

July 18, 2013



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CPN ACTIVITIES

South Africa Conference on Religion, Reconciliation and Peace

Some 30 peace studies scholars and practitioners, many affiliated with CPN, gathered in Cape Town, South Africa, June 5-7, for the conference “Peace from the Ground Up: Post-conflict Socialization, Religion, and Reconciliation in Africa.” The conference, which fostered mutual learning between academics and peacebuilding practitioners, was co-sponsored by the Program on Religion & Reconciliation at the University of Notre Dame’s Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in Cape Town with support from the CPN and the John Templeton Foundation. For more, see [CPN News](#).

A PEACEBUILDING CHURCH: NEWS

Myanmar: Religious Leaders Address Peace and Development Issues

[Two statements](#) by religious leaders addressed current challenges in Myanmar. In a June statement, the Catholic Bishops of Myanmar, “concerned with the holistic dignity

of all human beings,” welcome the reform measures of the government, but urged the government to address challenges, such as quality education, the rights and dignity of indigenous groups, root causes of conflicts, natural resource protection, religious diversity, and refugee rights.

Religious leaders from all the major religions in the country met for an Interfaith Breakfast and issued an appeal “urging all our country men and women to take a path of fellowship that will bring peace and prosperity to all.” They commend the government for its efforts to bring greater peace and appeal to all that “peace is the only road for all of us.”

SECAM General Assembly on Peace and Reconciliation

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) met for a General Assembly July 8-15 on the theme, “The Church in Africa, at the Service of Reconciliation, Peace and Justice.” They denounce the violence in the eastern region of DRC and call for all involved to work for a peaceful solution. In order to fulfill their commitment to justice and reconciliation, the bishops also approved a 5 year strategic plan. “We are determined to give strong signals: now it is up to each Episcopal Conference to identify specific interventions, empowering everyone involved,” explained the vice president of SECAM, Mgr. Gabriel Mbilingi, Archbishop of Lubango, Angola, according to [Agenzia Fides](#).

Colombia: Bishops Hold Plenary Assembly, Meet with Government Negotiators

The bishops of the Episcopal Conference of Colombia (CEC) addressed the peace process during their Plenary Assembly in early July. On their final day, they met with government negotiators to discuss the process, receive updates, and encourage continued dialogue. The Catholic Church continues to accompany and monitor the peace process. For more, see the [latest statement of July 11 by CEC](#) on the state of the country (pdf in Spanish) and [articles](#) on the CEC website.

Role of Colombian Churches, Faith Groups in Promoting Peace

Veteran peacebuilder in Colombia and United States Institute for Peace (USIP) program officer Virginia Bouvier provides perspective on the role of the churches in the struggle for peace in Colombia in this USIP July 2, 2013 edition of [The Olive Branch](#). For more detailed information, visit [Ms. Bouvier’s personal blog](#). Her most recent post looks “more broadly at the roles of the churches with regard to peace in Colombia, and discuss[es] three emerging trends: the spirit of ecumenism and its focus on ethics, the articulation of an identity of ecumenical women peace builders within that trend, and the growing international partnerships for peace within and across churches.”

Central African Republic: Bishops Sound Alarm

In a recent letter to Michel Djotodia, leader of the March coup in the Central African Republic, the Catholic bishops decry killings, rape, looting, desecration of churches, the influx of foreign missionaries, corruption and the general destruction of the social fabric.

For more on the Church in Central Africa and the perilous state of affairs in that region, see [Agenzia Fides](#).

CPN PARTNERS

USCCB and CRS Make Solidarity Visits to Colombia and Peru

A delegation from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services made a solidarity visit in June to Colombia and Peru. Among others, the delegation included the chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace, Bishop Richard Pates, and the CEO of CRS, Carolyn Woo. They met with Church and government representatives, visited impoverished communities, and explored ways of supporting peace negotiations. Findings will be shared with the U.S. government and others. [Read more](#).

Pax Christi International Annual Meeting

Pax Christi International (PCI) held its annual general meeting June 10-12, 2013 in Berlin, Germany. CPN Steering Committee member Marie Dennis was re-elected as co-president, along with Bishop Kevin Dowling of South Africa. Strengthening the PCI movement through knowledge sharing and coordination planning around core issues was also on the agenda. For further information on PCI and its partners, read their latest [Newsletter](#) (link opens pdf).

Berkley Center Launches Online Forum

The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University recently launched an interactive online forum. The [Berkley Forum](#) offers a space for thoughtful debate about challenges impacting religion, law, ethics, and world affairs. Building on the expertise of center faculty, the forum brings together leading scholars, thought leaders, and readers to interact around insightful commentaries and responses.

RESOURCES

Book: *Global Justice, Christology and Christian Ethics* by Lisa Sowle Cahill

Global Justice, Christology and Christian Ethics (Cambridge, 2013) by Lisa Sowle Cahill demonstrates why just action is necessarily a criterion of authentic Christian theology and gives grounds for Christian hope that change in violent structures is really possible. In it, Cahill offers a twenty-first-century Christian response to global social concerns through reference to traditional doctrines about Christ. Concrete examples throughout the book offer a global and ecumenical study. For more, see [Cambridge Press](#).

Book: *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Pakistan*

In this book (Multi Media Affairs, 2013), Fr. James Channan, Executive Secretary of the Pakistan bishops' Episcopal National Commission for Christian Muslim Relations, provides an overview of Christian-Muslim dialogue in Pakistan, both its theological foundations and the difficult practical issues that arise in the Pakistani context. For a copy, see www.multimediaaffairs.com.

Call for Papers

Verbum Incarnatum, a multidisciplinary journal published annually at the University of the Incarnate Word, will publish a special volume on Peace & Social Justice. Submissions will be accepted until Sept. 1, 2103, not March 1, as listed on the [call for papers](#).

Report: Global Restrictions on Religion Increase

A new [study by the Pew Research Center](#) finds that the already high level of restrictions on religion in the Middle East and North Africa – whether resulting from government policies or from social hostilities – continued to increase in 2011, when most of the political uprisings known as the Arab Spring occurred. The findings run contrary to expectations expressed by many world leaders that the uprisings would lead to greater freedoms for the people of the region, including fewer restrictions on religious beliefs and practices.

JOB OPENINGS

U.S.-based Catholic peace and justice positions can be found by clicking on “Position Openings” [here](#).

Please send information on Catholic peacebuilding to cpn@nd.edu. To un-subscribe to this listserv, respond to this email with "UNSUBSCRIBE" in the subject heading. If you have received this email as a forward, you may subscribe to the listserv by emailing cpn@nd.edu.

The Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN) is a voluntary network of practitioners, academics, clergy and laity from around the world which seeks to enhance the study and practice of Catholic peacebuilding, especially at the local level. The CPN aims to deepen bonds of solidarity among Catholic peacebuilders, share and analyze “best practices,” expand the peacebuilding capacity of the Church in areas of conflict, and encourage the further development of a theology of a just peace. While it is a Catholic network, the CPN believes that authentic and effective Catholic peacebuilding involves dialogue and collaboration with those of other religious traditions and all those committed to building a more just and peaceful world.

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