

## **DR. HAROLD M. BROCKUS**

### **Keynote Speaker**

**Harold Brockus** is a retired Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ minister and an organizational consultant. He has been a community activist in Pinellas County for over 30 years and has opposed religious and political extremism throughout his life. His causes have included racial and economic justice, farm workers, gay rights, youth services, and peacemaking. He is devoted to his four children and seven grandchildren.

[The following is condensed from a tribute to Harold when he received an achievement award from the Pinellas County ACLU in 2006.]

Born in Independence, Missouri, Harold grew up in a blue collar family and was the first to go to college. He won a scholarship to Yale, where he majored in American Studies. While there, he worked in a homeless shelter and helped organize a lecture series that brought Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to speak just after the Montgomery Boycott.

After Yale, Harold worked as a street worker dealing with youth gangs in Kansas City. He lived in the community organizing activities for the youth and interceding on their behalf when they got in trouble, saying "My goal was to reduce violence and get them opportunities."

His pastor suggested that he try seminary and he attended McCormick Seminary in Chicago, later receiving a Doctorate of Ministry from a Presbyterian seminary associated with the University of California in Berkeley.

In the summer of 1962, he was part of an interracial group that held swim-ins to integrate Chicago beaches. He said, "On a couple of occasions Mayor Daley saved our lives. He didn't want trouble in his city and the police held the mob back."

Harold married and started a family. After seminary, he became pastor of a Presbyterian church in a small Iowa town. Working with Mexican farm workers, he organized a clinic and advised the school board that the federal funds they were receiving required them to accommodate farm workers' children. He also obtained school board funding for a school and was condemned as a trouble maker in editorials in the local paper. While in Iowa he organized a Delta Ministry, a nonsectarian ministry that brought poor African Americans from Mississippi to Iowa where he arranged for a local cannery to provide on-the-job training.

In 1970, the Brockus family moved to Pinellas County (St. Petersburg area) to rejuvenate the Good Samaritan Church in Pinellas Park. He organized, with church members, a counter culture center to provide outreach to young people struggling with the bad feelings of those times. This safe place, for example, eventually provided draft counseling as the Vietnam War dragged on.

In 1971, Pinellas County Schools were integrated, and trouble followed. One high school near Harold's church had to be closed for a few weeks, during which he organized an interracial youth group. Black students were brought to Good Samaritan Church to meet with white students and build a core group of peacemakers. When the school reopened, Harold organized a group of adults to walk the halls to help avoid violence. About this time Harold led his church to become a Safe Place - where activists and several community groups were welcome to meet.

In 1985, Harold got involved with sexual minority youth issues, for there were no agencies to refer gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, transgender, queer young people. He organized a support group that provided education and social opportunities in a safe place.

In 1989, Harold began working with the HIV/AIDS community and chaired the AIDS Coalition. In 1995, he also helped organize a PFLAG (Parents and Friends & Family of Lesbians and Gays) chapter - which led to the School Board's adding "sexual orientation" to its anti-harassment and discrimination policy.

Harold retired from Good Samaritan Church in 2002. Since then he has been active organizing farm workers in Wimauma, serving on the Board of Directors of Bethel Farm Workers, a group which provides legal assistance, a head start program, housing, and a literacy program. He has served several years as the president of the local chapter of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State - and is also part of the Eckerd College Leadership program for more than 25 years.

Definitely a life dedicated to justice, liberty, and analyzing policies that need changing on occasion - and then organizing a means of taking action to make the changes and improvements.

[More]

## ENTEN ELLER

**Enten Eller** is a native of La Verne, California, and grew up as an active participant in the Church of the Brethren. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, VA) with a BA in Physics and Mathematics, then served court-ordered community service (alternative service) for several years in Virginia and Illinois, where he also began a computer consulting business.

During this time he served three terms on the Board of On Earth Peace. When his community service concluded, he began at Bethany Theological Seminary (Oak Brook, IL), and served churches in Idaho and Michigan as a student. Upon completion of his MDiv, he pastored the Root River (MN) COB for four years, then the Lafayette (Indiana) COB for six years, where he also was the Executive Director of the Mediation Services of Tippecanoe County, and continued his computer business. He also served for a number of years reshaping the Church of the Brethren's Ministry of Reconciliation (prior to being adopted by On Earth Peace).

After being disabled for nearly seven years, during which time he hosted an international rooming house in La Verne, CA, he then was able to accept the call to serve as the Director of Distributed Education and Electronic Communication at Bethany Seminary (Richmond, IN), and is now in his sixth year at Bethany.

His interests include working in Southern Sudan and international hospitality, participating in church revitalization efforts for small congregations, and technology, in addition to peacemaking, reconciliation, and ministry. He and his wife Mary enjoy traveling, camping, and tandem bicycling when they can fit it in.

### **Morning Workshop: "Social Networking and Electronic Communications for Peace"**

This Workshop will begin with a brief explanation of the prevailing social networking platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and MySpace), and then explore some of the aspects of the social network phenomenon, particularly as these networks have functioned as catalysts for peace and justice movements such as Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street.

### **Peace Testimony: "United States of America vs. Enten Eller: One Story of God's Call"**

Enten was the first person in the country to be convicted for non-registration under the current draft law. He will share about his experience of following God's call on his life to not register, leading to his felony conviction in 1982.

## DEREK THOMPSON

**Derek Thompson** is a graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, CA), where his studies focused on the needs and responses to "Children at Risk." He received his Masters of Biblical Studies and Theology at Fuller, as well as a Masters in Cross Cultural Studies. Derek is currently working as the Director of Student Ministry at the Church of the Palms (Presbyterian Church USA) in Sarasota, FL. He is married to Alisia, his wife of seven years, and they have two daughters - Emilia (age 4) and Avery (just about 2).

### **Morning Workshop: "Cry Out for Justice." Equipping teenagers and the church to promote Justice in the world through the Biblical practice of advocacy.**

To **Cry Out** is a powerful, deeply spiritual, and effective response to the experience of injustice in our world. The theme first appears in the Bible when the people of Israel "groaned under their slavery and **cried out**" to God (Ex. 2:23). God "heard their cry" and responded by delivering them. For those under oppression it not only evokes the power of God to rescue them, but is a definitive message to the oppressor that their spirits will not be crushed. For those of us free of injustice our **Cry** bonds us in solidarity with those who suffer, disrupts the status quo of injustice, and restores the humanity in all of us. To be silent in the face of injustice is to encourage it. Therefore, as we endeavor to **Cry Out** for Justice we partake in an ancient practice in which our voices join all those who went before us, in a chorus that is inspired by God to redeem the world.

[More]

## **Historic Peace Churches SUBGROUP TITLES and CHAIRS**

### **Meeting Simultaneously in the Afternoon**

#### **"WITNESSING TO LAWMAKERS" – Karen Putney (Tampa)**

Explore opportunities and methods to voice concerns to lawmakers when it is perceived that there is work they can do to support our witness in the areas of peace, social justice, environmental concerns, etc.

#### **"KIDS AS PEACEMAKERS" – Sue Smith (St. Petersburg)**

This designed program (of 5 or 6 sessions) encourages children to participate in envisioning peace in their communities and the world by engaging in a consensus decision-making process to create a large wooden Peace Mural to be displayed in their community.

#### **"PRAYING FOR PEACE" – Ray Hileman (Miami)**

Explore the various opportunities to "pray specifically for peace" – such as prayer vigils, prayer walks, concerts of prayer, prayer rallies, private praying ..... locally, via denominations, nationally or world wide.

#### **"BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH MUSLIMS" – Merle Crouse (St. Cloud)**

Learn how to be in touch with Muslim individuals and organizations in order to cultivate understanding, respect, and friendship; build on mutual interests; and help advocate for positive interfaith relationships.

#### **"COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR PEACE" – Tom Guelcher (Fort Myers)**

Discuss how to work together to use organization, education, and action through groups in our communities to bring about much needed changes in our nation's military and foreign policies.