

Every month since February 1987 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has produced one-hour TV programs on issues related to peace, social justice, economics, the environment, and nonviolence. The Olympia FOR's program airs several times every week for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for Thurston County's cable TV subscribers. You can see TCTV's schedule at [www.tctv.net](http://www.tctv.net).

You can also watch the program described below (**and many more than 125 of our previous monthly interview programs and also many special programs**) at the Olympia FOR's website, [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org). Simply click the **TV programs** link, scroll down, and click the program you want to watch. Many of our website's TV program listings also include links to documents describing the program in Word and/or .pdf format.

## APRIL 2016

# “Stories of Successful Work for Peace, Nonviolence, Social Justice”

by Glen Anderson, this TV series' producer and host

Usually the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's TV program focuses on one specific issue, but for April 2016 we share some stories of people who have acted boldly and nonviolently for peace, social justice, and the well-being of the human community. These stories come from many parts of the world. Some happened long ago, and some only recently.

Too often we hear news of violence and oppression, but not often enough do we hear about people who have acted boldly and positively to correct the problems.

When all we hear is bad news, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and to become cynical. We need stories of successful nonviolent action in order to inspire and empower us to continue. After all, if something has already happened – such as overthrowing dictators nonviolently – then we know it is possible.

For April 2016 **our guests – Jody Mackey and Bob Zeigler** – share stories with positive examples of non-violent action. After sharing a good variety of success stories, they share a few personal experiences, and wise insights they have gained from this inspiring track record of nonviolent action. Jody and Bob are very much appreciated in Olympia and beyond for the tremendous work they have accomplished for peace, human rights and nonviolence:

The stories they share prove that nonviolence is not merely a nice-sounding platitude or a glib abstraction, but rather a powerful way to make positive social and political change.

### **Actual examples of effective nonviolence from long ago and recently:**

Many of the stories they share are not well known, even among peace activists. Jody tells how people on the Mediterranean island of Crete lived for a very long time in ancient times with a women-led, egalitarian, peaceful society. Instead of making war on other places, they traded with them and became prosperous. Also, in the mid-European area that is now Czechoslovakia, a peaceful civilization existed for a long time.

Jody also tells how Hungarians that expelled Austrian invaders and oppressors in the mid-1800s, by using a smart variety of nonviolent methods. Likewise, the Maori people in what is now New Zealand used a creative nonviolent way to stop the last attempt of the British military to attack and subdue them.

In the 1980s Bob was very active in the Sanctuary Movement in Olympia and beyond. They publicly defied the Reagan Administration's repression of people in El Salvador and Guatemala by welcoming and protecting

refugees from the U.S.-sponsored violence there. He shared interesting insights into how a conservative congregation in Olympia reflected on the core aspects of their faith and decided to become a public sanctuary for a Salvadoran refugee family.

Bob explained that when a peace agreement eventually stopped the death squads and overt war in El Salvador, a number of Salvadoran women took the lead in creating a local Zone of Peace in their home communities there. They arranged for extensive training in conflict resolution and other grassroots empowerment activities. They significantly reduced the violence that was occurring, and they made significant progress in restoring damaged ecosystems.

The concept of “persistent resistance” was a core element in their work. They kept focusing on the important values and principles and made small incremental changes that over time made significant positive changes.

Jody shared some basic information about how Denmark used nonviolence to creatively frustrate the Nazis who were occupying Denmark, and how people in the Philippines organized a massive nonviolent movement that overthrew Ferdinand Marcos, the Filipino dictator who was militarily supported by the U.S. government. Information about both of these cases – and about a dozen other cases of nonviolent resistance to oppression and invasion – are laid out in the book *A Force More Powerful*. See information at the end of this document.

Some Americans know about Wangari Mathai, the African woman who won the Nobel Peace Prize for organizing a very massive tree-planting project there. But hardly anyone knew about the story that Bob shared about her experiences living in Kansas USA with a family. Bob shared this story with our viewers.

Jody shared a story of forgiveness after Rwanda’s civil war between Hutus and Tutsis, and another amazing story that occurred in Selma, Alabama, but that almost nobody knows about. (It’s not one of the well-known stories. You need to hear Judy tell this!)

## **First-hand experiences, learnings, insights, and practicing nonviolence:**

Bob shared some first-hand experiences of how he became sensitized to issues of social justice, from his youth and young adult years, and with growing understanding of the radical justice issues in scriptures. This continued after he moved to Olympia in 1976.

For many years Bob has been working closely with Native American people and nations throughout our Puget Sound region, and he shared some stories and insights from those.

He also passed along the wisdom from Ruth Hernandez, one of the refugees from El Salvador, who lived in Olympia through our Sanctuary Movement. Ruth was only 14 years old when she told an older refugee: “Don’t you ever give up hope, and do not ever let them take your hope away, because when they take your hope away they have taken everything from you.

Jody and Bob each shared brief stories about other people’s experiences in applying compassion and nonviolence in everyday life. Bob also pointed out that individuals can do it, and even Gandhi and King had said that small numbers of people are sufficient to make significant progress through nonviolent action.

During this TV conversation we talked about big examples at the national level and small examples in our daily lives. If we are grounded in compassion and nonviolence – and if we are alert to opportunities to practice compassion and nonviolence – we will find opportunities to actually practice them.

We will also be alert to examples and insights from unexpected sources. Nowadays in the U.S. and Europe there is a lot of bias against Muslims. But some Muslims are pacifists – just like there are some pacifists in every faith community. Jody told us briefly about Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a pacifist Muslim who worked directly with Gandhi for many years. He was a Pashtun from the area of NE India (now NW Pakistan), where the Pashtuns were known and feared for their propensity for violence, but Abdul Ghaffar Khan mobilized a large number of Pashtun Muslims for strong, disciplined nonviolent action.

## Summary and encouragement:

Let's face it. There are many serious problems at the global, national and local levels. The problems are big and daunting. It is easy to feel overwhelmed and powerless. It is easy to turn toward despair and cynicism.

But history has shown— even in the worst of times – that nonviolence is powerful at turning things around.

- Sometimes this nonviolence is grounded in simple compassion on a case-by-case basis.
- Sometimes this nonviolence is consciously developed into smart overall strategies for large grassroots movements.

If something has already happened, then we know it is possible. Nonviolent victories have already happened, so we know that nonviolence works.

- We can learn from history.
- We can learn from people who have compiled and shared stories of successful nonviolent action.
- We can learn from people of all ages – including young people – and learn from people from all nations and all faith traditions.

The stories we have shared – and additional stories from many resources, including those listed below – can inspire and empower people. These stories can help us solve the world's biggest problems – especially if we ground ourselves in really understanding how and why nonviolence works.

## Many excellent resources about nonviolence exist, including:

- *A Force More Powerful* is a book and a DVD collection that documents some examples. See [www.aforcemorepowerful.org](http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org)
- The Albert Einstein Institution is an excellent resource with many publications and downloadable documents. Visit [www.aeinstein.org](http://www.aeinstein.org)
- Recently I wrote an article titled, **“We Can Replace Cynicism and Despair with Empowerment and Hope.”** It is one of many resources posted on the **“Nonviolence”** section of the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's website, [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org). Click the **“Nonviolence”** link, and then scroll down to the link for **“We Can Replace Cynicism and Despair with Empowerment and Hope.”**

You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence by contacting the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation at (360) 491-9093 or [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org)

We're all one human family,  
and we all share one planet.  
We can create a better world,  
but we all have to work at it.  
The world needs you! You can help!

*Thank you!*