

# PEACEBUILDER'S TEAMS: TO SURVIVE WE HAVE TO CHANGE OUR WAYS

A guide by Bob Luitweiler (2007)



Peacebuilders Teams are engaged in mostly local projects that create practical building blocks for a new society in the cracks of our decaying one. We believe that by laying a foundation for the kind of global community we want, we can accomplish more than by criticizing the actions of the power establishment.

## How Peacemaking is Different

A Peacebuilders Team is different from a community-service group. Instead it creates projects and relationships that initiate root changes needed to lay the foundations for a peaceful, just and compassionate global society.

It is essential for all of us to recognize the difference between ameliorative projects that merely patch up the cracks in our falling house and projects that put a new solid foundation under it.

Distinguishing between the programs that are softening the hardships of our rough society and those that are dealing with root problems is only possible with a long range and deeply insightful vision of community development.

## You Can Start a Team

Any small group of concerned people can become a vital influence in your community. Becoming a part of a Peacebuilders Team can give your life a new level of fulfillment as your team makes a vital contribution to your community and helps point the way towards a gentler, more compassionate and sustainable world. .

## How to Start a Team

**There should be no formal officers nor fixed preconceived program** beyond a general agreement to explore the philosophy of peacebuilding (defined below) on many levels in theory and in practice. Any kind of political structure can spoil the feeling of spontaneous fellowship that you want to cultivate. You will be working towards a closer free-flowing family-like relationship that brings a small group together and strengthens each one of you to serve the larger society locally and world wide.

Ideally you will come to feel more like an extended family of fond cousins than as members of some club, political action group or social service program.

### **The First Members:**

The quality of every organism is determined by the health of the nucleus. A team that starts with a good nucleus will be most likely to develop the qualities a Peacebuilders Team needs to succeed in its purposes. Three or four persons who work well together and agree on the purposes of Peacebuilding will form a more solid foundation than a larger diverse beginning group. They will help give the group a positive focus from the start. They may already be active in a group whose purpose is consistent with one of the projects listed below; i.e. service to Third World, promoting intercultural and interracial harmony, or non-violence, or a Gandhian or Quaker group. In the beginning be careful of the Tunnel Vision ones who are sure they have found the “best” and want all the rest to adhere to their “wisdom”. Be also careful of those who join groups to get power and position or prestige.

After the team has made a solid start and has a focused nucleus doubtful personalities can be easier to work with. Or it can be suggested they start their own separate team.

Start off by doing things together not by planning to save the world. A variety of activities bring people together on different levels. Have a picnic or even an outing in the country or a short bicycle trip together. If it is something that requires some team effort like tent camping that is good. Although I would not emphasize the group study in the beginning it should not be left out.

After a cohesive nucleus is formed it is time to start building the larger team. A team that includes members from various ethnic groups will help enhance the purpose of peacebuilding in many ways. Just getting to know more intimately persons from other cultures can seriously increase not only our understanding but also our global perspectives, especially if that person is from a Third World country.

Then the team members may look for ways to build small projects which can become elements of a healthy society. There are thousands of social projects, popularly called NGOs that soften the harsh corners of our unjust society. They make our selfish and confused, and often cruel world, easier to take. But very few do little more than postpone the day of COLLAPSE when Mother Nature says “You have damaged me beyond repair. You have killed a rare, precious and beautiful planet”

#### **Vitality of an Intimate Peace Team:**

TEAM MEETINGS CAN BE AN ENJOYABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

They combine serious searches for deeper and broader insights into our crumbling world with planning constructive local projects with activities that enhanced their feeling as a growing family. When guest speakers come to town the team might try to arrange a

separate meeting with mostly team members in order to discuss the speaker's concerns on a more searching level.

#### SOLIDARITY – TEAM-FAMILY BUILDING

A variety of activities would build the family spirit – group singing, story telling about each one's personal life, picnics and tent camping trips. When properly organized such activities can be high spots of the team life.

#### MEET IN FAMILY HOMES.

Even occasionally meeting in a private home can mean a lot to single people away from home. The team might agree to clean the host's home both before and after the meetings.