



Many to Many

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“Many to Many” is a quarterly publication under the aegis of Peace Through Unity as a communicating link between “we, the peoples” of all nations, races, creeds and ideologies offering in the spirit of the preamble of the United Nations Charter an instrument for the furthering of better relationships based on deepening mutual understanding and the aspiration to promote unity and cooperation beyond all differences.

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Who am 'I' – Who are 'We'?

The rapid collapse of relationships at every level of the world community is evoking many different reactions from us all. As news media is saturating space with a continuing stream of updates and soundbites from deeply traumatic events suffered within every corner of the planet, it stands to reason that anxious and heated discussions are taking place within and throughout the human family.

Between outbursts of indignation, name-calling and finger-pointing, the attempts to outline possible solutions will often be shot down or slowly dissolve into further arguments and nit-picking around details on plans of action.

This incessant flow of words, whether loud and opinionated or soothing and reassuring, seems to have devalued their content through sheer misuse - or overuse. Added to this, we may also find ourselves becoming less sensitive to ceaseless streams of images of people running away from the burning ruins of their homes; the small boats packed to overflowing with people fleeing from the mayhem of war; the intimate close-ups of a child dying of hunger in the arms of an equally mal-nourished parent; all of these human tragedies topped up with 'fly-over' images revealing the vanishing of forests, the butchering of wildlife, the polluted oceans and rapidly melting polar ice – all displaying today's state of affairs of our planetary home.

It is hard, near impossible, to respond to - or take in - the sheer magnitude of this systemic condition

affecting, it seems, each and every part of our planetary environment. People in power are likely to engage in personal and/or political mudslinging and weapon-rattling, while others can tend to sink into a state of passive, self-indulging gloom and doom. But throughout the entire human family there is also a rapidly growing number of people of all ages, who are sensing the heartbeat of a new lease of life stirring within their own being; people who are eagerly nurturing this 'source of newness', this groundswell from within themselves and recognised in the eyes of others.

A strong network of interconnectedness is emerging between 'we, the peoples of all nations'; together we are, albeit cautiously and slowly, waking up to the call of our Mother who is, and has been, preparing the soil for new beginnings. With boundless patience and persistence, She teaches us to let go of all our many unsustainable habits and attachments which are nailing us to the past.

Through the ages, humanity has searched for and, step by step, acquired answers to its many questions. Propelled by curiosity and the constant urge to overcome any recognised boundaries has led to continuous explorations of outer spaces as well as inner spheres of relationships. With youthful zest a wealth of knowledge has been accumulated by the human species, living on this minute and precious planet we call home, journeying around the Sun in accordance with the higher order of things. The time has come for us to mature into adulthood,

wake up to the inner sense of purpose and shoulder the responsibility for our actions.

With each day the rising rays of the Sun will bring us further into the Aquarian millennia in which humanity will learn to temper its own cravings with the needs of other lives which are also evolving within other planetary kingdoms. With deepening sensitivity, the human being will learn to understand and *express* - and will learn also to *receive* - the kind of Love that asks nothing in return. Thus, the human adolescence shall earn the right to become a trusted - trustworthy - co-worker within the greater Whole.

Let us - for the Love of God - grow up! Let us resolve to become who we are - *truly* are - and were always meant to be.

The rite of passage goes through
Heart.

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.” --

Constitution of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

UN's Annual Culture of Peace Forum Remains Derailed– & Civil Society Bypassed



Credit: United Nations

NEW YORK, Aug 22 2023 (IPS) - 14 June has become a black day for the UN High Forum on The Culture of Peace (HLF-CoP) convened by the successive Presidents of the UN General Assembly since 2012.

This exalted, high profile, much-celebrated, much-awaited popular, productive, and purposeful gathering of the General Assembly was derailed in a very ill conceived and unthoughtful manner by the Office of the President of the UN General Assembly (OPGA) and the current Team Bangladesh at the UN.

And that was done without even informing the civil society which has been a major partner in organizing the day-long event for a decade.

Also, important to recall that during the last ten years, the Culture of Peace agenda of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) was taken up as an integral part of the HLF-CoP and the annual resolution on the follow up of the Declaration and Programme Action on a Culture of Peace was adopted.

That was purposeful and had substantive implications related to collaboration between Member States

and civil society advocating the culture of peace.



Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury

Though adoption of a resolution is an

intergovernmental affair, in view of the fact the UN's foundational documents on culture of peace give civil society a special role asserting that "Civil society needs to be fully engaged in fuller development of a culture of peace" (Article 5 of the Declaration).

The first and only occasion the UN has done that.

The annual UN resolutions on the subject also repeated that special role since 1997. Why then this bypassing of the civil society by the organizers of the HLF-CoP? Over the last ten years since 2012, GMCoP has worked closely with OPGA mostly with positive outcomes.

But the 77th OPGA and Team Bangladesh at the UN were found to be not interested in collaborating with the civil society.

The event was truncated into a half-day affair calling it a Plenary Meeting. The whole spirit of connecting the Members States through a day-long engagement held in two parts was totally abandoned. The other half is known popularly as the civil society component of the Forum. In the decade-long history of the HLF-CoP, this has never happened.

Why the Culture of Peace is such an anathema?

The opening speech by current President of the General Assembly (PGA) on 14 June had no reference to the main issue – Culture of Peace. Even the foundational document was not mentioned in full in his presentation.

Wonder what was the motivation? PGA speaking on the agenda item 14 on Culture of Peace do not find it necessary to mention culture of peace even once, yes, not a single time. His speechwriter must have prepared it to recycle it for other similar peace-related occasions.

In the section containing “Conclusion and recommendations” of the “Report of the UN Secretary-General on a Culture of Peace (A/77/614)” of 29 November 2022, paragraph 42 says:

“As outlined in “Our Common Agenda” (OCA), a culture of peace must be based on a better understanding of the underlying drivers that sustain conflict, an idea that will be developed further through the Secretary-General’s “New Agenda for Peace” (NAP).

Neither of those two Agendas – OCA and NAP – mention “culture of peace” at all, yes, no reference at all. This is a gross misinformation recorded in the Report of the UN Secretary-General. One would again wonder where we have reached in terms of accuracy and thoroughness.

Nobody, not even the so-called culture of peace defender Team Bangladesh, noticed because the delegates do not read the SG’s report as thoroughly as they are expected to.

The incumbent Secretary-General has the unique distinction of not attending a single HLF-CoP,

including the 20th anniversary forum, during his seven years at the UN in the post. His predecessor attended in person a number of times to listen to the wise words of the Nobel laureates and other eminent persons.

HLF-CoP is the only Forum of the UN which was graced by the participation of as many as six Nobel Peace Laureates – all women to honor the global role and work of women for the culture of peace. In the UN history, nothing like this happened at any annual event or on any occasion.

Pope Francis’ recent book (English version) on war and peace is titled **“Against War – Building a Culture of Peace”** to the great delight amongst the culture of peace civil society organizations.

The Mayors for Peace, a multilateral organization based in Hiroshima with a membership of 8300 Mayors in 166 countries and regions have integrated “Promoting the Culture of Peace” as part of its Mission Statement in 2021.

Efforts from civil society thwarted unceremoniously

As the Founder of the Global Movement of The Culture of Peace (GMCoP), a coalition of the 18 civil society organizations advocating for the culture of peace at the UN, I had taken the initiative of meeting with the PGA77 and briefing him about the background of the HLF and the annual resolutions of the Assembly mandating the PGA to convene the Forum.

The gorgeous past programme booklets and approved UN visual identity samples were also left with

him. He was kind and gracious. But unfortunately, his staff dealing with culture of peace were not. Thereafter, the civil society representatives reached out to staff responsible for the HLF but were advised to come through the relevant Member States.

I am flabbergasted finding such disdain for civil society. Civil society had collaborated and supported the OPGA since 2012. This OPGA was the most unhelpful of all to the civil society representatives.

How was the HLF-CoP initiated?

The HLF was initiated in 2012 by the 66th PGA Ambassador Nassir Al-Nasser mainly to address the weakest area of the implementation of the UN's own Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace adopted more than two decades ago in 1999, namely the commitments by the Member States who were responsible for the adoption of the landmark resolution by consensus.

The other objective of Ambassador Al-Nasser was to build a true collaborative channel between Member States and the civil society organizations which are the strongest and most-enthusiastic about advancing the culture of peace. That was a visionary perspective put to action in initiating the HLF-CoP.

The 2019 HLF-CoP was a grand occasion convened by PGA72 María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UN's foundational document on culture of peace on 13 September 1999. For that, GMCoP commenced a 20th anniversary profile build-up advocacy with its other civil society partners.

Team Bangladesh fails miserably as the Culture of Peace champion

It is inconceivable when one finds the current Team Bangladesh's disinterest in the culture of peace recalling that its predecessor Team Bangladesh took the first pioneering step on 31 July 1997 to write to the then newly elected Secretary-General Kofi Annan requesting inclusion of a new item of UNGA agenda on culture of peace.

My own voluntary guidance and attention, along with those from the civil society were extended to Teams Bangladesh and OPGAs over the years through many diverse ways that included writing the annual draft resolutions presented by Bangladesh on the culture of peace; inputs for remarks of PGAs on behalf of Bangladesh delegation; arrange funding for the travel and hospitality of keynote speakers occasionally from far off cities by arranging for resources.

All these civil society supports was shunned by the current Team Bangladesh.

Since 1996, the culture of peace became the flagship initiative of Bangladesh. Its leadership role on the culture of peace was recognized by PGA67 inviting Bangladesh Foreign Minister to chair the HLF-CoP in his place. Two Foreign Ministers and Ministerial level representatives of Bangladesh spoke at the Forum's Panel Discussion on different occasions.

One wonders how this cold shoulder could be given to the culture of peace without instructions from the capital. Leadership of the Government

of Bangladesh back home continue its whole-hearted support and encouragement to the long-standing high-profile role of Bangladesh on the culture of peace.

At the truncated HLF-CoP on 14 June 2023, Team Bangladesh obtained the lowest number of co-sponsors which had no countries of Europe or US. Lowest number also for the speakers and again no country from Europe spoke.

OPGA needs transparency and streamlining

One wonders why OPGA is so dismissive of the initiatives and of the valuable suggestions offered by the civil society.

In fact, OPGA has become another layer of UN bureaucracy. That is of a hybrid kind invoking that it works for the Member States through PGA leadership while reaching out to the Secretariat for all types of support and assistance.

Before this current structure of OPGA with 20+ support staff commenced some years ago, UN's Department of General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) was managing everything smoothly and efficiently. Now it spends most of the time convincing the OPGA staff who wants to assert the primacy of the PGA in the affairs of GA.

When Bangladesh Foreign Minister was PGA in 1986, I was his Special Assistant with a team of three Bangladesh colleagues. The exalted title of Chief of Cabinet of PGA was not in existence at that time. Things worked well and PGA's

responsibilities were carried out successfully.

OPGA needs to be more transparent. In 1998, I recall as Chair of the UN's Budgetary Committee, an amount of US dollars \$250,000 was approved for OPGA. What is its total budget now (not just UN's regular one but through other contributions)?

How much of that is devoted to travels for PGA and his staff? On occasions, the GA issues take a secondary position to PGA travels. Which countries second their staff to the OPGA? After all these years of the experience of ever-expanding OPGA structure, there should be an independent evaluation of its value-added benefits, if any.

Conclusion

I believe that the UN should own the culture of peace and internalize its implementation throughout the UN system. Also, Secretary-General should prioritize the culture of peace as a part of his leadership agenda. He should make good use of this workable tool that UN possess in the culture of peace programme to advance the objective of sustainable peace.

We need to remember that the culture of peace remains permanently a decision of the UNGA. No one – a PGA or an Ambassador – can obliterate it from the attention and engagement of the global community.

Any cursorily organized, hurriedly-put-together, mandate-obligated arrangements for the HLF-CoP now would not get the trust and confidence of the culture of peace

community, more so that of the GMCoP.

Keeping in mind the experience the role played by OPGA and Team Bangladesh during the 77th UNGA session, we hope there will be a better experience at the 78th session which commences in two weeks.

The Culture of Peace is not a quick fix. It is a movement, not a revolution!

*Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury,
Chair of the nine-month-long negotiations
resulting in the consensus as mandated by UN
General Assembly and presenter of the agreed text
of this document (A/RES/53/243) for adoption by
the Assembly; Permanent Representative of
Bangladesh to the UN (1996-2001); UN Under-
Secretary-General (2002-2007).
IPS UN Bureau*



Credit: United Nations

Gita Brooke, co-founder of PTU, often said, "Let's see what wants to unfold." This year it has! Peace events, that is. The month of September is alive with events surrounding the Culture of Peace, including the 24th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration & Programme of Action on Culture of Peace [A/RES/53/243], 13 September 1999 and the 42nd International Day of Peace (IDP) a day of non-violence and cease-fire, 21 September. To share the highlights of Peace Month 2023, Many to Many has invited Dot Maver, longtime peace educator, advocate, and collaborator who participated in many of these events. Here's what she said:
~Iris Spellings

Peace Month 2023

When we think of Libra we think of balance, equilibrium, right human relations, peace consciousness. And the more common themes of sex, death and taxes. Libra is the overseer of the transition from Pisces to Aquarius. Libra, the scales of justice. Libra, a powerful time to invoke the Spirit of Peace, also known as the Spirit of Equilibrium. The **Culture of Peace** is showing itself everywhere now. Peace is living in right relationship with self, others and all life. **Codes.Earth** calls us to reorient from a worldview of separateness to the fact of our oneness with all of life and the necessity of meeting the core needs of humans, animals and all life to realize a culture of peace.

Take just a moment to invoke the **Spirit of Peace** as you read this first stanza of **The Great Invocation**, first released in 1936 to assist with the ending of the World War. Its outstanding note was – and is – deep, extra-planetary peace. It is a call to the **Forces of Light and Love** through the agency of the Spirit of Peace.

Let the Forces of Light bring illumination to humankind.

Let the Spirit of Peace be spread abroad.

May men and women of goodwill

everywhere meet in a spirit of cooperation.

May forgiveness on the part of all be the keynote at this time.

Let Power attend the efforts of the Great Ones.

So let it be and help us to do our part.

September is welcomed as **Peace Month** by many around the world as we come together in **Peace through Unity** following a 99 day preparation period that is initiated by **World Unity Week** [worldunityweek.org] acknowledging the 100 day countdown to the 21 September **International Day of Peace**

<https://internationaldayofpeace.org> and

includes a **UN High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace, 11 Days of Global Unity** from 9/11 to 9/21

<https://11daysofglobalunity.org/> and

more. At <https://juliekrull.com/> you will meet one of the evolutionary leaders in this community, Julie Krull, founder of **Good of the Whole**

<https://www.goodofthewhole.org/>, **The Connection**

Field ConnectionField.Net (and here is a link to their Open

House: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rIjgr8-pvkc>), the **Holomovement**

<https://www.holomovement.net/> and

moderator of **One Planet Peace Forum**

<https://oneplanetpeaceforum.org/>. Julie is a

demonstration of the Culture of Peace,

ever connecting, exploring, and

speaking to a world that works for

everyone within a cosmic

consciousness and unitive worldview.

Wrapped around September 21st is **Peace Week** <https://peaceweek.org> bringing hundreds of groups and communities around the world together in the **Spirit of Peace**, as we focus on solutions around the world, coming together in the spirit of loving and wise collaboration. In 2023, a concept of *Teeming*, developed by Dr. Tamsin Woolley-Barker is offered to the community.

In an article on **Mighty Network One World** <https://oneworld.earth> Jon Ramer, founder of **SINE Network** and **Compassion Games**, describes the opportunity:

“Please join us to experience Dr. Tamsin Woolley-Barker’s TEEMING UP approach to synergistically grow our individual and collective missions through the power of mass and radical collaboration, and a network of shared purpose.

“Mass-collaboration” is the coming together of individuals and organizations from diverse backgrounds, disciplines, and perspectives, united by shared purpose. It isn’t easy. Open communication, mutual respect, and a conviction that everyone has something to contribute are key.

“Radical collaboration” pushes our boundaries, challenging us to confront biases, assumptions, and the way we perceive the world around us. It requires a deep commitment to empathy, active listening, and the courage to step out of our comfort zones.

Here we put both mass-collaboration and radical collaboration to work, nourishing our collective intelligence and leveraging swarm-creativity in support of each others’ missions. Inclusivity, trust, and shared ownership unleashes collective intelligence that helps us achieve the extraordinary.”

UNITY.EARTH is at the heart of this expanding global community, and with **Unify.org** and **PurposeEarth.org** form a powerful triangle of world servers inspiring cooperation on behalf of the common good.

For more information, and amazing opportunities to get involved virtually anywhere around the world visit:

- **Mighty Networks**
<https://oneworld.earth>
- **WhatsApp Thread**
<https://chat.whatsapp.com/Fq0zxKqYOGz2mQ96lmT78F>
- **UNITY EARTH Community Facebook Group** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/unityearth/>
- **UNITY EARTH TV**
<https://unity.earth/tv/>

Dot Maver, Global Silent Minute
www.globalsilentminute.org

2023 United Nations High-Level Forum on The Culture of Peace

FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION

Every year CPNN carries articles about the United Nations High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace that has been convened annually by the President of the UN General Assembly [since 2012](#). This year it took place at UN headquarters on August 31.



Scene at beginning of Forum, taken from [UN video](#). (Note that in previous years, the room was filled with representatives of civil society and Member States)

A [concept note](#) with background about the culture of peace was published this year prior to the forum by the President of the General assembly saying that it would be dedicated to the theme “Promoting Culture of Peace in the Digital Era.” As was the case [in 2022](#), the United Nations did not publish a general article about the forum. The order of the programme was published in the [UN Journal](#) along with links to statements from 22 Member States, but a summary of the event was not published in the UN websites for [meetings](#) or [press releases](#).

A three-hour video of the forum is available from the [UN media center](#) and a separate video of the

presentation by Sri Lanka is available on [YouTube](#).

In this article we have sought excerpts from other articles, including speeches delivered at the forum.

The following description of the event was published in [Bangladesh](#) “Convened by President of the General Assembly Csaba Korosi, the forum’s inaugural session featured addresses from distinguished speakers, including the Under-Secretary General for Policy, Director of UNESCO’s New York Office, and the Head of UN Affairs of ITU.

“Later a panel discussion was held under the theme, “Promoting Culture of Peace in the Digital Era,” which was chaired by Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, and participated by member states, observers and the civil society.

“Apart from Member States, expert speakers including the Secretary General’s Tech Envoy, Rector of the University for Peace and representative of Google presented remarks in the panel discussion. “Applauding Bangladesh’s leadership in promoting culture of peace, the President of the General Assembly highlighted that sustaining a culture of peace in the digital age entails nurturing an inclusive online space that encourages respect and tolerance.

Question(s) related to this article:

[***What is the United Nations doing for a culture of peace?***](#)

(continued from left column)

“This involves countering online hate speech and discrimination and addressing the risks of misusing new technologies without depriving those who require them,” he said stressing the importance of collective involvement, he underscored that success hinges on robust multilateral cooperation.”

Since there was no other news coverage of the event, one needs to listen to the [UN video](#) to learn more.

The Director of UNESCO's New York Office spoke from minutes 25-30. He did not mention UNESCO's history with the culture of peace, such as its responsibility for the UN International Year for the Culture of Peace (2000) and the succeeding Culture of Peace Decade, nor the fact that it prepared and submitted the Draft Declaration and Programme of Action for a Culture of Peace eventually adopted by the General Assembly in 1999.

A prominent place was given to Google. The representative of Google, Zoe Darne, was one of the five presenters in the panel discussion, her presentation taking place from minutes 80 to 87 in the video. She also took an active role in the general discussion that followed, being the final speaker of the day. Curiously, a search by the Google Search Engine reveals photos of her at the forum, but no mention of the content of her remarks.

There was much less participation of the civil society this year. Unlike in previous years, the civil society organizations affiliated with the UN Department of Public Information were not allowed to participate. And Ambassador Chowdhury, who had mobilized civil society participation in previous years was not included in the planning. Back in 1999, when he was Ambassador from Bangladesh, Chowdhury resisted opposition by the EU and United States and chaired the nine-month negotiations that led to the adoption of the above-mentioned Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

According to a recent [article written by Chowdhury](#), the “cold-shoulder” given to the culture of peace for this forum this year is part of a more general rejection of the culture of peace by the current United Nations administration. Neither of the two general agendas for action – “[Our Common Agenda](#)” (OCA), and “[New Agenda for Peace](#)” (NAP) – mention “culture of peace” at all.

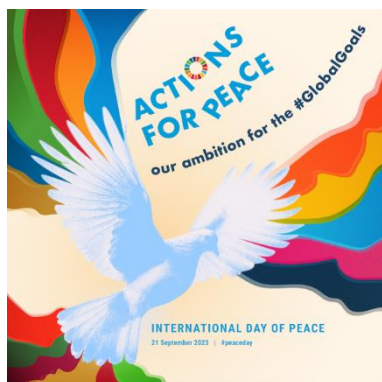
CPNN <https://cpnn-world.org>
September 7, 2023

“Let us join our efforts toward building the unshakable foundations for a culture of peace.”

-- Daisaku Ikeda

Powerful Peace Day 2023 U.S. “Peace Alliance” Actions

ADVOCACY IN CONGRESS FOR “DEPARTMENT OF PEACEBUILDING” BILL



In observance of the 2023 UN International Day of Peace theme of “Actions for Peace,” here is summary of the U.S. Peace Alliance’s National Department of Peacebuilding Campaign “actions for peace.”

FALL 2023 ADVOCACY DAYS SUMMARY NEVER GIVE UP

Since 2004, Department of Peacebuilding advocates have worked to create a cabinet-level Department of Peacebuilding (DoP/HR 1111) in our federal government. This work continues in the 118th Congress (2023-2024). We have made hundreds of contacts with members of Congress and have met with numerous Congressional offices, urging them to cosponsor HR 1111, which is sponsored by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (CA-12). The bill currently has 35 cosponsors, including Rep. Mike Quigley (IL-5) who signed on as a cosponsor shortly

after DoP advocates met with his office on 9/19/2023.

Most recently, in 2023, we conducted **two sets of advocacy days** with meetings in DC and/or via Zoom. During **Spring 2023 Advocacy Days**, we met with, dropped by or emailed and called about 130 members of Congress. During **Fall 2023 Advocacy Days**, we met with and/or contacted about another 130 Democrats and Republican. We have also held numerous meetings before, between and after Advocacy Days. These meetings were also being “AMPLIFIED” by phone calls to DC offices. There are 435 members of Congress -- we are well on our way to being in touch with over half of them.

In addition to promoting legislation to create a Department of Peacebuilding (HR 1111), we are also promoting **other peacebuilding-related legislation:**

- Assault Weapons Ban of 2023 (HR 698/ S 25) + more gun-violence prevention bills
- Commission to Study & Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act (HR 40/ S 40)
- Office of Gun Violence Prevention (HR 1699/ S 951)
- Promoting Resolution of Tibet-China Conflict Act (HR 533/ S 138)
- Women’s Health Protection Act (HR 12/ S 701)

During our final Fall 2023 advocacy meeting on 9/20/21, **Congressman Maxwell Frost’s office told us President Biden would announce on 9/22/23 that he was creating a first-ever White House Office on Gun Violence Prevention.**

This was because of Congressman Frost's legislation to create such an office ... legislation the DoP Campaign has also been pushing. Congressman Frost is the youngest member of Congress, and this was his first bill ever. (see other article about the Office of Gun Violence Prevention)

Some members of Congress thanked us for directing their attention to peacebuilding, which some said is a seldom-mentioned topic on Capitol Hill. They appreciated focusing on this rather than on the divisiveness of the day.

The **backdrop of our time in DC** was disagreement within the Republican Party and a possible/probable shutdown of our government in a few days. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was at the UN and then in DC seeking help from other nations to keep his own nation alive. I can't think of one time I've been in DC when there wasn't at least one major crisis. As I watched the failure of the majority party to put good governance first, I couldn't help but think of so many Americans who are trying to be their best selves and who expect our government to govern in a way that benefits all and provides for happiness, health, peace and justice in our lives.

We've had much positive input **and a number of challenges along the way**, not the least of which was me flying 3,000 miles to DC (and 3,000 miles back to CA) only to come down with COVID. During this time in a small hotel room, I attended numerous Zooms with Congressional offices. We were joined by DoP advocates from all over the country, including a high school student from Seattle, WA (Eleni Savvides) and a Pathways to Peace student who just started school at

Catholic University in DC (Emma DeBaise).

The last night we were in DC, my husband and I forced ourselves out of the hotel and took a masked walk to the Capitol. It was a beautiful night. **I burned sage on the steps of the Capitol and prayed for this nation and this world**. Then we flew home to watch the near-shutdown of the federal government until mid-November when this all may play out again and a House of Representative (the People's House) with no Speaker.

As always, **persistence is the lesson**. Whatever the time, wherever the place, there is a need for peacebuilding. Neither rain, nor snow, nor climate chaos, nor government shut-down threats, nor divisiveness, nor COVID should stop us.

Nancy Merritt, Department of Peacebuilding Campaign

Submitted by Anne Creter, Peace Through Unity & Department of Peacebuilding Campaign

U.S. President Biden Creates Office of Gun Violence Prevention

~ Never Accept Gun Violence, Or ANY Violence as Normal ~



President Biden, Rep. Maxwell Frost & Vice President Harris at White House Ceremony announcing creation of Gun Violence Prevention Office in the Rose Garden on 9/22/23.

On International Day of Peace (9/21/2023), Congressman Maxwell Frost (FL-10) announced that **the Administration is establishing a federal Office of Gun Violence Prevention** to advance common sense policy and coordinate prevention efforts across federal agencies. Rep. Frost's legislation led to the creation of this office. Congratulations to Rep. Frost, his staff and the gun violence prevention community. *"This is a win for the gun violence prevention movement and a win for the American public,"* Rep. Frost said. A ceremony was held at the White House on 9/22/2023.

The Department of Peacebuilding Campaign (DoP) learned this news in a meeting with Rep. Frost's office on 9/20/2023. Throughout that week, the DoP Campaign conducted meetings with Democrats and Republicans promoting the DoP legislation (HR 1111) and other peacebuilding-related

bills, including Rep. Frost's legislation for an Office of Gun Violence Prevention (HR 1699/ S 951). This was part of Fall 2023 Advocacy Days for peacebuilding.



Jon Carter, Rep. Maxwell Frost's Staffer

We discussed this good news with Jon Carter, Rep. Frost's Legislative Assistant. **This bill was the first bill ever introduced by Rep. Frost, the youngest member of Congress, and is a major accomplishment.** Rep. Frost said gun violence prevention is a matter of survival. He introduced this legislation because **he did not want to get shot.** Rep. Frost is the former Organizing Director of March for Our Lives, a student-led organization created after the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL in 2018, when 17 people were killed.

*"As a life-long organizer and survivor of gun violence, I introduced legislation to create the first-ever Office of Gun Violence Prevention back in March because **I refuse to ever accept that the senseless gun violence destroying our communities is normal** ... This office is the first critical step to tackling gun violence head on and ensuring that the federal government can lead in the fight to live in a world where we never lose another life because of a gun,"* said Rep. Frost.

During the meeting with Jon Carter, we talked about **the parallels between the Office for Gun Violence Prevention and calls for a cabinet-level Department of Peacebuilding to**

prevent violence of all kinds. And the intersectionality of gun violence, school violence, bullying and mental health issues, violence in families and communities, racism, violence at the international level and violence against the earth. AND the importance of educating our children and ourselves about peacebuilding and violence prevention skills. We should never accept ANY kind of violence as normal.

At the White House ceremony President Joe Biden said guns are the number one killer of children in this country. *"This is totally unacceptable. This is not who we are."* He urged acting as if we are the UNITED States of America and never giving up, never losing hope, that there is nothing we can't do if we do it together.

President Biden is creating this first-ever White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention by executive order. The office will have four primary responsibilities, including:

- 1) overseeing the implementation of last year's Bipartisan Safer Communities Act;
- 2) coordinating support for survivors, families and communities impacted by gun violence;
- 3) identifying new executive acts to reduce gun violence; and
- 4) expanding the "coalition of partners" to get more state and local gun violence laws.

Together these steps will save lives, said President Biden.

Peacebuilding is every step.

Nancy Merritt and The Peace Alliance
Department of Peacebuilding Campaign

"Love for peace is not enough. Beyond it we need a vision of peace, a science of peace, a strategy for peace and innumerable actions for peace."

Robert Muller ("Philosopher of the UN")

Power of Women Digital Conference 2023 Achieves Global Success

Amplifying Voices, Empowering Change: The Inaugural DPOW Conference Marks a Historic Milestone [Digital, September 8-10th, 2023] - Led by the new generation of young leaders, the Power of Women Digital Conference 2023 (DPOW), a groundbreaking 48-hour virtual symposium, concluded with resounding success. The event, which brought together over 100 global leaders, experts, and attendees from more than 50 countries, aimed to amplify the voices of women in decision-making processes, unite diverse perspectives, promote global awareness, and nurture collective action for humanity's shared mission fostering a culture of peace and well-being for ourselves, our loved ones and our environment. DPOW was unique in many ways, notably by promoting collaboration between women and men for the greater good of society. It also embraces "Edutainment," where music, media, arts, and entertainment plays a pivotal role in driving awareness and uniting a global community. The conference ran parallel to the prestigious G20 Summit and was conducted in collaboration with its official engagement group, the C20, Civil 20, Gender Equality, and Women's Empowerment Working Group.

Key statistics from the conference showcase the impact and reach of this transformative event:

- 48-Hour Broadcast with 122+ Sessions
- 2640 Minutes of Pre-recorded and Live Content
- 18,234 YouTube Unique Live Streamers and 11,000+ Facebook Live Streamers during the 48-Hour Broadcast
- 29,127+ Total YouTube Unique Viewers with 38,254 total views 7 days post conference
- 55.8% of viewers aged 18-34 and 20.0% aged 35-44. The majority of viewers, 79.4%, were male, emphasizing the universal nature of gender equality.
- Attendees and speakers from 50+ countries, including the U.S. (36.6%), India (26.4%), & France (4.2%).

The Power of Women Digital Conference 2023 featured a distinguished lineup of international presenters, including HRH Princess Basmah of Saudi Arabia, renowned for her advocacy and the Fourth Way Law, Keynote Speaker Dr. Deepa Narayan, Social Scientist, Author, Researcher and Senior Policy Advisor to the World Bank, Former UN Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury with Resolution 1325, Distinguished Keynote Speaker Jonathan Granoff, President of the Global Security Institute, Meg Jones Chief Economic

Empowerment UN Women, Marianne Williamson, acclaimed author and 2023 U.S. Presidential Candidate, Elisabeth Moreno, Former French Minister of Gender, Marilyn Tam, former President of Reebok and a speaker on leadership, diversity, and inclusion, Young visionary entrepreneur and sustainable start-up creator, Mahanaryaman Scindia, Yuvraj of Gwalior, India, Former journalist and advocate for community development through the economy, Queen Radhika Gaekwad of Baroda, Human potential expert and author, Jean Houston, Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris that is the largest female lead spiritual movement Sister Jayanthi, Renowned Spiritual Leader Dr. Rev. Michael Beckwith, Grammy Winning Composer Sharon Farber, Leadership of C20 and many more inspiring voices.

The conference encouraged reflection, respect for diverse perspectives, and a solution-driven approach when addressing shared challenges through collaboration.

Tying the Conference's Success to India's Historic Achievement: The Power of Women Digital Conference 2023 celebrates a significant milestone in the global movement for gender balance and women's empowerment. Just days after the conclusion of the G20 Summit 2023 in India, the country passed a historic bill reserving one-third of its parliamentary seats for women. The recent enactment of this historic bill in India resonates

deeply with the goals and discussions of the Power of Women Digital Conference. DPOW, conducted as a free 48-hour virtual symposium, united diverse perspectives and emphasized the significance of collaboratively working toward a shared mission for humanity, with peace and well-being for ourselves, our society, and our environment at its core. It aimed to amplify the voices of women, promote global gender balance, and foster collaboration between women and men for the greater good of society. The conference provided a platform for dialogue, insightful discussions, polling, interactive workshops, and thought-provoking sessions, encouraging participants to explore innovative ideas and co-create actionable solutions to benefit all.

The conference broadcast is available for viewing on the official website, <https://www.powerofwomen.info>.

Shenali Rajaratnam and Ashley Portillo Leaders of Power of Women



Awakening to the Inner Divinity: An Essay

This time has been called the ‘Great Awakening’ by mystics and poets, scientists and philosophers. Contemporary thinkers recognized decades ago that the human species has a higher dimension of consciousness, which has been increasingly emerging. As this new awareness expands and spreads across the globe, it is giving rise to a sense of human unity that is turning the tide of our evolution.

The world we live in has been shaped over vast eons by a sense of separation that began with the perception of ourselves as separate physical forms. When the soul awakens to the life *within* the form – the spirit that is life itself – the illusion of separation gives way to the realization of our essential unity. Current global crises have accelerated our awareness of the inseparability of human lives, exposing the urgency of human need and arousing the Soul’s response to need.

This awakening was long foreseen by Those who dwell in the realm of Souls and seek to guide humanity through the transition to a new era that will be shaped by the soul’s awareness. For seekers who may wonder what we are awakening to, in the larger scheme, the following is a response from the Tibetan Master, D.K, whose works exposed the vast evolutionary shift that is now underway.

“All that IS is ever present. What we are concerned with is the constant awakening of humanity to that which eternally IS . . . but of which the subject is unaware”¹

Only the soul, the inner divinity, has the power to perceive this truth. As we awaken collectively, the realization is dawning that the world we long for – a world imbued with love, light, and purpose – is being born in the consciousness of the higher self. By transcending the limits of mind divorced from the soul, that which has always existed but remained invisible comes into view. And we are learning the requirements to make it visible.

Awakening to new life might be likened to what we experience in the early morning hours, when our freshly opened eyes perceive a subtler quality of light that is not visible amid the stresses of daily living. The current planetary crises are causing us to see life in a subtler light. When life crises interrupt our habitual patterns of thinking and feeling, they often trigger a search for the deeper meaning of our own lives, and of human existence in general.

Those who genuinely seek higher understanding will always find their way to spiritual teachings that illumine the mind. Fresh insight into the challenges of life comes through reflection on truths from the wisdom teachings, which have stood the test of time, and through meditation that opens a pathway to the light of the soul. When the heart opens as well, one has access to the inner knowing of the soul with its capacity for self-observation and discernment of truth.

Great insight is contained in these words from Carl Jung:

"Your vision becomes clear when you look into your heart. Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens."

The light of the soul light, when directed inward, exposes the 'shadow side' of the personality. Those who are committed to spiritual growth will recognize the need for self-purification. By eliminating the dross of the persona, it becomes possible to align the lower self with the soul, the true Self, allowing consciousness to expand. Steadily, as we awaken to the love of the soul – and to the presence of Those greater and wiser souls who subtly radiate their light and love – the path unfolds.

Albert Einstein, the illumined soul who gave us the formula for the synthesis of energy/spirit and matter through light, said this about the need for expanding consciousness:

"A human being experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated . . . a kind of optical delusion of consciousness. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty."

The Soul has the power to free the personality from its imprisoning *self*-consciousness. In the state of soul awareness, we recognize the indivisible web of life in which we exist and are called to serve its well-being. In this time of planetary crises, we can sense the forces of light pouring in and arousing the higher

Self of humanity – the Christ consciousness, the Buddha nature. It is the awakened inner divinity that will transform our suffering world into a realm permeated by peace, love, and truth.

Awakening leads in time to the journey of transformation. As the path unfolds and identity shifts from persona to soul, there is a growing sense of responsibility for co-creating a new reality.*

From <https://atreeoflight.org/awakening> (edited)

¹ Bailey, Alice A., *Telepathy and the Etheric Vehicle*

* [Editor's note: Peacemakers often refer to this new reality that we're in the midst of co-creating as The Culture of Peace.]

"We all have within us a centre of stillness surrounded by silence. This house, dedicated to work and debate in the service of peace, should have one room dedicated to silence in the outward sense and stillness in the inner sense. It has been the aim to create in this small room a place where the doors may be open to the infinite lands of thought and prayer."

UN Meditation Room

A City is the Hub of the Culture of Peace

How can history be in our hands? As was said by the great anthropologist Margaret Mead, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

A small group of thoughtful and committed citizens came together in Ashland, Oregon in 2012, with a focus to create an outstanding United Nations International Day of Peace on September 21, 2012. The following year, on Peace Day, they filled Westley Hall with 200 people celebrating a Feast For Peace and all in attendance agreed it was time to establish an ongoing, year-round Ashland Culture of Peace Commission.

David Wick and Irene Kai brought the seeds of a Culture of Peace from their years of work with Pathways To Peace and the UN in the San Francisco Bay Area, David since 1980. They were joined by five additional committed citizens as they explored, planned, and organized for two years while interacting with the Ashland City Council. An important guiding document was the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace ([A/RES/53/243](#)). A City Council proclamation embracing and encouraging a Culture of Peace community was unanimously approved on March 15, 2015 and the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission, a citizen’s commission, was launched in a community celebration on September 21, 2015. This began a true local-global peacebuilding initiative.

The United Nations identifies a Culture of Peace as, “... a set of values,

attitudes, traditions and modes of behavior and ways of life...” This is a broad anthropological sense of culture, and not a narrow popular sense such as music and art.

Our mission is to challenge and shift our individual and community attitudes and beliefs from a “Culture of War to a Culture of Peace.” We believe this will lead to a shift in mindset and behaviors which will lead to systemic change.

Within its first three months, ACPC developed a structure designed around eight areas of peace: Religion, Law, Habitat, Education, Business, Culture, Science and Environment. To represent each of these areas, an Ashland citizen, known to have interest and background, was invited to become a Commissioner. Among the Commissioners are the Ashland Police Chief and The Ashland Tidings newspaper Editor.

Cities are the real societal structural level where the Culture of Peace “rubber meets the road.” The individual person is always the bottom line in peace and peacebuilding daily choices, but it is the city that has the reach, authority, responsibility, and influence to set the positive tone and direction for so many people. This can be done by beginning to use the Culture of Peace as a compass for guidance and a lens to see and understand differently.

The Ashland Culture of Peace Commission (ACPC) is truly a local-global initiative and grew organically with the strength of years of experience behind it. An initial step was to define what a Culture of Peace is in Ashland, in 2015, and create a vision. That vision became a world that works for all. And the vision of the Ashland Culture of Peace

Commission brought forward its mission, “A community-wide movement dedicated to transforming our attitudes, behaviors, and institutions into ones that foster harmonious relationships with each other and the natural world.”

In collaboration with ACPC and initiating a [proclamation](#), the Ashland Mayor and City Council joined [International Cities of Peace](#) as the 163rd city on May 16, 2017. This included being named a City of Peace in perpetuity. This does not mean that Ashland was completed in this regard, but this intention creates a community agreement and awareness of moving forward in the City of Peace direction. This also creates a community umbrella under which many programs and initiatives can find alignment.

An example of this far-reaching alignment is the manifestation and celebration of the World Peace Flame in Ashland. The inspiration and action of ACPC Co-founder Irene Kai brought the [World Peace Flame](#) from Wales to Ashland and it is only the second one in the United States. This has become a powerful image of peace locally and internationally.

Inspiration, insight and building blocks for the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission came from thought leaders and pioneers highlighted in [Culture of Peace Description and Background](#) such as: **Federico Mayor**, former Director-General of UNESCO
Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, former UN Under-Secretary-General and founder of the Global Movement for the Culture of Peace
Avon Mattison, Co-Founder and former President, Pathways To Peace

David Adams, former Director, UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programme and Director of the International Year for the Culture of Peace in 1998, and author of *World Peace Through The Town Hall: A Strategy For The Global Movement For A Culture Of Peace*

Bert Etling was the Ashland Daily Tidings Editor and ACPC Commissioner. Bert invited ACPC to submit articles on the Culture of Peace to the newspaper to help inform, educate, and inspire our local community, and beyond. Twice a month, for six years, ACPC submitted articles that came from a wide variety of authors and perspectives. The following four articles are from the treasure trove of ACPC articles which reflect that we all create the Culture of Peace in our daily lives and the communities in which we live. This is a choice; everyone is a pathway to peace.

What is a “Culture of Peace”?

By Bob Morris, Ashland Culture of Peace Commission
March 22, 2016

Culture of Peace: Ashland police department partners for peace

By Tighe O’Meara, Chief of Police, Ashland Police Department
April 24, 2016

Say hello and I will smile

By Irene Kai, Co-founder, Ashland Culture of Peace Commission

Making space - a time for cultural literacy and respect

By Ashland Chamber of Commerce
July 12, 2021

May Peace Prevail on Earth,

David Wick email ashlandcpc@gmail.com
Executive Director, Ashland Culture of Peace Commission President, Pathways To Peace Past President, Rotary E-Club of World Peace

What is a 'Culture of Peace'?

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of columns from the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission about its work in the community. The first, which appeared Feb. 20, is online at www.dailytidings.com. Future columns will appear biweekly on Mondays starting April 11. A culture of peace is a new paradigm. It's a new model for society, a new way of being, of interacting, of resolving conflict. Crafting a culture of peace is challenging in a world where language has tended to reflect a culture of war.

A culture of peace was declared in Ashland last September with the launching of the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission (ACPC) on the UN's International Day of Peace. Working to support the United Nation's mission to avoid the "scourge" or curse of war, UNESCO begins its Constitution by asserting that *"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."* But most of us fall short when trying to think our way into a new mindset. It's hard to rely solely on our brains to shift the attitudes which result in stereotyping. It's difficult to overcome the habit of distinguishing ourselves from others by casting "them" as different from and less than "us."

A culture of peace invites us to engage our hearts. It encourages us to slow down our knee-jerk reactions by feeling before we think and then thinking before we act. Compassion means to feel another's suffering, and a culture of peace brings such empathy to both conversations and systems. Describing the strength it takes to face struggles without fear, the word "courage" derives from an ancient word for heart. It takes courage to recognize the inherent value and basic needs of each member of our city, while remaining mindful of the diverse gifts which we each bring to our community.

Culture consists of the beliefs, customs and way of life in a society. Culture underlies the functioning of such societal institutions as schools, businesses, courts, media and governments. How would life in Ashland change if being inclusive became a priority, if inviting everyone's participation became the norm and if respecting our common humanity became commonplace? Could we imagine embedding compassion into our listening so to grasp not just the words but also the emotions and deep-down values of fellow Ashlanders? What might be the outcome of all residents and visitors feeling truly safe, heard, and empowered?

Peace is not the absence of conflict. In a culture of peace, disagreeing parties would collaborate to discover solutions, possibly conclusions that neither could have realized on their own. In its Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, the UN recognized that peace "requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation." The cost of such peace-building would be the requirement that all persons be responsible for their actions. The anticipated result of such accountability would be deepened trust.

The seeds of peace have already been germinating in Ashland. In our musical and theatrical city, it wouldn't be a stretch to picture an emphasis on art and beauty, nor would it be a challenge in a town so filled with care providers and life coaches to envision outbreaks of nurturing and curiosity and influxes of kindness and

generosity. In Ashland there's an awakening to the role of humans in the web of life, ushering in more harmonious partnerships between humankind and the environment and a greater respect for natural resources.

In a culture of peace, bridges would be erected connecting all the players already contributing to the wellness of the world, of which Ashland has many, while windows would open to let in larger truths and broader perspectives to better grasp local and world affairs. In a culture of peace, a living model for thriving together would continue to emerge and evolve.

Bob Morse is a coordinator for the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission's Peace Ambassadors.

Culture of Peace: Ashland Police Department Partners for Peace

When I was approached to consider becoming a member of the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission (ACPC), I was not certain what I was getting myself into. I was, and still am, sure that if American law enforcement is going to improve its relationship with the national community, we have to engage with all members of the public in a meaningful way.

With that in mind, I took a leap of faith and joined the group. I discovered a diverse group of community members who are striving for something great. I found people "dedicated to transforming our attitudes, behaviors, and institutions into ones that foster harmonious relationships with each other and the natural world."

In recent years we have seen several large-scale, national movements and events play out before our eyes. We have watched as the occupy movements developed with varying results in different communities. We have watched as Ferguson unfolded like a bad dream before our eyes, as well as all of the subsequent incidents that have cast a shadow on our national community's relationship with law enforcement.

I have observed a theme throughout all of these events: Police departments that have established open, honest relationships before major incidents occur have a much better chance of navigating and finding some peace during and after the event. This is why I took the leap of faith, and this is why I have made community engagement one of my top priorities.

We also need to recognize that something very productive has come out of this, something that can make us stronger and better than we were before it all happened. We are starting to see that we, as a nation, are not beyond prejudice and bias. Prior to 2014, many of us, including me, were operating under the illusion that we were in control, and that, by golly, I'm not prejudiced!

Well, folks, it's time for a wakeup call. We may not be explicitly prejudiced, but all of us are biased in one way or another. All of us are subjected to unconscious programming that has an impact on the opinions we form and the decisions we make.

I acknowledge that this is not the answer, but it is the first step toward an answer. I am excited that our police department has been training in the fascinating field of

implicit bias. The next step is to also explore procedural justice, which, in a big way, is what the ACPC is all about.

Procedural justice doesn't mean that every person gets his or her way. It means that every person gets respect, dignity, and is allowed to have his or her voice heard. That is how I see the Ashland Culture of Peace movement – respecting all members of the community, allowing them their dignity, and allowing them to be heard.

The Ashland Police Department values the lives of all members of our community. We have embraced several new programs that have allowed us to stay focused on being peace officers and not warriors:

- The department has redefined how sexual assaults are investigated, leaving the survivor in control.
- We have embraced a drug amnesty program that allows addicts to turn in their drugs and receive treatment instead of a criminal charge.
- We have deployed an anti-opioid drug that can save the lives of members of the community who are suffering from an overdose.
- We are embracing a system of fair and impartial policing that is based on implicit bias studies.

Just as recognizing that biases exist, by itself, is not an answer, none of these programs is an answer in and of itself. However, each is a good step toward addressing an important issue. And, each is an important way that your police department can stay engaged with the community in a meaningful way.

I see programs like these, and engagement with groups like the ACPC, as important steps toward rebuilding our relationship with the community. This is a way that the

police department can be partners in creating harmonious relationships and a culture of peace in our community.

Tighe O'Meara Ashland Chief of Police is a member of the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission.

Say Hello and I Will Smile

“Despite all the challenges, I remain hopeful as I think about rebuilding an even stronger, more inclusive, more resilient Oregon.” — Governor Kate Brown

I immigrated to this country from Hong Kong when I was 15, living in New York Chinatown. I lived in London while pursuing my MFA degree and traveled to many countries for business around the world. Wherever I went, I was identified as an American. I spoke English with an American accent. I dressed like one and had a very open attitude. Even when I went back to China and spoke fluent Chinese, they still asked if I am visiting from America.

In the U.S., I was told on countless occasions to go back to where I came from.

There was an ease living in big cities. The exposure to many different cultures through schools, work and food made everyone appreciate the complexity of being different. When I first encounter new acquaintances, my attitude is curiosity that promotes self-awareness to appreciate my own uniqueness. We are all in the same boat.

I came to Ashland 24 years ago. First, I noticed the “look” when I walked down the street with my Eurasian children. For the first time since I immigrated to this country, I

was very self-conscious of not being white.

I currently teach at Rogue Community College. I have encountered older white male students who were outright hostile and refused to take instruction from a nonwhite woman. There are laws to protect us from discrimination, but it is difficult to articulate microaggressions.

I was invited to a gala event outside of my usual circle. I sat at a table with other guests. An older lady who sat next to me gave me that “look” and asked why I was sitting at the table and if I worked there. This is not an uncommon occurrence. I had work staff ask me if I worked at a facility when I was touring with the owner.

Rebuilding our community takes all of us, especially given the history of Oregon. Our state was America’s first and only state to begin as “whites-only.” The original constitution banned Black people from the state, and the law stayed in the constitution for well over 100 years.

Cultural literacy is not a concept but a practice. Having a Black Lives Matter sign on your lawn is nice but it doesn’t explicitly exempt you from being a racist. It is your daily action that shows your intent. People are affected by your actions. Each one of us carries memories of our family that go back hundreds of years whether we are conscious of it or not. The memories dictate our attitude and world views.

As recently as 2019, when I organized the Ashland Global Peace Conference, a small group of Ashland community members opposed one of the guest speakers at our conference. I was viciously attacked by this group

on social media, and they threatened to crash the conference.

Ashland is a small town; the toxicity of dominance and power grabs adds to the stress of our struggles from the economic instability caused by the pandemic and wildfires. The history of – and still ongoing – racial injustice put so much added stress on the Black, Indigenous and people of color in our community. As a woman of color inspired by Gov. Brown, I want to do my share to rebuild a more inclusive and resilient community.

This article marks the fifth anniversary of the Culture of Peace column in the Ashland Tidings. We are more isolated now than ever with the pandemic, and it is time for us to get to know each other more. I take this auspicious opportunity to invite you to know our community better by introducing different Black, Indigenous and people of color in our community in upcoming columns.

When I traveled, whether in Africa, Europe or Asia, I didn’t speak the local language, but the first thing I encountered was a smile. It is the universal language for “I am happy to see you.”

When you see me out and about, say hello and I will smile. I am happy to see you. I mean it! Let’s get to know each other.

Irene Kai Co-founder of the Ashland Culture of Peace Commission, Flame Keeper of the World Peace Flame in Ashland.
Monday, February 22nd 2021

Making Space – A Time for Cultural Literacy and Respect

The Ashland Chamber of Commerce and Travel Ashland appreciate the many efforts of Irene Kai and David

Wick in developing the Culture of Peace through the years and their recent efforts around cultural literacy.

From the designation of becoming a City of Peace to being home to one of the few sacred Peace Flames in the world, their work has built an impactful foundation to grow upon.

We have been pleased to be engaged with them over the years and a partner in international conferences and education, having served as a conference panelist as well as promoter of their events and vision. As they are promoting the work of cultural literacy, we want to underscore the merits as well as the need.

Given the current social climate in Ashland and around our nation, cultural literacy begins with making space for each other to listen, respectfully to hear where someone is coming from. That takes time and dedication to being open and kind as well as respecting differences of opinion. We are listening and we acknowledge the work we have to do to move forward to further understand each other. Expanding that openness beyond the individual, the Ashland Chamber and Travel Ashland have been focusing on what work we can do to help support cultural literacy.

Travel Ashland is regionally connected in partnership with Travel Southern Oregon, which created the Tourism Inclusion Council of Southern Oregon in 2018, composed of a diversity of stakeholders from the business and tourism communities of Southern Oregon. TSO is committed to establishing a regional tourism economy that promotes equitable, safe and welcoming experiences and opportunities for visitors and our

regional workforce of diverse backgrounds.

The TICSO mission is to advise Travel Southern Oregon on strategies to nurture and develop a welcoming, inclusive and safe cultural climate for tourists visiting our region and citizens living in our region. TICSO will also be working with TSO to create training and educational programs and events that promote our understanding of diversity, inclusion and equity, and to expand our capability to welcome people from all cultures, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities and races.

Given our role as an educationally based, membership organization, a tourism destination marketing organization and Ashland economic development entity, our work in cultural literacy continues to expand. It is important to reflect on the collaborative sister-city relationship with Guanajuato, Mexico.

With partners such as SOU, city of Ashland, the Amigo Club and Ashland residents, significant efforts have gone into fostering the respectful bond that Ashland and Guanajuato have grown over the years, culminating in the 50th anniversary celebration in 2019. The Ashland Chamber's past global conferences on doing business with China, Japan and Mexico highlighted navigating international business relationships with a cultural lens.

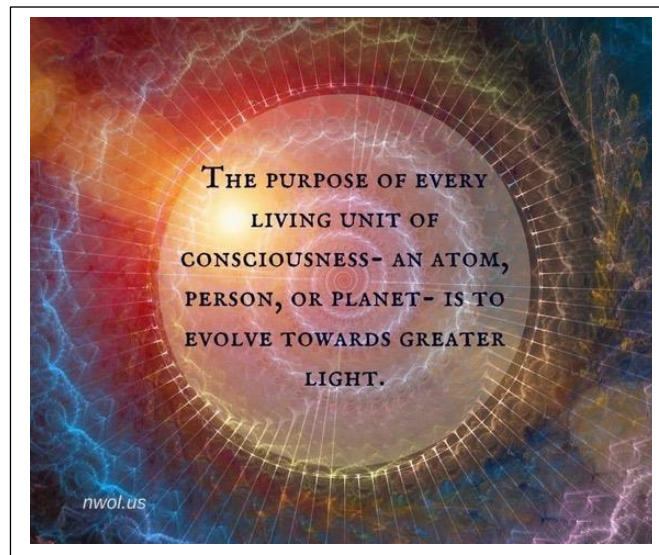
Currently, through the economic development work of the Ashland Chamber, we have learned statewide and nationally people of color have had much more difficulty in access to capital, revealing a significant gap in the ability to grow businesses. As we are launching a new program to

support small businesses in Ashland and our region, we have developed an outreach strategy to help provide access to these resources to businesses owned by people of color.

The Language of Business, a financial literacy initiative of the Ashland Chamber, will run throughout the summer with five consecutive educational videos with links and partner resources to help guide existing businesses as well as promote new business development.

We continue to listen, learn and support Ashland's cultural literacy efforts, acknowledging the work that needs to be done in our community, to take steps forward together toward a greater awareness to be welcoming and kind to each other.

Ashland Chamber of Commerce



The Difference Between "Peace" and "Culture of Peace"

“At the present moment of history, war and peace (defined as the absence of war) are issues that cannot be decided by the town and city. Instead the power to make decisions about these issues is monopolized by the state, with support from the various institutions allied with it, the arms industry, the mass media and even the educational systems, including universities. While towns and cities are powerless to make decisions on the culture of war, they suffer from it nonetheless. The main task of the city is the well-being of its citizens, which requires a culture of peace. But what is this culture of peace?

It is not by accident that the term "culture of peace" originated at UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and that it originated in a meeting in Africa in 1989. UNESCO was established after World War II to ensure that there would never again be another world war. It made a distinction between the old concept of peace between sovereign states and a new concept, as yet unnamed, of peace between peoples. The preamble to the UNESCO constitution declared in 1946:

“That a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.”

It was not until 1989 that this concept was given the name of "culture of peace" in the final declaration of the International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men, sponsored by UNESCO in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire. The declaration called for the construction of "a new vision of peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men"

In 1992, UNESCO decided to undertake an "action programme for the culture of peace" It was one of those crucial moments in world history when advances could be made because the old order was changing. UNESCO had been transformed by the success of national liberation movements into an organization with a new potential majority of votes from the countries of the South. The Cold War had ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union. The UN Security Council, freed from the Cold War vetoes of the Soviet Union, had begun to undertake peacekeeping missions, with a new doctrine of intervention spelled out in the 1992 document "An Agenda for Peace." And perhaps, most important, Federico Mayor, a "dark-horse candidate", had been elected as Director-General of UNESCO. He was a man committed to the Constitutional mandate of the organization and to the newly emerged nations of the south. Mr. Mayor took up the culture of peace as his priority.

Details of this history are provided on my website at Early History of the Culture of Peace: A Personal Memoire (Adams 2003). <https://www.culture-of-peace.info/history/introduction.html>

The UNESCO (1992) Action Programme for a Culture of Peace declared:

"to construct peace in the minds of men - that is the mandate of UNESCO. Never before has our work been needed so much. The world has reached a turning-point in history. It is a moment of opportunity for global co-operation for peace. It is a moment that should not be lost. It has become clear that military force cannot solve the global problems of violence and injustice. Military force can only continue the vicious cycle. . . We need peace culture, not war culture . . ."

During the decade of the 1990s, with the support of Director-General Mayor, our culture of peace unit began to establish national programmes for a culture of peace in countries such as El Salvador, Mozambique, Philippines, and even Russia, but by the end of the decade these initiatives had failed due primarily to lack of support from the rich Member States. It became evident that they did not want to see a culture of peace developed in those countries. Then, in 1998 the UN General Assembly in New York, thanks to the initiative of countries from the South, declared the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace and requested from UNESCO in Paris a draft Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

The Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted as Resolution A/53/243 by the United Nations General Assembly in 1999, includes the final definition of the culture of peace. It is in fact a "final definition" because once the United Nations adopts a declaration of this type, like the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, it becomes a permanent standard-setting document. New resolutions can be adopted later, but the initial declaration cannot be amended. The culture of peace is defined as "a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life." Notice that "culture" is defined in the broad anthropological sense, not in the narrow popular sense restricted to music, dance, and the other arts.

Although the Declaration section was somewhat politicized by the diplomats (e.g., insisting that it would not apply to the internal policies of the Member States), the section on the Programme of Action retained intact the eight programme areas of a culture of peace. This was due to the consummate diplomacy of Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury of Bangladesh who shepherded its passage through an unprecedented nine months of discussion and opposition:

- 1) culture of peace through education
- 2) sustainable economic and social development
- 3) respect for all human rights
- 4) equality between women and men
- 5) democratic participation
- 6) understanding, tolerance and solidarity
- 7) participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge
- 8) international peace and security [with a priority on disarmament]

It is important to recognize at this point that with the exception of

the 8th programme area, all of the culture of peace areas apply as directly to the policies of the city as they do to the policies of the state. The 8th programme area can be interpreted as public safety and gun control at the local level, as well as networking with other cities for peace at an international level.”

With permission, excerpt from:

[World Peace through the Town Hall](#)

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1441480420>

David Adams, author

A good leader inspires people to have confidence in the leader,
a great leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves.

Eleanor Roosevelt

President Eisenhower's 1953-1955 Cabinet-Level Secretary of Peace

"As long as there will be Ministries of War or Defense in 170, of 188 nations there will be no peace on Earth. I suggest that the President of the United States in his speech to the UN General Assembly 2000 will announce that the Pentagon will be suppressed and will be replaced by a United States Ministry of Peace as President Eisenhower did after World War II, a ministry whose incumbent was Harold Stassen, the last living signer of the United Nations Charter and who should be honored for having held this position. The cold war put an end to it. Now that the cold war is over the United States can resume and re-establish this ministry. Followed I am sure by many other countries, if not all on Earth."

UN Under Sec-Gen **Dr Robert Muller** (Prophet of the UN) in his multi- Volumes of "Ideas & Dreams for a Better World" book (Idea # 3039) 1999.



1956 Press Photo Peace Secretary Harold Stassen appears on "Press Conference."

I was stunned when the above Robert Muller quote randomly popped up last year in my google search for a peace quote. For I knew of Dr Muller's profound

quotes but never had heard this one with its astounding gem – *that the U.S. may actually have had a functioning cabinet-level Disarmament Specialist or "Secretary for Peace" in its history!* Who knew? Yet I could not confirm its veracity, as

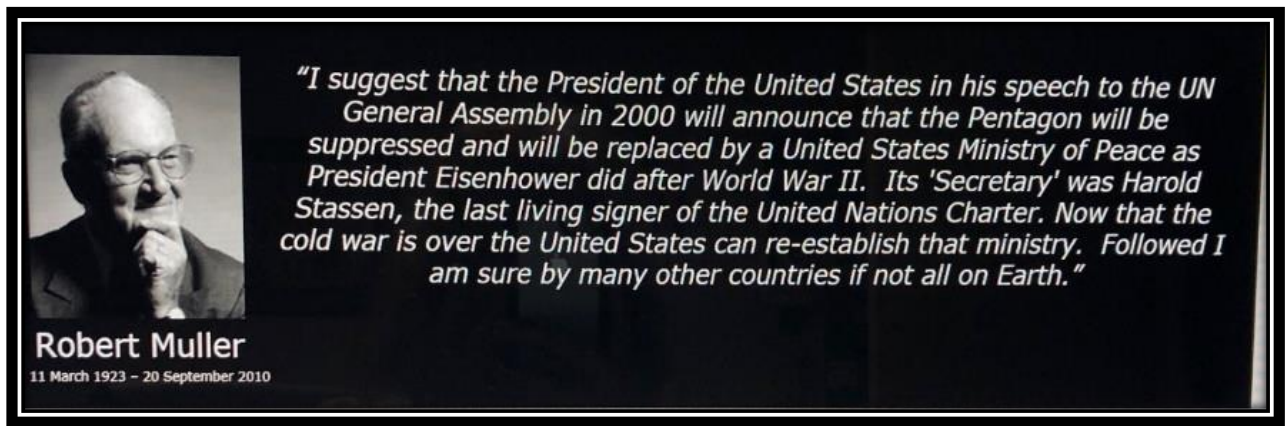
nothing came up in Google attempts to verify it. *Until recently when I was compelled to dig deeper, trusting there had to be more to this revolutionary claim that the wise Dr Muller had made.*

I was prompted further due to the March 10th **Robert Muller Birth Centenary Celebration** jointly organized by the Global Movement for The Culture of Peace (Ambassador Chowdhury & Dot Maver), University for Peace in Costa Rica (Dr Muller founded) and UN NGO Pathways to Peace. For the program was to open with a set of "100 Golden Sayings of Robert Muller." And for the above gem to be included, its Secretary of Peace assertion had to be substantiated. So, I consulted the New York Times archives and was flabbergasted to discover (among other confirmations) a 1990 book entitled **Eisenhower: Turning the World Toward Peace by Harold Stassen**, the man who had been Eisenhower's Secretary of Peace. When just one copy of this rare book was available on Amazon and it arrived at my door the next day, I was elated. For it opened to **Chapter 19 "Secretary of Peace"** -- thus substantiating Dr Muller's quote so it could be included in his Centenary Celebration *for all to know*. It turns out Dr Muller knew of this because he had worked with Stassen when the UN was founded.

After WW2 when Eisenhower became President, he called upon his trusted war buddy Harold Stassen to work in his Cabinet on Disarmament to mitigate what was unleashed by the dropping of the bomb. **This fact is a significant talking point for us now as it adds political credibility to our mission to establish a US Department of Peacebuilding.** Plus knowing that the internationally famous U.S. WW2 hero "Ike" had actually created such a

position makes it a global talking point as well. Benefitting our sister-organization, the **Global Alliance for Ministries & Infrastructures for Peace** (gamip.org) as well in its worldwide advocacy for governmental departments, ministries and other “infrastructures for peace.”

Bless the visionary Dr. Robert Muller for enabling us to uncover this long-buried, powerful historical fact that will enhance our important “infrastructures for peace” work at this perilous inflection point in world history -- to make real his ‘Secretaries-of-Peace-in-All-Countries’ Dream for a Better World.



Anne Creter

Peace Alliance International Lead & Department of Peacebuilding Committee, Global Alliance for Ministries & Infrastructures for Peace, Global Movement for the Culture of Peace

Peace Alliance INTERNATIONAL
CORNERSTONE Quarterly Report

THE GREAT INVOCATION

From the point of Light within the
Mind of God

Let light stream forth into human
minds.

Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the
Heart of God

Let love stream forth into human
hearts.

May the Coming One return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God
is known

Let purpose guide all little human
wills

The purpose which the Masters know
and serve.

From the centre which we call the
human race

Let the Plan of Love and Light work
out

And may it seal the door where evil
dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore
the plan on Earth.