



Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

By **Laura Johnsrude**

“Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America” is a grassroots, secular, non-partisan group of ‘mothers and others’ that advocates for sensible gun policies. It was started on Facebook by Shannon Watts in December of 2012, after the tragedy at Sandy Hook, and it quickly ballooned into a national force against gun violence, joining hands a year later with “Mayors against Illegal Guns.” Now, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense (Moms) is under the umbrella of Everytown.org, along with Mayors Against Illegal Guns and a Survivors Network.

Moms has chapters in every state and has 3.5 million supporters within the Everytown network, gaining ground on the 5 million members that the over one-hundred-years-old NRA claims are on its roster.

Moms’ supporters are from all walks of life, including both gun owners and those who do not own firearms. We all believe that common-sense gun reform saves lives and we demand action from our state and federal legislators. If our legislators refuse to support sensible gun policies, we will work to kick them out of office and elect gun sense candidates. We are gun sense voters.

Moms advocates for closing the loopholes in our background-check system, either through changes in the federal laws, or through state legislatures, one by one.



Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America” gather at John Yarmuth’s Louisville office to thank him for participating in the U. S. House of Representatives Sit-In demanding action on gun violence

With our current flawed federal laws, 40 percent of gun transfers are between uncensored parties that include gun shows and online purchases. And due to an amendment to the 1994 Brady Bill, federally licensed dealers can complete a sale after 72 hours, even if the background check is not yet complete. (Dubbed “The Charleston Loop-

hole” because Dylan Roof benefited from this Default Proceed Loophole.) Since our federal law only requires background checks when the seller is a federally licensed gun dealer, all those other ‘private’ sales occur without screening the buyer for risks related to domestic violence, criminal behavior, judicial decisions about mental health, illegal

drug use, fugitive status, or citizenship.

Moms also promotes firearm safety in an effort to decrease the risks of unintentional child gun injuries and deaths, and to decrease the risks of suicide and domestic violence. About 1.7 million American children reside where guns are both loaded and unlocked, and, as a recent study revealed, more than two-thirds of those kids know where their parents keep the weapons. In our country each year, nearly 100 children under seventeen will die from unintentional shootings and over 400 commit suicide with a gun. Safety is always an adult responsibility, and our Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense “BeSmart” presenters are invited to PTA meetings and other parent groups to provide guidance about how to store guns locked and unloaded, separately from ammunition, in homes and vehicles; how to recognize the risks of teen suicide; how to screen for the presence of unsecured guns in the homes of playmates.

Moms supports reasonable limits on how loaded guns are carried and used in public. During the 2016 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, Kentucky Moms members showed up in Frankfort at a committee meeting when a bill was on the docket to allow for firearms in K-12 schools and colleges. We showed up again when a bill was being considered to eliminate the

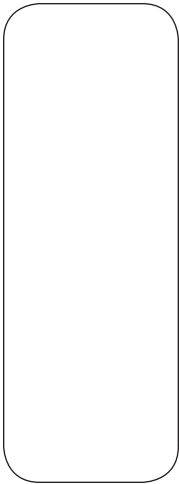
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Black Lives Do Matter

By **Dionne Griffiths**



By **Dionne Griffiths**

“Black Lives Matter.” For some, this is a call to action. To others, it is a catch phrase spoken with a sarcastic tone and flippantly tossed about while trying to be trendy and politically correct. Sometimes the statement is spoken with layers of disdain.

As a woman of African American and Jamaican heritage, I was raised and educated in the South, and I am a professional in the South. And I have witnessed and experienced firsthand how the lives of black men and black women have been disregarded, disrespected, and how our intelligence, character and integrity have been questioned.

However, since I grew up with a

strong sense of cultural identity, knowledge of my African, African American, and Jamaican history, and I graduated from an outstanding historically black college (HBCU), Spelman College, I am rooted against the unpredictable wind of overt and covert racism and the storms of injustice. Yet I know, to some people, black lives do not matter or black lives are seen as less valuable. The United States is a country where the history and economy were rooted in racial constructs, hierarchies, and notions of white superiority. Today, it is a country where some people use implicit racial bias and micro-aggressions towards black people because their skin is brown, their noses are broad, and/or their hair is tightly coiled. This unchallenged mentality and behavior is distressing and dangerous.

Police brutality, black fatalities, racist trolls on social media, the resurgence of hate groups, and hate speech on national platforms prove the ongoing vulnerability of the lives of people of African descent, specifically, and people of color as a whole. It also demonstrates the multi-layered and volatile nature of racism in America. No one is born a racist; racism and racist ideology are taught. However, this fact is of little comfort when history repeats itself across generations, and when justice and equity remain elusive.

Therefore, I do social justice work as a way to raise awareness about racial and social justice issues and the desperately needed transformation that must happen in America. Through social media marketing,

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state requirements for safety and firearm training completion prior to licensing a resident for a Concealed Carry permit. (These bills did not, subsequently, make it out of committees.)

Moms members also traveled to Frankfurt on Advocacy Day to meet with our representatives about sensible gun policies. Year-round, we email and call our representatives to encourage action to combat gun



Laura Johnsrude

violence. We also keep gun violence prevention in the public discourse by participating in parades and protests, speaking in forums as invited guests, and by submitting reader letters to Kentucky newspapers.

Moms makes good use of social media, tweeting support during the sit-in on the floor of the U. S. House of Representatives and during Chris Murphy’s inspirational Senate filibuster. We flooded the congressional offices with phone calls. We spread the hashtag #DisarmHate all over America, attending Pride Parades and vigils.

Moms participates wholeheartedly in Wear Orange Day, a national event that is both a call to action for gun violence prevention and a remembrance of Hadiya Pendleton, a fifteen-year-old Chicago girl killed by gunfire one week after marching in President Obama’s second inaugural parade.

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America wants a safer community, and we demand stronger, enforceable laws to protect our families and keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. We’re going to advance our cause during this election season by standing up for gun violence prevention policies and encouraging Kentuckians, and all Americans, to be Gun Sense Voters in November!

You can join the Kentucky Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America by clicking the ‘Sign Up’ button on our public Facebook page. Go to: facebook.com/MomsDemandActionKY

Or search facebook for: “Moms demand action KY”

Laura B. Johnsrude has an undergraduate degree from Duke University

and a Medical Degree from East Carolina University. She did her pediatric residency in Cincinnati, Ohio, and worked in Texas, Arkansas, and Illinois before moving to Louisville in 2001. Now retired from pediatrics, she volunteers for the Kentucky Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, serving as Communications Lead. She can be reached at laura.johnsrude@twc.com



Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America” celebrate at the Louisville Urban League on “Wear Orange Day.”

Black Lives Do Matter

I educate to liberate. By writing articles for racial and social justice publications, I educate to liberate. By sharing resources about unconscious bias, I educate to liberate. By challenging stereotypes about black people, I educate to liberate.

It takes all of us, regardless of race, class, or gender, to challenge and dismantle systemic racism wherever it emerges—in educational institutions, in workplace

conversations, during happy hour, at family gatherings, and in beauty parlor and barber shop talk. We must continually speak up for racial and social justice. Social activism is not a short-term trendy activity of convenience; it is a lifelong endeavor. And I will continue to advocate and express that black lives matter—as a black woman, American citizen, human being, and positive social change agent.

How will you authentically express that black lives matter to you?

Raised in Louisville, Kentucky, Dionne Griffiths is a program coordinator, writer, and social change agent in Louisville. Dionne earned her M.A. in Choreography from the University of North Carolina-Greensboro and graduated from Spelman College with a B.A. in Comparative Women’s

Studies. She was the 2014-2016 Acting President of the Louisville Chapter of the National Alumnae Association of Spelman College. Her community engagement has also included the Louisville Metro Healing Possible Quorum, the Louisville YMCA Black Achievers, and the Louisville Urban League. You can reach her at MahoganyStyle2020@gmail.com



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Travels through Palestine on the Freedom Bus



Meredith Pass prepares to plant an olive tree to replace trees uprooted from Palestinian land by the state of Israel.

By Meredith Pass

*I learnt all the words worthy of the court
of blood
So that I could break the rule
I learnt all the words and broke them up
To make a single word:
Homeland.*

— Mahmoud Darwish

In March of 2014, I travelled to Palestine. I and others travelled through the Palestinian West Bank aboard the Freedom Bus, sponsored by the Jenin Freedom Theater in Jenin, Palestine.

When I arrived in Jenin, I spent about three days by myself at the Cinema Jenin Guest House run by Ayman Nasari. My first night there, I was given a warm welcome by Ayman and William, who was from Antwerp, Belgium.

Ayman and William would be travelling to the Jenin Refugee Camp that night so William could take some photographs and talk with the families there. They asked if I would like to join them, and I was delighted to say yes.

In the camp, we entered the home of a Palestinian family, and we were immediately given delicious food, fruit, and something similar to baklava, but there were nuts in the middle, as well as this amazing bread with spinach inside.

The family only spoke Arabic, so Ayman, our guide, was kind enough to translate for us. We were able to meet the matriarch of the family, who was over 100 years old. William asked what life was like before the Israeli occupation. When she answered, she said that if she spoke about it she wouldn't be able to sleep that night.

We talked to her grandson, and he explained what life is like now for Palestinians. There are very few opportunities for Palestinians when it comes to finding a job after graduating from school. It was explained to me that if ten men have gone to school and study, then after they graduate, it is likely that only two of them will get jobs.

During my journey on the Freedom Bus through the Hebron Hills and Jordan Valley, I met a young man in a smaller village whose seven-year-old cousin and another girl were walking down a road and were run over and killed by the Israeli army who were driving through the area.

Israel has declared the area a "closed

military zone," even though Palestinians live there. This is so that if someone is killed in the area, the Israeli army can say it was the person's fault because there are signs that say they should not be in a closed military zone. This is to protect the army from any "casualties" that may occur. This was not the first time something like this happened, nor would it be the last.

Later, on the Freedom Bus, we travelled to the small village of Al Mufaqarah and learned that many of the Palestinian shepherds in the area were being harassed and attacked by Israeli settlers. The settlers would come and poison the Palestinians' sheep or other livestock and physically threaten the shepherds. When the Israeli army was called in to investigate one of these incidents, nothing happened to the settlers, but the Palestinian shepherd was questioned and then arrested by the Israeli army. This is what daily life is like for Palestinians.

Their local mosque has been destroyed by the Israeli military many times. When I was there in March of 2014, I sat amid the rubble with my fellow travelling companions and listened to the men speak of daily life under the Israeli occupation. There are many other stories I could recount for you, but the occupation becomes more dangerous and deadly every single day.

I would have to say, from what I have learned, I think I understand that the occupation is bad for both Israelis and Palestinians. I truly believe that there is hope for peace somewhere—that is what Palestine and the humanity, generosity, and kindness of the Palestinian people taught me. You can never give up hope or your joy for life. You can't let the occupation take that away from you.

As American Jews, we are taught at a very early age that we must support Israel no matter what, and that Israel has every right to exist, and the Israeli government has every right to defend itself. Israel was created out of the horrors of the Holocaust, there needed to be a place for Jews to feel safe, but have we ever stopped to ask ourselves at what cost?

One can go on and on in circles debating whether or not Israel has the right to exist, but I think the important question here is: Whose lives have been lost, destroyed, and displaced in the process of establishing this homeland, and is it worth it? After travelling to the West Bank and seeing for myself

the inhumanity of Israel's occupation of Palestine, I made a promise to share these stories with my community at home.

I have come to my own conclusions that Zionism is a colonialist, racist, ideology that perpetuates violence and apathy towards the Palestinian people. I believe that, as American Jews, we must begin to dismantle the ties between Judaism and Zionism, and we must begin raising our voices against Israel's occupation of Palestine and of the Palestinian people.

I do not believe it is anti-Semitic to speak out against the crimes against humanity that Israel commits every single

day, and I would argue that it is very much a part of Judaism to stand up for anyone who is being mistreated or dehumanized.

So please, I ask you as fellow American Jews in this community, open your hearts and open your eyes to the reality of what is happening in Palestine and don't remain silent.

Meredith Pass is working toward her Bachelor's Degree in Women and Gender Studies at the University of Louisville. She is involved with Students for Justice in Palestine at the University of Louisville. You can reach her at Meredith.pass6@gmail.com



Meredith with Ayman Nasari, who runs the Cinema Jenin Guesthouse



Men from the Palestinian village of Al Mufaqarah sit on the rubble of their local mosque after it was destroyed by Israel multiple times. Their homes have also been destroyed by Israel multiple times in an effort to force them off their land.



Israeli bulldozers coming in December 2012 to destroy the mosque in the Palestinian village of Al Mufaqarah for the second time.

Photo source: almufaqarah.wordpress.com



The ruins of the mosque in the Palestinian village of Al Mufaqarah after being destroyed by Israel for the second time in December 2012. Israel has repeatedly destroyed the Palestinians' mosque and their homes as part of Israel's ongoing ethnic cleansing to force them off their land. The Palestinians are living in tents and caves in order to try to stay on their land. They need your help. To learn more, google: "mufaqarah"

Photo source: almufaqarah.wordpress.com

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Daniel Berrigan: Family, faith, and action (part 2)

By **Ethan Vesely-Flad**

Part one of this article appeared in the September 2016 issue of *FORsooth*. This article was written shortly after the death of renowned Catholic priest Father Daniel Berrigan. It was originally published in May 25, 2016 on the national Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) website blog: www.forusa.org/blog.php

While many think of him as an activist, Father Daniel Berrigan was first and foremost a priest.

It has struck me through the years how our culture sometimes seeks to “de-religionize” certain individuals. Like Martin Luther King, Jr. (typically referred to as “Dr. King” rather than “Reverend”) and others, Fr. Berrigan was often labeled “communist” as a way to specifically discount and deny his Christian authenticity. Alternatively, spiritually-rooted justice makers, especially those within FOR’s community, are labeled as representing the radical margins of their faith traditions, yet in reality they claim the very moral and theological center of those religions.

Dan’s spiritual centeredness was core to his witness and encouraged connections with adherents of different faith traditions and lineages, such as the Gethsemani Abbey Peacemakers Retreat convened by FOR, which brought together Protestant and Catholic thinker-activists for a historic collaboration in 1964, and the deep relationship he developed with Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh, who became a long-time interlocutor and co-author.

Last but not least, Dan was of course a person of steadfast and courageous action.

Rooted in his Christian theological understanding, his articulation of nonviolence led directly to a place of moral and political engagement. “From a religious point of view, nonviolence is not primarily a tactic. It is a way of living and being and expressing the truth of your soul in the world. Tactics come and go. Tactics now work and now do not work. The gift of faith, as I understand it, is to be able to die well when called to.”

To many people, Dan’s legacy may appear intimidating. How could we ever compare to this priest who, for instance, helped launch the Plowshares movement: pouring human blood on government property and military draft files, hammering on nuclear warheads?

Yet it was never his goal to stand on a pedestal for others to imitate.

All who knew Dan can testify how deeply human and humble he was, unconcerned about public profile or legacy. Along with his fellow conspirators, he was simply committed to finding creative, provocative ways to resist the status quo of militaristic empire and hegemony, and to inspire action in others.



Fr. Daniel Berrigan speaking in a church

The Berrigan family released a statement, which includes these words: “He was not strategic, he was not opportunistic, but he understood solidarity—the power of showing up for people and struggles and communities.”

I agree. Dan would never have called himself a nonviolent strategist or organizer. “I think this concentration upon political effectiveness is very often a trap. There is in fact very little one can do in certain circumstances. One can only know effects later, or the survivors know what the gift meant. You can’t immediately proclaim political effectiveness.”

These are life lessons for us today.

Our modern era of activism—driven by data, proof of impact, and other “hard” assets—was not his framework. We are challenged instead to engage ourselves in the world, finding a moral center and stepping out from that place. “One cannot level one’s moral lance at every evil in the universe. There are just too many of them. But you can do something, and the difference between doing something and doing nothing is everything.”

As I headed to Manhattan to mourn Dan’s death and celebrate his life in community, I meditated on that challenge. What am I called to do in this moment? As I reflect on my conversations with Dan

through the years and read his writing, I find myself grounded once again in a message of love.

“Love, love at the end,” Dan wrote a half-century ago.

May it be so.

Ethan Vesely-Flad is Director of National Organizing for the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He helps create networks of grassroots supporters among FOR chapters, affiliates, and ally coalitions. He has 25 years of experience in strengthening spiritually-rooted justice networks promoting anti-racism, environmental justice, LGBTQ rights, and demilitarization. Ethan became FOR’s director of national organizing in 2014 after serving as director of communications and editor of Fellowship Magazine for nine years. Before joining FOR’s team in 2005, he served as editor of The Witness magazine, executive director of the Episcopal Church Publishing Company, and editor of GraceOnline. His writing has appeared in ColorLines, The Huffington Post, The Source, Episcopal Life, and other media. Find Ethan on Twitter @ethanvf



Ethan Vesely-Flad

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October 20 Christopher 2X, Local Peace Advocate

Learn about Christopher 2X’s activities in our community and his work with the Hood 2 Hood movement. In 2015, Christopher 2X joined with other community activists to form **“We All We Got” Hood 2 Hood, a centralized movement to prevent violence, versus reacting to it.** Hood 2 Hood is a push to reclaim Louisville’s neighborhoods from the violence lingering throughout the city. “The group can’t succeed alone and needs other community members to step up to help lead the change that is needed,” Christopher 2X.

November 17 Cathe Dykstra, Family Scholar House

FSH’s mission is to **end the cycle of poverty and transform our community by empowering families and youth to succeed in education and achieve life-long self-sufficiency.** Cathe Dykstra will share the impact of changing the paradigm for work with disadvantaged families from short-term support to long-term solutions by providing the education that leads to career-track employment. With four Louisville campuses, three regional outreach programs and a growing affiliate program, Family Scholar House continues to increase housing capacity, expand services and serve as a national best-practice for ending poverty.

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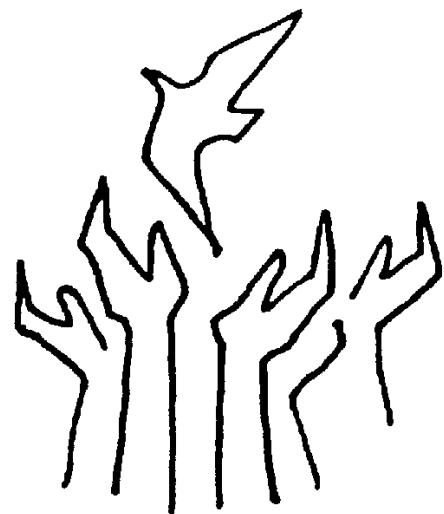
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Health care ministry in action at St. William Catholic Church and Centennial Olivet Baptist Church

By Phil Schervish

“TheHealthInequalityProject”(Journal of the American Medical Association, April 11, 2016) concluded that the gap in life spans between rich and poor widened in the years from 2001 to 2014.

Among American men, the top 1 percent in income live 15 years longer than the poorest 1 percent. For women, the gap is 10 years.

In Louisville, those in zip code 40212 have a life expectancy of 69 years while those in 40245 have a life expectancy of 80 years. This is but one example of health disparity and the ongoing violence of racism.

Over the past few decades, faith-based organizations across the country have been placing greater emphasis on health and wellness. This reflects a growing recognition of the links between physical, mental, and spiritual health, as well as the integral role that faith-based institutions play in communities.

As congregations turn their focus to health and wellness as matters of justice and non-violence, many recognize the need to direct these efforts to their wider communities as well as to their members.

One local effort to address the disparity is provided by the Norton Healthcare Office of Church and Health Ministries (OCHM), directed by Rev. Ron Oliver. Norton Healthcare provides support to 191 church health ministry groups throughout Louisville and the surrounding area. Approximately 48 (25 percent) of those ministries are in churches West of 9th street in Louisville.

St. William parishioner Virginia Bush, BSN, a nurse formerly of Veterans Hospital,



Virginia and Bob Bush

began meeting with Pat Welsh, MSN of the Norton OCHM as early as January 2014.

Through her efforts, Ms. Bush shepherded the Health Ministry Development-Team for St. William Catholic Church. The St. William Health Ministry’s mission is to encourage and promote health of mind, body and spirit. Bush explained, “When requested, we will confidentially and prayerfully accompany members of the faith community and of our neighborhood with education, prevention, and support on their wellness journey.”

The Health Ministry is a new concept for St. William Parish and for the California neighborhood where it is located. This ministry is part of the Leadership Circle of St. William. The Health Ministry team provides health education, wellness and promotion programs, and support services for the overall health and safety of the parish and community.

The team works in conjunction with our neighboring congregation at Centennial Olivet Baptist Church to provide outreach to the California neighborhood. The ministry

receives educational and resource support from Norton OCHM.

The Health Ministry Development Team currently includes eight Registered Nurses (RN) and Social Workers (MSSW) who are members of St. William Parish. The team includes LaCresha Warfield (RN), who is Health Ministry coordinator of Centennial Olivet Baptist Church. Several other parishioners have offered their services on an as-needed basis.

The first health screening event conducted by the Health Ministry teams of the two congregations was a blood pressure screening offered after services at St. William and at Centennial Olivet Baptist Church in September 2015. Since that event, the teams have provided educational material in parish bulletins and hosted educational sessions after Sunday services. Sessions have included information on advanced directives and end of life issues and a program on suicide prevention.

In addition to providing support and assistance to parishioners with health issues, the teams have expanded services



Phil and Peg Schervish

into the California community, recognizing the churches’ responsibility for the health and welfare of the community in which they reside.

This expansion has included screening programs at the California Community Center; grief counseling and STD/HIV education for the women of the Dierson Center branch of Dismass Charities, working with the Kentucky prison system; and health consultation to Hispanic women with children with developmental issues at La Casita Center.

Plans are being made for participation in the annual California Community Health Fair in August, 2016.

For her role in initiating these efforts, Virginia Bush has been named Norton Healthcare Health Ministry Nurse of the Year.

There are many areas in this ministry where anyone (not just nurses) can offer their gifts. For more information, please contact Virginia Bush, BSN at St William Church gena2bush@gmail.com

Or contact Pat Welsh, MSN, at Norton Healthcare Office of Church and Health Ministry.

Phil Schervish is a former member of the faculty of the Spalding University School of Social Work, where he taught social welfare policy. He is a former Grants Manager of the Norton Healthcare Office of Prevention and Wellness and is former Chair of the Louisville Fellowship of Reconciliation. Currently, Phil is a member of the St. William Pastoral Planning Committee and a member of the St. William Health Ministry Team. Contact him at pschervish@gmail.com

Kentucky Human Rights Commission: Allegations of police mistreatment of African Americans in Providence, KY

By Victoria Stephens, Communications Director Kentucky Commission on Human Rights

Louisville (July 1, 2016) – The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, in a letter to the U.S. Dept. of Justice Western District of Kentucky, asked the department to investigate Providence, Kentucky citizens’ allegations of police mistreatment based on race and color.

“Please be advised that the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights has received verbal and written complaints from citizens of Providence, Kentucky regarding alleged racial profiling, harassment and/ or mistreatment of residents by certain city police officers,” said John J. Johnson, executive director of the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights.

In addition, Executive Director Johnson expressed the commission’s grave concern about the Providence mayor’s response to the citizens’ concerns.

The Journal-Enterprise newspaper reported on June 8 that during a Providence City Council meeting on June 7, Mayor Eddie Gooch admonished a resident for wearing a “Black Lives Matter” tee-shirt into the council chamber. Mayor Gooch told the resident that if she wore the shirt again, she would be escorted out. As reported, Mayor Gooch said, “That [Black Lives

Matter] is a racist organization, and a racist sign, and you will not wear it back in these council chambers.”

Further, the paper reported that Mayor Gooch said, “Black lives only matter when they’re killed by a white police officer – All lives matter.”

Executive Director Johnson said the mayor’s remarks are most troubling to the commission.

“Mayor Gooch’s statements belie a profound misunderstanding of the “Black Lives Matter” public awareness concept, which arose in response to a growing number of African Americans who had been killed by police officers. Certainly all lives matter. But if police are unfairly targeting black citizens for abusive treatment, including death, then no lives will be safe,” Johnson said.

The letter signed by Executive Director Johnson said:

“One of the mandates by law to be carried out by the commission is to encourage fair treatment, foster mutual understanding and respect, and discourage discrimination against any racial or ethnic group or its members.

“Any holder of an elected or appointed governmental office such as a mayor shares the grave responsibility to help the state stand by such a mandate for the peace and safeguarding of our society...

“The mayor’s interactions with residents at the city council meeting on June

7 and his statements about “Black Lives Matter” do not instill confidence that the civil and constitutional rights of the residents of Providence will be protected.”

Given the nature and seriousness of the allegations by citizens about police behavior based on race, color or ethnicity, the commission requested the U.S. Department of Justice to “investigate to determine if citizens’ rights have been violated in any way.”

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights is the state government authority that enforces civil rights laws, which make discrimination illegal.

For help with discrimination, contact

the commission at 1-800-292-5566 or www.kchr.ky.gov

Note from the FORsooth editorial team:

You, our readers, can help improve this situation. Please call the Providence Mayor and Police Chief and ask them to treat African Americans fairly and with dignity, including Black Lives Matter activists. If enough of us call, it could make a difference.

*Providence Mayor Eddie Gooch: (270) 667-2170
Providence Police Department: 270-667-2022*

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*“It’s so much more than folding a newspaper”
“Better than watching the Big Bang Theory”
(actual quotes from real FORsooth-labeling party goers)*

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Thomas Merton: Writings on nature

By Sharon Grant

There have been many, many books written on Thomas Merton since his death in 1968. These books cover a whole spectrum of his thoughts and themes, but most do not talk at length about his writings on nature. I am currently reading a beautiful little book on Merton which does exactly this, *When the Trees Say Nothing*, edited by Kathleen Deignan. There are some excerpts that I think might mean something to my environmental friends. So, I'm sharing with you an excerpt from the foreword by Thomas Berry, that wonderful cosmologist of the 20th century.

Berry speaks first of the religious tradition that Thomas Merton was living his monastic life out of: the order of the French Abbey of Melleray, founded by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, who was a great religious leader and an influential spiritual author of his time, who died in 1153. Bernard, along with another 12th century mystic, Hildegard of Bingen, provides significant inspiration for Merton in the style and content of his writing. Berry points out, "Along with Hildegard, Bernard belongs among the medieval writers to whom the natural world is a central focus

in their spiritual writings. The name of his monastery, Clairvaux – translated as 'Clearview' – expresses his sensitivity in this regard."

Today, more than ever, we are aware of the threat to our natural environment. This is awakening us to wonder at the gift that our natural world is. Scientists and environmentalists, along with religious leaders, are speaking of the profound mystery and unrealized revelation of our cosmic reality. Berry speaks of "the natural world as the primary manifestation of the divine to human intelligence."

The sense of the divine comes to us through the natural world. Merton knew this very well. He wrote "I live in the woods out of necessity. I get out of bed in the middle of the night because it is imperative that I hear the silence of the night, alone, and, with my face to the floor, say psalms, alone, in the silence of the night." (*Dancing in the Water of Life*, p. 240)

Berry points out how important a sense of the sacred is in our environmental work. "An absence of a sense of the sacred is the basic flaw in many of our efforts at ecologically or environmentally adjusting our human presence to the natural world."

It is also true that without a genuine love for nature, we lack the passion to save it. That sense of the sacredness of nature permeated Merton's writings, as in this excerpt from the poem, "The Sowing of Meanings," from his book of poetry, *Figures for an Apocalypse*:

For, like a grain of fire
Smoldering in the heart
of every living essence,
God plants His undivided power –
Buries His thought
too vast for worlds
In seeds and roots
and blade and flower.

Berry believes that it is not enough to try to remedy our environmental devastation simply by initiating renewable sources of energy and by reducing the impact of greenhouse gases. Such focus indicates that we see the natural world as primarily for human use, not as a manifestation of sacred presence to be in communion with. In Berry's words, "The deep psychic change needed to withdraw us from the fascination of the industrial world, and the deceptive gifts that it gives us, is too difficult for simply the avoidance of its difficulties or

the attractions of its benefits. Eventually only our sense of the sacred will save us." (*When the Trees Say Nothing*, p. 19)

Sharon Grant is a Spiritual Director and Retreat Presenter, living in Louisville, Kentucky. She is currently part of the editorial team of FORsooth. She can be reached at sgrant334@yahoo.com



Sharon Grant

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Socialism is love manifest

By Isaac Marion Thacker IV

It may seem strange in the United States to maintain this title's truth. After all, socialism is supposedly the totalitarian, militaristic, bloodthirsty "evil empire" of Ronald Reagan's fertile, fictile imagination. (He delivered that General-Electric speech so many times that he came to believe it, and gave up New-Deal liberalism).

And in a world-sea in which they were completely surrounded by hungry capitalist sharks, there were in fact some in the USSR, and in China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, etc., who believed in a military "answer" to dangerous, even societally-deadly, threats. But, from everything I have seen, by far the majority of the Dr. Strangeloves were in the "free" global West (and North), especially the U.S.

The typical socialist, on the other hand, believes not in a system where 99 percent of the population works to make somebody else rich, but in peace and plenty for all (not just the richest one percent or 0.1 percent). What better way to manifest love?!

Even Stalin, whatever his reasons, argued against conquest-happy elements in his Soviet Union, and for "Socialism in

One Country."

China during the Cold War was the only superpower that didn't have its nuclear weapons ready to obliterate cities and their billions of human inhabitants on a hair-trigger. Only the countries of the socialist East (notably the Soviets) renounced the first use of nuclear weapons.

Not only did the U.S. fail to renounce first use of nuclear weapons, it actually unnecessarily atom-bombed two major Japanese cities in 1945 without nuclear provocation, and followed that less than a decade later with John Foster Dulles' strategy of "massive retaliation." This was essentially a threat to respond to any attack massively—which meant with nuclear weapons. Given Hiroshima and Nagasaki, no wonder the world took Dulles (and Eisenhower) seriously.

Incredibly, the U.S. then claimed that the USSR's renunciation of first use couldn't be trusted, because "they break treaties." This was a simple case of psychological projection: remember "our" (the U.S. government's) history of interaction with Native Americans!

And while we're on the subject of treaties, Lenin published all the nefarious

Leftword(s)



Isaac Marion Thacker IV

secret capitalist treaties that played such a large role in leading to World War I, almost immediately after taking power. Secrecy is fundamentally in the modern world a capitalist affectation. If you aren't exploiting people, you don't need to hide stuff! i.e., you don't need to hide things when you're fighting, as we socialists do, for the benefit of 99 or 99.9 percent of humanity, fighting for rather than against almost all of the planet's people.

Perhaps the clinching event in this

thread came when Fidel Castro emerged back onto the world stage, in a still-limited way, after months and years of battling an illness that nearly killed him. His first pronouncement was not a tirade against the capitalist world, or the U.S., or even its blockade of Cuba (which is still in place despite "normalized" diplomatic relations, by the way). No, Fidel talked about the need to avoid nuclear war as by far the most important global issue. 'Nuff said!

History will in fact emphatically absolve Fidel Castro. The 0.1 percent or one percent will not ultimately win. There are too few of them and too many of us. Si se puede! We will win! Love will win; and socialism is love manifest!! Viva the 99 percent!

Isaac Marion Thacker IV (Ike Thacker) graduated summa cum laude (4.0 GPA) with both a B.A. and an M.A. in European and U.S. History from Murray State University. He also earned, with honors and a minor in Mathematics, a B.S. in Computer Science from Eastern Kentucky University. He is a longtime activist for political, social, and especially economic democracy, with an equal concomitant striving for peace, who often focuses on housing and racial-justice issues. He may be contacted at ike.thacker@gmail.com

Calendar for peacemakers

Please e-mail us information about your peace and justice events to calendar.peace@gmail.com by the first Wednesday of the month.

Oct 1 to January 2. **RACE: ARE WE SO DIFFERENT?** The Muhammad Ali Center. Learn more about race from biological, cultural and historical perspective from this interactive exhibit. Explore ideas and practices. Visit alicenter.org

Oct 1 (Sat) **CANVASS NEIGHBORHOODS FOR FRESH FOOD**. Saturdays and Sundays. Join us any time. Fresh Stop Project volunteers take orders door to door for locally grown fruits and vegetables. Visit newrootsproduce.org

Oct 1 (Sat) **LOUISVILLE COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE**. Every Saturday morning. Also, other days and times. 26 farmers’ markets from California neighborhood to Norton Commons. Visit www.louisvilleky.gov/HealthyHometown

Oct 2 (Sun) **“AIM HIGHER”** focusing on military counter-recruitment. Every first Sunday at 7 PM. Discuss conscientious objection, military recruitment, and the possibility for high school students to «opt out» of having their names given to recruiters. Call Jim Johnson, 262-0148 or e-mail FORnonviolence@gmail.com

Oct 2 (Sun) **LGBT WEDDING EXPO**. Rainbow Wedding Network at The Galt House. Meet home-related vendors in an elegant and welcoming atmosphere. Free. Visit SameLoveSameRights.com

Oct 4 (Tues) **TIME FOR A MORAL REVOLUTION OF VALUES**. Kentuckians For The Commonwealth and the Kentucky Council of Churches at St. Stephen Church.6:30PM Participate in our national tour to redefine morality in American politics. Visit www.kftc.org

Oct 4(Tues)**DANCING WELLFORPTSDSURVIVORS**. Every Tuesday this month. Dance with us to show your support for veterans who are working hard to meet the challenges of PTSD and Tramatic Brain Injuries. 6PM to 7:30PM. Free child care provided. For more information, call Deborah Denenfeld at (502) 889-6584

Oct 5 (Wed) **DEADLINE FOR LISTINGS IN THIS PEACE CALENDAR**. For publication in the December issue of FORsooth. (Deadline is every first Wednesday) Please email new or updated calendar listings to calendar.peace@gmail.com

Oct 5 (Wed) **NOONTIME INTERFAITH MEDITATIONS**. Every Wednesday from 12:10 to 12:30 at Christ Church Cathedral, Downtown. Weekly rotation includes Zen Buddhist silence, Lecto Divina, Vipassana Buddhist practices, and Creative Visualization. Visit paths2peace.org

Oct 5 (Wed) **THE LOUISVILLE SUSTAINABILITY FORUM**. Every first Wednesday. Sustainability and relationships that create a community for change. Bring your lunch. Noon to 1:45 PM, Passionist Earth & Spirit Center, the Barn at 1924 Newburg Road.

Oct 6 (Thurs) **KENTUCKY SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE**. Every first & third Thursday, 5:30PM at Main Public Library. Call Kay Tillow 636-1551.

Oct 6 (Thurs) **CAN SPECIES CONSERVATION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT CO-EXIST**. U of L University Club. Hear Prof. Janna Tajibaeva on how we can create more species-friendly communities and cities. Visit <http://louisville.edu/sustainability/>

Oct 6 (Thurs) **MY RECIPE FOR PEACE** Interfaith Path at Second Presbyterian Church, 5:30PM to 8PM. Hear engaging speakers on their recipe for foods they prepare to bring people together and enjoy the results with them. Live music. Visit <http://paths2peace.org>

Oct 8 (Sat) **EARTHSARE OF LOUISVILLE**. Crescent Hill Ministries, 6PM to 8PM. Every 2ndSaturday. Discuss healthy food and behavior change. Bring a plant-based dish and share your recipe. Mix, mingle, music. Call 299-9520 for more information.

Oct 11 (Tues) **REAL PEOPLE, REAL CHALLENGES, REAL SOLUTIONS**. Volunteers of America Family Emergency Shelter, morning and evening sessions. One hour interactive tour of VOA’s work and programs for self-determination. For more information, call 636-4660

Oct 11 (Tues) **REFRAMING CONFLICT**. The Office of Youth Development (OYD) and BLOCS Coordinating Council offer a different training each month on positive youth practical skills to improve our interactions. 9AM to Noon. Visit <https://louisvilleky.gov/events/methods-training-4>

Oct 11 (Tues) **MOVIMENIENTO DE MUJERES LATINA – LATINA WOMEN’S MOVEMENT**, La Casita Center, Every second Tuesday, 5:30PM. Network, mentor, find friends and share. Call 322-4036 for more information.

Oct 11 (Tues) **THOMAS MERTON BUDDHIST MASTERS**. The Merton Center, 6:30P to 9 PM. Learn how Merton reframed Buddhist principles into Christian understanding. Experience nonattachment, compassion, mindfulness, and connecting our intentions. Visit <http://merton.org>

Oct 11 (Tues) **CONFLICT RESOLUTION TRAINING**. Peace Education Program, 8:30AM to 3PM. Practice the building blocks of conflict resolution: affirmation, cooperation and communication. Visit <http://peaceeducationprogram.org>

Oct 12 (Wed) **Y-NOW CHILDREN OF PRISONERS MENTORING**. Luncheon at YMCA Safe Place. 2nd Wednesday each month. Learn how you can help break the cycle through mentoring and encouragement. RSVP to 635-5233.

Oct 12 (Wed) **COMPASSIONATE LOUISVILLE**. Noon. Meeting locations rotate. Help monitor the progress of Metro Louisville ten-year campaign for compassion. Visit <http://compassionatelouisville.org> for more information.

Oct 14 (Fri) **A GLIMPSE OF ETERNITY**. The Louisville Astronomical Society at dusk in Tom Sawyer Park. Every 2ndFriday depending on weather. Look through telescopes at planets, our moon, stars, double stars, the Orion nebula and other wonders. Visit www.louisville-astro.org

Oct 14 (Fri) **SUSTAINABILITY ROUNDTABLE: AIR TOXICS**. U of L Life Sciences Building, Room 133. Hear Russ Barnett of the Kentucky Institute for Environmental and Sustainable Development on this aspect of our social-ecological resilience. Visit <http://louisville.edu/sustainability/>

Oct 15 (Sat) **GROWING FOOD AND COMMUNITY**. 15 Thousand Farmers at Dismas St. Ann’s on Algonquin Pkwy, the 15th of every month. Share ideas and experiences about growing your own food. Taste samples. Visit www.15thousandfarmers.com

Oct 16 to 21 **THOMAS MERTON WITH ROAD SCHOLARS**. The Merton Center. Travel with us and reflect on relevant writings of Merton. Visit <http://merton.org>

Oct 17 to 23 **U of L SUSTAINABILITY WEEK**. Belknap Campus. Help us raise awareness of sustainable practices. Workshops on gardening, recycling and bicycle maintenance, farmers market, and walking tour of green gems on campus. Visit <http://louisville.edu/sustainability/>

Oct 17 (Mon)**NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDTABLE**. New Directions. Participate in our think-tank of grassroots volunteers for neighborhood safety and empowerment. Visit <https://newdirectionshousing.squarespace.com>

Oct 19 (Wed) **PUBLIC SCHOOL FLASH DADS**. JCPS Office of Diversity, 8AM to 9AM. Volunteer mentors greet students as they arrive at school one morning each month. Just bring a good attitude, a friendly voice, and willing to shake a hand or give a positive greeting. For more information, call 485-3506.

Oct 20 (Thu) **DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES FOR THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF FORSOOTH**. Send articles to russgreenleaf@yahoo.com or call 502-264-2437.

Oct 20 (Thu) **THIRD THURDAY LUNCH**. Christopher 2X, local peace advocate, will speak about his work with the Hood 2 Hood movement to reclaim Louisville’s neighborhoods from violence. At Hotel Louisville, 120 W. Broadway (Corner of 2nd and Broadway) (This is a new location.) Lunch begins at 11:30 am. Speaker at noon. Co-sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Interfaith Paths to Peace. RSVP to Cathy Ford at 502/458-1223 or fordhoff@bellsouth.net, or to Cindy Humbert at interfaithpaths@gmail.com

Oct 20 (Thu) **FORsooth LABELING PARTY**. 6:30 PM at the Winn Center at the Presbyterian Seminary, 1044 Alta Vista Rd. COME TO THE PARTY ! Many hands make light work, and the opposite is also true. Join us if you can. It’s fun. Meet progressive people. Enjoy great conversations. Free refreshments. For more information or directions, call 451-5658 or email: fordhoff@bellsouth.net

Oct 20 (Thurs) **OPEN-DIALOGUE WITH POLICE**. Louisville Metro Police Department at local community centers, 6PM. Learn about things police officers do. Talk with law enforcement officials and help build relationships and mutual understanding. Visit <http://louisvilleky.gov/government/police>

Oct 20 (Thurs) **MENTAL ILLNESS SUPPORT & ADVOCACY**. NAMI Louisville every third Thursday at 3PM. Also Saturdays and Sundays. Support group for families. Draw on years of experience. Visit www.namilouisville.org

Oct 20 (Thurs) **COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN (CASA)**. Orientation, Noon to 1PM. Learn how you can help defend the rights of abused and neglected children in our community. Call 595-4911 to RSVP

Oct 22 & 27 **BEARGRASS CREEK ALLIANCE**. Help us preserve and maintain our local waterways by joining our Beargrass Creek Clean-up. On Oct 27, celebrate and consider how we spread awareness of these natural treasures during The Creek in Your Backyard meet-up. <http://kwalliance.org/what-we-do/watershed-planning/>

Oct 25 (Tues) **KENTUCKY REFUGEE MINISTRIES LUNCH & LEARN**. Learn more about our refugee & immigration settlement program and citizenship tutoring classes. Visit <http://kyrm.org>

Oct 25 (Tues) **JUSTICE MINISTRY ASSEMBLIES. CLOUT** (Citizens of Louisville Organized and United Together), 7PM. Volunteers in nineteen diverse congregations assemble to identify critical community problems for group advocacy. Visit www.cloutky.org

Oct 26 to 29 **APPLIED GEOGRAPHY CONFERENCE**. UofL Geography Dept. at the Galt House. Learn more about geographic solutions and explanations to societal problems. Panel discussions, exhibits, poster presentations, and field trips. Visit <http://louisville.edu/sustainability/>

Oct 27 (Thurs) **ANNUAL LATIN AMERICAN AND LATINO STUDIES HERITAGE LECTURE**. UofL Ekstrom Library, 4:30PM. Hear writer and scholar Gustavo Perez Firmat on exoticism and the aesthetics of diversity. Visit <http://louisville.edu/sustainability/>

Oct 29 (Sat) **SUSTAINABILITY ROUNDTABLE: MINDFULNESS AND SUSTAINABILITY**. UofL Life Sciences Building, Room 133. Hear Prof. Paul Salmon on the psychological aspects of our social-ecological resilience. Visit <http://louisville.edu/sustainability/>

OUT OF TOWN

Oct 1 to Oct 26 **KENTUCKY ACLU / FAIRNESS ORGANIZING MEETINGS**. Help us build Fairness committees in Bowling Green, Elizabethtown, Frankfort, Northern KY, Owensboro, and Shelbyville. Visit www.aclu-ky.org

Oct 3 (Mon) **KENTUCKY MIGRANT NETWORK COALITION**. Lexington KY at the Cardinal Valley Center, 12PM. Every first Monday. Get better acquainted with Kentucky’s immigrant and refugee families. For more information, call 859-258-3824.

Oct 6 (Thurs) **INTERFAITH PRAYER VIGIL FOR PEACE**. Lexington, KY at West Main and Broadway, 5:30PM to 6:30PM. Every Thursday for eleven years. For more information, Call 859-327-6277.

Oct 8 (Sat) **DRAKES CREEK WATERSHED CELEBRATION**. Scottsville, Kentucky. Join our public consciousness-raising efforts, show your support, and celebrate the natural wonder of Drakes Creek. Visit <http://kwalliance.org>

Oct 14 to 16 **NATIVE AMERICAN POW-WOW**. Long Hunter State Park near Nashville, Tennessee, Meet Native Americans of different nations and share our culture. Enjoy traditional native foods. Experience our spirit. Visit www.naiatn.org

Oct 18 (Tues) **CATHOLIC CHARITES FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP LUNCHEON**. Basilica of St. Joseph in Bardstown. Consider how faith, works and citizenship interact and cooperate. Visit <http://cclou.org>

Oct 20 (Thurs) **ORGANIC AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP**. KSU Research Farm, Frankfort, KY. Every third Thursday. Participate in efforts to develop local food economies with the Community Farm Alliance and others. Visit www.communityfarmalliance.org

PEACEMAKING EVENTS AT THE LOUISVILLE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARIES.
Visit www.lfpl.org for more information.

Oct 1 (Sat) **ENGLISH CONVERSATION CLUB**. Every Saturday at the Iroquois & Newburg Public Library Branches, 3PM. Also Main Library on Wednesdays at 7PM.

Oct 1 (Sat) **FRENCH CIRCLE**. Iroquois Public Library, 12:30PM. Read and discuss LE PETIT PRINCE in French.

Oct 4 (Tues) **HOUR OF POWER BOOK DISCUSSIONS**. Newburg Public Library, every first Tuesday, 6:30 PM. Discuss books on personal efforts to overcome the challenges of abuse, oppression, deprivation, discrimination or disabilities.

Oct 5 (Wed) **MEETING OF THE MINDS**. Crescent Hill Public Library, 7PM. Discuss current events and topics with your friends and neighbors.

Oct 6 (Thurs) **GOVERNMENT, CIVICS, AND CITIZENSHIP**. Main Library, 6:30PM. Learn about the philosophical foundations, structure, constitutional law, legislative process, and politics of our system of government.

Oct 6 (Thurs) **AFRICAN AMERICAN ARCHIVES TOUR**. Western Public Library, 1PM. Peruse the great books in our collection. Watch a short documentary. Every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday this month.

Oct 8 (Sat) **SPANISH LITERATURE SALON**. Iroquois Public Library, 1PM. Read and discuss EL PRINCIPITO by Francesco Juarez in Spanish.

Oct 12 (Wed) **BOOKS ON GLOBAL SOLIDARITY**. Main Public Library, Noon to 1PM. Second Wednesday each month. (aka The Mayor’s Book Club) Read and explore contemporary books rooted in different countries and cultures. Celebrate the diversity of Louisville.

Oct 13 (Thurs) **GRANTSEEKING BASICS FOR WORTHY CAUSES**. Main Library, 6:30PM. Learn the process of writing grant proposals. Master the essentials.

Oct 18 (Tues) **MEMORY LOSS, DEMENTIA AND ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE**. Bon Air Public Library, 6PM. Learn more about detection, cause, risk factors, stages, treatment and how to help.

Oct 29 (Sat) **BILINGUAL STORYTIME – ENGLISH & SPANISH** Iroquois Public Library, 11:15am. Hear engaging stories told in Spanish and English.