By Nic Mueller

"Have I been with you all this time ... and you still do not know me?"
John 14:9
“SEEING JESUS” ... IN PEOPLE RESISTING THE MILITARIZATION OF YOUTH

Faithful followers of Jesus founded On Earth Peace forty-five years ago because they were concerned about young people in the church losing their peace witness. While our programs have expanded and changed since then, OEP remains committed today as we wear our heart at protecting young people from the militarism flooding our society.

In keeping with this commitment, our executive director Bill Scheurer represents OEP on the steering committee of Military Families Speak Out (http://MFSO.org) and the National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth (http://N3OMY.org). OEP is the national sponsor of the Stop Recruiting Kids Campaign (http://S4Kcampaign.org).

While faith tells us to “put away the sword,” science shows the “adolescent brain is not equipped to make accurate risk calculations” in life choices. Society now protects our kids from adult rules like alcohol and tobacco. OEP and our allies are committed to protecting them from the equally inappropriate adult rules of military recruiting before they reach adulthood.

Jesus had a deep connection with the poor — manifesting their spiritual and physical needs and providing the systems that dispossessed them.

In 1967-1968, Martin Luther King, Jr., called for a Poor People’s Campaign to connect 3000 people to build a sustained, mass, nonviolent action movement in Washington, DC. Focused on housing, jobs, and income. Fifty years later, a new Poor People’s Campaign is recognizing that work by building power and organizing in forty states, making connections between the war economy, environmental degradation, and systemic racism and poverty.

OEP’s Matt Guynn is a member of the Oregon coordinating committee and Bill Scheurer meets regularly with the national partners committee. OEP intern Alysia Parker attended the national convening in June, and members of our staff and community have participated in the PPC from California to Kansas to Washington, DC.

We invite you to get involved with your closest PPC chapter and participate in the PPC from California to Kansas to Washington, DC. For more information, contact OEP’s Matt Guynn (mguynn@OnEarthPeace.org).

On Earth Peace started a new prison justice community of practice in 2018. People connect to share knowledge, discuss successful advocacy strategies, collaborate on actions and narratives, and support one another in their respective works.

Group members include friends and loved ones of incarcerated persons, the formerly incarcerated, prison staff, pastors, and other justice activists. Many are involved in local initiatives in their own states, as well as in national actions and organizations.

Working with OEP and the Church of the Brethren Death Row Support Project, pastor Claire Flowers started a “You Deserve Love” project and sent Valentine’s Day cards to prisoners on death row and members of Congress (https://www.gofundme.com/you-deserve-love). People have responded to this wonderful project by giving supplies and support, and Claire expects to follow up with greeting cards and other messages for more occasions.

We invite you to join our prison justice community at https://www.facebook.com/groups/OnEarthPeace/.

On Earth Peace offers an innovative and effective #DoveClub program for monthly donors and our Dove Club members challenge us to do even more. OEP invites you to host a youth peace retreat or Agape-Satyagraha training site, use our curriculum in Sunday School, encourage a young adult to apply for an OEP paid internship, join the Dunker Punks podcast, and support emerging leaders in your church and community in a variety of creative ways.

In 2018, in conjunction with the Kingian Nonviolence Coordinating Committee, OEP offered two modules of the five-month course, “Beyond the Dream: The Radical Love of Martin Luther King, Jr.” Participants from the US and Nigeria who identified as Church of the Brethren, Quakers, Methodist, Catholic, and more, joined in these intensive leadership cohorts.

In June, OEP was invited to return to Dayton, Ohio, for a second Kingian Nonviolence training for community leaders. The workshop, facilitated by OEP’s Matt Guynn and Keza Cunte of Black Lives Matter Dayton, gave birth to a series of continuation events, called Nonviolence Jim Sessions, in which participants came back together to further apply nonviolence principles and practices to their community work. We invite you to learn more about our Kingian Nonviolence community of practice at https://www.facebook.com/groups/KingianNonviolence/.

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