



# INTERFAITH PEACE MINISTRY OF ORANGE COUNTY

" Doing the work of faith-based peace with justice "

## NEWS FROM THE ORANGE COUNTY INTERFAITH COMMITTEE TO AID FARM WORKERS

By Suzanne Darweesh, Board Member, IPMOC

On February 6, 2010 the Orange County Interfaith Committee to Aid Farm Workers celebrated their 45<sup>th</sup> year of supporting farm workers with a fundraiser for the United Farm Workers, the union that Cesar Chavez founded in the 1960s. Arturo Rodriguez, President of the UFW, was the speaker.

President Rodriguez spoke about the UFW history with Giumarra Vineyards, the largest table grape company in the US (employing 3000 workers in California) and one of the first companies to sign a contract with the UFW. At present it is one of the most egregious in its treatment of farm workers. Two of the 15 farm workers who have died in the fields recently from heat related causes were working on Giumarra-owned property. There are also instances of pesticides being sprayed while workers are picking produce in the fields. Furthermore, a suit has been filed because of a highly offensive case of sexual harassment directed towards a seventeen-year-old young woman. She and her relatives who came to her defense were fired instead of the boss who instigated the harassment. Giumarra markets its fruits and vegetables under the name, Nature's Partner, which in turn sells this produce to Kroger's. Kroger headquarters, based in Cincinnati, Ohio, owns Ralph's and Food for Less here in California, as well as other grocery store chains in 31 states. Please write a letter of protest to the CEO of Kroger about its treatment of farm workers. You can find a sample letter with the CEO's name and address by going to the website of the National Farm Worker Ministry,

[www.nfw.org](http://www.nfw.org), click onto "campaigns" and then "Support Giumarra workers."

Immigration and Congressman Luis Gutierrez's reform bill on immigration was also discussed by Mr. Rodriguez. That bill, referred to by the acronym CIR ASAP, Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity Act of 2009, includes the AgJobs farm worker immigration legislation, which would provide an opportunity for undocumented agricultural workers to achieve legal status in this country. The bill has 91 co-sponsors at present. The AgJobs bill, first introduced by Senator Dianne Feinstein, has enjoyed bi-partisan support by both workers and growers. More information can also be found on the NFWM and UFW websites. For information about local campaigns and activities please email me at [sdarweesh@aol.com](mailto:sdarweesh@aol.com).

**The IPM-OC treasury takes a big hit every time we send out a newsletter. If you have not made a donation recently (or even if you have!), would you take a minute and consider making a donation today? There is a self addressed envelope in this newsletter for your convenience. Thank you!**

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MODERN DAY SLAVERY

By Maria Elena Perales, Board Member, IPMOC

In a Presidential Proclamation on January 4, 2010, President Obama declared, "Fighting modern slavery and human trafficking is a shared responsibility. This month, I urge all Americans to educate themselves about all forms of modern slavery and the signs and consequences of human trafficking. Together, we can and must end

this most serious, ongoing criminal civil rights violation.”

Slavery conjures images of the U.S. Civil War era, yet modern day slavery exists today in greater numbers than the mid-19th century, often right under our noses. It's estimated **that 27 million people worldwide are victims of human trafficking**. Such an outrageous crime against humanity only exists because traffickers rely on people looking in another direction. You can help bring an end to human trafficking by learning more about it and shining a light in the hidden places where traffickers operate.

**Learn more and help promote awareness.**

Visit the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force website:

<http://www.egovlink.com/ochumantrafficking/>. The OCHTTF is sponsored by the Westminster Police Department and Community Service Programs, Inc. It works with Orange County Law Enforcement, Federal Law Enforcement, Victim Service providers, community and faith based organizations to identify, rescue, and serve victims of human trafficking in Orange County.

**What should you do if you see something that looks like Human Trafficking?** If it is an emergency, call 911. If it looks suspicious, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) **Hotline 888- 3737-888** and explain what you have seen. The NHTRC will then contact the appropriate Orange County personnel to follow up.

A victim of trafficking may look like many people you see every day. However if you see someone who “appears to be unable to speak for themselves”, someone else is controlling them, “they appear fearful, especially of law enforcement” or someone else has their documents (passport/identification), call 888-3737-888.

### **APARTHEID IN ISRAEL**

By Rev. Dr. Dennis Short, Board Member, IPMOC

From January 18-27, 2010, my wife, Linda, and I joined with 10 other members of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), one Methodist minister, and a retired attorney from Santa Barbara, traveled throughout Israel/Palestine. Our visit was coordinated by Rev.

Kathy Nichols, a former missionary who had been stationed with Sabeel for a number of years. Our guide was a Palestinian Christian who was very pleasant and knowledgeable. Our bus driver was a Palestinian Muslim.

Upon arriving at the airport in Tel Aviv, we drove directly to our “1 star hotel” in Bethlehem where our window looked right at and over the 20-foot wall dividing a beautiful field on the Israeli side from the Palestinian 2-5 story refugee camp on the other side. Some refugees have been in that camp for 50 years. They still have the keys to their homes, taken from them 50 years ago, hanging in their living rooms.

In Jerusalem, we met a Palestinian woman and her children living in a tent next to her home which had been bulldozed by the Israeli Army because they didn't have a building permit, a document not available from the government.

One of the most impressive persons we met was Father Naim Ateek, the Director of Sabeel. Sabeel is Arabic for “the way.” I strongly recommend his book, [A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation](#), with a forward by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Over and over we met and talked with Palestinians who had lost their home sites to Israeli “settlers.” We also met with the Jewish group, Rabbis for Human Rights – a group working to protect Palestinians from losing their homes. Average Palestinians and Israelis want peace and I'm very pleased that today, March 8, 2010, both Palestinian and Israeli leaders have agreed to sit down and talk with Vice President Joe Biden and George Mitchell. But as of now, Israel is very much, in the words of former President Carter, “an apartheid state.”

### **COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY (CTBT)**

#### **We Can Prevent New Nuclear Weapons by Preventing Countries from Testing**

By Jeanne Whitesell, Board Member, IPMOC

In 1999, the U.S. Senate voted not to ratify the CTBT. Many of the Senators who voted “no” expressed concerns about two issues:

- the ability of the U.S. to maintain its arsenal without testing

- the ability to verify that other countries are not testing

*Today, significant progress has been made to address these Concerns.*

**Maintain Existing Nuclear Weapons:** In 1992, President George H.W. Bush halted nuclear testing; the U.S. has not conducted a nuclear explosion since. However, every year, each warhead type in the arsenal undergoes a rigorous evaluation and is certified safe and reliable.

**Monitor Tests and Verify Compliance:** The CTBT would make it easier to detect and deter clandestine nuclear testing. It would be possible to do short-notice, on-site inspections. In the March 2009 Scientific American, experts concluded that "detecting a test of a nuclear weapon has become so effective and reliable that no nation could expect to get away with secretly exploding a device having military significance."

#### **NOW IS THE TIME FOR CTBT RATIFICATION.**

##### **What you can do!**

**TALK** to people in your communities about the dangers of nuclear weapons.

**SIGN UP** for action alerts so you can make your voice heard: [www.wandtakeaction.org](http://www.wandtakeaction.org)

**WRITE** letters to the editor about this treaty and the promise of disarmament.

**CONTACT** WAND Education Fund for more information. Visit [www.WANDEducationFund.org](http://www.WANDEducationFund.org).

**LEARN** more and stay informed.

### **A MUSLIM RESPONSE CONCERNING THE SUBJECT OF SUICIDE ATTACKS AND THE USE OF TERROR**

By Amina Palmer, Board Member, IPMOC

In 2009 two suicide missions took place on U.S. soil, one was thwarted by alert and courageous citizens, the other was completed leaving a number of fatalities and injured survivors. These acts, as well as the weekly reports that we receive on suicide missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, give the distinct impression that Islam and Muslims give tacit approval to these methods of attack, or that Islamic doctrine makes allowances for this sort of anomalous behavior. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It is unfortunate, to say the least, that through a twisted combination of misinterpretation and charismatic rhetoric, certain individuals and groups (such as Al Qaeda) have played upon people's grievances and misfortune to incite and engage them in these activities.

To begin with, there are a number of *ayats* (verses) from the Qur'an that illustrate and affirm the value and sanctity of one's own life as well as the lives of others. The following quote is from *Sura* (Chapter) Five, titled *al-Ma'ida* (The Table). This quote immediately follows the story of Cain and Abel:

So We decreed for the tribe of Israel that if someone kills another person-- unless it is manslaughter or for causing corruption in the earth-- it is as if he had murdered all mankind. And if anyone gives life to another person, it is as if he had given life to all mankind.

(5:32)

Historically in Islam, suicide has never been an approved mode of military conduct, but it is significant that in 1983 over 200 U.S. Marines stationed in Lebanon were killed by a suicide mission condoned and carried out by Islamic Jihad. The Americans subsequently pulled out of Lebanon and this was seen by many Muslims as a major victory over the occupying forces of a western foreign power. As a result, disparate Muslim groups and individuals began to take it upon themselves to interpret (or misinterpret) and embellish upon Islamic law in areas that concern the specific conditions for engaging in military activity. In actual fact, no act of war may be carried out by a Muslim unless a 'state of war' has been formally declared by a legitimate ruler of state. One cannot self-interpret Qur'an or Islamic *hadith* (traditions). Furthermore, it is also forbidden to behave as if one has the authority to issue ad-hoc edicts for others to follow. Interpretation of legal issues is meant to be examined and discussed by knowledgeable and trusted scholars and it is considered a serious and methodical process. When examining how Al Qaeda operates in these realms, we see that much of the rhetoric centers on revenge and revenge tactics and that the reasoning being used to underpin their logic goes from the act (that they

sanction) and then moves backwards. In other words, they use the fallacious logic of “the end justifies the means”.

Hopefully the tide is turning. Although there have been a number of Muslim voices who have denounced these tactics, the devastation caused by suicide attacks automatically receives a larger portion of press coverage. Recently, an article in the Los Angeles Times on December 15, 2009 focused on Muslim efforts to reject the methods of terror embraced by groups such as Al Qaeda. Ironically, the movement is based in Libya where LA Times correspondent, Borzou Daragahi has been stationed while conducting research. He titled his article: “Turning their backs on Al Qaeda, the move by Libyan militants is unique--perhaps a big--setback for the terror network”. In Egypt, al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Group) is another group that has officially renounced violence. They did this in 1997. Originally, they formed as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood who had renounced violence in the 1970s. In the 1990s al-Gama’a used violence and terrorist tactics to focus on their main cause, which was to overthrow the Egyptian government. The now imprisoned blind cleric, Omar Abdel-Rahman, was one of the spiritual leaders of this movement. As a result of al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya’s activities many of their members have been in prison since the 1990s. Then, in 1997, scholars from al-Azhar University, traditionally considered the pinnacle of Muslim scholarship throughout the Islamic world, managed to bring al-Gama’a’s renouncement of terrorism and violence to fruition. The al-Azhar scholars engaged the prisoners in debate and challenging discussions based on sound Qur’anic references and interpretation<sup>1</sup>. This intellectual approach to anti-terrorism is quietly gaining support in the Muslim world.

For Muslims, intentional suicide is considered a grievous transgression. Although some feel that suicide missions are their last and most effective weapon of choice, there is gathering support for the position that the disregard for one’s own life and others is not only contrary to Islamic law and tradition, but that any ‘perceived victory’ through suicide and terror is actually an illusion and simply leads to additional violence and destruction.

Addendum: As of March 2nd, 2010 Sheikh Dr. Tahir ul-Qadri, who is considered one of the highest authorities on Muslim law and spirituality, issued a legal edict (fatwa) on the issue of suicide and terror. His 600 page document condemns suicide and terror:

London’s The Independent newspaper reports that the imam told fellow Muslims: “Terrorism is terrorism, violence is violence and it has no place in Islamic teaching and no justification can be provided for it, or any kind of excuses of ifs and buts. The world needs an absolute, unconditional, unqualified and total condemnation of terrorism.”<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Tahir’s announcement will be taken very seriously by the Muslim community because of the stature of his knowledge and sincerity. We all hope and pray for a universal acceptance of this balanced and informed approach.

<sup>1</sup> Electronic source:

[http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=Article\\_C&cid=1183484069565&pagename=Zone-English-Living\\_Shariah/LSELayout](http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=Article_C&cid=1183484069565&pagename=Zone-English-Living_Shariah/LSELayout)

<sup>2</sup> Electronic source:

[http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/03/03/terror.fatwa.analysis/index.html?section=cnn\\_latest](http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/03/03/terror.fatwa.analysis/index.html?section=cnn_latest)

## UPDATE ON SB 399

By Fred Bush, Board Member, IPMOC

As many of you will remember, many faith communities in the LA and Orange County areas celebrated Friday, May 22 through Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup> 2009 as “Juvenile Justice Sabbath.” The purpose of the event was to draw attention to a gross miscarriage of justice, which is taking place in the courts of the state of California. In California, youth under the age of 18 years old are sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. They will spend the rest of their lives in prison.

Senate Bill 399, The Fair Sentencing for Youth Act, which was introduced in February 2009, will rectify this situation. The Act would provide an opportunity for review and re-sentencing after ten years or more of incarceration. Recognizing that teenagers are still maturing, this Act creates specific criteria and an intense, three-part review process that would result in the possibility of a lesser sentence for those offenders who have

matured and proven themselves to have changed. Under this Act, youth offenders serving life sentences first would have to submit a petition to the sentencing court showing they have met certain criteria. Those offenders who are found to have met the criteria would have the opportunity for a re-sentencing hearing. Not all youth would get a new sentencing hearing, and those who did would have no guarantee of getting a lesser sentence. Even if re-sentenced, most offenders will still face a parole board and must prove they merit parole. Otherwise, they will remain in prison. There would be no guarantee of parole, only the opportunity to earn it.

Last year the Bill was passed by the California Senate and was then taken up by the Public Safety Committee of the California Assembly. On Jan 12 2010, the Assembly Public Safety Committee passed the Bill by a vote of 4 to 2. It now heads to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, where the cost of the bill will be analyzed. SB 399 could save the state millions of dollars if it is passed into law. If passed in Appropriations, the bill will move on to be voted on by the full Assembly. There, 41 of 80 votes are needed.

### **What Actions can you take?**

1. Write your Assembly Member: Your Assembly Member will vote on the bill when it gets to the Assembly Floor. He or she needs to know you support the bill. Write a letter and fax or mail it to your Assembly Member and send a copy to Human Rights Watch.

2. Write the Governor: If SB 399 is passed by the legislature, the Governor must sign it for it to become law. He has the authority to veto bills, and without his support, SB 399 will die. Write the Governor and let him know that California should have fair sentencing for youth! Write your own letter or go to [www.fairsentencingforyouth.org](http://www.fairsentencingforyouth.org) to find a sample letter.

3. Spread the Word and Keep Checking [www.fairsentencingforyouth.org](http://www.fairsentencingforyouth.org). Help make this effort a reality: tell a friend by sending an email. Better yet, call friends and family and tell them about this effort. Help them figure out how to contact their representatives. Keep checking the web site because things change quickly in Sacramento and your help may be needed!

## **ACTION OPPORTUNITIES:**

Go to <http://ocpeace.org/calendar.html> for more details.

### **WEEKLY ORANGE COUNTY PEACE EVENTS**

EVERY SUNDAY at noon: "**Enough**" demo at HB Pier.

Contact by email: [afitguy@excite.com](mailto:afitguy@excite.com)

Website: [www.theyoungturks.com/section/Enough](http://www.theyoungturks.com/section/Enough)

EVERY SUNDAY at 3pm: **Food Not Bombs** in Santa Ana

Contact by e-mail:

[santaanafoodnotbombs@riseup.net](mailto:santaanafoodnotbombs@riseup.net)

EVERY SUNDAY at 7pm: **Peace Vigil** at HB Pier

EVERY FRIDAY at 5pm: **Anti-War/Anti-**

**Imperialism Protest** at Bristol & Anton in

Costa Mesa. Contact by e-mail Chuck

Anderson - [QUETZALCOATL38@aol.com](mailto:QUETZALCOATL38@aol.com).

EVERY SATURDAY at 11am: **Peace Demo** at

Main Beach, Pacific Coast Hwy and Ocean

Ave in Laguna Beach.

EVERY SATURDAY at 12pm: **Anti-War Demo** at

Brea Blvd & Imperial Highway in Brea. Contact:

Marcus Gourley [runningdeeractivist@yahoo.com](mailto:runningdeeractivist@yahoo.com).

### **TWICE MONTHLY ORANGE COUNTY PEACE EVENTS**

EVERY FIRST AND THIRD WEDNESDAY at

5:30pm: **Code Pink Antiwar Protest** in

Orange at Glassell and Chapman (Orange

Circle). Contact by email:

[kathy@codepinkoc.org](mailto:kathy@codepinkoc.org) Website:

[www.codepinkoc.org](http://www.codepinkoc.org)

EVERY FIRST AND THIRD FRIDAY at 5pm:

**Women in Black Demo** at Harbor and

Newport in Costa Mesa. Contact: Carlene at

949-720-7065 or Lilian at 714-545-1450

SECOND AND FOURTH SATURDAYS at 10am:

**OC Peace Coalition** general meeting at the St. Joseph Center, 480 S. Batavia in Orange.

Website: [www.ocpeace.org](http://www.ocpeace.org)

*An idea that is developed and put into action is more important than an idea that exists only as an idea. - Buddha*

## **MONTHLY ORANGE COUNTY PEACE EVENTS**

**Military Families Speak Out.** This active group has had some calendar changes. Check: [www.mfsooc.org](http://www.mfsooc.org) or call 562-833-8035 for up-to-date information.

USUALLY THIRD TUESDAY - 7:30-9:30:

**Cousins Club** at Irvine Ranch Water District, Irvine. Contact: [www.cousinscluboc.org](http://www.cousinscluboc.org) or e-mail: [info@cousinscluboc.org](mailto:info@cousinscluboc.org)

EVERY LAST SATURDAY - 11:00am-12:30pm.

**Patriots Against the War**, Seal Beach Leisure World. Call 562-430-7509 or 562-430-1047.



### **Check out IPMOC.org!**

Articles and suggestions for both the website and newsletters may be sent to [jswhitesell3211@yahoo.com](mailto:jswhitesell3211@yahoo.com). Please send an email to [katbowland@hotmail.com](mailto:katbowland@hotmail.com) (put IPMOC in subject line) if you wish to receive email copies of future newsletters – less paper copies = less costs.



#### **Publication Information:**

This newsletter is published quarterly by Interfaith Peace Ministry of Orange County, 480 S. Batavia, Orange, CA 92668. Annual IPM membership, including subscription is \$25. For a copy of a newsletter, email your address to [katbowland@hotmail.com](mailto:katbowland@hotmail.com). Managing Editor, Jeanne Whitesell, of St. Mark Presbyterian Church, Production Assistant, Bev Weatherill of the Disciples of Christ, Word Processor, Katy Black, of the United Church of Christ. We welcome contributions of articles, calendar and resources information. Please keep article length to 500 words or less.

## **Moving Pictures: Friday Night Film Series**

On the First Friday of Each Month

St. Joseph Center, Mother Louis Room  
480 S. Batavia Street, Orange, CA 92868  
6:30-7:00 PM: Gathering & Refreshments

7:00-9:00 PM: Film & Discussion

There Is No Fee To Participate. Come Join In.

RSVP: (714) 633-8121 Ext. 7716

[justice@csjorange.org](mailto:justice@csjorange.org)

*Sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange*

[www.sistersofstjosephorange.org/](http://www.sistersofstjosephorange.org/)

**May 7th – The Least of These** - This film takes a penetrating look at the T. Don Hutto Residential Center, a former medium-security prison that re-opened in 2006 as a prototype family detention center. The facility houses immigrant children and their parents from all over the world who are awaiting asylum hearings or deportation proceedings. 2009, 62 Minutes

**June 4<sup>th</sup> – Which Way Home - 2010 Oscar<sup>®</sup> Nominee for "Best Feature Documentary"** - The film follows several unaccompanied child migrants as they journey through Mexico en route to the U.S. on a freight train they call "The Beast". Stories of children who are desperately trying to reach their families, but have been abandoned by their smugglers are featured. 2009, 82 Minutes

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