

# Stirrings



Clifford Harper

A Basilian Peace & Justice Newsletter

Spring 2016

## Remembering Daniel Berrigan SJ

By Tom Roberts and Patrick O'Neill  
(Edited from the *National Catholic Reporter*)

**PRIEST,  
POET,  
PROPHET**  
1

**BLUE SCARF  
EARTH DAY  
WALK**  
2

**PUT DOWN  
YOUR SWORD  
(VATICAN)**  
3

**EVOLUTION  
AND  
SPIRITUALITY**  
4-5

**THE ARSONIST  
HAS A NAME  
(FT. MAC)**  
6

**I AM  
A GIRL  
(GAZA)**  
7

**LIFE  
DIRECTIONS  
(DETROIT)**  
8

Jesuit Fr. Daniel Berrigan was regularly challenged during his life by skeptics and newcomers to the cause of peacemaking to show the results of the thankless work he had undertaken. He regularly responded that God calls us to faithfulness, not success. It would be just as easy to see the community that jammed into a church here for his funeral Friday morning as clearest proof that the witness of his life has been successful beyond measure.

The poet-priest-resister lived to see the first Jesuit pope, Francis, uphold for the world the Christian vocation to the margins of humanity, where Berrigan had spent so many of his days. And who could have predicted, during his long years of slogging along the paths of non-violent resistance, that shortly before he died a global meeting of peacemakers would convene at the Vatican. Or that the gathering, embraced by Francis, would conclude with the proffering of a resolution seeking the end of the “just war theory,” an approach which the group said had outlived its usefulness.

In his homily, **Jesuit Fr. Stephen Kelly**, who has spent more than a decade in prison for non-violent protests, in “a break with funeral convention,” linked Daniel with his brother, Philip, who died in 2002. He said the two “exposed the

historical alliance of the religious leaders, those appointed pastors, colluding with structures of domination. Bomb-blessing has no place in Jesus self-giving.” But through the centuries what was an intimate circle of outcasts and martyrs dissembled and gained in ascendancy over the power it was meant to resist. The power that had to be faced.

During the events surrounding the formalities of the funeral -- at the wake the night before, during the march and in the reception following at the parish’s school, the air was thick with the stories of conversion, of how Berrigan gave retreat goers or readers of his abundant literary output, new ways of understanding what it means to be Christian and Catholic in the United States.

**Jim Wallis**, founder and president of Sojourners and an author most recently of *America’s Original Sin*, a book about racism in America, credits Berrigan with nothing less than saving his faith. Pushed out of his white, evangelical church as a teenager over the issue of race -- he was told by an elder that “Christianity has nothing to do with racism, that’s political” . “Here was this Christian,” Wallis said of Berrigan, “who was contra to what my elders told me, and took his faith public. And that’s what I’ve been trying to do the rest of my life.”

continued on page 2



## Blue Scarf Earth Day Walk

Toronto April 2016



Sponsored by Pax Christi Toronto, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and Camp Micah, the *Earth Day Walk* stopped at the office of the Canadian Minister of Finance, Bill Morneau, and left him a letter requesting that the Government of Canada plan for the needed national 'Leap Forward' towards renewable energy and away from dependence on fossil fuels which are in fact fueling devastating climate change. Several copies of the *Leap Manifesto* were also left for him to read.

### *A Call for a Canada of Caring*

"There is no longer an excuse for building new infrastructure projects that lock us into increased extraction decades into the future. The new iron law of energy development must be: if you don't want it in your backyard, then it doesn't belong in anyone's backyard. That applies equally to oil and gas pipelines; fracking in New Brunswick, Quebec and British Columbia; increased tanker traffic off our coasts; and to Canadian-owned mining projects the world over."

***The Leap Manifesto***

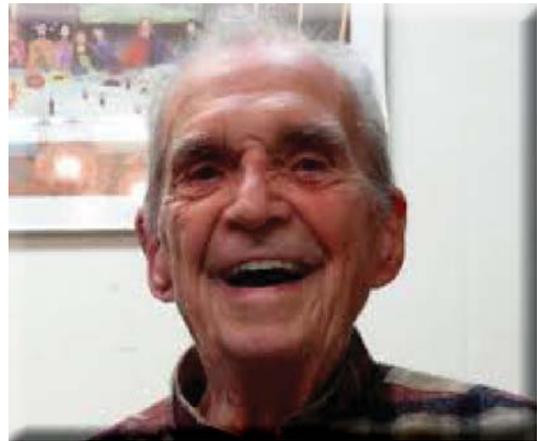
## Stirrings

*A Peace & Justice Newsletter  
A project of the Basilian Centre for Peace & Justice*

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## Priest, Poet, Prophet

continued from page 1

**Mercy Sr. Theresa Kane**, known for her welcome of Pope John Paul II to the United States in 1979 by asking him to open all church ministries to women, encountered Berrigan through a retreat he gave to her community and through his writing. "I think he had a great sense early on of the militarization of the planet. I really think he was anointed by God to lead us in a deeper understanding of peace. I do think he was chosen."

The **Rev. Bill Wylie-Kellermann**, pastor of Detroit's St. Peter's Episcopal Church, met Berrigan while taking a course the priest taught on the Book of Revelation. Wylie-Kellerman said he believes the Catonsville action was a turning point in the anti-Vietnam War era. "He and Phil really dragged the church into the anti-war struggle just by implication, and that certainly affected me. It was really my call to discipleship and nonviolent resistance."

The eulogy, in multiple parts, was led by various members of the Berrigan clan. It began with **Elizabeth McAlister**, wife of Philip and long active in nonviolent resistance, repeating some of the lines of a statement released by the Catonsville 9 in 1968 explaining the motivation for the action:

*"We have chosen to say, with the gift of our liberty, if necessary our lives: the violence stops here, the death stops here, the suppression of the truth stops here, this war stops here."*

He was the one, McAlister recalled, who, during Christmas gatherings and as the day drew to an end, would begin discussion about a subject that was engaging the family's concern or interest and then he'd ask: "What gives you hope these days? What are you doing that gives you hope?"

*Tom Roberts is NCR editor at large and Patrick O'Neill is a longtime contributor to NCR. The full article from 7 May 2016 can be read in its entirety at [ncronline.org](http://ncronline.org).*

Stirring: (noun) the act of moving or putting into motion, activity

# 'Put Down the Sword'

By William Slavick

The Vatican conference call for Just Peace theology gave Dan Berrigan a hopeful departure.

Jesus and his followers were peaceful, practiced love of neighbor, and for three centuries rejected violence, choosing martyrdom over engaging in violence.

The link with Constantine's empire resulted in contradictory loyalties. Many Christians retreated to the desert; most shelved the Sermon on the Mount and served Caesar. Augustine employed Cicero and contemporary philosophy to fashion norms for just war and war conduct, expanded and refined by Aquinas and Spanish scholastics: Force may be necessary for "the tranquility of order."

Save for large medieval peace marches, the post-Reformation peace churches, and Catholic Worker movement pacifism, Gospel nonviolence disappeared. Just war norms were ignored more often than respected, i.e., the Crusades and World War I. Yet, in 1957 Pope Pius XII said that Catholics could not be conscientious objectors. But many Christians remained uncomfortable killing those they supposedly loved.

Europe's post-World War II recognition of the futility of war, John XXIII's challenge of modern warfare, Vatican II's embrace of primacy of conscience, and wide disapproval of the Vietnam carnage all challenged war as a means of conflict resolution. John Paul II embraced just war but never found one he could approve. Nowadays, wars have deceitful justifications and predominantly civilian casualties.

Dan Berrigan, who burned draft records to protest the Vietnam intervention and engaged in numerous acts of resistance to war leading to jail time and who died Saturday, argued that the

Gospel calls us to be faithful, however remote the prospect of results. The U.S. Bishops' 1985 pastoral, "The Challenge of Peace," rejected nuclear weapons and legitimized Gospel nonviolence as an alternative theology to just war theory.

John Paul II's U.S. bishops largely ignored the call to peace. But in April, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Pax Christi International, and the Catholic Peacebuilding Movement sponsored a conference in the Vatican on nonviolence and just peace that may well herald a radical reversal of Roman Catholic teaching.

Pope Francis's message to the conference proposed as goals the abolition of war, recognition of our common humanity as a basis for resolving conflicts, and substitution of mercy for indifference and dialogue for violence.

The conference produced "An Appeal to the Catholic Church to



Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence." It sees Christians "called to recognize the centrality of active nonviolence to the vision and message of Jesus" and "to our long-term vocation of healing and reconciling both people and the planet."

The Church should invest its resources in promoting a spirituality and practice of active nonviolence, employing "the power of love in action." There is no "just" war, a theory too often "used to endorse rather than prevent or limit war." Nonviolent

social methodology works. It can resolve conflicts peaceably. And a "Just Peace" provides a "vision and ethic to build peace as well as to prevent, defuse, and to heal the damage of violent conflict."

The statement calls for integration of Gospel nonviolence into the life and work of the Church; promotion of nonviolent practices and strategies such as nonviolent resistance and restorative justice, initiation of a global conversation on nonviolence, an end to teaching "just war theory," and raising the prophetic voice of the Church "to challenge unjust world powers" and defend nonviolent activists working for peace and justice.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, head of the Pontifical Council and major author of *Laudato Si*, the climate encyclical, approved the statement.

The Rev. John Dear, a conference participant and longtime friend of Berrigan, observed that the encyclical the conference asks Pope Francis to write "could open up a whole new history for Christianity, and return us to the spirit of the early Church, where no one was allowed to participate in war, prepare for war, or kill another human being."

After the wide disregard of "The Challenge of Peace," this is revolutionary – like Jesus's words: "Put down the sword." Comfortable U.S. Catholics will be stirred and more Protestant churches will likely join those already committed to active nonviolence.

Fortuitously, the Vatican conference call for Just Peace theology gave Dan Berrigan a hopeful departure. May he rest in peace.

*University of Southern Maine professor William Slavick was Pax Christi Maine coordinator for 23 years.*

# Evolution and Spirituality

By Kevin Anderson

*Edited notes on talks by*

*Sr. Joan Chittister OSB and Fr. Diarmuid O'Murchu MSC  
at the Canadian Forum on Theology and Education  
held in Oakville Ontario 1-2 April 2016*

## Joan Chittister

Evolution is not just science but a growing consciousness. Science has sparked a theological revolution and an avalanche of philosophical insight. Galileo's heresy was not to use telescopes, but to challenge the cosmology of the church. This new science changes the view of both heaven above and hell below. It also changes morality. It means a change in stories describing the "geography" of the afterlife. It means we must rethink everything: God, afterlife, and the entire world. It is not faith that must change, but our interpretation of God.

The names that we give to God determine how we see ourselves. We must nourish our full humanity. Joan told the story of a five-year-old whose mother had recently passed away. The little girl said "mommy is in God's stomach". In other words, God is all around us. Coming from the mind of a five-year-old, this is quite profound. No single image of God is true or complete; anything else makes God into an idol, and boxes the truth in.

We must not be fooled by patriarchal perspectives. There are many feminine images of God in the Bible: cook, homemaker, mother, provider. Our true God is inclusive; God the mother waits, loves, forgives; she is not controlling; she is welcoming, and encouraging. The Divine Feminine is about heart. This means gentleness, and not just cool rationality. Feelings are essential to knowing and understanding God. "I have heard the cry of my people". This God feels compassion, and cares for the struggling; this God, and we, are *feeling* the world that we need to create, to save, to renew.

The pre-evolutionary worldview of God is quite different than our emerging sensibility. God remains a mystery that nobody wants because most people still covet the God of certainty, of surety. Yet realizing that we are ignorant, realizing that the *God of fear*, or the *God of judgement*, the *magical God*, or the *convenient God*, is a puny God, we recognize this is not the true God but a fabricated one made in our own image, for our own convenience. This is "God in a box". This God is a crutch – an intolerable God who permits oppression and injustice. The notion of a God "out there," a God who effectively ignores me, and others, a God who is a puppeteer, a potentate, a persecutor, a God for whom obedience is the only proper response: these images of divinity are nothing but "a graven image of ourselves."



Science is now inviting us to draw a new picture of God; to keep seeing with new eyes.

Our humanity must rethink our story of creation, of God, and of the self. The old view of God as all-powerful, all-knowing, becomes harder to believe when we see that God does not save our world from injustice, war, poverty, and oppression. The Old Testament story sends heroes, saviors, redeemers for each generation. "I am sending *you* to deliver them". Therefore, God does not save us; we must do the work.

And in this new paradigm God is not a cosmic calculator, or a counter of deeds; there is no way to merit God in this new consciousness. God is not patriarch, lawyer, or judge, but an encourager who invites us to participate in life. Our God is not the god of the Greeks who pronounces edicts from a lofty throne, who is indifferent, unapproachable, unemotional and uncaring. Instead, God is a sending, caring, merciful God.

Our choices, our freedom, our personal decisions, our actions, will become more important; these choices are the "natural selections" we make toward our own evolution. Therefore, what I do about global warming in a very real way defines my "spirit," my morality, my emergence – the natural selection of my "evolving self."

We are "*empowered*" by God to use our own "*power*" to grow, and birth the world. The God of the universe is "on the way" – growing – and all creation is growing, groaning, straining in the pangs of childbirth. The past is not a template for the future, or forever. God is promise, possibility, and invitation from within. God creates us by inviting us to the process of growth. God is God of the future. *We have living to do*. We must extend our own possibilities to become our best self.

We create the world of the next-generation; this is our role. We grow into God one level at a time: to discover, uncover, and better our deeper selves. God as mother, tends us as we grow; she sustains, heals, and enfolds life.

*Evolution is THE great spiritual teacher*. Growth is a slow process that demands trust and time. It can be cumbersome and painful. Failure is inevitable. Yet it is a holy invitation to become more than we are at present.

## Diarmuid O'Murchu

Evolutionary consciousness is an evolution towards recognizing that all systems participate in the process of growth. Evolution confronts knowledge and champions the notion of “courageous growth”. Tradition is not a “clinging on” but a “passing on”. This is the paradigm shift that must take place in our world and church.

So, we must replace the old story of dogma & control, in order to see the larger story of evolution in which everything grows. Growth means change; this means death; this means letting go; it means embracing the complexity of “development.” We must use a cosmological framework for our story; and our story is nothing less than the story of evolution. This is not about the past; evolution requires that we look toward “opportunity,” and the invitation of the future. The spirit is calling us forward into the future. The evolution story is broad, deep, big, – AND – optimistic.

There's a clash between worldviews. The old view which meant to escape this “veil of tears” to the hereafter is all about escape and attempting to grasp the “beyond.” Now we are faced with the challenge to engage the present. The new paradigm is about movements toward “liberation.” The old view was hierarchical, fixed, contained, and a pyramid structure. The new view is a circular structure, in fact, circles within circles, revealing cosmic and interweaving patterns, a web of relationships, with an undergirding connection to nature.



This change of paradigm means that we need to outgrow the traditional, fixed and defined universe, that for too long, has defined us, and that has limited our view of God and our religion. This means we must embrace a new paradigm which is open ended, complex, and scary. This new and emerging story is larger, and more mysterious; it has a “cosmic horizon;” it is a new story; it lets us begin where God begins; it lets God be God. Our story is about the source of all energy; it reveals how this energy continues to energize all life. Even our spiritual response is an invocation of this divine energy.

The great body, which is the universe, is our body. We are “embodied” beings of energy. The primordial water, flowing out from the Big Bang, is in the salt of our ancient oceans. We are descendants of ancient beings; and all that

came before us is embodied within us. Like all life, we begin as a single celled beings; this is the pattern of all that evolves from simplicity to complexity. Our bodies form, with all others creatures, the body of creation; we are ONE BODY. We are the cosmos; we are the earth; and we are part of an awakening consciousness that can reflect on this beautiful revelation of LIFE.

Another circle of awareness is the notion that we are grounded to the earth; in a very real way, this is our grounding, our sacred ground, the ground of our being. When we take dirt from the garden, and hold it, we are holding a piece of ourselves; we are dust; we are “black earth teeming with life.” We recognize that our handful of earth with bacteria/fungi/worms is a living and complex ecosystem; in a handful of mud, we hold more order and complexity, and life, than exists on the surface of most planets of our galaxy. The human person is found in the web of belonging. We must recognize that matter and spirit are one, that the personal and impersonal are one.

This requires metamorphosis – a process of birthing a new “evolutionary” consciousness. Spirituality is born out of

the profound energy of “inter-connectedness”. In essence, Spirit power is what energizes the energy of the universe. Holiness is cosmic energy. It is the spirit driving us forth towards coherence and meaning. Energy is our “home.”

The real problem is our faulty relationship with the earth; we are divorced from this earth link; the earth must be our true home, and we must heal our relationship with nature.

We need to include the voices of the periphery. We must celebrate consciousness around the globe of indigenous cultures, their awareness, and their respect of relationality. The revival of the new church will come with networking. We need daily meditation and centering prayer. We also need spiritual accompaniment. We need an outlet for fostering social justice. We need regular creative reading. We must remember that the incarnation is about “embodiment.” The spirit needs body. And, our first body is the universe: the trees/animals/plants and even the bacteria - these are bodies; these are *our* bodies. God indeed works through this body – in and through us – because “God loves bodies.”

*Kevin teaches at Robert Hall Catholic Secondary School in Caledon, Ontario.*

# The Arsonists Have a Name

by Martin Lukas



As the fire that ravaged Fort McMurray finally moves past the city, and the province tallies the heartbreaking damage, a search will begin to discover the source of the destruction. Investigators will comb the nearby forests for clues, tracing the fire's path to what they call its "point of origin." They'll interview witnesses, collect satellite imagery, and rule out natural causes – much like the work of detectives.

Except, in the age of climate change-fuelled mega-fires, this truly is a crime scene.

Not, I mean, the handiwork of troublesome teenagers, nor a campfire left accidentally burning. The devastation of Fort McMurray is the predictable outcome of arson on an entirely different scale. These arsonists have a name and they're hiding in plain view – because their actions, at the moment, are still considered legal. They're the companies that helped turn the boreal forest into a flammable tinderbox. The same companies that have undermined attempts to rein in carbon emissions. The same companies that, by their very design, chase profits with no mind for the ecological and human consequences.

Yet in the fire's aftermath, it has seemed impossible to name them: fossil fuel corporations. Of course they're not the only ones who have fuelled climate change: all of us consume oil at every level of our lives. But the record is clear that we are not equally responsible: an astonishing 90 companies alone have caused two-thirds of global carbon emissions. And all the oil giants involved in the Alberta tar sands are among them: ExxonMobil, BP, Shell, Total, CNRL, Chevron.

In the last week, these corporations have escaped accountability as quickly as ordinary Albertans have risen to action. Across the province, people have opened their homes to evacuees, offered gas, shared food. The most

marginalized have given the most: First Nations welcoming thousands to their communities; Muslims praying for rain at the Alberta legislature; and Syrian refugees, barely resettled in the province, gathering donations.

Most of these people had no idea of the disaster that was coming. But there were some who did: the corporate arsonists themselves. As far back as forty-five years ago, certain Canadian oil corporations already knew the lethal climate consequences of their business model. Last month, building on similar revelations about US companies, investigative reporters discovered stunning proof in the archives of a Calgary museum — a clue as good as any about this mega-fire's "point of origin."

An uncovered report produced in 1970 by Imperial Oil, the Canadian branch of ExxonMobil, put it crystal clear: "Since pollution means disaster to the affected species, the only satisfactory course of action is to prevent it." Except the oil company proceeded to spend decades lying about what they knew, and ensured the disaster would be as profound as possible.

Science may not show a direct link between climate change and the existence of one particular fire, but there is no doubt why the blaze that devoured the Alberta town was so powerful.

"We have loaded the dice for more extreme wildfires," says Mike Flannigan, a wildfire scientist at the University of Alberta. "We attribute the increase in wildfires and their severity and intensity to human-caused climate change. We've been saying it for years. Many of us saw a Fort McMurray-like situation coming, but none of us expected anything as horrific as what has happened."

To remain mute about those responsible for this devastation is not an act of sensitivity toward the citizens of Fort McMurray. It is to stand idly by while these corporations move on to claim their next victims. To argue, as prime minister Justin Trudeau has, that making the connection between climate change and this infernal fire isn't "helpful," is not a gesture of statesmanly maturity. It is the prevarication of political cowards.

If we want to contain warming to the Paris climate accord's target of 1.5 degrees, we will need to keep most fossil fuels in the ground – to strand these assets and shift to clean energy. But corporations have no such intention. In other words, they're bent on arson on a global scale.

*Martin Lukas is an independent journalist living in Montréal, Canada. Read the entire article in The Guardian 12 May 2016.*

Stirring: (noun) the act of moving or putting into motion, activity

## I am a girl

By Yara Jouda



Painting by Malak Mattar

I am a girl

*who has no dreams and maybe no future. In a blink of an eye, I could be without hands, heart and soul.*

I am a girl

*who lives under a roof which is under a sky occupied by thousands of planes full of rockets, who is surrounded by land without anyone to work it, because everyone is afraid of being killed by soldiers in the watch towers, hidden but ready to fire at any time —without caring who they target and how their families will survive without them.*

*Beyond that, there is a sea that, as much as we love it, terrifies us, because it carries huge and creepy ships that can kill us as well.*

*Shall I also tell you about the beautiful park turned into scarred, barren land? Shall I tell you I would love to fly on a plane, but I am so scared of being killed by one? Shall I tell you that I am scared to look at the sky and count the stars, because maybe they will suddenly turn into the lights that kill? I can't even write about these things that threaten my life without fearing I will die as a result.*

*They took our childhood and happiness from us, and then tell us we are the terrorists. Sorry, but I don't remember raising a weapon in your face to kill you, unless you consider the games we played to be terrorism. Do you know how much we wanted and fought in those games to be the police officer who defended the poor kids and protected them from the Israeli soldiers? What do you expect children to do, when we are still so young but we can't erase the sounds of bombs, or the pain of losing the ones we loved when a rocket fell on their house and they didn't do anything to deserve such a death?*

*And let us not forget the closing of the crossings, making it impossible to travel. And even when we can, it's as if our names on our IDs have a red line under them, just because we are Palestinian – people treat us differently, they are "careful," like we are all terrorists.*

I am a girl

*who, in parts of the world where the people "matter," would be considered too young to ask such things, much less know anything about them.*

I am a girl

*who is forced to be an old woman at the age of 15.*

*– Yara Jouda lives in Alnusierat refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, Palestine.*

*She is a student at Mamdouh Saidam High School.*

# The Story of Life Directions in Detroit and Other Cities

By Leo Reilly CSB

Father John Phelps received permission in 1973 from his Redemptorist Community to try to do something about the growing tragedy of youth killing youth or, as some including Cardinal John Dearden called it, “kids killing kids.”



Amid growing cultural tension in the 1960s, Detroit along with other American cities emptied out its middle class, made the inner city an area of concentrated poverty, and let the school system fall below half the state funding level. Another priest, Fr. Alex Steinmiller CP, a nun, Sr. Rosalie Esquerry OP, and a married couple, Alexander and Judith MacDonald, joined Fr. John to form the first team of what would come to be called *Life Directions*. They had two big problems.

They could not speak about God in the public schools and the Church, which at first provided some funding, decided the activity was not religious enough. So the group felt their way. And it was a gospel way. The answer to kids killing kids was to learn to forgive rather than to answer violence with violence. Forgiving did not mean forgetting but learning to live without violence. In 2013, they celebrated forty years of sharing that way in Detroit, Chicago, San Antonio, Tucson, New Orleans, Marion County, Oregon and Windsor, Ontario.

Where children come from stable two-parent families, they are much less likely to follow the way of violence. Where children come from broken families with attendant situations of extreme poverty, they easily lack the direction in their lives that allows them to make wise decisions. Anger is answered with anger and leads to violence. On Fr. Phelps' first entry into a public school the principal was about to order him to leave, when a fire alarm went off and everybody had to leave. Another teacher tried to find out more and the goal of peer counselling without violating the separation of Church and State got off to a shaky start.

Gradually the strategy of getting peers to share with peers, the strong with those in danger of following the path of violence, took effect. The book has many stories of children

waking up to values that have enabled them to survive and live well. Sister Rosalie, as a former principal, has helped *Life Directions* through the myriad requirements of school regulations.

Funding was a problem. The team realized that professional expertise was needed. They became aware that the needs of those still in school differed from the needs of those eighteen to thirty-five year olds who had left school. Skits in which people play parts as children, parents and, especially, grandparents are an important part of the process. Teens accept evaluation positive and negative from teens that they cannot accept from others. As the focus of *Life Directions* became sharper, results improved and funders became more interested. Judge James Hathaway in Detroit played an important part to get funding. As a judge, he faced the daily plight of youth in his courts; as an important community member he solicited donations. John J. “Pete” Raskob, whose grandfather introduced the mantra, “If you want peace, work for justice,” became a major funder. His grandfather help build the Empire State Building as well as being the first Catholic candidate for President of the United States.

It is hardly surprising that those who have been part of *Life Directions* over the years have also done the best academically. The answer to better marks is better feelings about oneself. It is the answer to ending school failure and drop-out. *Life Directions* continues to flourish in two cities as a grass roots, self-funded effort and as a reminder that America still has, in theory, a system of universal education in which rich, middle and poor can all learn from one another. Now 2,000 young people a year pass through the program

You can order the book, *Life Directions: Raising Hope, Building Peace* at [www.lifedirections.org](http://www.lifedirections.org). It is an indispensable guide, full of wisdom, experience and stories raising hope and building peace.

