, and there is a flood of new material in the last few years written by both indigenous and non-indigenous writers, from social, political and theological perspectives. I recommend two wonderful books as a starting point.

The first is *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*, by Thomas King.<sup>3</sup> I am respectfully going to suggest that every non-indigenous person living in North America needs to read it. Any lingering positive illusions you might have about the process of colonization of North America will be shattered.

King’s highly readable, clear, hard-hitting style will enrage you, and, at the same time, it will make you laugh out loud at his ironic, hilariously deadpan telling of this lamentable narrative. His style has aptly been compared to Mark Twain’s; it is biting, homespun prose that sneaks up on you and nails the truth.

King is a California-born, part-Cherokee, writer, academic and activist for Native American issues. He now lives in Guelph, ON, having taught for many years at the University of Guelph. He has written a string of successful novels, all with aboriginal



themes, as well television and radio drama scripts in Canada.

This book is not a novel, but a very original history of native-settler relations in both the US and Canada (historically, aboriginal groups do not see a border) since first contact.

After you finish King's book, move on to *The Comeback*, by John Ralston Saul.<sup>4</sup> All residents of Canada should definitely do this, as well as US Americans who truly want to know more about Canada.

Saul is well known in Canada as a public intellectual, political theorist and writer. Perhaps his larger claim to fame is that he is married to Adrienne Clarkson, a former Governor General of Canada.

Published in 2014, this book is from a uniquely Canadian perspective, based on the reality that for the past several decades, indigenous people in Canada have been making a comeback—socially, culturally, linguistically and politically, not because of suddenly more enlightened government policy, but because native peoples themselves are finding their voice and power.

Saul examines the historic and present-day broken relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians and rightly names this as the most pressing unsolved issue in Canada today. Based on how our parliamentary form of government works, he outlines how government actions dealing with aboriginal issues over the last 150 years have been illegal and unethical.

He insists the problem is absolutely solvable, and even outlines specific approaches and initiatives that governments need to take that will lead to the beginning of true reconciliation.

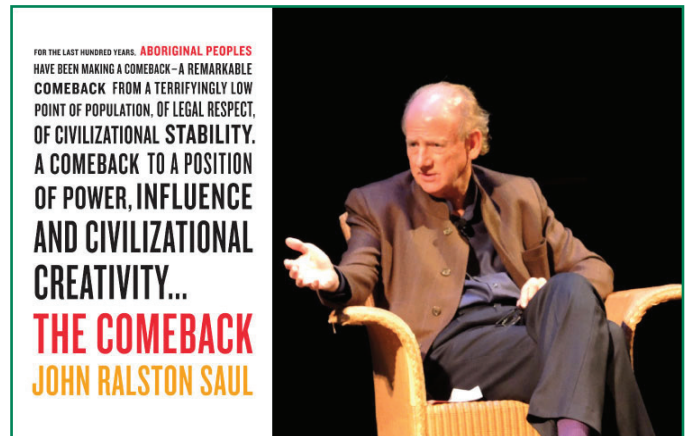
These eye-opening, concrete examples of what reconciliation could actually look like are another remarkable aspect of the book—a nation-to-nation relationship with no

suspicion, no paternalism, no racism. For this reason also (other than learning important things about your close neighbour to the north), US American readers will find it enlightening and helpful in their own context.

—Karen Turner is a former member of the BPFNA Board of Directors, and served as the chair of the Board Development Committee for several years. A retired social worker, she now lives in Toronto, ON, where she belongs to the Jeremiah Community, an intentional Christian community in the downtown area.

## Endnotes

1. *The Comeback*, John Ralston Saul, p. 79.
2. An edict or formal proclamation from the Pope to the Catholic world.
3. This book is available on Amazon.
4. This book is available at [www.johnralstonsaul.com](http://www.johnralstonsaul.com) or on Amazon.



## Building the Movement to End the New Jim Crow

Written by longtime BPFNA member and organizer Daniel Hunter, *Building a Movement to End the New Jim Crow* is an organizing guide to accompany Michelle Alexander's best-seller *The New Jim Crow*.



The guide's description on Amazon.com says, *This accessible organizing guide puts tools in your hands to help you and your group understand how to make meaningful, effective change. Learn about your role in movement-building and how to pick and build campaigns that contribute towards a bigger mass movement against the largest penal system in the world. This important new resource offers examples from this and other movements, time-tested organizing techniques and vision to inspire, challenge, and motivate.*

To purchase a copy of this excellent resource, go to [www.bpfna.org/equip/store-main](http://www.bpfna.org/equip/store-main) and click on "Books and Resources."

# Earth Transformed with Music! Inclusive Songs for Worship

## A Hymnal by Jann Aldredge-Clanton

*reviewed by Thom Longino*

**I** confess: I am one of those people who saves the bulletin from Sunday's worship service to refer back to through the week. Sometimes I will say a prayer that has been used, but often I will refer back to a hymn so I may sing it as a prayer to center myself in the Sacred during the course of my week. Sometimes I even find myself singing a hymn to myself from the previous Sunday's service, and that is usually my clue that I should refer back to the bulletin to sing the whole hymn. I am quirky like that.

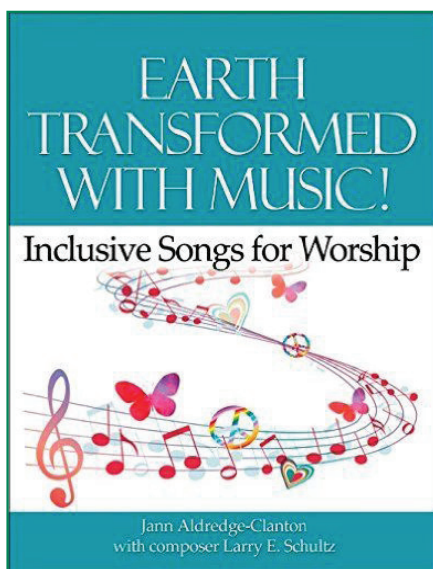
Recently, I found myself singing the lines "Praise Sophia, Holy Wisdom, praise her many names and forms." It's easy to remember because it is to the tune of "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee." I referred back to my bulletin, and sure enough, it was there. I sang all the verses as I sat in prayer. This hymn brings a smile to my heart.

As I looked over the bulletin, all the hymns used were penned by Jann Aldredge-Clanton. This is nothing new for where I go to church, Ebenezer/herchurch Lutheran in San Francisco, CA. Pastor Stacy Boorn has used Jann's hymns in worship for quite a few years. What was different about the hymns that Sunday were all from Dr. Aldredge-Clanton's newest hymnal *Earth Transformed with Music! Inclusive Songs for Worship*.

There is another reason I often save and refer back to my bulletins from Ebenezer/herchurch Lutheran. That is because I work as a street chaplain in San Francisco, and I will often use Jann's hymns in some of the groups and Bible studies I help facilitate. Her use of new words to tunes many are familiar with makes the hymns easy to sing, often providing a good centering and jumping off point for prayer, conversation and sharing.

In the past I have used more of Jann's Advent/Christmas/Epiphany hymns, but as I thumb through her new hymnal, I foresee using some of the new hymns from *Earth Transformed with Music! Inclusive Songs for Worship*.

I am excited to further explore these hymns as my pastor uses them in worship, because they often dance in my soul.



I look forward to sharing them with the folks I work with on the streets, because I love sharing joy and helping others explore who Sophia may be for them.

—Rev. Thom Longino is a person of many hats: a member and adjunct pastor at Ebenezer/herchurch Lutheran in San Francisco, CA; a street chaplain, with the San Francisco Night Ministry and the Faithful Fools Street Ministry; a member of the Order of Ecumenical Franciscans; and a budding spiritual director.

### Hymnals by Jann Aldredge-Clanton and Larry E. Schultz

**J**ann Aldredge-Clanton writes, "Words we sing in worship have great power to shape our beliefs and actions." She has published three hymnals with this in mind.

Many of the tunes are drawn from the church's rich tradition, but all three hymnals include original tunes and arrangements by composer Larry E. Schultz. Below are descriptions of Jann's first two hymnals.

#### • *Inclusive Hymns for Liberating Christians*

The wide variety of biblical divine names and images in this hymnal are based on the sacredness of all people and all creation. It includes 116 hymns, notes and extensive indexes, drawing from prophetic, liberating tradition in Scripture. Themes include peace, justice, resurrection, abundant life, liberation, new creation and partnership in relationships. The collection celebrates the seasons of the church year and other special occasions. It balances female and male divine names and resurrects ancient female divine images.

#### • *Inclusive Hymns for Liberation, Peace, and Justice*

The second collection, like the first, is designed to contribute to an expansive theology and an ethic of equality and justice in human relationships. It covers gender, race, interfaith cooperation, sexual orientation, ecology and other social justice issues. This collection also includes hymns of lament and hymns that celebrate special occasions. Many are appropriate for interfaith settings. Most of the hymns are set to widely known tunes, many with fresh arrangements.

—All three hymnals can be purchased on Amazon or on Jann's website, [www.jannaldredgeclanton.com](http://www.jannaldredgeclanton.com).



# Mother's Day Is Peace Sunday

*"Arise, then, women of this day! Arise, all women who have hearts,  
Whether our baptism be of water or of tears!"*

**T**here's a fact you may not know about Mother's Day. Did you know Mother's Day originated as a day of peace?

While Anna Jarvis is recognized as the founder of more modern Mother's Day traditions, there were previous attempts to create such a holiday. In 1868, Anna Jarvis' mother, Ann Jarvis, attempted to establish a Mother's Friendship Day to reunite families divided during the Civil War. And, in 1872, Julia Ward Howe led a "Mother's Day for Peace" anti-war observance, which was accompanied by a Mother's Day Proclamation.

Also known as the "Appeal to Womanhood throughout the World," this proclamation is still relevant more than 100 years later:

*In this day of progress, in this century of light, the ambition of rulers has been allowed to barter the dear interests of domestic life for the bloody exchanges of the battle field... the mother has a sacred and commanding word to say to the sons who owe their life to her suffering. That word should now be heard, and answered to as never before.*

*Arise, then, women of this day! Arise, all women who have hearts, whether our baptism be of water or of tears! Say firmly: We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies. Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause. Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience....*

*From the bosom of the devastated earth a voice goes up with our own. It says: Disarm, disarm! The sword of murder is not the balance of justice. Blood does not wipe out dishonor, nor violence vindicate possession....*

*In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women, without limit of nationality, may be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient, and at the earliest period consistent with its objects, to promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace.*

In 2016, Mother's Day in the US and Canada falls on Sunday, May 8. Together, we can once again make Mother's Day a celebration of peace! The BPFNA has a wide variety of peace resources available for your church to use during its Mother's Day service. Go to <http://www.bpfna.org/peace-sunday> to find litanies, songs, prayers, sermons, etc. And email [allison@bpfna.org](mailto:allison@bpfna.org) with any resources you would like for us to add to this list!



## Calvary Baptist in Washington, DC, Seeks Pastor

Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, DC, is seeking a Senior Minister. Located in the heart of the nation's capital for more than 150 years, Calvary is a progressive Baptist congregation with a commitment to providing a space for worship that is welcoming to all of God's people and to God's love, justice and peace. We seek a senior minister with a passion for leadership and service. Washington, DC, is in the midst of a population boom. At the same time, the city has many residents struggling to find affordable housing. Our ideal candidate will be a skilled communicator in the pulpit and a servant leader with the ability to lead the church staff and work with a congregation that is enthusiastic about living out God's call. Spanish fluency is not required but is a plus.

A cover letter and resume may be submitted to [MSC@calvarydc.org](mailto:MSC@calvarydc.org) or by mail to Ministerial Selection Committee, Calvary Baptist Church, 755 8th Street, NW, Washington, DC, 20001. More information at <http://calvarydc.org/pastoral-search>.

# A Benefit Concert with Kate Campbell

Friday, May 27 at 7 p.m.

Glendale Baptist Church, 1021 Glendale Lane, Nashville, TN

We are thrilled to announce that the fabulous singer/songwriter Kate Campbell, a longtime member and supporter, will be offering a concert to benefit BPFNA ~ Bautistas por La Paz this May!

If you know Kate, you'll understand why we are excited. If not, read on:

As the daughter of a Baptist preacher from Sledge, MS, Kate's formative years were spent in the very core of the US civil rights movement of the 1960s, and the indelible experiences of those years have shaped her heart, character and convictions ever since. As a child of the South, her musical tastes were forged in the damped, smoky fires of soul, rhythm & blues, Southern rock, country and folk music. Kate Campbell's music continues to inspire and enthuse a growing audience. Her endearing, clear-water vocal delivery, eloquent gift for storytelling and easy command of a full-range of American music styles, have combined to earn Campbell recognition as a formidable talent by critics, musicians and a discerning public.

With stories that echo the best justice preachers of her Baptist traditions, she moves audiences with songs like "Alabama Department of Corrections Meditation Blues," a true narrative about death-row prisoners who find peace through meditation and "Montgomery to Mobile" which imagines Rosa Parks and George Wallace sitting side by side on a bus ride. She also has a gift for sparking laughter with tunes like "Jesus and Tomatoes" and "Funeral Food."

To purchase tickets, please go to [www.bpfna.org/benefit-concert](http://www.bpfna.org/benefit-concert). For more information about Kate, go to [www.katecampbell.com](http://www.katecampbell.com).



Faith experienced at an early age is the foundation for all other growth. The good news we share with our children has the power to transform lives and revitalize communities. So let's prepare the ground for a new tomorrow, send down roots anchored in love. Let's sow in them seeds of mercy and plant them by the river of life. Let's teach our kids to shine in this world.

\* Start small



## Gifts of Honor

### In Honor of:

#### **SARDIS BAPTIST CHURCH STAFF:**

**BOB STILLERMAN,  
JONATHAN EIDSON,  
SCOTTIE STAMPER,  
KATHRYN KREUTZER**

*FROM: TILLIE DUNCAN*

#### **LEDAYNE MCLEESE POLASKI**

*FROM: MELLISA GALLISON*

#### **BOB & JUDY DOLL**

*FROM: JAN CONSTANTINESCU*

#### **GEORGE WILLIAMSON**

*FROM: DAVE AND JOY MARTIN*

#### **EVELYN HANNEMAN'S BIRTHDAY**

*FROM: LINDA AND ACE ORNT*

#### **REV. ISABEL DOCAMPO**

*FROM: JANN ALDREDGE-CLANTON*

### In Memory of:

#### **REV. LUIS FIDEL MERCADO**

*FROM: LYDIA MERCADO*

#### **A.J. MUSTE, PAST PRESIDENT OF FOR**

*FROM: NORMAN GOTTWALD  
& LAURA LAGERQUIST*

#### **MARY RUTH CROOK**

*FROM: PAULA DEMPSEY*

#### **MARY POLAND**

*FROM: DARLENE & ART SMITH*

#### **GRACE MORGAN**

*FROM: BEV GAVEL*

#### **REV. STEPHEN CASE**

*FROM: FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
OF MANSFIELD, PA*

#### **CONRAD BROWN**

*FROM: CAT WILCOX-BROWNE*

## YOU DID IT!

In 2015, we had a \$40,000 matching grant to encourage new and increased giving to the work of peace through BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz.

It was a big task, and you did it!

770 of you gave for the first time or increased your gift, and we raised an additional \$52,172 thanks to your generosity!

**THANK YOU! We knew you'd come through for us, and you did – in a big way.**

Your gifts made possible a fabulous 2015 and set us up for an even better 2016.

With everyone pulling together and doing what they could, some people adding to their gift by \$5 or \$10 and others making much larger increases, as well as many people joining in for the first time, we were able to do something amazing!

Congratulations on being a part of something BIG – and thank you!



## YOUR PURCHASE COUNTS TWICE!

when you order Fair Trade items from Equal Exchange through the Baptist Fair Trade Project!

Not only are you supporting small farmers around the world, but a portion of the proceeds also go to support the BPFNA's Friendship Tour Scholarship Program!

Visit [www.equalexchange.coop/our-partners](http://www.equalexchange.coop/our-partners) and select "Interfaith Partners" to learn more about the BFTP.

Go to <http://shop.equalexchange.coop> to place an order!





# 2015 BPFNA Highlights

**A**s the BPFNA began 2015, we started implementation of a new strategic plan that emerged from a nearly two-year discernment process. As part of that plan, we:

- Committed ourselves to a five-year focus, “No Longer Strangers: Crossing Borders for Peacemaking.”
- Added *Bautistas por la Paz* to our name to deepen our public commitment to being a four-nation network with roots in Canada, the US, Mexico and Puerto Rico.
- Adopted a new mission statement: *Witnessing to God’s peace rooted in justice ~ working together until it comes. Testificando sobre la paz de Dios enraizada en justicia ~ Trabajando hasta que llegue.*
- Created a theological statement that undergirds our work:  
*Jesus came not only for personal salvation and the transformation of individual lives, but also to empower the poor, liberate the oppressed, set free the captive and pronounce a new day of hope and grace for all of creation. As we seek to follow Jesus, we take up this message of liberation and reconciliation.*
- Added new staff: Scott Hayes as Office Manager and Summer Conference Coordinator for 2016, and Hortensia Picos-Lee as Spanish Resource Manager, to help us create and share resources in both English and Spanish.

**World Peace Networks (WPN)** includes all of our work beyond North America. In the past year we have:

- Sponsored a Conflict Transformation (CT) training for the professors and staff of Andhra Christian Theological College, India, led by Lee McKenna and Chaks Zadda.
- Supported our friends at Crossing Lines-Africa to conduct a one-day CT workshop for University Student Leaders at Hands of Grace Community Church in Kampala, Uganda. The training gathered 57 student leaders for an emphasis on LGBTQ equality and pride.
- We also helped Crossing Lines to secure other funding for their courageous and innovative work to empower and train young LGBTQ leaders in Uganda.

Through the **Gavel Memorial World Peace Fund**, WPN also provided general support to these groups:

- Pan African Peace Network (PAP-NET) works to bring nonviolent conflict transformation synergies to transform African conflicts while fostering social equity and community progress. PAP-NET, under the leadership of Lancelot Muteyo, has become the “go to” group for CT training in a wide variety of settings throughout Africa.
- Jitokeze Wamama Wafrika serves the households of marginalized women and girls in Kenya who are most vulnerable to the impacts of droughts and conflicts induced by climate change. It works in the interconnected areas of food security, water security, income security and peacebuilding/conflict transformation.
- Kingdom of Peace and Development (KOPAD) works

with rural communities to identify unique resources in their localities that can sustainably be utilized to achieve community growth, development and transformation. KOPAD leader Boaz Keibarak has created a comprehensive campaign for the transformation of his native Kenya.

- PHARP (Peacebuilding, Healing and Reconciliation Programme) works to foster peace, healing, reconciliation and discipleship through training in conflict prevention, transformation and reconstruction. Our funding supported PHARP’s Peace Community Empowerment Project that targets youth between 13-18 years who are being prepared by community elders for cattle rustling, a major source of on-going conflict.

We also worked to create a more inclusive application process for Gavel Memorial World Peace funding. (*See the end of this article for 2016-funded projects.*)

**Local Peace Networks (LPN)** includes projects within our home countries of Puerto Rico, Mexico, the US and Canada. In this past year, we:

- Created a discussion guide to encourage groups to see and discuss the movie *Selma*.
- Co-sponsored an interfaith conference on drone warfare.
- Led a “Justice at the Border” Friendship Tour to El Paso/Ciudad Juarez, offering scholarships for 10 participants, allowing them to experience in deep and transformative ways the many issues of injustice on the US-Mexico border.
  - Invited the 10 participants above to plan and lead an intense track of workshops for our annual Summer Conference to educate individuals and churches on how they can respond to US-Mexico border issues.
- Sent a delegation to take part in the one-year commemoration of Michael Brown’s death in Ferguson, MO. We secured scholarships for 10 participants, some of whom are longtime members and some of whom are brand new to us.
- Provided our members and churches with frequent updates from Ferguson along with a list of ways individuals and churches outside of Ferguson could participate and support the commemoration.
- Reactivated the Williamson Peace Action Fund to support the work that emerges from our members and/or the small, grassroots, local organizations of which they are a part.
- Sent a representative to the 50th Anniversary of the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March.
- Promoted 10 Days of Peace, a project of Iglesias por la Paz in Mexico.
- Sent representatives to the 100th anniversary celebration of our partners at FOR-USA (Fellowship of Reconciliation).
- Committed ourselves to spend at least the next year in focused self-reflection (individual and corporate) around the theme of Centering Black Lives in Pursuit of Racial Justice.

**Our publications** provide a consistent way to inform, inspire and equip the work of peace. This year we have:

- Published the third and final volume of *The Vocation of Peacemaking*, a series of essays written by members and friends of BPFNA reflecting on how they live out the call to peace.
- Published a weekly essay series called “The Borders I Cross,” a collection of inspiring stories of some of the many ways ordinary people cross borders to create peace.
- Published four new issues of the award-winning *Baptist Peacemaker*. *Peacemaker* was honored again this year with a “Best of the Christian Press” award from the Associated Church Press for Bob Tiller’s “Inching Toward Peace Between Israel and Palestine.”
- Produced four issues of our quarterly electronic publication *Model Ministries* that focuses on the work being done by BPFNA Partner Congregations.
- Made plans to publish *Born in Sin, Upended By Grace*, a new memoir by our founding president, George Williamson.
- Executive Director LeDayne McLeese Polaski and Communications Manager Allison Paksoy have both had essays published by Baptist News Global.

## We created the following opportunities for trainings:

- Provided scholarships for a 10-Day Training of CT Trainers (TCTT).
- Offered a one-day Introduction to Conflict Transformation at the American Baptist Mission Summit as well as an introductory workshop as part of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship-North Carolina gathering.
- Led our first CT training for students leaving incarceration and returning to the community, as well as our first event within a detention center, Butner Federal Correctional Facility.
- Our staff members attended “Dismantling Racism” workshops to strengthen our ability to do anti-oppression work.

## We facilitated the following gatherings:

### Peace Breakfasts:

- At the national gathering of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Dallas, TX, we sponsored a program titled “I Was A Stranger: The Church and Immigration.”
- At the national gathering of the American Baptist Churches-USA, we offered a program titled “The Black Lives Matter Movement: A Call to Christian Action.”

### Conferences:

- We held a fabulous Summer Conference with the theme “No Longer Strangers: Crossing Borders for Peacemaking.” In addition to programming for children, youth, young adults and adults, we convened a group of international seminarians from seven countries. Participants in February’s “Justice at the Border” Friendship Tour presented an informative series of workshops to shape our actions on border issues in the coming year.
- We made plans for our next conference, “When Did We See You in Prison? Breaking Social and Structural Injustice” to be held June 27 - July 2, 2016, at Cheyney University in Cheyney,

PA (near Philadelphia, USA). Cheyney is the oldest historically Black institution of higher education in the US.

- We made plans for our first Summer Conference to be held in Mexico, focused on solidarity with, and empowerment of, “the least of these” to be held July 17-22, 2017, at Misión Mazahua, a conference center located one hour from Toluca, the capital of the State of Mexico.
- We held *Peace, Justice and Fun: A concert and celebration of Fair Trade* at the ABC Mission Summit.

## We did considerable work with seminaries:

- Rev. Dr. Amaury Tañón-Santos, president of the BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz board of directors, taught “Eschatology: Theology in History, Promise of Justice and Peacemaking” at the Seminario Intercultural Mayense (SIM) in San Cristobal, Chiapas, Mexico.
- Summer Conference attendees contributed \$5,157 to help SIM buy a new-to-them truck.
- Seminarians from Sri Lanka, Canada, Haiti, the US, Liberia, Mexico, Nagaland and Puerto Rico gathered at our summer conference.
- Made plans to partner with the Alliance of Baptists and Pullen Memorial Baptist Church to provide a class as part of the Hispanic Summer Program: “Breaking the Cycle: Love Your Enemy,” to be taught by board member Mayra Picos-Lee in June 2016.

## In Equipping our Partner Congregations (PCs), we:

- Provided our PCs with subscriptions to *Baptist Peacemaker* and *Model Ministries*, discounts on all materials we create, worship resources, vouchers to help members attend Summer Conference, calls to action, resource suggestions, free CT training and/or a BPFNA speaker and the opportunity to be networked with fellow peace-minded congregations.
- Helped to create “Crossing Borders as Young Leaders,” a gathering in Cuba held in conjunction with la Fraternidad de Iglesias de Bautistas de Cuba and the Alliance of Baptists.
- BPFNA staff brought greetings, spoke, visited or preached at 22 Partner Congregations.

Please see “Highlights” on page 30.

## BPFNA Financial Report January–December 2015

### INCOME

|               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Contributions | 256,785.94        |
| Programs      | 155,951.61        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>412,737.55</b> |

### EXPENSES

|                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Administration | 80,232.46         |
| Programs       | 331,699.06        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>411,931.52</b> |

# 2015 Contributors

**T**he board and staff of the BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz thank the following individuals, local congregations and other organizations who provided financial support in 2015.

The majority of our income comes from individuals and congregations. The remainder comes from other sources, including grants and the sale of resources. Our financial records are audited annually.

The BPFNA is a people-based organization with minimal support from institutions and denominations. We operate with the commitment of people who believe our vision for peace rooted in justice is important. We feel blessed to have the opportunity to do this vital work of establishing peace with justice—and of working alongside people like you.

If your name is not listed below and it should be, please notify us (704/521-6051; [scott@bpfna.org](mailto:scott@bpfna.org)). We will correct our records and note the omission in the next issue of *Baptist Peacemaker*.

## Individuals, Canada

**ALBERTA:** John Bruneau, Camrose, AB; Betty Lou & Larry Harris, Wetaskiwin, AB; Rose Merke, Edmonton, AB; Lois Wightman, Camrose, AB; **BRITISH COLUMBIA:** Jan Constantinescu, Vancouver, BC; Teresa Diewert, Surrey, BC; Robert & Judith Doll, Burnaby, BC; Blake Gilks, Vancouver, BC; **MANITOBA:** Frederick Rupert, Winnipeg, MB; **NOVA SCOTIA:** Ron & Carol Buckley, Port Williams, NS; Roger & Sadie Cann, New Minas, NS; Joao Matwawana, Lower Sackville, NS; David & Cynthia Ogilvie, Centreville, NS; **ONTARIO:** Anthony Armstrong, Nepean, ON; Gary Caldwell, Lynden, ON; Ted & Shirley Copeland, Paris, ON; Paul & Nancy Dekar, Dundas, ON; Fred Demaray, Ottawa, ON; Laurie Dullaart, Toronto, ON; John & Judith Furry, Woodstock, ON; Ron & Barbara Getz, Campbellcroft, ON; Karen Hilliker, London, ON; Marilyn Jenkins, Nepean, ON; Ken and Marina Lloyd, Burlington, ON; Lee McKenna, Mono Township, ON; Gary & Ruby Purdy, Hamilton, ON; Ken & Leila Ranney, Peterborough, ON; Esther Sleep, Ancaster, ON; Karen Turner, Heather Steeves, Toronto, ON; George & Prue Watts, Peterborough, ON; Bertha Wieler, St. Catharines, ON; **SASKATCHEWAN:** Vern Ratzlaff, Saskatoon, SK.

## Individual Donors, India

Savi Liegise, Dimapur, Nagaland.

## Individual Donors, Mexico

Eleazar Pérez Encino, Chiapas, MX.

## Individual Donors, Puerto Rico

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# 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

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## Church Bodies, Canada

Canadian Baptists of Ontario & Quebec, Etobicoke, ON.

## Church Bodies, US

**CONNECTICUT:** ABC of Connecticut, West Hartford, CT; **GEORGIA:** Alliance of Baptists, Atlanta, GA; **MASSACHUSETTS:** ABC of Massachusetts, Groton, MA; **NEW YORK:** ABC Rochester/Genesee Region, Rochester, NY; **PENNSYLVANIA:** Home Mission Societies ABC-USA, Valley Forge, PA.

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## Highlights, continued from page 25

### In our advocacy work, we:

- Have encouraged and equipped members and partner churches to speak out for such things as: clemency in death penalty cases in Georgia (US) and Indonesia, reasonable regulations on payday lending, net neutrality, the restoration

of voting rights, criminal justice reform, welcoming refugees, reasonable gun regulations in the US, open investigation of disappearances in Mexico, justice in Palestine/Israel and much more.

- Provided key leadership within the Christian Peace Circle, a gathering for leaders of a wonderfully diverse group of faith-based peace and justice organizations.
- Participated in the initial efforts to coordinate a Christian Peace Response to the war in Syria and the ongoing military violence of the US and its coalition partners.
- Sent a delegation to the annual SOA Watch events calling for the closure of the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, GA.
- Took part in the 10th anniversary celebration of Churches Supporting Churches, calling for continued and equitable recovery efforts to those still struggling from the effects of Hurricane Katrina in the US.
- Completed two new issue monographs: "What Your Church Can Do about the Moral Injury of War" and "What Your Church Can Do about Migrant Justice."
- Regularly shared worship and education resources on timely issues such as the killings of unarmed black civilians, responses to refugees and gun violence.
- Offered a workshop on Migrant Justice at the American Baptist Church's Space for Grace gathering.
- Continued to run the Baptist Fair Trade Network to empower small farmers and educate congregations on economic justice issues.

## We will be supporting the following groups in 2016 through the Gavel Memorial Peace Fund:

- Crossing Lines: Combatting Electoral Violence through Conflict Transformation Trainings for Peaceful Elections in 2016.
- Global Baptist Peace Conference:
- Scholarships for 2017 Conference Gathering.
- Jitokeze Wamama Wafrika: Annual Jitokeze Friendship and Learning Tour for 2016.
- Kingdom of Peace and Development (KOPAD): Widows Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Conference.
- PAP-NET: Training of Conflict Transformation Trainers for Children Living in the Streets.
- Red Crearte: Música y arte litúrgico en red.
- Academia de Formación Espiritual (Puerto Rico) .
- BorderLinks:Amig@s de Mariposas Visitation Program: Recruitment and Volunteer Trainings.
- Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico: Eco-theological Initiative of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico.
- Iglesia Bautista Jerusalén: Visitas para la formacion en la paz con justicia en una iglesia de Chiapas, Mexico.
- Iglesias por la Paz: Acompañamiento pastoral a víctimas de violencia en México a familiares de desaparecidos y/o asesinados.
- Together in Christ: Peace & Reconciliation Project for Sierra Leonean Immigrants. ■

# Pass the Peace.

If you are reading Baptist Peacemaker, chances are that you are a member of the BPFNA - Bautistas por la Paz. If you are not, we invite you to add your story to ours. Just clip this coupon and send us your check, and you will become a member. If you are a BPFNA member, please invite others to our conversation.

**Please print the following information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

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☐ My membership check is enclosed. \$40-Household; \$20-Student/Low Income; \$50-Church/Institution

☐ Also enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as an additional contribution.

*Send your check and this form to: BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz, 300 Hawthorne Lane, Suite 205, Charlotte, NC 28204 USA. Visit our website at [www.bpfna.org/join](http://www.bpfna.org/join) to join online.*

*Do you ever feel like  
your congregation is the  
only one seeking  
to work for peace?*

## The BPFNA Partner Congregation program can help in these ways:

- (1) *It encourages strategic alliances for mission between local churches and other peacemakers,*
- (2) *And it offers resources and networking for congregations that would otherwise be isolated in a violent and materialistic world.*

## The BPFNA welcomes its newest Partner Congregations:

*Common Street Spiritual Center, Natick, MA  
Harmony Creek Church, Kettering, OH  
Seventh & James Baptist Church, Waco, TX*

*For more information, contact LeDayne McLeese Polaskiat [ledayne@bpfna.org](mailto:ledayne@bpfna.org) or 704/521-6051.*

## IT WILL HELP US A LOT

if you would  
let us know if this is not  
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*Please send updated contact  
information to [scott@bpfna.org](mailto:scott@bpfna.org)  
or call 704-521-6051.*

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300 Hawthorne Lane, Suite 205, Charlotte, NC 28204  
phone 704/521-6051 • fax 704/521-6053 • [www.bpfna.org](http://www.bpfna.org)

## Save the Date for the Global Baptist Peace Conference January 29–February 3, 2018 Cali, Colombia

**S**tart making plans now for the sixth Global Baptist Peace Conference! This international gathering will bring together Baptists from across the globe who are passionate about nonviolence, social justice, and strengthening the witness of Baptist peacemaking. The week will include a range of activities, such as intensive trainings, workshops, and plenary sessions, that will provide attendees with knowledge, resources, and action items to better equip them to work for peace in their own contexts.

