
Global Peace Services USA

...an idea whose time has come

Vol. 11, No. 1

November 2009

Greetings from John Eriksson, President, GPS USA

Welcome to this Fall 2009 issue of the Newsletter of Global Peace Services USA. This edition includes an article by GPS Board Member Professor Harry Yeide on the role of nurses in conflict resolution in historical perspective, expanding his earlier article on this subject that appeared in the Fall 2008 issue. Professor Yeide, who is the editor of this issue, is one of several GPS Board Members continuing our focus on health professionals and how they address and resolve conflict among themselves and among those whom they serve. We also include some excerpts from the syllabus of a pioneering course, "Nurses as Healers and Peacemakers," co-taught by GPS Board Member and RN, Inshirah Farhoud, and Judeen Schulte, Dean of the School of Nursing, Alverno College, in Milwaukee. Another article by Katie Nicholas, newly active in the innovative GPS work underway in Youngstown, Ohio, describes the project initiated by Board Member Cecil Monroe in Youngstown, "Gardens for Peace." Mr. Monroe is joined by new GPS Board Member Professor Daniel Ayana of Youngstown State University in leading this peace-building effort. The project has the dual objective of taking conflict-prone youth off the streets and providing them training and orientation that will prepare them for future employment.

We introduce in this issue a new project developed by Board Member Dr. Robert Muscat, dealing with identity and conflict. Drawing from the work of Nobel Economics Laureate Amartya Sen, Dr. Muscat has developed a pilot proposal to work with primary and secondary schools to introduce students to the fact that they have multiple identities. The proposal is based on the observation that violent conflict often arises when those in power seek to exaggerate single identities among different ethnic or religious groups. By stressing multiple identities, the receptivity to manipulation of single identities by demagogic leaders would hopefully be diminished.

We introduce and welcome our new Board Member, Professor Daniel Ayana, at the end of this Newsletter.

Nurses and Peacemaking ... Continued

Once again, we move toward the activity of health care and its relation to peace-making. More generally, we are inclined to associate many sorts of social service with peace making, and frequently the service is an alternative to some violent search for resolution of a conflict, or maintenance of a violent status quo. This is especially true of medical care. If we look at a seeming exception, namely medical service in the armed forces, we find that the obligation of human health care persists; while most of our armed forces are served by professional medical personal, these persons usually enjoy some degree of neutral status, and have the responsibility to treat the enemy wounded, as well as those who wear the same uniform.

Within health care, nursing has normally been dominated by women, and many believe that women are the more peaceful of the two genders. Thus, nursing has often seemed an especially promising area for students of peace studies. This has been argued with evidence by some of our feminist thinkers, but they are far from the only ones who so view the question of gender and peace-making.

The Board of Global Peace Services USA sees the GPS newsletter as a forum for a wide range of views on the many questions and concerns entailed in peace-building, peacemaking and peace service. We welcome ideas and opinions from a variety of perspectives, even if we do not necessarily concur with all the thoughts expressed. The GPS Board encourages you, our readers, to share with us your responses to the ideas and experiences presented in these pages. Please write, phone or e-mail us and let us know if you'd like us to publish your reflections in forthcoming newsletters.

Our December 2008 Newsletter began with an essay on Florence Nightingale, a truly iconic figure in the history of nursing. While everyone, I think, still agrees on her centrality in the history of modern nursing -- whatever reservations we may have regarding her program -- our more recent debates over health care reform suggest that we are anything but united in our affirmation of how we ought to do it, or how we are best able to pay for it, or possibly anything else beyond our typical desire not to be medically ill and to be certain that if we are, we are cared for at the highest level.

Some of the shifts that lie behind our increasing contrasts in judgment can also be discerned in modern American nursing. This is a major reason for the GPS interest in the course offered to nurses in training at Alverno College, of which we will learn more below. There was a time when most health care was offered by physicians and nurses going to the patient's home to provide service; indeed, hospitals were once regarded as the last place one might go before death. Now, most physicians and most nurses function in offices and hospitals, and patients are expected to come to

them. Increasingly, health care professionals seem to desire the kind of hours that their compatriots enjoy; I am told that this is a powerful force in the choice of specialties among both medical and nursing students.

Hospitals were once local, and under the administration of recently retired local physicians. Now they are increasingly links in large chains, and under the administration of persons trained in business administration. Many advances in health care require the use of sensitive and expensive equipment, devices that medical training does not lead one to comprehend beyond their use. I recall once talking to an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nurse regarding the possibility that she might get some false readings from a high technology machine. I expected her to tell of the corps of trained technicians that stood ready to rush in, and was a bit surprised when she said that she usually hit the machine with her hand; she felt that her nursing experience warned her when readings seemed impossible. But I suspect that others are less experienced and self-confident than she was. Or maybe they are just more careful. And we have not even mentioned the specters of malpractice litigation, advertising, the programs of drug companies, etc.

It would be surprising if modern nursing did not reflect these changes and others. I have participated in many gatherings in which nurses had learned to refer to the humans for whom they care as “clients” rather than “patients.” While usually it is not clear whether this just sounds better or more up-to-date, it does do away with the metaphorical universe of being a substitute “mother” to the patients, and substitute for it a more judicial, conflict laden, frame of reference. While the term “nurse” has never been universal, other western languages stick to family language in describing the relation. There have always been authority issues for nurses, but now they must face bureaucrats rather than just their supervising physicians or heads of their nursing unit. While there has been long-standing concern with “lateral violence,” one

must now deal with violence that is remote in origin. These bureaucrats, in keeping with the “bottom line” mentality of the business world, have often transferred historical nursing responsibilities to lower paid professionals, and nurses have responded by gaining more medical technical expertise and by forming societies of specialists. Most nursing training programs are now conducted in academic institutions and few hospital administered programs remain. And bureaucrats that are local often can, and do, plead their helplessness in terms of required changes handed down from some higher level.

Some changes are definitely for the betterment of human health, but some are just changes. How do we tell the differences? And many of these changes involve nurses in conflict situations. This is certainly a reason why learning how to be a better nurse ought to involve some training in conflict resolution. I will not try to anticipate the findings of the Alverno experiment, but I hope that all readers will see that we need many changes in the training of nurses.

While our chapter on Alverno continues a long-standing GPS interest, this Newsletter will also feature two brand new programs for which we see great futures. In the report from Youngstown, we learn of the effort to engage young people in some community building gardening activities. Here we will see not only social action, but social action that involves urban kids with nature and growth. Again, many have thought that the real alternative to our violence prone lives lies in the direction of a more organic frame of reference. Similarly, we are developing an “identities project” that is rooted in some recent discoveries in how we think, and suggesting ways in which we might nurture young persons to think so that the “us-them” dichotomy is seen as a limiting mode of perception. As is the case with our experiment at Alverno, we invite your comments.

Harry Yeide, Jr.

Course Syllabus: Nurses as Healers and Peacemakers

The following are excerpts from the “Instructional Syllabus” and related material for the Alverno College School of Nursing course, N-395-01, with Inshirah Farhoud and Judeen Schulte listed as the primary faculty instructors. (Inshirah, a Registered Nurse in Milwaukee, WI, is a GPS Board Member, and Judeen is the Dean of the School of Nursing at Alverno College.) We hope this compilation will give an impression of this unique professional educational experience.

“This course focuses on nurses being and creating peace – for themselves, their patients, organizations and local and

global communities. Drawing on frameworks of peacemaking/conflict management, learning experiences, assignments, an assessment will allow for in-depth exploration of practical peacemaking. Course activities will explore ways to increase one’s personal peace and assist others to develop peace-making skills. . . .”

Course Outcomes are then listed:

“1. Recognize one’s own and others’ attitudes, values, and expectations and how they lead to violence and/or peace, illness and/or health.

2. Develop a repertoire of practices to promote peace in one's own life, manage tensions, and to sustain commitment to conflict transformation.
3. Draw on the study of nurses and peacemaking to explain implications of diversity and global interconnectedness in day-to-day life.
4. Use appropriate methods to analyze and interpret the study of healing and peacemaking, demonstrating awareness of its complexity.
5. Use research strategies, frameworks and information-gathering skills to gain a perspective on ways that global interconnections are reflected in the study of nurses promoting healing and peacemaking.
6. Specify implications of learning from this course to own personal and professional roles."

Virtually the same "outcomes" are listed in a handout that deals with a "Peace and Healing Fair" for which the class was to be divided into smaller groups each of which was to be responsible for creating a resource available to others who might attend. There was an emphasis on "horizontal/lateral violence" and the list of outcomes identifies two that did not appear above:

"7. Contribute to a collective understanding of the meaning, impact, and practices to intervene with horizontal/lateral violence with the Alverno College School of Nursing.

8. Project how lessons learned about horizontal/lateral violence can be applied in your personal life and work settings."

There follow additional directions, including one that both instructs the students and further defines horizontal/lateral violence (this passage is paraphrased from the original).

"Within your small group, prepare activities and visuals (professional looking posters, handouts, videos, slide shows, etc.) that can be used at a Peace and Healing Fair for students and faculty of the Alverno College School of Nursing. Focuses for the activities will be to explain lateral violence, one of the most common forms

of violence among nurses, and demonstrate a commitment to peace and healing practices. Credible references should be cited. . . Common forms of lateral violence are "non-verbal innuendo," "verbal affront," "undermining activities," "sabotage," "infighting," "scapegoat," "backstabbing," "failure to respect privacy," and "broken promises."

*Another special course component had to do with each student giving a peace leader speech. A list of peace leaders representing a wide array of peacemaking approaches was provided to the students. In their presentations, students were asked to discuss the peace leader's life, as well as the leader's main ideas. The nursing students were also invited to spend time reflecting on the socio-political context of each leader. The list of names follows:**

Jane Adams	Fridjof Nansen
Muhammad Ali	Linus Pauling
Joan Baez	Peace Pilgrim
Judi Bari	S. Helen Prejean
Dietrich Bonhoeffer	Jeanette Rankin
Fr. Roy Bourgeois	Bishop Oscar Romero
Helen Caldicott	Bertrand Russell
Cesar Chavez	Albert Schweitzer
Ernesto Cortes	Chief Seattle
The Dali Lama	Pete Seeger
Dorothy Day	Tom Slick
Adolfo Perez Esquivel	Samantha Smith
Mahatma Gandhi	Rev. Leon Sullivan
Thich Nhat Hahn	Emma Tenayuca
Gordon Kiyoshi Hirabachi	Mother Theresa
Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.	Henry David Thoreau
Ron Kovic	Bishop Desmond Tutu
Aung Sui Suu Kyi	Lech Walesa
Nelson Mandela	Elie Wiesel
Thomas Merton	Jody William
A.J. Muste	Leylaq Zana

*The original text has been slightly edited for inclusion in the newsletter.

Gardening for Peace

Youngstown, Ohio was once a city thriving with economic, social and cultural diversity. With the closing of the steel mills in 1970 many people lost their jobs and moved away from the city in search of new opportunities. The population dropped from 170,000 to roughly 73,000, dramatically lowering the tax base and weakening the housing market (Lanks). Today, over 22% of the homes in Youngstown are vacant and unkempt. With some neighborhood crime rates as high as 60%, the citywide total has risen to almost double

the national average. The city, along with Youngstown State University and area residents, came up with an ambitious plan known as the *Youngstown 2010 Project* to address the problems associated with high unemployment and vacancy rates. The goals were to accept that Youngstown has become a smaller city, improve the city's image and enhance residents' quality of life (Mock). The project is well underway and has removed many unused infrastructures, attracted new businesses, and rehabilitated deteriorated and

abandoned spaces. These new empty pieces of property are then left as green spaces to beautify neighborhoods.

In order to help improve the sense of community and help establish a new sense of pride in Youngstown, Global Peace Services USA has initiated a project to reclaim vacant lots as community garden spaces. One such lot, Jubilee Gardens, has been donated by Ohio State University Extension Service for this purpose. This garden will be renamed "The Peace Garden" and used to improve the quality of life and promote peace for the area residents. The University has also agreed to let GPS have access to three more garden plots in the future. Community gardens often act as a catalyst for community development and create opportunity for recreation, exercise, therapy, and education. The produce grown will help reduce family food budgets and promote a healthier more nutritious diet. It also provides an opportunity for them to grow and sell produce at a local farmers market.

GPS would like to reach out to the youth in the area, as well as their families, to teach nutrition, gardening and promote non-violence. In order to gain involvement in the project, GPS is going to connect with area schools through the winter/spring months by teaching students about seeds and various garden concepts. When the weather begins to warm, we will host an open garden day where these students, their families and the surrounding neighborhood will be invited to come see the garden and register for their own plot. Once assigned, members will be required to maintain their own individual plots until harvest season has ended. GPS would like to raise adequate funds to provide seeds and use of tools free of charge to these families.

The Peace Garden is located on the North Side of Youngstown. The property is protected by fencing on all sides and entry into the garden can only be obtained by a key holder. GPS will have open garden days several times a

week to allow gardeners access to their plots. There is a garage on site for storage of tools, tractors and equipment. Ohio State University Extension has agreed to maintain the grass and perform any tilling necessary. Composting will be performed and taught on site in order to preserve soil health and limit the amount of chemicals used. Rain collection barrels will be utilized in order to reduce the amount of city water used and to teach and promote conservation.

While still in the planning stages, much effort has been exerted to involve community organizations such as local churches, synagogues, mosques, schools, non-profits and city officials. The next step is to hold a planning meeting where these organizations and community leaders and members can come together to discuss ideas, plans for the project, and establish a volunteer network. The project is currently in need of funds to purchase tools, equipment, seeds, soil and to facilitate meetings and workshops.

Lanks, Belinda. "The incredible shrinking city facing steep population decline, Youngstown, Ohio, is repositioning itself." *MetropolisMag.Com*. October 14, 2009. <<http://www.metropolismag.com/story/20060417/the-incredible-shrinking-city>>.

Mock, Brentin. "Can they save Youngstown?" *Next American City*. October 14, 2009. <<http://americacity.org/magazine/article/can-they-save-youngstown/>>.

Katie Nicholas

Identity and Conflict

Conflict resolution organizations focus on dialogue and negotiation between an Us and Others in contention. These efforts take for granted the separate identities of the contending parties, and work within the existing identity (and interest) parameters. In his book *Identity and Violence*, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen deplored how differences in identity have fed inter-group conflict, and he challenged the common belief that individual and/or group identity is immutable. GPS is developing an approach to the problem of identity and conflict, drawing on this work by Sen.

Scholars of nationalism and identity range between (a) those who hold that identity is defined, and *set* (essentially, for life), by key inherited characteristics - place of birth, language, race, kin, and religion, and (b) those who think that identity (and affinity with others of the same identity) is *not immutable*, but can be redefined by individuals as they go through life, or manipulated by elites to mobilize group support. The former, those who see identity set in concrete, are often called primordialists; the latter, instrumentalists.

Sen rejects primordialism. He argues it is an error, psychologically and sociologically, to separate people into

sharply defined groups. He stresses that people have complex identities, including many facets that cross group boundaries. In addition to “primordial” characteristics, people are members of an economic class, professions, political persuasions, social groups, school alumni, local communities, arts and sports aficionados, and have other characteristics and loyalties that are open to choice and may override the primordials in determining how they view their identity and commonality with others. Unfortunately, primordial elements have historically been used by opportunistic power-seekers to mobilize groups against each other, including engendering existential fear and hatred to the point of violent conflict. This artificial engendering can blind individuals to their own complexity, constrain their ability to “choose” themselves, and lead them to act against their own best, “real,” interests. For a society as a whole, perceived divisions and hostilities can be exaggerated into existential struggles.

Anthropologist Benedict Anderson has captured the arbitrary nature of group identities with a phrase that has become a fundamental insight: he dubs nationalities, ethnics, and other groupings “imagined communities.” Groups coalesce around myths, beliefs, and traditions they have been educated and socialized to accept and imagine as defining their common identity and history. The identity characteristics that define the imagined communities can harden into fault lines along which antagonisms grow, communities mobilize, and conflicts emerge.

Sen and others have focused on the fact that pared-down notions of identity have been powerful instruments for solidifying separateness and antagonism. Sen observes, “If the disaffected Arab activist today can take pride only in the purity of Islam, rather than in the many-sided richness of Arab history, the unique prioritization of religion, shared by warriors on both sides, plays a major part in incarcerating people within the enclosure of a singular identity.” Of course, antagonists often clash over competing *real* interests. It is the existentialist transformation that might be avoided if antagonists could realize they actually have much in common, and that some of the things they believe to be irreducibly different and divisive can be set aside as historically shallow, or not really antithetical, or having weak factual basis, and sometimes being purely fictional elements in their “imagined community.”

Reducing Existential Difference

Sen believes that “many of the conflicts and barbarities in the world are sustained through the illusion of a unique and choiceless identity. The art of constructing hatred takes the form of invoking the magical power of an allegedly predominant identity that drowns other affiliations, and in a conveniently bellicose form can also overpower any human sympathy or natural kindness that we may normally have. In fact, a major source of potential conflict in the contemporary

world is the presumption that people can be uniquely categorized based on religion or culture.” To the extent hatreds have been constructed and identities are thought, mistakenly, to be immutable, such illusions may be dispelled, with the conflicts thereby ameliorated to some, perhaps substantial, degree.

Can these insights be translated into actual programs that can affect people’s perceptions of their own and their antagonists’ identities? What can be done to counter the artificialities of existential difference, help bridge the divides between “imagined” communities, and weaken the thrust of identity competition? Sen argues strongly for education as tool for countering the idea that we are all creatures of “choiceless singularity.”

For some groups (not insignificant, in some countries), their identity, even as defined by basic components, is naturally plural. They may be in mixed marriages, or the children of mixed marriages; the mix may cross races, ethnicities, and/or religions, perhaps several identity constituents. For these people (e.g. ex-Yugoslavs in marriages between Croats, Serbs, and Bosnian Muslims; Americans in interracial marriages), plural identity may be a source of angst (and literary creativity!), but also a source of resistance to taking sides and of insight into the artificiality and tragedy of identity hatred.

For most people seemingly locked into “choiceless singularity,” globalization offers new opportunities to break the hold of artificial and single-factor identity. In societies hooked into globalization and advancing technology and education, individuals are becoming multifaceted and more aware of complexity and the rest of the world. There is also a down-side; in some societies, people fear their cultures, and identities, are being diluted by the inflow of foreign tastes, cultural norms, and art forms.

Programs to bring together people from antagonistic groups have become standard fare in recent years for the many organizations working to promote conflict resolution and reconciliation. These programs use various educational and dialoguing methods to dispel distrust, help people credit the humanity of Others, discover commonalities, and increase mutual understanding and communication. Most of the participants are adults, although numbers of programs bring together youth, including teenagers.

Much less has been done to work with younger people. This is unfortunate, since the core of identity is commonly defined during people’s early years, along with their family’s and society’s prejudices and antagonisms toward Others. GPS has been developing some innovative approaches to extending inter-group (or inter-“imagined community”) dialogue and understanding efforts down to the younger ages, focusing on early education while self-

identification is still in a malleable stage. We are working on designing pilot projects for elementary and secondary schools, tailor-made for locations where disparate communities are at risk to conflict.

The curriculum will introduce elementary and secondary school students to various subjects that illustrate (with modern knowledge and pedagogical tools) the many commonalities they share in their histories, cultures, languages, genetic inheritances, etc. They also learn about, and participate in, each other's unique cultural attributes (like music, crafts, costumes, festivals). In a future issue of the Newsletter, we will provide greater details on the project, and on our ideas for implementation and replication.

Robert Muscat

Introduction of New Board Member: Professor Daniel Ayana

Our new GPS Board Member is Daniel Ayana. He is Associate Professor of History at Youngstown State University, in Ohio. Daniel came from Ethiopia for a graduate program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where he received his PhD in History in 1995, with a major in African History and a focus on modern Ethiopia. He taught for two years at Illinois State University in Bloomington before moving to Youngstown State. Daniel is active in local community affairs in Youngstown and is a session member at his church. He has been helping in the resettlement of immigrants with different agencies.

Global Peace Services USA

GPS USA, founded in 1997, is incorporated in the District of Columbia and is tax-exempt. Current board members are: Daniel Ayana, Martin Benton, John Eriksson, Inshirah Farhoud, Cecil Monroe, Robert Muscat, Mindy Reiser, Sovan Tun, and Harry Yeide. We welcome contributions and comments. To contact us:

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