

Keeping Alive the Passion for Peace and Justice

Disciples Peace Fellowship

NEWSNOTES JUNE/

Don't forget  
dpfweb.org

June/July 2009  
Edition

## CELESTE ZAPPALA DPF BREAKFAST SPEAKER

**Celeste Zappala,  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
USA**

The mother of three, Celeste lost her oldest son, Sgt. Sherwood Baker in an explosion in Baghdad as he searched for the weapons of mass destruction on April 26, 2004. Sherwood, a social worker, was the first PA National Guardsman killed in combat since World War II; he leaves a wife and young son.

Always committed to working for peace and justice, she is an active member of Military Families Speak Out and a founding member of Gold Star Families Speak Out, representing families who have lost a loved one in Iraq.

Celeste has been a teacher and now directs the Mayor's Office of Aging in Philadelphia. She has been involved in many causes including assisting political refugees from Central America, the Nuclear Freeze

movement, and alleviating poverty.

Since the death of her son she and her family have worked relentlessly to promote a peaceful end to the occupation of Iraq. She has spoken in many cities across the US and is a spokesperson for peace in national and international media. In March 2006, she was a featured speaker at an International Peace conference in Istanbul, and in 2008 was the guest of the Japanese Women's peace movement speaking in 4 cities.

Though Celeste is a religious person and member of the United Methodist Church, her message is universal. She believes that people are capable of solving conflict without violence and that individuals can and must take individual and collective responsibility for creating peace.

The DPF breakfast will take place August 1, 2009 at 7-8:30am in Cosmopolitan B, Hyatt Hotel Indianapolis.

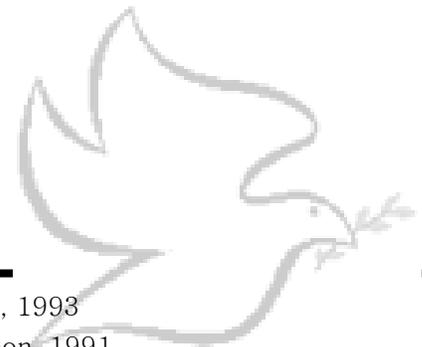


**To Do List:**

- Remember to renew your DPF 2009 membership!! Please don't delay
- Pray for Peace and the Reign of Justice
- Register and attend the General Assembly and DPF events:
  - DOM/DPF Pre-Assembly Event: Tuesday July 28 (8:00am) - Wednesday July 29 (thru 1:30pm)  
Westin Hotel, Capitol 1
  - DOM/DPF Dinner, Wednesday July 29, Westin: Capitol 2
  - DOM International Dinner, Wednesday, July 29 (5-7pm) Westin Ballrooms 4 & 5
  - DPF Breakfast, Saturday, August 1 (7-8:30am)  
Hyatt Cosmopolitan B
  - DPF-Sponsored Workshops (See Assembly Schedule at Disciples.org)
    - "Before and After the Reunion: Pastoral Care to Troops & Their Families"
    - "Peace Internships—Yeah, It's Worth It"
- Tell a friend about the Disciples Peace Fellowship
- Re-read the resolution from General Assembly and study the implications for you, your church, your region and the General Church. How are we living into a vision of peace and justice
- Pray for ALL in harm's way in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Will Wittkamper Award is given by the Disciples Peace Fellowship in recognition of a lifetime commitment to peace and justice. The award, given every two years since 1981, is named for Will Wittkamper, who was a pastor in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) active in the struggle for racial equality in the mid-twentieth century in the United States. Rev. Wittkamper was an active supporter of Clarence Jordan at the interracial community Koinonia Farms in Americus, Georgia. The winners are recognized at the DPF Breakfast at General Assembly, and their names are included on an award plaque on display in the Disciples Center.

## **In Indianapolis, IN 2009: Ian McRae**



### Previous Awardees:

Russell and Barbara Fuller, 2007  
 Lucas Torres, 2005  
 Robert and Adele Lemon, 2003  
 Rhodes and Lois Thompson, 2001  
 Dorothy Hunter, 1999  
 Garnett Day, 1997  
 TJ Liggett, 1995

VG and AC Cuppy, 1993  
 Parker Frank Wilson, 1991  
 Nellie Kratz, 1989  
 Barton Hunter, 1987  
 Joseph B. Hunter, 1985  
 Rosa Page Welch, 1983  
 Harold Fey, 1981

**UNITY AND THE RESTORATION OF NONVIOLENCE**

Craig M. Watts

Minister, Royal Palm Christian Church  
Coral Springs, Florida

Unity and the restoration of biblical Christianity were always closely linked in the minds of Disciples founders. But sometimes the relationship between these two great themes has been strained. For instance insisting upon organization uniformity or agreement upon details of doctrine in the name of restoration did nothing to produce unity. To the contrary, an emphasis upon such matters fostered fragmentation.

But Disciples leaders were concerned with more than church structure and doctrine in their quest for unity. They also saw a need to have a restoration of New Testament moral practice in order to overcome the scandal of division. And prominent among the practices that were in need of restoring was that of nonviolence. Many leaders among Disciples recognized that few practices, if any, more brutally set Christian against Christian than war. Arguably nothing is more contrary to a faithful witness to the love of God shown in Christ.

In his inaugural essay of his first journal, The Christian Baptist, Alexander Campbell denounced “the chaplain” who would “exhort his general and his Christian warriors to go forth with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other.” Campbell found such behavior appallingly destructive to church unity. Later he wrote in the Millennia Harbinger, “Of all the monstrosities on which our sun has ever shown, that of professedly Christian nations, glutting their wrath and vengeance on one another, with all the instruments of murder and slaughter, caps the climax of human folly and gratuitous wickedness.”

Campbell held that the restoration of Christian nonviolence was imperative for church unity. In his great “Address on War” he spoke against war, not simply as a problem of organized violence of nation against nation but as a problem of church against church. Campbell claimed that whenever the church lifted its voice to sanction and support war or offer its members to the cause, the unifying message of the gospel is discredited. He held that churches and Christians in different nations own greater loyalty to one another than they do the nation in which they live. To do otherwise ends up “desecrating the religion of the Prince of Peace by causing [the church] to minister as a handmaid of war.”

Campbell was not alone in recognizing the restoration of nonviolence as necessary for the unity of the church. One of the greatest leaders of the second generation of Disciples, J.W. McGarvey, along with thirteen other church leaders, prior to the Civil War wrote a statement urging members to refuse to fight. Pointing to the pacifism of the early Christians, they urged the church to “restore that love and peace which he [Christ] inculcated.” They declared, “We cannot justify by the New Testament our participation in this fratricidal strife... It is our duty to remain a united body.” They went on to encourage an utter rejection of violence, urging Christians everywhere “to study exclusively the things that make for peace.”

The connection between Christian unity and nonviolence was lifted high by the early twentieth century Disciples leader Peter Ainslie, founder of what is now the Council on Christian Unity. Among Disciples no one had a greater passion for unity than Ainslie. Yet his passion for unity was matched by his commitment to nonviolence. He saw the intimate link between the two concerns. He declared that “every church ought itself to be a peace society, seeking to express the spirit of Christ in terms of international brotherhood.” He saw World War I as a judgment upon the impotence of a divided church.

As a former missionary, Harold Fey was especially aware of the global nature of the church. He contended that those who recognize the oneness of the church cannot support the violent division that is war. In the terminology of his day, Fey wrote, “Christians must bear their witness to the reality of brotherhood and the meaning of the world community by becoming the first to

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## Reflections on Jail with Christian Peace Witness for Iraq

By Vicki Andrews

On April 29, 2009, I was privileged to be able to join with members of the Christian Peace Witness to lift our voices against the war in Iraq and to ask our government to repent of our actions and make reparations to the people of Iraq. After an inspiring service in the National City Church, we had a candlelight procession to Lafayette Park, just across the street from the White House. After a period of inspirational talks, prayer and a ceremony of blessing and sharing bread, we proceeded across Pennsylvania Avenue to the gates of the White House where leaders met with White House guards and asked to present a basket of bread to a representative of the President. The offer was refused and twenty of us chose to remain and stand or kneel in front of the White House. We expected that we would be arrested, but none of us knew that we would spend the next twenty hours incarcerated. There had been an agreement that we would be allowed to post and forfeit and be free to leave after processing or to plead guilty, be released after processing and come back to trial. The rules changed at some point in the evening and we were informed by the officers that if we did not post and forfeit we would be locked up in the Central Cell Block in downtown D.C. The officers we dealt with seemed unhappy with this change and very clearly did not want to send us to Central Cell Block. Several of them told us what a horrible place it was, how terrible the other prisoners would be and pleaded with us to post and forfeit for our own health and safety.

Nine of us chose not to post and forfeit and were transported to Central Cell Block where we were processed (fingerprinted, photographed, etc.) and held in small cells until we could be taken to the overnight cells at approximately 3:30 a.m. We were given a packet with a bologna and cheese sandwich and some lemonade. My cell had a resident already; she had the bottom bunk so I had to climb up on the toilet and the sink to make it to the top bunk. The bunks were steel, with no padding. At least there was no place for bed bugs, lice, or other small creatures to hide, but it was a very uncomfortable place to try to rest, and sleep was out of the question. Lights were on all night and guards were coming and going, sometimes bringing new people in, sometimes just checking on prisoners. One man down the hall spent the night yelling and screaming obscenities and when we were awakened at 6 a.m. two women in our unit joined in. It seemed as though each one was trying to outdo the other; it also seemed as though they couldn't stop even if they wanted to. We were offered another bologna and cheese sandwich and some lemonade.

At 7 a.m. we were taken to another building (handcuffed and shackled) to be placed in a holding cell to wait for court. The cells consisted of hard benches to sit on and a toilet and sink combination. The two women who had been yelling obscenities continued; they were given a drug test and then moved to another area. I was told they would be placed in solitary confinement until they were quiet. How frightening that must have been for them.

The overwhelming feeling I had during my short jail experience was a very deep sorrow. The women who were locked up with us were so obviously women who had never had a chance in life. Many of them had been in and out of the jail system early in life and often and would probably be back, but I saw them reaching out to help and comfort others. I was even more saddened by the attitude of the jailers. I realize that it must be a difficult job and that most of the jailers have had to develop a thick shell to continue working in the system, but almost all of them had a very disdainful attitude towards the prisoners.

To pass the time I tried to pray, to meditate, and to reflect on why we were there, but I found that it was difficult to focus because of the constant noise and commotion. I did manage to say the rosary a few times, using my fingers as beads. The words of some of the peace songs we had sung the night before went through my head over and over. I thought about the people who are imprisoned unjustly for long periods of time and have been in custody for years. I reflected that I was standing up to the evil of war and representing many people I know who are opposed to war, but hadn't been able to join us in this experience. I was inspired by the stories of some of the heroes in our group, people like Kathy Kelly, Father Louis Vitale, Ardyth Platte and Carol Gilbert of Jonah House. They have been arrested and imprisoned over and over in their lives and keep on going. It helped me through the process just to have

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challenge war on a larger scale in the name of Christ.” When during times of war Christians suspend their adherence to the way of loving peace, “[t]hese suspensions do an amount of harm to the worldwide Christian cause which cannot be repaired in years.”

In a world fragmented by international hostility, racial strife and ethnic animosity, a people committed to unity such as the Disciples can play a vital role. But unless the commitment to Christian unity is coupled with a determination to restore the practice of nonviolence and reject war, we will fall short of what the world needs and what God expects from us.

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them in our group. I thought that if Jesus were here in person today, he would have been in our group. I know that it wouldn't have been an occasional thing for him and that he would keep going back to the White House and to Congress day after day, probably getting arrested on a regular basis to protest the destruction that we have brought to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan and to urge repentance and reparation. I believe that we were truly following his path and doing his work in the world. I also reflected on the presence of God in all people, even the angriest of the prisoners and guards and in all places, even in Central Cell Block in Washington, D.C.

When we were led from the cell block to go to court at 3 p.m., the women who were left behind waiting for their time in court stood and applauded us. On the plane trip back home I was sitting next to a woman who was a committed Republican. We visited a bit and I did share what I had done in D.C. After that she was quiet for most of the trip and I thought she may be offended, but as we got up to leave she said, with tears in her eyes, "Thank you for what you're doing. Please keep it up. This horrible war has got to end. I have three nephews in the service and one is heading for Afghanistan."

My first few days back home, I've had tears in my eyes quite often and a lump in my throat as I think back to the event, the inspirational talks at the church, the service in Lafayette Park, the sharing of bread, the wonderful people who shared the experience with me, the troops heading to war, and the women who will continue to be in and out of the jail system because of the lack of other opportunities in their lives.

## THE LINK BETWEEN VIDEO GAMES AND WAR by Sharon Warner

Among adults today is a generation who grew up with video games. A friend of mine speaks of growing up with a callous on his thumb from playing Nintendo; his hands have cramped from hours of gaming. Over the years games have gotten more complex, intricate, realistic, and engrossing. In 2002 a Wall Street Journal Survey found that 146 million people in the U.S. play video games; 45% of these players are children and youth. Slowly we are recognizing that video games can be as powerfully addictive as other addictions. Last year the American Medical Association received a proposal from one of their sub groups that AMA officially recognize the addiction as a psychiatric disorder so that sufferers could get insurance coverage for treatment. The AMA report cited that up to 90% of children and youth play video games and as many as 15% of them (more than 5 million kids) may be addicted.

Economically, our culture is feeding on the business. Annual sales in 1995 were \$3 billion. In 2002 the total sales had increased to \$10 billion. There are many types of video games but one of the most popular is the "first-person shooter" game. These games place players in situations in which they confront other players, monsters or characters and shoot to kill. "The killing [in these games] has become increasingly graphic. In the 80's or early 90's, shooting an opponent resulted in the collapse of that figure on the screen.

Today's graphics provide gore, flying body parts, realistic writhing and screams of pain." (Herzfeld, 22) In the gaming world this is all fun, entertainment. As an ad for one game said enticingly: "If you've ever wanted to run through a **crowded mall** while mowing down innocent shoppers with an **M-16**, or take a **grenade launcher** to storefronts and **parked cars**, (*State of Emergency*) is your game. (It) offers **violent**, vicarious thrill that are socially unacceptable, **brazenly immoral** and a helluva lot of fun." (*Electronic Gaming Monthly*) A sample of advertising for violent video games illumines this link between killing and fun:

"Meet people from all over the world, then kill them." (*Subspace*, rated K-A, Kids to Adults)

"More fun than shooting your neighbor's cat." (*Point Blank*, rated T for Teen)

"Let the slaughter begin." (*Destrega*, rated T for Teen)

"As easy as killing babies with axes." (*Carmageddon*, rated M for Mature)

*Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* swirls with violence: gangsters kill cops, steal cars, solicit prostitutes, and beat them. It was awarded the 2004 Game of the Year.

The link between media and violence, that is, to what degree watching violent movies or TV shows leads to violent behavior, has been swirling in controversy for years. But while the linkage is still debatable for violence in TV and film, the linkage between violent video games and violent actions is becoming more established. A review of 20 years of studies done by psychologists at St. Leo University found that the games can trigger hostile behavior in kids. (See also 2004 February issue of *Journal of Adolescence* for four recent studies on this linkage.)

The nature of video games places them in a special category of media and gives them more impact in the shaping of potential aggressive behavior. Other video forms (film, TV, etc.) engage us through imagination. Imagination is a powerful formation medium as through it we engage images of how the world could be. What we can imagine has an impact on what we may accomplish or do. However, video games do more than offer us images of the way the world could be; they offer us ways to actually act on those im-

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ages. Our deepest learning comes from our experience. When we can't or aren't experiencing something directly, the second best way to learn it is through simulation. Simulations are a type of experience; they teach us "what it is like" to be here or do that.

Video games are more powerful as formative mediums than film or TV because they are simulated experience. There is a "profound difference between imagined and simulated experience." (Kathleen Parker) In the case of "first-person shooter" video games, players don't just see, or imagine what it is like to kill, they "experience" what it is like to kill. More specifically, players don't just observe the experience of killing; players are "in" the experience. They experience how their decisions and actions affect the outcome. And often, in these simulated games, when the outcome of their decisions is the killing of the "enemy," (in many games, the cop, the prostitute, the minority person) players are rewarded.

The design of video games make them a powerful teaching medium. In Kathleen Parker's haunting comment, "we may someday measure with regret the psychic distance between video-simulated rape and murder and the real thing."

The military knows this well. They use video games for training, as well as recruiting. In her 2004 article in *Christian Century*, Noreen Herzfeld explains:

American's Army, a first-person shooter game, is distributed on CD by army recruiters and is downloadable from the army's Web site. The Marine Corps has used the game Dune. David Grossman, retired professor of psychology at West Point, says that these games provide a script for rehearsing the act of killing: "It is their job to condition and enable people to kill. . . [These games] teach a person how to look another person in the eye and snuff their life out."

*Reprinted by request*

**Don't Forget to register for General Assembly and all of the Events.  
Disciples.Org**

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Annual Dues: \$35.00 Individual\_\_ \$50.00 Household/Congregation \_\_ \$12.00 Students/Limited Income\_\_

I am instead/also including a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the work of Disciples Peace Fellowship

**Send dues and contributions to:**

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*DPF depends entirely on membership contributions and donations to support its work.*