

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 more than 90 of our previous interview programs and special programs) at the Olympia FOR's website, [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org). Simply click the TV programs link to reach [www.olympiafor.org/tv\\_programs.htm](http://www.olympiafor.org/tv_programs.htm), scroll down, and click the program you want to watch.

Many of our website's TV program listings also include a .pdf document describing the program.

## OCTOBER 2012

# "NONVIOLENCE IN THE REAL WORLD"

by GLEN ANDERSON, PRODUCER AND HOST OF THIS TV SERIES

It's typical to assume that danger requires a "fight or flight" response: Either use violence or run away. When applied to foreign policy this leads us to rely on militarism and war. Domestically we end up with people arming themselves, passing "stand your ground" gun laws, and getting into fights.

Movies and much of popular culture (and our foreign policy) rely upon "the Myth of Redemptive Violence," the notion that problems can be solved only by an ultimate confrontation in which the "good" person uses violence to triumph over the "evil" one. Movies show this as a shootout on a Wild West main street, a car chase resulting in gunfire and explosions, and so forth. In foreign policy we bomb other countries, violently overthrow governments, assassinate foreign leaders, and so forth.

Nonviolence offers a "Third Way." Instead of "fight or flight," we can use nonviolent strategies and methods to oppose what is bad and replace it with a just and humane alternative. Nonviolence can require as much courage and risk as violence (*e.g.*, Gandhi, King), but it recognizes that the methods we use will

sow the seeds of the new society we want to create. If we seek a peaceful and just society, we must use peaceful and just methods to achieve it.

Nonviolence really is practical. For several decades a number of researchers and writers have compiled historical information showing that nonviolence has a long and successful history.

For example, Gene Sharp has documented thousands of years and hundreds of methods. From the 1970s to the present day his writings have helped peace and justice activists around the world, including organizers of nonviolent revolutions against the crumbling Soviet empire and the recent democracy movement in the Arab world. See Gene Sharp's books, articles and other resources at the Albert Einstein Institution, [www.aeinstein.org](http://www.aeinstein.org)

Other people researched and wrote *A Force More Powerful*, a fascinating book examining a dozen case studies and a series of 30-minute videos highlighting six of these. The Olympia FOR can lend you our copies of the book and videos.

A fascinating and persuasive book, *Why Civil Resistance Works*, by Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, compiles information about more than 200 campaigns – some violent and some nonviolent – since 1900, and shows that the nonviolent ones were much more likely than the violent ones to succeed in their goals (e.g., overthrowing dictators), and much more likely to result in democracy afterward.

Chenoweth summarizes the book's findings in a compelling 81-minute YouTube presentation at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHkzgDOMtYs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHkzgDOMtYs)

Our October 2012 TV program clarifies what nonviolence is (and is not). It emphasizes how nonviolence is practical at both large scale (national and international) levels and small-scale (interpersonal and family) levels.

Not only is nonviolence practical, but it also is strongly urged by Jesus. This also might come as a surprise to some viewers. We'll explain how Jesus was promoting this "Third Way," and how the Early Church was strongly committed to nonviolence.

After a few centuries the Church lost its nonviolent way, became enmeshed with government, and ended up saying that wars meeting certain criteria would be OK and "just." The "Just War" criteria are actually strict, and none of our modern wars come even close to meeting those criteria, but nationalism has become our modern religion, so people simply assume that any war our government conducts is "just" because we assume that our nation is so righteous.

Christian Pacifism – a tradition going back to Jesus and extending through the historic peace churches (Quakers, Mennonites, Brethren) and through people such as Tolstoy and the Berrigan brothers in the modern era – has

remained a powerful witness and a prod to the "Just War" theory and other "business as usual" mainstream religion.

Our guest is Glen Gersmehl, National Coordinator of the Lutheran Peace Fellowship ([www.lutheranpeace.org](http://www.lutheranpeace.org)), which is based in Seattle.