



moral perspectives

Rev. Charles Erickson

Nation needs a peace academy

Conflict is inevitable. It arises despite mutual interest, unity of purpose or shared goals. It is most intense and destructive when aims are the most noble.

Many of us ignore tension or run away from conflict in a desire for peace at any price. Just as often we turn conflict into a fight we hope to win. Everyone needs skills for coping with conflict. With methods of coping comes confidence the parties and the situation will be improved by honestly facing facts.

Several colleges and universities have programs in conflict resolution and management. Wisdom has accumulated in response to industrial tensions, international problems, and more ordinary human relations in family life. In addition to academic centers there are programs such as training people for diplomatic service.

OUR WORLD can no longer afford to let insights about conflict management lie hidden in filing cabinets and dusty reports. Historians will be years finding out what really worked to end the Iranian hostage crisis or to bring Egypt and Israel to the conclusion of the Camp David accords. Is there any way to get practical use from the scattered libraries, research, skills and programs?

Yes. A national peace academy was proposed 23 years ago and stands a good chance of actually being born this year. Both Michigan senators and seven of our U.S. representatives are among 153 co-sponsors.

A peace academy can become a highly respected center for scholarship and training. People involved in peace learning can be both a symbol and national purpose and a practical asset all through society. Imagine the visibility of peace if the academy had the finest facilities of any educational enterprise in the country.

IMAGINE alumni holding important positions all through government and business of those from the war college for high ranking military officers? Teachers in all the social sciences could study at the center for wisdom about human relations.

Dreams diminish during the legislative process. Amendments reflect shortsighted concerns of current fears. In the long perspective, the peace academy could lead us beyond mere hand wringing when conventional weapons result in downing a civilian airliner and beyond standoffs regarding chemical and nuclear weaponry.

Legislators need to know our feelings when it comes to crucial funding decisions. More than that, we need to converse with each other to create a national climate giving prestige to people and programs pursuing peace. Conflict resolution and management deserves the highest priority for the sake of all aspects of our society. A national peace academy can help us live productively with inevitable conflict.

Community House hosts card sale day

The Community House, Birmingham, will provide tables and free space for any non-profit organization wishing to display and sell cards at its Christmas Card Sale Day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 7.

It has also agreed to allow organizations to use the center for a pickup spot where individuals who have already ordered cards can accept delivery.

Groups or organizations who wish to participate should contact Katherine Larin, 644-5832.

Groups taking part are being asked to forward samples of their cards to be featured in a display promoting the sale day. The Community House is at Townsend and Bates.

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