

» Boko Haram and the Nigerian Crisis: Interfaith Perspectives and Responses

Contributed by Paul Brun Del Re



The panel: left to right: Professor Dauda Abubakar, Cliff Kindy, and Thasin Sardar

Violence by the Boko Haram in Nigeria made headlines with the widely-publicized kidnapping of schoolgirls there last year. There was a special concern at the Lansing Church of the Brethren, because most of the girls kidnapped were members of the Nigerian Brethren faith (Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria). In April, a local panel of experts responded to this crisis, organized by David Wiley, former director of the African Studies Center at MSU and Paul Brun Del Re, of the Lansing Church of the Brethren. Interfaith prayer was led by Imam Sohail Chaudhry of the East Lansing Islamic Center, Rabbi Michael Zimmerman of Kehillat Israel, and Pastor Cindy Barnum-Steggerda of the Lansing Church of the Brethren.

Background on Boko Haram Violence

Professor Dauda Abubakar, political scientist and Nigerian scholar, said that in northeastern Nigeria where Boko Haram has been operating in recent years, an internal rift between the governor of Borno State and Mohammed Yusuf, the leader of Boko Haram, degenerated into violence. Many churches were destroyed and people killed. After Yusuf was killed by the security forces, Boko Haram escalated the violence, attacking cities, especially Maiduguri, and carrying out terrorist activities regardless of victim's faith. The bulk of the population, especially women, children

and the elderly, were internally displaced and thousands killed. The Nigerian federal government imposed a state of emergency. In 2012-2013 the civilian population joined with the security agencies to flush out Boko Haram from Maiduguri, but this then affected the rural areas.

How to Deescalate

Abubakar recommended ways the U.S. can help, starting with material assistance and rebuilding. Raising awareness of the significance of interfaith initiatives would help, since Nigeria is almost equal in Christian and Muslim population. Nigerian people must be able to live together. This can occur through the work of community-based organizations and religious leaders. The Interfaith community and civil society must ask government leaders to deal forthrightly with corruption and the looting of the government treasury.

Cliff Kindy, Christian Peacemaker Team Reservist, who has worked with both Christian and Muslim groups in Nigeria, stated that escalating violence makes things worse. Kindy stressed the use of tools of nonviolence, such as listening. As people have fled, Muslims and Christians have found themselves together in interfaith camps, where they build houses, schools, clinics and places of worship for everyone. This model provides hope. Nigeria could be a model for the world.

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Peace Notes is a publication of the Peace Education Center. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Board.

Act Locally and Make a Global Difference

Becky Payne, Editor

Today, as I write this, it is the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, Japan. Surely we can remember that devastation and avoid getting entangled in another war. Unfortunately, a recently-negotiated nuclear agreement with Iran could be derailed by Congress. Lengthy negotiations between Iran, China, France, Britain, Russia, and the U.S. last month finally resulted in this agreement, which is designed to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons and gradually remove the sanctions that are crippling that nation. "Congressional rejection of the agreement could lead to a collapse of talks that puts our countries back on a path toward confrontation." – Friends Committee on National Legislation <http://fcnl.org/issues/iran/>

What we can do

There is a ton of money being unleashed to persuade Congress to vote no – and our Michigan Senators have not indicated how they will vote. The agreement has to be approved by September 17th in order to go into effect. We need to ask our congress-people to sign this agreement. Citizen input is important as they decide how to cast their vote.

Make sure that military-industry lobbyists don't put us on the path to war. Please check out the following analyses

The Unreality of the Iran-Nuke Fight by CIA Analyst Paul Pillar:

<http://www.commondreams.org/views/2015/07/27/unreality-iran-nuke-fight>

Richard Falk, International Legal Scholar and former UN Special Rapporteur for Palestine:

<http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2015/07/28/alliance-blackmail-israels-opposition-to-the-iran-nuclear-agreement/>

Contact your legislators – their contact information is on our calendar page inside.

Also in this newsletter, we highlight other pressing concerns, and give you opportunities to attend rallies and meetings, sign letters or otherwise participate in shaping the world for now and for a safer future. Big changes start with simple actions. Read on and join us to keep our civilization moving in the right direction.

Military Recruitment Opt-Out Alert

Contributed by the PEYouth Outreach Program

If you have young people in your life who do not wish to be contacted by military recruiters, they must "Opt out" of the list that their high school is required to give to the military each year. If they do not get a form in their orientation package or their school does not have a form, the PEC has one on their website. www.peaceeducationcenter.org



PHOTO: Two of the Tom Schneider Peacemaker Award recipients join the award committee at our 2015 annual meeting. Left to right: Kathie Kuhn, Becky Payne, awardees; Stephanie Persyn and Alejandro Trevino, Terry Link and Peter Dougherty (not pictured is Mary Haddad).

Three High School Seniors Receive 2015 Tom Schneider Peacemaker Award

Contributed by Kate Darnell

At area high school awards ceremonies this spring, the Peace Education Center presented three 2015 Tom Schneider Peacemaker Awards.

These awards are given annually to mid-Michigan high school seniors who act to promote peace and justice and who seek to further those values in the world. Award certificates were presented to students along with a monetary grant that recipients can use in the way they see fit to further their peace and justice work.

The following three graduating seniors are recipients of this year's award:

Mary Haddad of Grand Ledge High School
Stephanie Persyn of Stockbridge High School, and
Alejandro Trevino of Lansing Everett High School

The award is in memory of Tom Schneider, a local activist and Bath Township Supervisor, who touched many lives in the community and around the world. Tom was a model of how we might build a more peaceful community. The Tom Schneider Peacemaker Award recognizes local young people who strive to carry on Tom's peacemaking legacy.

If you would like to contribute toward this award fund, please send checks payable to Peace Education Center to 855 Grove Street, East Lansing, MI 48823; on the memo line add "Tom Schneider Peacemaker Award." OR contribute online through Network for Good; <https://www.networkforgood.org/donation/MakeDonation.aspx?ORGID2=382078801> under Designation, enter "Tom Schneider Peacemaker Award."

Boko Haram and the Nigerian Crisis...

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Islamism Is Not the Cause

Thasin Sardar of the East Lansing Islamic Center stated that until recently the Muslim world was known as the most tolerant of others' faiths. Boko Haram's origins are not the Quran, but are a manifestation of socio-political tensions. Repressive regimes have disillusioned many young, who then are drawn to violent groups such as Boko Haram, romanticizing them as freedom fighters. Members may be Muslim, but their actions are not Islamic.

Muslims cringe whenever they hear of horrific crimes committed by purported Muslims. It is a double whammy: they mourn the loss of lives and also have to put up with the tarnishing of their faith that follows. But no religion encourages wanton bloodshed and violence. Muslims

should not allow Boko Haram and others to hijack their religion for selfish motives. The Obama administration has abandoned using the prefix "Islamic" when mentioning terrorists.

Sardar noted that America is more religiously tolerant and respectful of ethnic and racial diversity than most other countries. Islam is flourishing here in a way that no other Western country can claim. We must all cooperate even if we differ in our theological backgrounds, and listen to each other to make the world a safer place for our children. Every religion wants peace, not just for its people, but for all of humanity. People of faith need to work together to dispel fear.

There will be discussion in the future of a possible common project that this local interfaith community could sponsor to help with the rebuilding. Contact Paul Brun Del Re at pbrundelre@yahoo.com for more information.

» LOOKING FOR MORE?

A video of this discussion can be seen at: <https://youtu.be/9RqZzGgqKsY>

A longer summary of this panel discussion can be found at the PEC website: www.peacedcenter.org

A Fall Calendar for Peace & Justice Activity and Action

» Upcoming meetings, discussions on important topics and events that celebrate, and promote community .

Regularly Scheduled Events:

Every Friday, noon to 1: Peace Vigil in front of the State capitol. All are welcome. Signs provided

First Tuesdays: Greater Lansing Time Bank Potluck and Orientation at Foster Community Center from 6-9 p.m., midmichigantimebank.org (see article on page 7)

First Thursdays: Peace Education Center Board Meeting 7pm in the lower-level conference room of the Unitarian Universalist Church, 855 Grove Street, East Lansing.

3rd Mondays - every other month: Greater Lansing Network Against War & Injustice (GLNAWI) planning meeting, 7pm in the lower-level conference room of the Unitarian Universalist Church, 855 Grove Street, East Lansing.

2nd & 4th Thursdays: Cost of Militarism Education Team COMET Reading Group, 6:45pm at Everybody Reads Bookstore - explores the use of U.S. military power to protect corporate interests, excessive allocation of funds to "defense spending", and the costs of American imperialism.

Special Events:

Sunday, Aug. 30: "One Book, One Community" conversation at the East Lansing Hannah Community Center, 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing at 7 p.m. Bryan Stevenson, author of "Just Mercy," a book about unfair incarceration policies in America, will speak.

Monday, Aug. 31: Bryan Stevenson, author of "Just Mercy," speaks at the MSU Breslin Center at 9 a.m. (see above)

Friday Sept. 11: "Hope, Not Hunger," the 9th Annual Mayors' Ramadan Unity Dinner 6-9 pm, Lansing Center. Mayors Virg Bernero and Nathan Triplett hosts. www.facebook.com/ramadanunitydinner

Monday, Sept. 21: International Day of Peace celebrations worldwide.

Monday, Sept. 21: Jim and Connie Detjen will speak about the impact of climate change in Antarctica and other parts of the globe. Edgewood United Church, 469 N. Hagadorn Road, East Lansing. Bring along a lunch to eat at noon followed by the presentation at 12:30 p.m.

Friday Sept. 25: Carry It On! Rebuild the Churches Musical Fund-Raiser at 8 p.m. at the Allen Market Place, 1629 East Kalamazoo Street, Lansing, featuring Robert B. Jones and Deacon Earl & The Congregation. Co-produced by the Ten Pound Fiddle and the Peace Education Center. Storytelling with traditional folk, gospel, roots/Americana, country and rock 'n roll. Food, beverages, and Sleepwalker Spirits and Ale products available. Net proceeds will be sent to "Rebuild the Churches." (see page 8.) Tickets are \$20.

www.tenpoundfiddle.org/event/carry-it-on-rebuild-the-churches-fund-raiser/



Sunday, Sept. 27: International Day of Peace - Peace March at 2 p.m. March begins at Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S. Pennsylvania Avenue, Lansing. Other activities follow. (see page 8.)

Sept. 25-27, Climate Crisis Solutions: Tools for Transition. Fall conference in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Register now! Presentations, workshops, tours, storytelling, music, and nuts-and-bolts demonstrations of tools for transition to a lower-carbon, higher-quality way of life.

www.communitysolution.org

Late September or early October: Advocacy Team Training - with Maiya Zwerling, National Field Organizer for Friends Committee on National Legislation. Contact Margaret Nielsen, msunielsen@yahoo.com, if you would like to participate.

Saturday, Oct. 3: Detroit March for Justice starts at noon in Roosevelt Park in Detroit. Staging will begin at 9:30am. Sierra Club leads the organizing efforts with partners from environmental, peace, social justice, and other organizations to build on the 2014 Climate March in New York City, demand justice and build the movement. Contact: andrew.sarpolis@sierraclub.org

Friday, October 9: Michigan Interfaith Power & Light's 10th Annual Sustainability Conference. Peoples Church, East Lansing. Actionable info on sustainability, energy efficiency & renewable energy. <http://www.miipl.org/greenandgrow-2/>



PHOTO: Commemorating the anniversary of the dropping of two atomic bombs that devastated two cities in Japan. The Friday vigil for peace continues. This community of activists has stood in front of the capital every single Friday since 2001. All are welcome to join - for an hour or a moment; every Friday or just one....

Oct. 25-27: Greater Lansing United Nations Association's Annual United Nations Day program, Year of Light and Light-Based Technologies. Sunday, October 25th at Abrams Planetarium - hors d-oeuvres and opening presentation.



Monday, October 26, MSU Henry Center, information about light and light-based technology research toward a more sustainable environment. More information at <http://gluna.org/>.

Oct. 28: Evening with Justice Richard Bernstein - in support of Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, 5 p.m. reception, 6 p.m. dinner, MSU Kellogg Center, 219 Harrison. Tickets \$150/\$50. Details at www.mymdrc.org

Wednesday, Nov. 4: Talk on climate change and the international treaty to limit greenhouse gas emissions in Paris in December 2015 - Jim Detjen, MSU Professor Emeritus, 7 p.m. Edgewood United Church, 469 N. Hagadorn Road, East Lansing.

Wednesday, Nov. 11: Discussion on the rapid growth of solar and renewable energy and how this could reduce the impact of climate change. - Jim Detjen, MSU Professor Emeritus. 7 p.m. Edgewood United Church, 469 N. Hagadorn Road, East Lansing.

Saturday, Nov. (date & place to be determined): Peace Center's Annual Alternative Craft Sale at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 855 Grove Street, East Lansing. 9-5. Feel good about your buying. Features local, handmade, sustainable, organic and fair trade goods, many sales benefitting nonprofit groups. Also, get information on worthy causes and organizations. Simple lunch available.

Monday, Dec. 21: Winter Solstice Write for Rights at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 855 Grove Street, East Lansing. Amnesty International local group & GLNAWI.

Make Your Voice Heard:

Your representatives need to hear from you on important issues!

Senator Debbie Stabenow

1-202-224 4822

731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

www.stabenow.senate.gov/?p=contact

Senator Gary Peters

1-202-224-6221

724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

www.peters.senate.gov/content/contact-gary

Representative Mike Bishop

1-202-225-4872

428 Cannon House Office Building
<https://mikebishop.house.gov/contact>

Representative John Moolenaar

1-202-225-3561

117 Cannon House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515

<https://moolenaar.house.gov/contact/email>

Representative Tim Walberg

1-202-225-6276

2436 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

<http://walberg.house.gov/contact/>

If you have an event related to peace & justice, let us know so we can consider it for our next newsletter!



Climate change could increase tensions worldwide, increase poverty and trigger political instability, such as wars.

Climate Change Summit Could Reduce Political Instability and Conflict

Contributed by Jim Detjen

Negotiators from more than 190 countries will meet in Paris this December to try to reach an agreement to sharply limit the emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

The agreement, which some experts say could be the most important environmental treaty ever achieved, will try to find ways to limit the rise in global temperatures to no more than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit or 2 degrees Centigrade.

The agreement is expected to include binding limits on the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, policies to reduce forest destruction and financial mechanisms to achieve these goals.

This treaty, if adopted and ratified by governments, could have huge impacts on human health, political stability and the creation of an environmentally-sustainable lifestyle. The treaty would be implemented in phases beginning in 2020.

During the past 20 years most of the world's climate scientists and scientific bodies have concluded that greenhouse gas emissions from industry and agriculture are increasing the planet's temperature, threatening coastal cities because of rising sea levels and increasing political instability.

Experts say the Paris treaty could put the world on track to reduce global emissions of greenhouse gases by 60 percent below 2010 levels by 2050.

According to a 2014 report by a United Nations panel, rising global temperatures are worsening global security problems, such as civil wars, strife between nations and refugees. A warmer world is expected to increase fights over resources, such as energy and water, and lead to more hunger and extreme weather. These impacts will help destabilize the world, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a U.N. panel that won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007.

Join Us - Help Shape the Work of the Peace Education Center

Contributed by the PEC board

Summer vacations are coming to an end. It's time to renew our focus on creating a more peaceful world. The small volunteer board that guides the PEC can't do the work alone so we urge you to pitch in.

In that spirit we thank our volunteers who helped staff our booth at the Great lakes Folk Festival in early August – Pat and Gary Lee, Becky Payne, Bethany Styer, Quess Derman, Paul and Carol Ann Brun Del Re, and Terry Link.

Having a public presence and bearing witness is crucial to shifting our world away from war and violence towards peace and nonviolence.

But we can use help in many areas.... See if any of these resonate with you!

- Redesign our web page for easier updating
- Membership coordinator to build our membership
- Outreach at local high schools
- Write for our newsletter
- Monitor our federal official's positions on peace issues
- Organize peace film programs
- Join the Cost of Militarism Education Team (COMET) book group
- Attend board meetings and share your voice and vision

Other suggestions are more than welcome!

Please contact us at: peaceedcenter@gmail.com

In deciding whether to participate in divestment, few basic questions should be asked...

Are you profiting from your investments in companies that are behaving against your values?

Talkin' About Divestment

Contributed by Terry Link

Profiting from behavior that we disapprove of is a stain on our souls. Taking money out of stocks in companies that we consider immoral is an important act. There are currently two major divestment campaigns that address that concern. One is focused on fossil fuel companies, the other on companies which are profiting from the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. In deciding whether to participate in divestment, a few basic questions should be asked.

- 1 Do I currently hold any investments in the companies of concern?
- 2 Are these companies profiting from activity that is harmful to society, peace, justice or other values I hold important?
- 3 Will divestment change the behavior and actions of those companies?

To decide if the above divestment campaigns are important to you, look at the claims made by the organizations that support ([Fossil Free](#) and the [BDS Movement](#)) and those that oppose ([American Petroleum Institute](#) and [Simon Wiesenthal Center](#)) those campaigns. Opponents frequently argue that there is no harm or illegality. In the cases above, they would have a hard time convincing me.

Opponents also try and make the case that divestment won't work or is counterproductive. But is that true? The most noteworthy divestment campaign was the divestment campaign launched against apartheid in South Africa. Black South Africans, including both Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu believe that divestment was an important factor in bringing apartheid to an end.

Of course, a divestment campaign could never accomplish such a feat alone. Perhaps that's a significant reason why the divestment action against companies profiting from the Israeli Occupation have also added boycott and sanction elements to their campaign (BDS). But even raising the specter of divestment brings the issue before the general public in a way that gives currency to the issue. Coupled with the real impact on the stock value of

those corporations, increased public awareness shifts the conversation in ways that sometimes leads to the changes sought. Such efforts generally take years before the behavior changes.

Just as in boycotts, divestment works best if the action is made public. Companies need to be told just why people are divesting. Letters, phone calls or emails to the company are good, and can be more effective if coupled with more public announcements, thereby encouraging or supporting others who might be considering such an action.

Are you profiting from your investments in companies that are behaving against your values? Perhaps these two divestment campaigns can begin to help us all invest for a better and more peaceful future.

» LOOKING FOR MORE?

PRO: Fossil Free Divestment: <http://gofossilfree.org>

BDS Movement: <http://www.bdsmovement.net>

ANTI: American Petroleum Institute: www.api.org

Simon Wiesenthal Center www.wiesenthal.com

Spotlight on: Mid-Michigan Time Bank

Contributed by Paige Sawdy

Mid-Michigan Time Bank is a non-profit service-exchange network, based on principles of respect and inclusion.

Members using this system agree that everyone's hours are worth the same. Members exchange their unique skills and services with one another using Time Dollars. If you work an hour, you then can receive an hour of another member's time and skill. Time Dollars serve a greater function than cash, especially for members who are unemployed, underemployed, disabled or otherwise disenfranchised.

Potlucks and orientations are the first Tuesdays of every month at Foster Community Center from 6-9pm. Check www.midmichigantimebank.org for more details.



Peace March Set for Sept. 27

Contributed by Jim Detjen

A peace march to celebrate International Day of Peace will begin at 2 p.m. on Sunday, September 27 at Potter Park Zoo, 1301 S. Pennsylvania Avenue, in Lansing.

Participants will march, hop, skip, jump and run on a one-mile march along the Lansing Riverwalk to “move, work and live for peace.” People in wheelchairs can roll along the pathway. Peace-filled activities will be available for all ages. These will include music, yoga, games, food and the planting of a Peace Pole. Activities will conclude by 4 p.m.

Participants are asked to meet at the “Tiger’s den” pavilion, adjacent to the Potter Park Zoo parking lot by 2 p.m. Bring along signs and banners.

Registration is free (and encouraged) at www.gluna.org. T-shirts may be purchased online at discounted prices.

This event is sponsored by the Greater Lansing United Nations Association, Peace Education Center, Michigan State University United Nations Association, Edgewood United Church and the Haslett High School Model United Nations organization.

Concert to Rebuild Churches

Ten Pound Fiddle and Peace Education Center have come together to help support the rebuilding of southern black churches that were destroyed in fires at the end of June. This series of fires occurred throughout the south following the appalling massacre at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston on the evening of June 17, 2015.

Carry It On! Rebuild the Churches is a concert event that will be held on Friday, September 25th, at 8 p.m. at the Allen Market Place at 1629 East Kalamazoo Street in Lansing. It will feature Robert B. Jones, and Deacon Earl & The Congregation

The evening will include storytelling with traditional folk, gospel, roots/Americana, country and rock ‘n roll. Food, beverages, and Sleepwalker Spirits and Ale products will be available for. Net proceeds will be sent to “Rebuild the Churches.”

Only 150 tickets will be sold. Tickets are \$20, with \$10 going to the Rebuild the Churches Fund.

More information is available at:

<http://www.tenpoundfiddle.org/event/carry-it-on-rebuild-the-churches-fund-raiser/>

Working for Peace

» STRIVING FOR JUSTICE