

In my traveling campus ministry job some 25 years ago, I met and was very much impressed by Bill Wickersham, who was the director of peace studies at the University of Iowa. His strategy was one of impact on the whole university, and accordingly he set up discussions with departments all over the campus on how their studies were relevant to issues of survival and fulfillment. He made successful contact with most departments, but one, physical education, teased him that “you can’t get us.” In a meeting he finally had with them, he recounted that Lord Acton had said that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton; Lord Russell later said it was not only won there, it was caused there. Their discussion helped them see that they were a significant part of informing attitudes—they were relevant to peace studies, broadly understood. Everyone can be.

If the world needs peace, if Christian discipleship calls us to work for it, if the university is one arena in which expertise can be applied toward it—then I hope that we may be in some small way a junction point, a meeting place, a crossing (if you will) where new hopeful possibilities for the world may emerge. We hope to work with Sis Levin to help this come about.

Cecil Findley
Campus Minister Emeritus

The Crossing seeks partnerships with local congregations and feels that the church's ministry in higher education will not be carried out without such joint efforts. It seems apparent to us that efforts such as called for here are an obvious area in which we can work together, drawing people together to discuss the aims, purposes, and values of theological education and its impact upon the lives of students and upon our society. We would love to work with your congregation on such programs. Explore the possibility with us. Let us hear from you.

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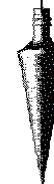
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“I am setting a plumb-line in the midst of my people . . .” Amos 7:8

The Plumb-Line

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THE CROSSING: A CAMPUS
CHRISTIAN CENTER
by Campus Minister Emeritus
Reverend Cecil Findley

AIN'T GONNA STUDY WAR NO MORE

The Crossing was privileged to have Sis and Jerry Levin in Madison in October 2003 for a series of presentations in a wide variety of settings on campus, in schools, and in churches. Jerry came to some unwanted fame when he was held hostage in Lebanon for about a year in the 1980s, apprehended in his post as CNN Middle East Bureau Chief. Sis made the news by working to get him freed and by writing *A Beirut Diary*, a widely read book subsequently made into a TV movie.

Sis, now an ordained Episcopal priest, has a doctorate in peace education and focuses much of her work on children. “Children are our hope for peace,” she asserts frequently. We hope to have one of Jerry’s powerfully written reports for another issue of *The Plumb-Line*; in this issue I focus on the subject of peace education as raised in our midst by Sis Levin.

In addition to giving us the title above, Sis has given us some thoughts toward answering the question, “What is peace education?” She describes it pedagogically as a “how-to” approach, “teaching and learning effectively how to personally and collectively participate in the management of conflict transformatively.” Wehr and Washburn, in an early definitive book on peace studies (*Peace and World Order Systems*, 1976), are in the same vein when they say, “Peace education, if it is done well, will inevitably lead students to confront a perplexing ques-

tion: What can I do? What should I do? What must I do to alter history’s mad course?”

Feeling that conflict in itself is neutral unless or until it is exacerbated into violence, this approach presents not avoidance, but conflict as an opportunity for growth through the use of techniques and tools learned in peace education, employing them systematically and comprehensively.

Well-developed programs are now at use in a wide number of schools throughout the world. The essential components of the approach are infused into the core curriculum of schools in age-appropriate ways for grades K-12. Sis Levin is currently teaching them in Bethlehem in the occupied territories, where the young show a readiness to learn these principles and approaches and an ability to lead their elders, and thus the whole society, toward better ways of handling conflict. In a dark situation, they are a ray of hope.

Meanwhile, back at home, peace studies constitute a growing field at the university level, a higher education counterpart to Sis’s efforts at the elementary and secondary levels. More than 20 years ago I wrote a dissertation entitled “Peace Studies as an Integrative Center for General Education.” At that time, there were only a handful of peace studies programs; today there are more than 350. In Wisconsin, they are organized in the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, with over 20 members. (Interestingly, UW–Madison does not have a peace studies program, and a number of students are acting on their own initiative to petition for having one here.)

Coming out of a long tradition in which campus ministry operates to bring church and university together on programs of mutual interest and concern,

The Crossing has initiated contact with the Wisconsin Institute to explore programs in which the peace-making expertise of academia can be brought more directly into the public discourse on issues of war and peace. Our hope is that we together explore ways in which we might help turn around the dominant mindset in our society that turns readily and almost lightly to violence as our only response to conflict. We need to broaden our vision of possible responses.

Sis Levin says that society has been too limited to the alternatives of “fight or flight,” and she feels that neither is helpful toward building a world at peace.

I would hope for peace studies that operate in a way that would go beyond impact on a few majors to infuse ethos and values on the whole campus, to help them come to learn that peace is possible, and that, as Sis Levin demonstrates, there are things we can do about it. In my dissertation, I argued that “peace

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studies, understood as that which informs and motivates the whole of education, which affects the illustration and the applications of the classroom and laboratory—without ever minimizing or compromising the integrity of the disciplines—is a concern of such magnitude that every discipline worthy of study can be touched by it and be relevant to it.” As several commentators have noted, if we fail in the quest for peace and survival, there may ultimately be nothing else left to study.