Do We Make a Difference?

Alumni of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding are working throughout the world, as the map on pages 2 and 3 shows. Some are immersed in the most intractable and difficult conflicts on this earth. They, like all of us, wonder whether their efforts will make a difference in the long-term. Within these pages they will see signs of hope and a partial answer to that question. We are grateful to call them colleagues in peacebuilding.

In Northern Ireland many factors contributed to fighters laying down their arms after 30 years of virtual civil war, but one factor was the role of EMU-linked peacebuilders. MA graduates like Joe Campbell and SPI participants like Sandra Peake worked tirelessly for years with others until peace came to the country.

In reading about the several dozen EMU-linked people who played significant roles in Northern Ireland, others may realize that indeed a small group of people can make a difference. They may also find lessons that they can adapt to their own situations.

As we take a look back, it is important to recognize the support that came to CJP that resulted in the development of our program. The CJP faculty and staff would like to dedicate this issue of Peacebuilder to James and Marion Payne (EMU class of 1958). This pair of retired educators stepped forward in 1993 to play significant roles in Northern Ireland, others may realize that indeed a small group of people can make a difference. They may also find lessons that they can adapt to their own situations.

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Lynn Roth
Executive Director
Sowing Seeds of Peace Worldwide

Masters or graduate certificate in Conflict Transformation: 296 alumni in 51 countries
- U.S. states (33) and Canadian provinces (4) where CJP alums live & work

Academic and non-degree training at EMU
- SPI - Summer Peacebuilding Institute: 2200 alumni in 119 countries
- STAR - Seminars on Trauma Awareness and Resilience: 991 alumni in 64 countries

The Practice Institute and major off-campus work: various projects in over 60 Countries

Peacebuilding institutes modeled on EMU's Summer Peacebuilding Institute: 7 institutes in 6 countries
Since I should not assume that everyone here is informed about the nature of the conflict in Northern Ireland, I will give you a quick history lesson.

Centuries ago Ireland came under the control of England. As part of that process, large numbers of English and Scottish people were encouraged to settle in the north of Ireland. While most of the native Irish were Catholic, most of the settlers were Protestant. At the start of the twentieth century there was a sustained campaign to break the link with Britain. However, in the north there was a campaign to maintain the link or union with Great Britain. On both sides of this argument, significant numbers were prepared to use violence in support of their cause. In 1920 the British settled the matter by dividing Ireland—granting independence to most of it and keeping the northern part within the United Kingdom. However, around 40% of northerners were Irish nationalists—people who wanted independence from Britain. Therefore, from its creation in 1920, Northern Ireland was a state whose citizens differed over their national allegiance. Consequently, for several decades, the leaders of the Protestant, unionist majority, discriminated against the Catholic, nationalist minority. The laws and institutions of the State reflected this discrimination.

By the 1960s, frustrations within the Catholic, nationalist community found expression in a campaign for civil rights. The state responded with brutal force. Within the Catholic community, there were people who began a new campaign of violence to end British rule and end the partition of Ireland. These people are known as republicans. Within the Protestant community, there were people who took up the gun to defend the link with Britain. These people are known as loyalists.

While the majority of Catholics (nationalists) and Protestants (unionists) did not support the use of violence, the terrorist campaigns fought by republicans and loyalists and the State’s campaign of counter-terrorism by the use of the British army and the police, meant that the Northern Ireland conflict became defined by widespread violence. 3,500 were killed. Thousands more were injured. Thousands were traumatised by violence. Thousands were sent to prison. However by the 1990s there was recognition that violence would not deliver a solution to the conflict and that any effort to find a political answer would only succeed if republican and loyalist paramilitaries were given a voice at the negotiating table.

In Ireland, over the last 15 years or so, we have been living through a period known as the Peace Process. This period has seen the establishment of political negotiations, ceasefires by the main republican and loyalist paramilitary organisations and fundamental reform of aspects of our system of governance in order to command the respect and allegiance of all our citizens. …[P]rogress has been so profound that it is possible now to speak of the end of the Troubles—a 30-year period when our conflict was expressed in violence and a generation grew up in the shadow of the gun and the bomb.
Ending 30 Years of Mayhem
Lessons from Northern Ireland

To all who watch CNN, BBC, Al-Jazeera, or some other news outlet and feel hopeless at the end of many broadcasts, read on.

To those peace workers around the world in the often-dangerous role of advocating non-violent conflict transformation... often among groups of people certain that their fight is worth inflicting, as well as facing, trauma and death... who sometimes view people working for peace as simply another enemy to be dispensed with... read on.

To funders of peace building who wonder if results will be seen in their lifetimes, read on.

This is a success story in the making. It is the miracle for which people prayed and worked for 30 years. This is the story of Northern Ireland.

Well, it’s part of the story. In these pages, we are focusing on the role of people linked to Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) and the broader Mennonite community in transforming violent conflict in Northern Ireland. The Mennonites often worked in tandem with kindred spirits such as the Society of Friends (Quakers). This is not to minimize the peacemaking roles of other key actors, from top-level politicians and paramilitary leaders to victims of violence.

Here, however, we wish to explore the way “Mennonites and Quakers punched above their weight in Northern Ireland,” to quote Joe Campbell, an Irish- Presbyterian who worked closely with people of faith (and of no faith) in nurturing peace in his country. Fans of boxing will know what Campbell means: to punch above one’s weight means successfully fighting an opponent much larger than oneself. (Not the usual pacifist metaphor, ha!)

Here we wish to show how a relatively small number of people can indeed make a huge difference. Not by making a huge splash. But through setting in motion a series of small changes, which can ripple into larger waves of transformation.

Our story does not describe a perfect miracle. “The line between good and bad does not separate us, but runs through each of us,” says Campbell. We cannot create perfect societies. We can only work for better ones, starting with our own ways of being and doing. Naturally, then, much remains to be done in Northern Ireland. Much trauma to be healed, many conflicts to be transformed, much anger and hatred to be rechanneled, many inequities and injustices to be addressed.

But much has been done. If we look at the despair that many in Northern Ireland felt from the 1970s to the 1990s...

...when it was neighborhood against neighborhood, one type of Christian against another type, police against those they vowed to protect and vice versa

...at the cost of 3,500 lives over three decades in a population of just 1.7 million -- which would be like 500,000 Americans dying in the United States...

Then we must celebrate how far Northern Ireland has come in an amazingly short time, with buds of peace emerging from a handful of seeds sprinkled in a strategic manner.

Scenes such as this in 2001 -- where a girl is heading to school through riot lines -- are increasingly rare in Northern Ireland.
When war-level violence was peaking in Northern Ireland in the spring/summer 2009, Lynn were still sorting out whether their faith communities should participate in violent situations. One of the first tentative steps toward intervening was launch-
ing Mennonite Conciliation Service in 1977. At that time Lynn Campbell was a leader in Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), an international relief organization. Roth spoke in favor of establish-
ing a conciliation service under MCC, explaining that it could address “social disasters,” just as Mennonite Disaster Service ad-
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Ron Kraybill, then a Harvard divinity student (later a founder of EMU’s Center for Justice and Peacebuilding), was hired to get Mennonites based in North America involved in conflict regions in support of local people.

In 1980, unrelated to the new MCC conciliation service, Kraybill advocated long-term day-to-day presence in conflict regions in support of local people. In 1980, he was close to a breakdown after 11 years of tough, front-line, cross-
community youth work in Belfast. Campbell returns to the United States where he contacted Ron Kraybill. Kraybill had been in Bible study group with Kraybill at Goshen College. “Would you be willing to lead some mediation training seminars in Ireland, if I find Irish organizations interested in hosting you?” Campbell asked.

“Definitely,” said Kraybill. In 1985, Kraybill made his first trip to Ireland, leading two seminars in Northern Ireland as well as two in Dublin. One of these was at the Belfast YMCA among Camp-
bell’s team of youth workers. “In hindsight, the impact of Ron’s seminars went beyond what we could have dreamed at the time,” says Campbell. “Biblically based and practical, the workshop energized me and made me hungrier for more.”

Kraybill also ran a seminar at Corrymeela, now world-famous as a reconciliation and retreat center in Northern Ireland. Kraybill left the nucleus of a “peace library” at Corrymeela, consisting of MCC-recommended reading materials. Some think that Kray-

Kraybill’s introduction-to-mediation sessions were the first held in Northern Ireland. If not, they were among the first.

In 1986, some who had taken Kraybill’s seminars formed the Northern Ireland Conflict and Mediation Association. They welcomed the arrival of Barry Hart (now a professor at CJP) to continue and deepen Kraybill’s initiatives. Sponsored by Menno-

Police at Apprentice Boys March, where violence often erupted.
majority group in the North, but were a minority on the island as a whole. In any case, Marie and Niall married and started raising a family in the late 1970s on land that belonged to Niall’s family in Northern Ireland.

“We set up a furniture and woodworking business so that we would have the flexibility to rear our children together,” Marie recalls. But the war found the young family. “My husband’s family business was blown up, and the post office was robbed so often by the paramilitaries it had to close down.” Even for those who refused to take sides, there was no safety.

We had incredible choices to make, such as: How to deal with bombs that were being set off by the IRA from the family garden in order to blow up soldiers, coping with horses that regularly were set on fire outside our houses; how to keep our children out of the line of fire between the British [soldiers] and IRA?

One morning in the early 90s, I looked up from changing nappies to see that the IRA were practising out in the back field. I noticed that the British army were coming with their guns at the ready, and at a moment’s notice, they were going to shoot and capture them. And then it struck me...that there has got to be a different way than this. So many of our lives – mostly young lives – all on sides were being lost. Within a few square miles of our house, over 100 Catholics, Protestants, and British security forces had lost, or were to lose, their lives in this war.

In 1987, Fitzduff, Sue Williams and a half-dozen others founded the Northern Ireland Conflict & Mediation Association – predecessor to today’s Mediation Northern Ireland.

Campbell Tills Peace Soil

Campbell arranged for Howard Zehr to make his first trip to Northern Ireland in late 1987. Zehr met with people linked to the judicial system and offered them restorative alternatives. Zehr suggested restorative justice would yield better outcomes than retribution. He also met with some former paramilitary men, helping them to envision replacing vigilant-style violence with restorative justice.

International Leaders in restorative justice – such as Zehr, John Bathistle of Australia and Harry Mika – repeatedly facilitated trainings in Northern Ireland during the late 1980s and 1990s. Zehr came four times. Mika, who has taught at SPI, did so as well as to speak at SPI and to train organizers. Zehr directed from 1990 to 1997, developed and funded many of the conflict transformation programs, and also worked at this center from 1998 to 2000. Today, Fitzduff directs the two universities in Northern Ireland and to write Community Conflict transformations everything I do day-to-day on this job,” says Grimshaw. “I view it as my business – as the business of all of us in the police service – to build relationships with people who were once enemies, to mend fences, to deal with memory, it takes time, and there are setbacks. If it was easy, everybody would be doing peacebuilding, would it not?”

At the headquarters of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Assistant Chief Constable Judith Gillespie shares Grimshaw’s interest in a truly “restorative”

from “summary justice” for youthful offenders.

By the late 1990s Joe Campbell and others trained by Ron Kraybill and Barry Fenton were running three-day training courses in mediation for community workers, probation and police officers, church people, school personnel, and others.

Four community leaders in Northern Ireland – Jim Auld (who took a restorative justice class at SPI ’89), Brian Gormally, Karen McEvoy and Michael Ritchie – issued a “discussion document” in late 1997 entitled “Designing a System of Restorative Community Justice in Northern Ireland.” Among their suggestions were that their fellow citizens learn to view criminal behavior as a breakdown in relationships, which needed to be repaired. They called for emphasis on offenders’ taking responsibility, on repairing the harms done, on care for victims and the community, on repressive elements that contribute to a cycle of violence. The authors did not appear to envision quick acceptance of their ideas – “the authors accept that the proposals suggested in this report may be controversial” – but they expressed hope for dialogue on the subject.

Nigel Grimshaw – a 32-year-old who had been in the police force of Northern Ireland since age 18 – came to the 1998 Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI) to take two courses, both co-taught by Howard Zehr: “Restorative Justice & Victim-Offender Conference” and “Learning From Indigenous Justice: Sentencing Circles and Family Group Conferencing.” Grimshaw had met Zehr earlier that year at a seminar he led in Belfast. Grimshaw had been a skeptic of restorative justice at the outset, but became impressed enough to want to learn more.

“The big thing I have taken out of restorative justice is respect for the relationship,” says Grimshaw. “I believe in persistent efforts to dialogue. No matter that he had to listen to people who spewed hatred at him, who wouldn’t shake hands with him, who wouldn’t look him in the eye – all because he was a police officer – eventually come around to meeting him for coffee just to chat. No matter that this took years of persistent efforts to dialogue. No matter that he had to listen to endless, often unfair, criticisms.

“All the thinking behind restorative justice, it impacts and influences everything I do day-to-day on this job,” says Grimshaw. “I view it as my business – as the business of all of us in the police service – to build relationships with people who might seem alien to you, to mending fences, to deal with memory, it takes time, and there are setbacks. If it was easy, everybody would be doing peacebuilding, wouldn’t they?”

At the headquarters of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Assistant Chief Constable Judith Gillespie shares Grimshaw’s interest in a truly “restorative”...
are made up almost off-hand. One woman in New York suggested that citizens’ groups can provide “not just the eyes and ears of the community, but also the muscle and brain.” That remark prompted Gillespie to shift from thinking of policing “done to a community” to a service “done with a community.”

Most of the teachers tapped for the PODS seminars were, or are, linked toEMU’s current CJP professor Howard Zehr and adjunct CJP professor Ron Kraybill, and adjunct CJP teacher Kay Pranis. The professors followed up with one or more trips to Northern Ireland to expand the seminars into the officers’ homes and workplaces and communities in 1999 and 2000. Collectively, these teachers sought to help the police build relationships with those who distrusted them and to make the reforms necessary for social well-being.

On one level — i.e., among the top political leaders in Northern Ireland — the 1998 Belfast Agreement marked a turning point in relations. This is where the peacebuilder approach took hold, with a focus on relationships with those who distrusted them and to make the service “done with a community” to a service “done with a community.”

The next Peace Service of Northern Ireland was sorely tested in September 2005, when rioting broke out after officers tried to re-route an annual Protestant parade away from a Catholic neighborhood in Belfast. In the past, this particular parade has given rise to much fear and some violence. During two nights of mayhem, 30 police officers were hurt. Visiting members of a U.S. police department later asked Grimsch why the Northern Irish police had restricted themselves to using non-lethal methods of crowd control, such as water hoses. Faced with injury-inflicting rioters, “we would have used live ammunition,” the American officers told their Irish counterparts. “We would have shot without a second thought.”

Grimsch understood his visitors’ urge to maintain order and to protect fellow officers, but he explained: “We showed restraint because of tomorrow. Tomorrow or the next day the violence will subside. When that day comes, my officers and I will need to get up and go back to these communities, go into the schools, visit shops, attend sports events, and build our relationships again.”

“Somewhere along the line, we have to pick up the pieces and move forward,” he continued. “We cannot indulge in the luxury of pointing our finger at people and saying, ‘You hurt our feelings, you were very violent towards us, we aren’t going to play with you anymore.’ We have learned to take the long view, to focus on the future we are building.”

The wisdom embodied by Northern Ireland’s police has caused foreign political and civic leaders to seek their advice. Official delegations from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and many other countries. In 2006, Grimsch and 13 other Irish officers went to Boston, Miami, Providence, and a deep friendship with a dynamic Catholic political activist, Brendan McAllister. As well-known men from different sides of the religious divide, they were uniquely qualified to set mediation Northern Ireland into motion. McAllister was its first director in 1991. Campbell served without pay, becoming assistant director in 1995 after relinquishing his YMCA work.

Mediation Group Becomes Key Player

In the late 1980s, Joe Campbell formed a working relationship and eventually a deep friendship with a dynamic Catholic political activist, Brendan McAllister. As well-known men from different sides of the religious divide, they were uniquely qualified to set mediation Northern Ireland into motion. McAllister was its first director in 1991. Campbell served without pay, becoming assistant director in 1995 after relinquishing his YMCA work.

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Peace After Prison

Martin Snoddon served 16 years in the Maze Prison outside Belfast for his activities as a member of the Ulster Volunteer Forces before he was released under judicial supervision in 1990. “EMU was a resource for me as I wrestled with the legacy of violent conflict,” says Snoddon, who came with a Mediation Northern Ireland group to SPI ’96. Snoddon is now founder and director of Northern Irish outside Belfast for his activities as a member of the wider Belfast community that came under attack on a daily basis. So-called freedom fighters were denying my family, my neighbors and my friends the right to live in peace.

Between the ages of 16 and 19 I actively engaged in violence, and before I had turned 20 I was imprisoned for my actions – in particular, for an attack on a premises that was a base for an IRA unit. Two people lost their lives in that attack. One was my colleague and comrade, who died when a bomb prematurely exploded. The other was a woman, an innocent civilian, who was on the premises at the time.

While I was incarcerated I had the opportunity to explore Irish history, and to ask why, despite my Christian upbringing, and despite my strong belief in a moral existence, I had contributed to the violence of our political conflict. My personal inner journey was long and torturous, but I grew to believe that violence was not going to resolve our political conflict, or repair our damaged and divided communities. While in prison I sat down with some of my enemies. I developed a very strong friendship with one particular Republican prisoner – a friendship that brought me a lot of hostility from my comrades.

In 1990 I was released under license. Upon release I found that this was not a society I wanted to reintegrate with. The polarization had only increased, and my moderate views were now as marginalized as my extremist views had been prior to my incarceration. Nevertheless, I still desired change in our society, and this time I resolved to do it through relationship building and conflict resolution.

This is the path I’ve been walking ever since – sometimes with extreme difficulty. In 2002 I received two death threats – one from each side. The work I engage in antagonizes people. It would have been so much easier to have taken a job in industry and just become insignificant in our society.

My past violent actions were very destructive, but now I’m fighting for peace in a far more constructive manner. The risks aren’t really much different but the rewards are much greater. People who use violence are not only likely to kill someone else, but also to kill part of themselves in the course of those violent actions. They lose part of their humanity. I deeply regret how my violent actions hurt innocent people. I have had to seek forgiveness within myself and to reconcile my past and my present. That in itself has put me in a better place and empowered me to address the needs of others with regard to the legacy of the violent conflict.


What drove me to take up arms was a desire for peace. Violence was visited upon me in 1969 when I was 15 years old. I lived in a Nationalist area of West Belfast, part of a small Protestant community that came under attack on a daily basis. So-called freedom fighters were denying my family, my neighbors and my friends the right to live in peace.

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John Lederach, joined the effort by serving as full-time volunteers from 1994 to 1997 at Mediation Northern Ireland. Bringing experience in Mennonite pastoring, teaching and marriage therapy, the elder Lederach quietly became invaluable trainers and mentors at the center during a period of growing demand for its services.

Campbell valued the low-key, respectful working style of the Lederachers and other Mennonites he met. They did not need or seek immediate results; they sought to be faithful to the biblical call to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God. “A lot of North Americans and South Africans came and gave us simplistic, quick answers – or they just threw up their hands – but the Mennonites didn’t do this,” says Campbell. “They accompanied us through the uncertainty and hopelessness of those years. Their main priority was developing and maintaining relationships across all lines.”

Campbell and McAllister found their conflict transformation principles tested to the utmost in 1995 when they were asked to intervene in a potentially explosive standoff. About 10,000 Protestants wished to parade through a Catholic neighborhood at Drumcree. Using shuttle diplomacy for 16 hours, the two men helped the sides arrive at a negotiated settlement, avoiding violence at that time. As a result of this and other work of “bridging the divide,” Campbell was awarded the Order of the British Empire by the Queen in 1997. He received it with mixed feelings, hoping it would not cause him to be perceived as a British lackey.

Today Campbell does peace work in Nepal and McAllister is a high-level government official, but the full-time volunteers at Mediation Northern Ireland continue to wade into conflict. “I would have been so much easier to have taken a job in industry and just become insignificant in our society,” says Campbell. “I have had to seek forgiveness within myself and to reconcile my past and my present. That in itself has put me in a better place and empowered me to address the needs of others with regard to the legacy of the violent conflict.”


Since 2006, Joe Campbell has worked with the United Mission to Nepal as conflict transformation advisor (more information on page 18).
While the Mennonites were “walking with Irish peacebuilders” in spring/summer 2009 and “Quaker-Style diplomacy” were shuttling between political figures on all sides in Northern Ireland, helping them to dialogue indirectly, out of the public spotlight, where posturing tended to occur. Under the auspices of the Society of Friends, the Williams quietly worked at helping the sides to understand each other better, in the hope that this might lead to peace initiatives. It did. Fitzduff notes that “forms of neutral spaces where they could relax and be open to hearing new ideas, as well as the ‘other side.’”

Beginning in 1999, Campbell and Brendan McAllister ushered a diverse array of people from Northern Ireland to the United States, where 56 persons over the next 13 years took classes at EMU’s Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI), while others did professional exchanges in cities around North America. The tours of several U.S. police departments described on page 11 were one of these initiatives.

At the 1996 SPI, McAllister took “Advanced Conciliation” taught by Ron Kraybill and “Trauma Healing and Reconciliation” taught by Barry Hart. In 1998, McAllister returned and took “Restorative Justice and Victim-Offender Conferencing” taught by Howard Zehr and Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz. This last course, in particular, is pertinent to McAllister’s new job as Victim Commissioner in Northern Ireland.14

In 1996, when McAllister first came to EMU, SPI was in its infancy, operating under the name “Summer Peacebuilding Institute” for the first time, though it was the third year peace workers from around the world had gathered at EMU. Mediation Northern Ireland ensured its home country was well represented, accounting for 13 of the 50 SPI ’96 participants.4

The Northern Ireland group was diverse, including Catholics and Protestants who worked on housing issues, youth diversion projects, healing for trauma victims, and facilitating indirect dialogue between opposing groups of fighters. There was even a former prisoner “lifer” – Martin Snoddon had served 16 years in prison as a result of participating in a Protestant paramilitary attack that caused two deaths. (For more on Snoddon, see page 14.) Ironically, the participants needed to meet on the neutral soil of SPI to get to know each other. Most who attended SPI ’96 went on to play key roles in Northern Ireland’s peace process. Some, including Snoddon, now travel the world as consultants, responding to requests from around the world.

Among that 1996 group was Sandra Peake, now executive director of WAVE Trauma Centre. (Peake returned for SPI ’98, as McAllister did) WAVE was formed in 1991 to support women left behind by the violence in Northern Ireland. Wave has expanded from two Belfast widows, one Catholic and one Protestant, to support “anyone bereaved or traumatized through the violence, irrespective of religious, cultural or political belief.” Given that at least 6,800 people have lost a member of their immediate family to “The Troubles” in Northern Ireland, WAVE has no shortage of referrals. About 600 new cases come through the doors of WAVE’s five centers each year despite the end of the conflict.

Barry Hart and Nancy Good Sider, co-teachers of the trauma trauma course in SPI ’97, have long been historically clear, and they were often prepared to travel with us for long periods of time, even residing with us for years,” said Fitzduff, who is now professor-director of the graduate program in conflict and conflict at Brandeis University in Massachusetts. “They were not working for career gain.”

In contrast, Fitzduff felt some other groups made things worse: “Despite the visits of hundreds of international academic and conflict-related delegations, only a handful will be remembered as having contributed significantly to the goal of ending the conflict — indeed, some external interventions have been nothing short of disastrous.”

To SPI They Come! Refreshed by his 1997-98 sabbatical at the Mennonite seminary in the United States, Joe Campbell saw advantages in removing key players from Northern Ireland for a while and bringing them into neutral spaces where they could relax and be open to hearing new ideas, as well as the “other side.”

In 2008, Brendan McAllister became one of four people appointed to the new high-profile, government-backed Victims Commission in Northern Ireland. Peter O’Reilly, is an alumnus of three SPI sessions (1997, 1999, 2005). At the invitation of Mediation Northern Ireland, Mark Chupp, Goshen College alum and SPI alumnus, followed up on his training by doing training in five of Northern Ireland’s most violent areas in 1997.

Of WAVE’s 93 paid and volunteer staffers, about a third have received training here. For obvious reasons, they have almost all ways enrolled in one of the trauma-transformation courses taught by Joe and/or Sandy Davis. Yet, like all alumni of SPI’s programs, they have adapted and expanded upon what they learned in these sessions. As a result, “they bring experiences and practices

In SPI ’08, WAVE volunteer Mark Kelly was pleased to take “Using Media to Promote Peace.” The topic itself interested him, given that WAVE would like to spread their stories without relying entirely on the traditional media. Of even more interest to Kelly, however, were the stories told by classmates from conflict zones around the world, including Darfur, Rwanda and the Baltic region. “It made me less insular,” he said. “It made me realize that peacebuilding is not an easy task, but nobody is alone. I heard of so many atrocities that people had to overcome. It’s a pick me up. It can bolster you in your endeavors, making you want to redouble your efforts.”

Kelly shared his own story: In the summer of 1977, Kelly was managing a neighborhood center owned by a Catholic church, where youths boxed and otherwise exercised. After work one day, Kelly was relaxing at a pub near his workplace, when a Protestant- planted bomb exploded beside him. He lost both legs. He was 18.

Some 30 years later, Kelly learned that WAVE center offered therapeutic massage to trauma survivors. After years of using prostheses, Kelly entered the center in the hope of easing the never-ending pain in what remains of his legs. He kept coming back for various activities and now is a mainstay at WAVE, serving on its board of directors and anchoring its Wednesday evening men’s group. He’s also a single father of four, ages 18 to 26. “Three of them are involved with members of other communities,” he says, referring to non-Catholics. This suits Kelly fine: “The fundamentals of all religions is love for your fellow men and women. I raised my children to follow their hearts.”

With a total of four people, EMU’s Summer Peacebuilding Institute – 32 over the last decade – than any other organization outside of the United States. Peake recently checked a listing of WAVE participants in EMU courses over the years and found: It has been a real microcosm of Northern Ireland society – individuals bereaved/befriended by the security forces; individuals with family members in the security forces; individuals bereaved by Loyalists, Republicans and security forces; individuals with family members in the security forces who were killed; people who served in the security forces themselves; and families whose loved ones represent the disappeared – that is, those loved ones were abducted and their bodies secretly buried and yet unlocated. Eight of the group were staff. All the rest were, or became, volunteers. The majority are still involved in the organization.

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12 After the death of husband Steve in late 2004, Sue Williams moved to the United States, her home country, to succeed Pat Martin as director of CAF’s Summer Peacebuilding Institute in the summer of 2008. Sue and Steve co-authored (with Simon Fisher, Dekha Ibrahim Abdi, Jawed Ludin and Richard Smith) “Using Media to Promote Peace.” The topic itself interested him, given that WAVE would like to spread their stories without relying entirely on the traditional media. Of even more interest to Kelly, however, were the stories told by classmates from conflict zones around the world, including Darfur, Rwanda and the Baltic region. “It made me less insular,” he said. “It made me realize that peacebuilding is not an easy task, but nobody is alone. I heard of so many atrocities that people had to overcome. It’s a pick me up. It can bolster you in your endeavors, making you want to redouble your efforts.”

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13 This comes from the 2002 Handbook of International Peacebuilding, edited by John Paul Lederach and Janice Moomaw Jenner, current director of the Practice and Training Institute at CAF.

14 In 2008, Brendan McAllister became one of four people appointed to the new high-profile, government-backed Victims Commission in Northern Ireland. Patrick O’Reilly, is an alumnus of three SPI sessions (1997, 1999, 2005). At the invitation of Mediation Northern Ireland, Mark Chupp, Goshen College alum and SPI alumnus, followed up on his training by doing training in five of Northern Ireland’s most violent areas in 1997.

15 For more information on SPI, visit www.emu.edu/spi

16 peacebuilder spring/summer 2009

photo by David Conder

emu.edu/cjp

northern ireland

Northern Ireland
Campbell, MA ’02
Shifts To Nepal’s Conflict

A year ago, the BBC documentary series “Distant Horizons” explored why Joe Campbell left Northern Ireland. In 2006 for an extended period instead of enjoying the relative calm and prosperity of his native country, conditions for which he had labored for many decades. “Joe Campbell could have put his feet up when he turned 60 and settled into a comfortable retirement in Northern Ireland,” said an article on the BBC News website. “Instead he and his wife Janet opted to take their work skills abroad for a four-year stint as volunteers in Nepal.”

The Campbells are offering the kind of quiet support to Nepalese peacebuilders that Mennonites offered to them and their colleagues in Northern Ireland during “The Troubles.” “When I think about John Paul (Lederach), Ron (Kraybill) and the others, they are models for how to be outsiders in a conflict. As they demonstrated, I listen, I ask questions, and perhaps tell a story from the Irish context,” says Campbell. “I try to bring the Nepalese a sense of hope when at times they can feel hopeless.”

Joe and Janet work with the United Mission to Nepal, an umbrella organization of 30 international mission agencies. Joe has the title of “conflict transformation advisor.” Janet, a nurse, is in charge of pastoral care for the international staff. She also does trauma work with the dozen Nepalese staff.

Starting with the Nepalese staff at United Mission, Campbell hopes to inspire more people in Nepal to “envision a career in peacebuilding for their country and to prepare for the long haul.”

Campbell notes that the war in Nepal was shorter than in Northern Ireland – 10 years instead of 30 – but it was bloodier: “over 14,000 killed; even today there’s over 1,000 people missing – killed, buried, burned, or who knows?” Nepal entered a fragile ceasefire period in 2005, with elections for a Constituent Assembly held in the spring of 2008. But the brutality of the previous decade has left wounds and scars that remain extremely painful, with renewed violence hovering as a possibility.

“We offered a lot of experience in Ireland that we would like to share,” says Campbell. “We would like to prevent or shorten what we went through.”

Like Northern Ireland, Nepal has no outright victor and no loser at this point. Campbell hopes “the hurts of war are not still too raw to prevent the Nepalese from working together in a coalition government.”

Concerning the long term, Campbell is optimistic. “They can work together to make this work.”

While Campbell is a four-year visitor to Nepal, seven graduates of EMU’s MA in conflict transformation program work in Nepal on a permanent basis: Ameet Dhakal, Anjana Shaky, Debendra Manandhar, Hemlata Rai, Yasodha Shrestha, Kumar Anuraj Jha, and Monica Rijal. That enrich the class,” says Good Sider. “They are teachers too. We teach each other.”

Ireland-Based Training Programs

In 2003 CJP professor Jayne Docherty and then-staffer Carolyn Yoder accepted invitations to lead workshops on trauma and peacebuilding at two conferences in Northern Ireland – one in Belfast (primarily Protestant) and one in Newcastle (mixed Protestant and Catholic). More than 200 people attended one or more of the workshops led by Docherty and Yoder, who stressed the link between unaddressed trauma and cyclical violence.

Docherty and Yoder used, in part, the training techniques of Seminars in Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR), a relatively new program at EMU. Alicyn Hart directed Yoder. STAR was developed to help New York City community and religious leaders deal with the collective trauma of 9/11. Since 2003, five people from Northern Ireland have traveled to take STAR at EMU.

Yet this barely begins to meet the need. Consider: 5,000 people suffering from trauma have contacted WAVE in the last 18 years. What more can be done?

One answer is to train STAR facilitators in Northern Ireland and elsewhere in the world, supplying them with the field-tested manuals used in the EMU-based trainings.16 Another answer comes from Sandra Peak at WAVE: Set up EMU-style trainings at home institutions. “We were very mindful of the value of the trauma programs at EMU – the first formal or specialized trauma program that we had undertaken,” says Peak.

“How Did Northern Ireland Move Toward Peace?” is a 54-page report published in June 2007 by CDI’s Collaborative Learning Projects. It can be found online at www.cdaiinc.com/cdawww/default.php

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17 From Northern Ireland, Hedley Abernethy, MA ’06, and Joe Campbell, MA ’02; From the Republic of Ireland, Matt Byrnes, MA ’06; and the U.S., Rhoda Kraus, Grad Cert. ’07; Jennifer Larson Sawin, MA ’04, Libby Schrag, MA ’01, and Emily Stanton, MA ’00.

18 “How Did Northern Ireland Move Toward Peace?” is a 54-page report published in June 2007 by CDI’s Collaborative Learning Projects. It can be found online at www.cdaiinc.com/cdawww/default.php

“Much Done, But More To Do”

The ripple effect of a small group of people persisting over the years becomes apparent if one considers the collective impact of the 66 people from Northern Ireland, including 32 from WAVE, who have taken classes in EMU’s Summer Peacebuilding Institute 100 police officers and community leaders in Policing Our Divided Society taught (in part) by EMU professors 100,000+ in Northern Ireland engaged in peace work 26 Irish nationals who have earned masters degrees in conflict transformation at EMU, along with 4 U.S. alumni who spent extended periods in Northern Ireland engaged in peace work 1 Mennonite, Joe Liechty, who earned a doctorate in Irish history by focusing on the religious roots of conflict, a study enabled because Liechty had no affiliation to any side of the conflict.
percent of the shift away from violence came as a result of work at the civil society level (where Mennonites generally situate themselves), with another 25 percent government-initiated. The remaining 25 percent was attributable to other influences, such as initiatives by the Clintons and widespread revulsion to terrorism (noting that their society can be a place where they and their children can work nicely to arrange for quiet, non-violently. In the early 1980s, Northern Ireland probably contained no more than 50 people wholly dedicated to peace work. Each person touched by those people in turn rallied others, resulting in tens of thousands by the early 2000s working at all levels of society to consolidate peace in Northern Ireland.

2. Raise awareness of the humanness of “The Other” and of the existence of alternatives to violence. Einstein is credited with saying, “Problems cannot be solved at the same level of consciousness that created them.” Increasing empathy and awareness must be an early goal of peacebuilders.

3. Head to neutral soil, if possible. In highly charged situations — where any contact with “The Other” might be viewed as betrayal by one’s own group — it can work nicely to arrange for quiet, intergroup contacts away from one’s home setting.

4. Informal contacts are key! Find ways to enhance socializing — over food and drink, while sightseeing or fishing, sharing photos of one’s children, or even singing a song together. It almost doesn’t matter the nature of the joint activity, as long as the parties in conflict have a chance to get to know each other as humans. For Terry Shevlin, formerly in the Royal Ulster Constabulary — where being a Catholic policeman made him an assassination target — the highlight of a 1999 educational trip to Atlanta under “Policing Our Divided Society” was when he and others in his highly diverse group from Northern Ireland responded to an invitation by a black Baptist preacher, a scarred veteran of the Civil Rights movement, to interlock arms and sing “We Shall Overcome!”

5. Recognize and address people’s deepest needs, including their fears, their sense of being besieged and treated unjustly, and of having less access to power and resources. Understand the impact of trauma on them. Unaddressed injustices and trauma fuel cyclical violence.

6. Small changes matter. For many years, the Belfast City Council, controlled by Unionists in Northern Ireland, displayed a banner on city hall that read, “Belfast Says Noel.” For Christmas 1994, the banner was changed to “Belfast Says Noel.” With a tiny change of wording, city residents were nudged toward a more positive attitude.

7. All players are needed. Courageous, visionary leaders who say “enough” and seek solutions; international assistance from the European Union, UN, United States and others; and civic society activities, such as religious

By Bonnie Price Lofton
groups working with political prisoners, academics revamping school curricula to remove fuel for the flames, and restorative justice practitioners working with the police force. Cumulatively, all contributed to positive change in Northern Ireland.

8. **Quiet, unpublishable “shuttle diplomacy” can be very useful.** By allowing opposing parties to hear each other’s stories and even to send subtle messages to each other, citizen-diplomats can play a useful role, assuming they absolutely guard the confidences of those whom they are shuttling between. In Northern Ireland, where face-to-face dialogue is not a cultural norm, this style of indirect mediation is frequently employed.

9. **Be prepared to build upon “iconic events,” such as the impact of a visiting international figure, such as Bill Clinton or Kofi Annan. Or it may even be a “peaceful” demonstration that ends in violence. Or it may be a natural disaster. Or a well-known, wronged person who publically chooses the path of reconciliation rather than revenge, such as Nelson Mandela. Whatever it is, the iconic event can mark the beginning of a sea-change in people’s perceptions, assuming the event is leveraged by others working for peace.

10. **Funding makes a huge difference.** In Ireland, the governments of the north and south funded civil society and local political initiatives, as did the EU, U.K., U.S. and other governments. Funds contributed by Irish-Americans also factored in (sometimes for the worse, when weapon acquisitions were funded, but as the peace process unfolded, this funding tended to shift to community-building initiatives.)

11. **Tap the energy and peace hopes of women.** Women’s groups tended to focus on the human side of the conflict in Northern Ireland, rather than on political issues, like the wording of the constitution and the definition of borders. Attracting women on all sides of the conflict to work for better health, education and employment, women’s groups played a huge role in moving Northern Ireland toward the Belfast Agreement.

12. **Persevere!** “There were no quick fixes in Northern Ireland,” says Sue Williams. “There was a series of modest, but essential, initiatives which did not succeed in the first instance, but which allowed others to build upon them.”

13. **Time can be an ally.** When the leaders of political parties and armed groups have been in leadership positions for 20, 30, even 40 years, dealing with a bottomless pit of conflict, they tend to become open to change. “They get tired. Society gets tired. It may be fatigue, exhaustion, aging, diminishing testosterone,” says Williams.

14. **Duplication of efforts is okay.** With Northern Ireland’s prisons filled with men linked to paramilitary organizations in the 1990s, all kinds of well-intentioned organizations sent volunteers and staffs to work with the prisoners – Save the Children, the Quakers, Protestant and Catholic clergy, Workers’ Education Association, prisoner-support groups associated with the paramilitaries themselves, etc. “When one program failed, lost its funding or its credibility, or simply lost its way, there were others able to continue the work,” says Williams.

15. **Underlying socio-economic issues must be on the table.** For example, if there is high unemployment or discrimination regarding who gets the jobs, the impact of this must be acknowledged and steps put in place to address it, as occurred when the Fair Employment Commission and Tribunal was established in Northern Ireland in 1978.

16. **Complete victory for a particular side is rarely possible.** Once the parties realize that, the door cracks open to a peace process.

17. **Hard truths must be part of the dialogue.** To move toward peace, differences have to be admitted, “hard truths” must be exchanged. Otherwise the parties are operating out of completely different perceptions of reality. With such exchanges, the parties will still disagree, but at least “The Others’” reality will be acknowledged, a necessary starting point.

18. **Listen and talk. Again. And again. And again.** The process is useful, even if repetitive. Some of the emotional “affect” is reduced in the talking and listening. It lessens people up psychologically. For people who feel marginalized, it reduces their sense of exclusion.

19. **If from outside the conflict, stay out of the driver’s seat.** The people “on the ground,” the locals, know more and understand more about their own conflict than outsiders. Support from outsiders for the efforts of local peace workers will usually be welcomed, but outsiders first should ask, “What kind of support do you need?” and provide that in a respectful, humble manner. Beginning in 1989, Mennonite agencies sending volunteers to Ireland put themselves under the scrutiny of a group of Protestants and Catholics from both North and South, called Support Body for Mennonite Witness in Ireland. In the spirit of serving rather than being in charge, the Mennonites consulted with this group before undertaking initiatives or accepting invitations.

20. **Think far future.** Know that your work will make a difference far beyond any peace accord signed under TV lights. Those years of building up women’s organizations, of interacting with prisoners (who are about to be released into society), of introducing restorative practices in school systems... these will all be needed to enable the paper agreement to stick, for lasting changes to seep through society.

21. **Give away your peacebuilding knowledge and techniques.** Celebrate when other organizations take hold of your best ideas and practices, perhaps even setting up similar peacebuilding programs. This is a sign that you are doing God’s work, not your own. As the president of EMU, Loren Swartzendruber, has expressed it: “The more of us in the peace business, the better.”

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1. Further information on the ideas attributed in this list to Sue Williams, director of EMU’s Center for Peacebuilding, can be found in a 54-page, 2007 report she co-authored with Niall Fitzduff, “How Did Northern Ireland Move Toward Peace?” at www.cdainc.com/cdawww/default.php

2. Asked to review this list before publication, Joe Campbell wrote that he found it “good and helpful,” but wished to add two observations: (1) “People change – that’s why we are in education, why there are churches, etc.” and (2) “Conflict is started by people and they will be ended by people.”
While Nilofar Sakhi was pursuing her MA in conflict transformation at EMU from 2005 to 2007, her younger sister Farishta was home in Afghanistan making plans of her own to attend graduate school. Farishta had replaced Nilofar working in a social organization, WASSA, in western Afghanistan. But Farishta did not plan to follow Nilofar to North America to attend graduate school. Farishta was willing to go almost anywhere to school, except to the United States. She understood why her sister had come, given that she had secured a full ride to a U.S. university under the Fulbright program. But Farishta did not like the way the U.S. government had conducted itself in Afghanistan, disregarding the advice and wisdom of local people as matters went from bad to worse. Farishta also did not like the materialistic, self-centered lifestyles she had seen in Hollywood movies.

Yet when Nilofar returned home two years ago, Farishta was impressed with the skills and attitudes her older sister displayed. Nilofar and Saeed Murad Rahi, another ’07 graduate of the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP), worked in a collaborative manner to patiently and respectfully visit community members and listen to what each had to say. Rahi had also been a Fulbright-supported student. “They did not return from the United States thinking they would be the presidents of Afghanistan,” said Farishta. “They returned and began quietly working at both the grassroots and national levels for positive change.”

“We come from a very religious family,” said Farishta. “My grandfather and uncle are mullahs. When Nilofar came back, I didn’t find that somebody had snatched away her Muslim values. They had added something good to her values.”

In response to Farishta’s questions, Nilofar told her younger sister that the CJP community was a special place in the United States, where “you can speak from your heart and everyone is really working for peace – it’s their beliefs, it’s their way of living, it’s not just something they do for prestige reasons.”

Impressed by Nilofar’s words and example, Farishta applied for a Fulbright scholarship to earn her masters at CJP too. While awaiting news of her application, Farishta came to know her future husband, a social worker named Ramin Nouroozi. He, too, had watched Nilofar and Rahi apply the mediation and negotiation skills they had learned at CJP to working with local councils in Afghanistan.

Ramin was friends with another Afghani student at EMU, whom he managed to visit in September, 2007. Ramin even attended an EMU class with his friend. Ramin returned to Afghanistan thinking, “We do not have enough people trained in this peacebuilding field.” This became Ramin’s favorite saying: “The more we sweat in peace, the less we bleed in war.”

In the spring of 2008, Farishta learned that she had won the much-coveted Fulbright scholarship to study at CJP. By then, however, she knew she did not want to leave Ramin to pursue her masters degree. Unfortunately, he did not have a scholarship to accompany her. Perhaps Ramin could win a Fulbright the following year, but what would it do to their marriage to be on different continents for their first year as newlyweds? Farishta gave up her Fulbright award in order to stay close to the man she married in June 2008.

In January 2009, after pooling as much family money as possible, Farishta and Ramin came to Harrisonburg to begin their journey toward being trained peacebuilders. They are not sure their families can provide all the funds they need to complete their master’s degrees, but they will learn as much as possible before returning home to join Nilofar and Rahi in working with grassroots organizations in their home country.

“In my country, there is lots of love for power,” says Ramin. “I prefer the ‘power of love’ over the ‘love of power.’ I want to contribute to a sustainable peace in Afghanistan.”

Donations and grants enable the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP) to prepare the next generation of peacebuilders. For ways you or your organization can support CJP, please contact CJP associate director of development Phoebe Kilby at phoebe.kilby@emu.edu or (540) 432-4081.

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- M.A. or Graduate Certificate in Conflict Transformation
- NEW! Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship. Offered by EMU’s MBA program in collaboration with CJP.
- NEW! Graduate Certificate in Theology for Peacebuilding. Offered by Eastern Mennonite Seminary in collaboration with CJP.

Summer Peacebuilding Institute (SPI)
Short-term intensive courses for professional development/training or academic credit. Participate in one or up to four sessions.
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- May 4-12
  Session I
- May 14-22
  Session II
- May 26-June 3
  Session III
- June 8-12
  Session IV

Seminars in Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR)
More information on fees and descriptions of seminar levels is online at:
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- March 23-29
  STAR Level II
- June 8-12
  STAR Level I (during SPI)
- September 14-18
  STAR Level I

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