

ADAPTATION



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Winter 2002

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF MO

SPECIAL ISSUE
SPECIAL ISSUE

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING US ORGANIZE A
CONFERENCE ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION



THE WHITE HOUSE

Thank you for writing about the acts of war committed against the United States on September 11. In the face of this evil, our country remains strong and united, a beacon of freedom and opportunity to the rest of the world.

Our Government continues to function without interruption. Our intelligence, military, and law enforcement communities are working non-stop to find those responsible for these acts. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who help or harbor them.

We must remember that our Arab and Muslim American citizens love our Nation and must be treated with dignity and respect. Americans of every creed, ethnicity, and national origin must unite against our common enemies.

Since these terrible tragedies occurred, our citizens have been generous, kind, resourceful, and brave. I encourage all Americans to find a way to help. Web sites like LibertyUnites.org can serve as a resource for those wanting to participate in the relief efforts.

I deeply appreciate the support and prayers of so many Americans. God bless you and your family, and God bless America.

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ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI (ECAM)

2348 TENNESSEE AVENUE *ST. LOUIS, MO 63104 * (314) 778-7464 * FAX (314) 778-0401 * E-Mail: ecam@primary.net

September 12, 2001

President George Walker Bush
President of The United States of America
The White House
1600 pennsylvania Avenue , NW,
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, new Ethio-Americans , both Christians and Muslims, the entire members of our community are saddened by the loss of lives and the extent of the tragedy. We condemn this act of terrorism against our people . We are with you in our hearts and minds we are sure that the American people will overcome this tragedy with their determination and courage.

Sincerely:

Gedlu B. Metaferia
For Board of Directors And
The Ethiopian Community Association of Missouri.

THE BackStoppers



THE POLICEMEN & FIREMEN FUND OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

Ethiopian Community Assoc. of Missouri
To All Concerned
2348 Tennessee Street
St. Louis, MO 63104

GIFT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & TAX RECEIPT

Dear Friend,

The Police & Firemen Fund of St. Louis, Inc. (A.K.A. The Backstoppers) do hereby acknowledge receipt of your recent gift to the families of the firefighters, police officers and other public service officers who perished in the tragic events of September 11th in New York City.

We are deeply grateful for your generosity, and we certify that no goods or services were provided in consideration of this gift in the amount of

\$600.00

(Hal Richardson)

Hal B. Richardson, Executive Director

12/4/01

Date

The Backstoppers is a 501 (3)c not-for-profit corporation. We provide financial and emotional relief to the families of policemen & firefighters who have perished in the line of duty. In our forty-two years of service we have provided great comfort to many deserving families in the St. Louis Metropolitan area. Our area of coverage includes the City of St. Louis and five nearby Missouri counties, and two counties in Illinois. We pay mortgages, provide health and dental coverage and help the children attend school. At this writing we are assisting thirty families and we are helping four young people attend college.

From The Editorial Desk

We Can Make a Difference!

When we began organizing this conference on Conflict Resolution, there was one and only one important objective in our minds — success! It was a perfect projection. Thanks to our skillful planning Committee, the conference become real and sound. The support and encouragement we got from various government offices, private entities, individuals, and no-for-profit organizations were beyond our expectation.

The speakers for the conference are selected for their deep and rich experience in their given subject matters. Indeed they are outstanding individuals who deserve respect and recognition. The theme of the conference is “Conflict Resolution for Peace and Security: Building a more Diverse Community.” Based on this theme, the sessions are divided in to four vital categories: Interfaith forum

— where major religious institutes discuss possible solutions in time of conflict. The second category goes for security forum— where speakers discuss facts on civil liberties and some crucial current laws of the National Security. From educational forum we will learn important lessons on nature of conflicts and handling conflicts in professional manners.

What happened on 9-11 was an unfortunate and evil act that alarm global society to work hand in hand against terrorism. No doubt all speakers focus on the 9-11 catastrophe while discussing their subject matters, and we as audience will like to hear how safe we are and how to stop such kind of conflict before it hit hard. With no doubt in our mind this conference can make a difference and of course we can make a difference too.

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ADAPTATION

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ECAM
2348 Tennessee
St. Louis, MO 63104
Telephone: (314) 776-7406
Fax: (314) 776-0401
Email: ecam1@swbell.net

**A STATEMENT REGARDING PEACE AND CONFLICT
RESOLUTION**

By Professor Ephraim Isaac — Princeton University

“The courage to make peace requires a more exacting discipline than of making war.” From my letter to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and President of Eritrea (1999)

Although I am not a politician, as a lifelong teacher and peace seeker and as a listener to many distinguished former students - including at least a former president of one country, presidents of universities and major banks, influential lawyers, respected doctors; journalists and religious leaders from around the world - I have had the opportunity to gain insights into world affairs. As a long-time Chairperson of the international board of the Addis Ababa based Peace and Development Organization of the Horn, I continue to observe the growing worldwide hostilities, on the struggle for peace and conflict resolution modus operandi, on the other. On the basis of these humble personal experiences, I would like to make two recommendations as possible areas of exploration for future world peace.

I. Political professional and international organizations can bear weight in negotiating peaceful resolutions to conflicts. The professionals must work tirelessly to find the necessary logistical support to implement peace, in conjunction with all interested parties, individuals, and organizations of good will both inside and outside the conflict areas.

As a student of ancient cultures, in particular that of my own homeland of Ethiopia, however, I believe that respected community leaders and traditional elders known for their honesty and integrity and coming to their peoples directly with a moral command and wisdom that transcends mere organizational affiliations or professional expertise, can have a more direct influence on conflict resolution. Their approach would be rooted in the psychological, emotional, and cultural bonds they share with their respective peoples. With a deep sense of care and commitment, which such leaders

and elders are expected to convey, they can humbly approach their peoples and get a more serious hearing than distant international experts. They can initiate dialogues for lasting constructive engagements on the spot pertaining to the nature of their economic and political relations. Elders can deliberate and give recommendations without blame that conflicting sides can consider without prejudice. Toward this end, they can formulate non-binding recommendations, which can often be more critical psychologically than those formulated in legalistic language.

There are many practical reasons underlying this principle. First, there is no substitute for the principle of self-help. There will be tremendous dividends if people can rediscover and use their own celebrated tradition of an internal people-to-people mechanism to solve their differences. The journey toward mutual reconciliation will reap a harvest of world respect and also help convince investors in whom they can have confidence. There is no development without peace and no peace without development.

Secondly, underlying causes and long-term grievances would be addressed by those who know intimately the causes of the conflict or the immediate action necessary to ameliorate an untenable political situation which the longer it last - with or without war - the more uncontrollable bitterness it will generate. Thirdly, elders understand that humanity is formed of a family of closely related peoples. As the great African American civil

Rights leader, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., put it, we are bound by "an inescapable web of mutuality." The seething resentments of the moment -war casualties and other painful problems -must not be allowed to consume innocent people. Elders know that love and respect for each other as members of an extended human family is necessary to and move forward in a spirit of forgiveness with a dignity of compromise and mutual forbearance.

n. The UN sends peacekeeping military/quasi-police forces to warring regions. I would like to put forward a proposal I hope the US should support. Most countries have ministries/secretaries of war/defense but, as far as I know, not a single country has a "Secretary of Peace" (an idea I advocated and proposed to the present Ethiopian authorities about ten years ago).

Although we have come to think of peace as a passive state of war or the presence of security and order, at the root of the word "peace" is a concept of an active contract or agreement. In other words, in as much as war requires a great deal of organization and preparation, so does peace too. Peace needs to be actively pursued, fostered, taught, and promoted in every village and the countryside.

A "Ministry (or Secretary) of Peace" could be the mirror image of the "Ministry of Defense" (or, Secretary of Defense or Department of War), with its own army of trained "soldiers", experts, and teachers. It must work in collaboration with (a) other government ministries (education, health, welfare, defense) and authorities, (b) the respective religious authorities and institutions , and (c) most importantly, with local elders and non-governmental community leaders throughout the countryside. It will sponsor study and monitor inter/intra-people potential conflict- generating tendencies, act as prophylactic against conflicts,

detect the symptoms and attack the viruses of war before they spread,

anticipate any outbreak of sudden hostilities, contain or undertake immediate resolution of conflicts on the local level before they get out of control, and promote conditions that advance peace as a cherished value.

I hope the US will encourage each and every UN member state to consider creating peace ministries fore peace keeping purposes in the 21st century .The UN can cooperate with such ministries and become more of a global moral force rather than a military force, adding to the proliferation of destructive weapons internationally.

To this end, I hope the US would consider establishing a committee to examine the feasibility and value of such a proposal to set up ministries or departments of peace throughout the world.

The 21st century is here. The world is moving ahead toward a new day. We cannot afford to further dissipate our global resources, economic and cultural. We must recover our common human legacy, and work for the progress of humanity through a common agenda of education, health and happiness. Finally, if this generation does not find a solution to rapidly increasing hostilities worldwide, history will condemn it and its leaders. However, if we act we will be winners and among the giants of the world history and civilization.

Creating Healthy Families in a Hostile Culture **by Carl W Swearson**

A couple days ago, I came across an ad that went something like this in a parenting magazine:

"It's now 4:00pm. Do you know where your children are?"

The purpose of the ad was to help parents learn of one way to keep their children away from using drugs, but it also helps underscore the dangers that exist in the current culture. Most would agree that families today face far more challenges than they did 50 years ago. Stop for a moment and think of the contrasts that exist between then and now: The culture was certainly much more "family friendly" then when compared to today.

Parents now need to be much more aware of the "cultural terrain" today if they want their children to be safe. For every cliff and pitfall that existed in the 1950's and 60's, there are probably 3 to 4 times more now.

Minefields exist everywhere -the school, the local library, the local theatre, and in some cases, even your own place of worship. Parents must be actively involved in the raising of their children -if they are genuinely concerned for their children's happiness and welfare.

To make matters worse, marriage rates today are down and divorce rates are up. In general, the amount of time each child gets with regards to direct parental supervision and input has declined. This is a result of the increased demands placed upon parents, particularly single parents, but it may also be an indication of the lack of understanding of the importance of the family in determining the ultimate outcome of our children in society.

Parents need much more survival skills today than ever before. They need to know where potential disasters exist and anticipate how our children can be harmed. We can no longer be satisfied with whatever cultural map society hands us if we are serious about our children's happiness.

Many tools have been developed to help parents cope with the challenges of raising children in a culturally hostile environment. One is Steven Covey's "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families." you may simply read the book or go so far as to attend workshops that take you through a step by step process of helping you create a workable "flight plan" to take your family where it wants to go.

Will we ever be able to create a totally safe cultural environment for our children? Probably not. Children are natural "hazard magnets." I'm reminded that in the book of Genesis, it relates how God created this paradise, the Garden of Eden, totally safe except for one "pit" in the whole place. God even warned them about it, but that's still where Adam and Eve ended up.

William Doherty shares these words concerning the topic, "The forces pulling on families are just too strong in the modern world. Ultimately, we must decide either to steer (our own course for our family) or to go where the (cultural) river takes us."

After 9-11. what can we do for Peace in St. Louis?
By C.J. Larkin

I have worked in the conflict resolution field for over ten years. Most of my work has been with family members, neighbors, work colleagues, schools and parents. In other words, my experience is with conflict on the local level.

When faced with conflict on the geopolitical level, I initially feel disoriented. My suggestions and skills seem small and unconnected to the large concerns of terrorism, racial, tribal and ethnic conflict and war. Yet, there is much good work to be done on the smaller, local stage which can affect families, neighborhoods, and communities. When an increasing number of local communities refine their ability to handle conflict positively, the larger community of governments and political parties is affected, however gradually. Thinking globally and acting locally applies to peacemaking in St. Louis.

Professor Efrem's excellent article contained in this newsletter, "A. Statement Regarding Peace and Conflict Resolution", reminds us of two resources we hold: self-help and the guidance of our community leaders and elders.

Self-help

In his article, Professor Ephraim writes,

There is no substitute for the principle of self-help. ...people can re-discover and use their own celebrated tradition of an internal people-to-people mechanism to solve their differences.

Our community can begin the process of self-help by recognizing the beneficial attitudes and skills which individuals in our communities already possess. Then, we can offer the opportunity to improve existing skills and develop these

Capabilities in a widening circle of our community .

Below are attitudes and skills most effective mediators use in the peaceful and just resolution of conflicts.

Attitudes

* People need to express grief, loss and a sense of injustice.

Skills

*Helping the stories of everyone in a conflict to be heard with respect and patience.

Attitudes

*Differences should be tolerated, and when understood, area source of richness. ~

*Identifying and explaining differences in culture, values and communication style.

*Asking questions and gaining understanding in a non-confrontational, non-judgmental manner.

Attitudes

*Problems are a result of frustrated needs or desires, not the result of "bad people".

*There are two sides to each conflict, even if the sides are not always equal in merit.

Skills

*Learning the motivations and needs behind demands and challenging actions or behaviors.

"Reframing" or explaining each person's needs a.'1d concerns in a ma.'lner which is non-stressful and calming. *Maintaining a respectful and patient openness to everyone in the dispute and modeling that attitude for others.

Attitudes

*Persistence, patience and faith in the process are essential to help others work through their conflicts.

- *With help, people can solve their problems to a point of mutual satisfaction.
- *Brainstorming or generating multiple options to reach everyone's goals.
- *Keeping discussion moving in a positive direction.
- *Reframing or overlooking negative statements or attitudes and focusing on practical solutions and the human desire to be at peace with one another.

Attitudes

- *Apology and forgiveness is valuable. ~
- *Identifying feelings of injustice and grief and facilitating apologies and responding willingness to forgive. *Helping people build trust and optimism.

Attitudes

- *Specific and practical agreements will facilitate healing, trust and positive relationships. Skills
- *Helping others to clarify what can agree to: who is going to do what, when, where, how and {sometimes) why.

Attitudes

- *Positive relationships require time and effort
- ~
- *Constructive, positive follow-up after agreement to address residual or new issues.

Community Leaders and Elders

In his article, Professor Ephraim asks community leaders to encourage peaceful resolution of conflict in their communities:

Respected community leaders and traditional elders can have a more direct influence on conflict resolution. ...They can initiate dialogues. ..Deliberate and give recommendations without blame. ...they can

Formulate non-binding recommendations.

Here are five steps which our community leaders can take to begin helping their community to become more peaceful and positive:

- 1) Community leaders and elders can agree to provide a forum for conflict resolution.
- 2) They can agree to offer their time to assist individuals, families and groups to resolve disputes.
- 3) They can contribute and solicit the resources necessary to provide these services: a place to hold mediation sessions, administrative support to connect those needing services with the community mediators and ongoing training for those providing mediation services.
- 4) They can provide community education about the peaceful resolution of conflict and train other community members in conflict resolution skills.
- 5) They can solicit the assistance of conflict resolution professionals in the St. Louis area, as well as from national organizations such as the National Association for Community Mediation in Washington, D.C.

Islam: The Struggle For Peace

Everyone is shocked and terrified to see or hear about mass killings, whether they are from bombs or hijacked planes. Many times, fingers are pointing at Islam, Muslims, and/or Arabs. They are often labeled as "terrorists" without evidence or proof. In a state of crisis, laying the blame on others is easier to do than understanding the nature of the events, the causes behind them, and the motives of the parties responsible.

The True Meaning of " Jihad"

Jihad is usually associated with Islam and Muslims, but the fact, the essence of Jihad is found in the three major monotheistic religions: Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Islam defines Jihad literally as "struggle, " especially in establishing the good and combating the evil -especially to establish social justice. Jihad in Islam includes:

1. Learning and teaching knowledge of this life as well as knowledge of the hereafter.
2. Learning, teaching, and practicing Islam in all aspects of one's life at all times in order to benefit one's self, family, and society.
3. Being a positive example of Islam everywhere, in every behavior and in every action.
4. Striving against evil, wrongdoing, and injustice with all one's power: by one's hand (action), one's tongue (speech), or at least one's heart (prayer).
5. Contributing to the struggle for good and against evil with one's money, physical effort, wisdom, and even one's life.

The Level Of Jihad:

1. A personal struggling within one's self to submit to Allah, striving to maintain higher morals and etiquette, while fighting against one's whims and desires. This inner Jihad is the highest form of Jihad.
2. Jihad against evil, injustice, and oppression within one's self, family, and society is the Social Jihad.
3. Jihad against all that prevents Muslims from worship, people from knowing Islam,

defending one's land, revolting against tyranny, and/or protecting the lands of Muslims in the sphere of Physical Jihad.

Islamic Terminology that is Commonly Misunderstood

Islam in Arabic literally means "submission." This submission is to the One Creator & Sustainer of the Worlds, Allah (the Arabic word for God). The root word of Islam is "Salam," meaning "peace." Hence, Islam is achieving peace with one's self and others through submission to Allah. Furthermore, a follower of the religion of Islam is referred to as a "Muslim" or "Moslems" or "submitter." **Allah**, the Arabic word for God, refers to the same God of Abraham. The wisdom behind using "Allah" versus "God" is that God can be in plural forms (God, Gods), as well as genders (God, Goddess). Allah, however, has no plural, nor does it denote a gender. Thus, it seen as a form of respect for Allah (God). **Jihad** in the Quran, the Holy Book of Islam, means "struggle" or strive to one's utmost capacity to improve one's self and society for the sake of Allah. Jihad is requirement upon all Muslims -to strive to be the best and please Allah all the time. Simply, it is the Muslims message of thanks for Allah's countless gifts.

Mujahedeen are those engaged in Jihad, those who exert themselves physically, mentally, spiritually, and/or monetarily for the sake of Allah, based on the teaching of the Quran and the Sunnah (the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad (peace Be Upon Him)).

What Is "Holy Jihad" or Holy War?" In Islam, there is no distinction made between Jihad and wars that are "holy" or "unholy. " This differentiation was created in Europe during the Crusades and their war against Muslims. Contrary to popular belief, Islam recognizes Jews and Christians as the "People of the Book, " and is held in high esteem. They are seen as followers of the Abrahamic patriarch, believing in Moses , and Jesus teachings. In fact, for many centuries, Muslims have peacefully coexisted with Christians, Jews, and people of other faiths, maintaining social, business, and intellectual ties.

As a religion, Islam teaches respect for and tolerance of all humans and their faiths provided no religious oppression or persecution exists, forbidding Muslims from worshiping Allah, or preventing others from learning the truth about Islam. Muslims also recognize that all humans are accountable for what they have done during their life on this Earth. In turn, they must deal in a positive manner and treat others respectfully, for this also reflects in their deeds and level of submission to Allah.

What is the "Call For Jihad?"

Jihad must be performed according to the Islamic rules & regulations and only for the sake or the service of Allah. The [physical or military Jihad so defend Islam and Muslims must be officially called for by a Muslim leader or authority such as a well- renowned Muslim scholar. This call is based

on these Islamic rules & regulations that include:

1. Defending oneself, other Muslims, and /or Islamic assets/properties.
2. Supporting Muslims who are impeded from practicing Islam.
3. Fighting evil, injustices, and oppression.
4. Assisting other Muslims if they do not have enough strength or power to defend themselves.
5. Fighting whoever fights Islam and prevents the message of Allah from reaching others.

If the call does not meet the Islamic guidelines, it is not considered Jihad, and is therefore unislamic. No one can call for Jihad or label themselves Mujahedeen unless they are united and follow Islamic laws.

What Does Islam Say About Jihad and Terrorism?

Jihad, as well-known concept in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam has its rewarded of reaching a better place in the hereafter, Paradise. None of the three religions, including Islam, permit terrorism. Indeed, Islam is a religion of mercy, unity, and most importantly peace with one's self and others. Jihad is a tool used to uphold the truth, defend the weak, and establish justice, as Allah says in The Holy Quran:

"God does not forbid you from showing kindness and dealing justly with those who have not fought you about religion and have not driven you out of your homes, God loves just dealers. " {Quran 5:8}

"Fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but do not transgress limits. God does not love transgressors. 11 (Quran 2: 190)

"If they seek peace, then seek you peace. And trust in God He is the One that heareth and knoweth all things. " (Q 8:61)

"...and let not hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do. II (Quran 5:8)

Jihad in The Bible and Torah:

"...but if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand; foot for foot, bum for bum, bruise for bruise. II (Old Testament, EXODUS 21:32)

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked; "Lord; how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times? II Jesus answered; "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. II (New Testament, MATTHEW 18:7)

is universal: peace and submission to Allah, the One and Only Creator and Sustainer of all. Muslims believe in all the Prophets mentioned in the Torah, the Bible, and the Quran. The Quran shares much theological fabric with the Old Testament (Torah) and New Testament (Bible). One God, Allah, reveals all these three religions and their books.

The act of inciting terror in the hearts of defend less civilians, the mass destruction of

building of property, or the bombing or maiming of innocent men, women, and children are all forbidden and detestable acts according to Islam and Muslims. Muslims follow a religion of peace, mercy, and forgiveness. If an individual Muslim were to commit an act of terrorism, this person would be guilty of violating the basic of tenants of Islam, and Muslims should be the first to help bring this individual to justice for his or her actions.

Jihad, according to the three religions, can also be practiced as patience with those fellow believers who mistreat you.

It is sad that with an of today's fellow believers who mistreat you. technologies and civilization we still Islam In Perspective can't stop from racism, hating, and Islam is not only a religion; it is a complete killing fellow humans. Hopefully, way of life. Thus, there is no separation of one day in the near future we will politics from religion. Islam is also a able to unite together and see each practical religion that respects all humans. It other for what we are-humans. was revealed to all mankind, and its message

May Allah bless us all and purify our hearts from all hate and anger

By: Nasir Ahmed and Mrs Shah Ahmed
Islamic Information Center
14366 Manchester Rd, Ballwin. MO

Conflict Resolution Conference

For Peace and Security

Building a More Diverse Community

February 14, 2002

8:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Sheraton Clayton Plaza Hotel

7730 Bonhomme Avenue, Clayton

Sponsored by



The Ethiopian Community Association of Missouri

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- Africans United Against AIDS Globally
- AIDS Interfaith Network of Metro St. Louis
- American Clergy Leadership Conference
- American Family Coalition
- Anti-Defamation League
- Baha'i Information Center
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- Interfaith Partnership of Metropolitan St. Louis
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- Jewish Community Relations Council
- Jews United for Justice
- Missouri Human Rights Commission
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- Swank Audiovisual
- U. S. Attorney's Hate Crime Task Force
- U. S. Department of Justice, Community Relations
- Whitney R. Harris Institute for Global Legal Studies
(Washington University School of Law)

We appreciate the efforts of all cosponsors, volunteers and participants who made this conference a success.

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ቀኑ March 2, 2002

ቦታው 7118 North Hanley

ሰዓቱ ከ9:00pm - 3:00am ነው።

**SEND YOUR EDUCATIONAL
ARTICLES, SUGGESTION,
COMMENT. MAKE IT ONE PAGE SHORT.**

**ECAM
2348 TENNESSEE AVE
ST. LOUIS, MO 63104
TEL: (314) 776 - 74 64 FAX: (314) 776 -0401
E-MAIL: ECAM1@SWBELL.NET**