

Every month since February 1987 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has produced one-hour TV programs on issues related to peace, social justice, economics, the environment, and nonviolence. The Olympia FOR's program airs several times every week (currently every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm) for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for Thurston County's cable TV subscribers. You can see TCTV's **current schedule at [www.tctv.net](http://www.tctv.net)**.

You can also watch the program described below (and many more than 150 of our previous monthly interview programs and also many special programs) at the Olympia FOR's website, [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org). Simply click the **TV programs link**, scroll down, and click the program you want to watch. Many of our website's TV program listings also include links to documents describing the program in Word and/or .pdf format.

## JANUARY 2017

### “Nonviolent Grassroots Remedies for Our Current Crisis”

by Glen Anderson, this TV series' producer and host

The November 2016 election alarmed many people about increasingly serious threats to human rights, social and economic justice, the environment, and democracy itself.

The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's January 2017 TV program explores how ordinary people can boldly confront these new threats – and also solve the underlying problems that we have been experiencing for years. We can get through these hard times – and create decent solutions –

- if we **recognize that we can indeed address the problems effectively**; and
- if we **understand how nonviolent grassroots movements are powerful ways to achieve social and political progress**; and
- if we **work strategically and nonviolently with other people to accomplish our goals**.

**Two expert guests share their information and insights to help us explore this topic. I have known and respected them for decades.** When I chose this topic, these two persons were the persons I thought would be best qualified to serve as guests, and I'm delighted that both said yes. I am happy to welcome **Mary Lou Finley** and **Glen Gersmehl**.

- **Mary Lou Finley** has a doctorate in Sociology and worked many years as a professor at Antioch University Seattle. In the mid-1960s she worked on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s staff in Chicago, and she has been active in many movements since that time, including the movements for women, peace, labor, racial justice, and against nuclear power.

She co-authored a book titled *Doing Democracy*, which helps people organize nonviolently at the grassroots to achieve social and political change. She co-edited a 2016 book on the long-term impact and legacy of the civil rights movement in Chicago. Mary Lou Finley is a certified Kingian Nonviolence trainer (training in Martin Luther King's kind of nonviolence). She has been conducting classes and workshops on nonviolence and social movements for many years with people of all ages.

- **Glen Gersmehl** also has worked for decades for social justice and peace. He worked seven years with the elderly in New York City's highest poverty and crime areas – and has worked skillfully to advocate, organize, and build social movements. He has led 800 workshops and taught nine college courses on peace and justice concerns, directed the nation's largest community leadership training center, provided trainings for many prestigious national and international settings, and has been published in many impressive publications. He developed participatory computer-based activities used by a million people. He was the U.S. delegate to international meetings held in India to plan the UN Decade for Peace. For many years he has also worked as the national Coordinator of the Lutheran Peace Fellowship and significantly strengthened their organization and activities.

Both Mary Lou Finley and Glen Gersmehl are widely respected and appreciated for their wide experience, insightful analysis, and bold encouragement to practice profoundly practical democracy by informing and empowering people to build strong nonviolent movements for social and political change.

**Our current situation overall – both before the 2016 election and looking ahead:**

Many people are saying that the 2016 election outcome portends extremely serious dangers ahead for human rights, social and economic justice, the environment and climate, escalating militarism, governmental corruption – and for democracy itself. Many serious problems had already existed, and now they will likely get worse. We are in for hard times.

Mary Lou Finley pointed out that before the 2016 election we had been experiencing a significant growth of grassroots movements, including Black Lives Matter. Before that, in 2011, the Occupy Movement effectively raised the issue of economic inequality. The Arab Spring had activated people in a number of countries. Other grassroots movements around the world and in the U.S. raised issues and empowered people. Perhaps what we are experiencing now is a backlash against the successes these movements were accomplishing.

She also alerted us to pay attention to what is really happening, apart from Trump's quotations in the news. Trump has been saying outrageous things that the media promote and people react to. She urged us not to let outrageous communications distract us from working on the real political issues. (Although she did not say this, it occurred to me afterward that this is like a pickpocket or magician who distracts people's attention so they don't see what they are actually doing.)

Glen Gersmehl agreed with Mary Lou and also said that when he is out in the mainstream community he is struck by how few people really understand the significant issues and fail to understand the grassroots organizing processes that we'll discuss during this TV interview. He appreciates this opportunity to explore opportunities, tools and resources for making progress, because these are not widely known.

When disaster strikes, a normal human reaction is to lament the horrible event. After the 2016 election, people are piling on a lot of "ain't-it-awful" lamenting and reinforcing each other's worst fears about what awaits us. While that reaction is understandable, it can crush our human spirit and inhibit us from taking positive steps to solve the problems.

Instead of letting dread overwhelm and immobilize us, we need to think clearly and devise smart strategies for solving the problems and creating the nation and world that we want. During this one-hour interview our guests share powerful and useful information, insights and strategies.

**The Shock Doctrine:**

Naomi Klein's brilliant book *The Shock Doctrine* is highly relevant to our current crisis! The same kinds of people who used "Shock and Awe" to conquer Iraq in 2003 and to impose radical dominance and repression in other places in recent years (as she explains in her book) are using "Shock and Awe" to assault us from all sides all at once after November's election in order to impose extremist political appointments and a radically abusive agenda. I strongly urge people to read Naomi Klein's *The Shock Doctrine* and see how it pertains to the crisis we face here and now.

Mary Lou agreed that many people are so shocked that we can become paralyzed "like deer in the headlights." That's not what we need right now. Instead, she said, we need to pull ourselves out of that, individually, with our friends, with our spiritual practices, or in other ways. We need to organize and prepare to fight back on behalf of racial justice, social justice, the environment and the other humane things we care about.

**Progress comes only from grassroots movements, not gifts from the top down:**

All of the political and social progress the U.S. and other nations have achieved have resulted from movements organized at the grassroots, not as gifts from the top down. Mary Lou has spent a lifetime working with grassroots movements. Fifty years ago she was working actively with the Civil Rights Movement, which is a very significant part of U.S. history and culture. It was the Civil Rights Movement's grassroots organizing that convinced Congress to pass major civil rights laws in 1964 and 1965.

I pointed out that the grassroots Civil Rights Movement also provided strong ripple effects for other emerging movements. The Civil Rights Movement provided significant inspiration, insight, empowerment, skills, and volunteers for other strong grassroots movements such as the peace movement, the women's rights movement, and the environmental movement. Movements build from each other and learn from each other. This is explained very clearly in the 2016 book *This Is an Uprising* by Mark Engler and Paul Engler. (Also see their website, [www.thisisanuprising.org](http://www.thisisanuprising.org))

**Democracy is 5% voting and 95% grassroots organizing:**

Glen Gersmehl said that – although many people assume that voting is the heart of democracy, and that's how we choose our country's direction – actually voting is only about 5% of democracy, while 95% of democracy is community organizing and getting together to build grassroots movements.

## Why nonviolence? How and why does nonviolence work?

Mary Lou explained why our grassroots organizing must be nonviolent. She said that typically we are organizing to urge a powerholder (in government or elsewhere) to do something different from what they are doing now. But really the first step should be to awaken the general public to the issues that are at stake. The public needs to pay attention, to learn, and to understand the problems and solutions before we can persuade the powerholders to do what we want. In order to reach a broad range of people, we must be nonviolent. We must be credible. We must welcome people in to join us. This requires that we be nonviolent.

I also mentioned that working nonviolently also creates a safe space so people will feel safe in joining with us, including people who are totally new to our movements. If a new person is afraid that violence – or even extreme rudeness – will occur, they will not join with us. We need to welcome larger numbers of people and all ages and ability levels into our movements in order to achieve our goals. Mary Lou agreed that we need to organize activities that are nonviolent and safe so more people will join with us.

Glen Gersmehl shared insights into how and why nonviolence works. He began by refuting some myths and misconceptions about nonviolence. It is not weakness. Also, nonviolence means much more than simply not hitting someone or not fighting. **Really, nonviolence is a different way to build power – and it is more effective than the heavy-handed kinds of power we commonly see.** Many people think that heavy-handed power (political or military) is the only kind of power there is. But nonviolence is a different kind of power, and it is stronger than the heavy-handed kind.

I mentioned that one of the many things I like about nonviolence is that it often includes “rewriting the script” of what a conflict is about. Instead of focusing on a physical fight, nonviolence creatively brings the important issues and values to light – and creatively changes the participants’ roles in the conflict – so we can solve the problems in humane ways.

Instead of a simplistic “fight-or-flight” crisis, nonviolence offers creative alternatives.

## Gene Sharp has documented and explained how and why nonviolence works – with many historical examples:

Many people think nonviolence is nice and moral, but weak instead of effective. But actually, nonviolence has worked very well for thousands of years, even without the

kinds of coherent theories and resources that have emerged in recent decades.

Since the early 1970s Gene Sharp has been perhaps the world’s best expert on the historical examples and practical strategies for using nonviolence. I have been reading his writings since 1976. I showed the TV camera Gene Sharp’s three-volume set of books, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. This has been a classic since the 1970s. His newer classic, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, which has been translated into many languages and has actually helped to nonviolently overthrow dictatorships.

Gene Sharp’s non-profit organization, the Albert Einstein Institution, [www.aeinstein.org](http://www.aeinstein.org), features books and other publications and resources. These show how people have been using nonviolence historically, and how people can use it now.

Glen Gersmehl pointed out that although the popular American assumption is that in the 1770s the American colonists won our independence by shooting the British soldiers with muskets, actually, a variety of nonviolent actions had largely won our independence even before the first shot was fired. People were boycotting British products, refusing to pay taxes to Britain, and taking other nonviolent actions to withdraw their consent and nonviolently refuse to cooperate with the oppressive British Empire. He said that if the Americans had had a leader like Gandhi or King, we could have achieved a nonviolent transfer of power without any gunfire at all.

I agreed with him. I said that if we understood the powerful nonviolent accomplishments, instead of thinking we owe our independence to men shooting muskets, we would recognize that our true heroes were the people who boycotted British products, people who set up an independent court system in Virginia and ignored the British-imposed court system there, and so forth. Americans would understand ourselves as a national heritage differently: we would recognize we owe our independence to this nonviolence instead of military violence.

I held up a well-researched and fascinating book, *A Force More Powerful*, by Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, which documents the nonviolent efforts in a dozen nations to resist or expel invading armies, overthrow oppressive governments, stop the abuse of human rights, and so forth. The book provides insights into how these nonviolent campaigns were organized and conducted, what happened, and what lessons we can learn from them. Six of these case studies were made into 30-minute documentary videos, and this series is available on VHS and DVD under the series name *A Force More Powerful*. I recommend these highly!

Mary Lou Finley said she especially appreciates how Gene Sharp emphasizes the strategic use of nonviolence in various kinds of cases. She had worked directly in Martin Luther King’s Civil Rights Movement. King emphasized the ethics and the humane values of working nonviolently. Mary Lou says that Gene Sharp does not deny that, but he emphasizes

that nonviolence actually works, so people can use it successfully if they are scrupulously nonviolent and strategically smart, even if they are not grounded in deeper spiritual values, as King was. Gene Sharp sometimes refers to using strategic nonviolence as “political *jiu jitsu*” that uses an oppressor’s power against himself.

She said, “Leaders need followers to cooperate with what they want to do.” People can undermine that power – and claim power for ourselves – by not cooperating with abusive leaders.

### **Erica Chenoweth’s recent book proves the effectiveness of nonviolence with solid proof from hundreds of examples of conflicts during the 1900s:**

In 2011 Erica Chenoweth and her co-author Maria J. Stephan published a powerfully informative book titled, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Chenoweth had started out initially with a very conventional militaristic approach to national security, but when someone challenged her to research the power and effectiveness of nonviolence, her research turned her around 180 degrees. I have read the book, which uses solid research and very rigorous methodology to actually prove that campaigns that are scrupulously nonviolent are much more likely to succeed against oppressors than campaigns that rely upon violence (or even include a little violence, which some people refer to as “diversity of tactics”). Chenoweth and Stephan proved that total nonviolence works much better than either violent uprisings or “diversity of tactics.”

Also, for those movements that did prevail, the ones that were entirely nonviolent were much more likely to produce good results (*e.g.*, resulting in democracies instead of new repressive regimes) than those that had used any violence.

Instead of violent movements conducted mostly by a few macho men, nonviolent movements are broad-based, including women, elderly people, children, people with disabilities, and so forth. So when the nonviolent movement wins, they have already laid the groundwork for a new, broad-based, egalitarian society grounded in the broad public interest and accountable to the general public instead of to a few macho revolutionists.

Mary Lou followed up on this concept with the example of one of her students, who had come from Nepal, where many years of political violence (Maoist, etc.) had saturated the society so thoroughly that kids grew up thinking that violence was how to solve problems, and violence became part of the culture (domestic violence within families, friends murdering friends, etc.). This high level of violence within Nepalese society continued long after the violent political conflict had been resolved.

She said that in contrast, a society that has been using nonviolence will be better able to move forward to a better society.

### **Nonviolence works against Nazis and other extremely brutal dictators:**

Many people assume that nonviolence works only against oppressors that are not very nasty, but that nonviolence is not strong and effective enough to use against brutal dictators or Nazis. People commonly ask, “What about Hitler?”

Glen Gersmehl said he grew up with that assumption. Only later did he learn how powerful and effective nonviolence has been in many brutal settings, including during the Nazi era. Recently he and some other people created a list of 160 examples of nonviolent action throughout history – including a great many examples of people using nonviolence in settings of extreme violence.

He said that after World War II, people discovered documentation of communications among Nazi leaders expressing their utter frustration at being unable to stop the nonviolent resistance efforts and dominate the people they wanted to dominate. The Nazis knew how to fight back against violent resistance, but they were utterly flummoxed by resolutely nonviolent resistance. For example, he said that when Norway’s teachers refused to teach Nazi propaganda in the schools, the Nazis could not figure out a way to force them to do so. Many, many other examples occurred in other settings, including South Africa during the apartheid era.

### **Other myths and misunderstandings about nonviolence:**

We discussed some of the other myths and misunderstandings about nonviolence. Nonviolence is **not simply** about not physically fighting in the current moment. Glen Gersmehl explained how **nonviolence can be a positive organizing force** – a vigorously active and strategic force **for building effective long-term movements**. He said that the smart movements will try several nonviolent methods and see how well each one works. Then they build upon the ones that seem to work best in their particular setting, share this information with additional people – including new people beyond those already involved – and keep building the movements from there. Some of these additional people might not agree on other issues, but the organizers focus on the values and interests that they do share, so they can recruit more people into the movements. **Attracting a large number of ordinary people is an important factor in winning the nonviolent campaign.**

Earlier I mentioned the book and video series titled *A Force More Powerful*. This phrase came from Desmond Tutu, the South African Anglican archbishop who was very active in the anti-apartheid movement. He said nonviolence is “a force

more powerful” than violence! This might seem astonishing, but the evidence does prove this!

**Indeed, nonviolence is a radical, creative alternative to merely “fight or flight,” which we have been taught are our only two options. Nonviolence gives us a better – and more powerful – alternative!**

Glen Gersmehl said that our educational system and our media utterly fail to inform us of the nonviolent alternative. They keep assuming that violence is the only way to fight back against oppression. If we had a real democracy, our schools and media would be teaching us that nonviolent people-power is powerful, and they would be teaching the methods for achieving goals without violence.

I agreed and said many movies end by having the “good guys” killing the “bad guys” by shooting them (e.g., gun fights, violent car chases, or explosions that blow them up). This recurring theme of using violence to solve problems has been referred to as “the myth of redemptive violence” – the notion that violence is how good conquers evil. Movies almost never use the kind of principled nonviolence we’ve been discussing during this interview to help good triumph over evil. Indeed, “the myth of redemptive violence” is what dominates U.S. foreign policy. As a result, most Americans can’t even imagine solving serious conflicts without violence. Our imaginations are so truncated that we are stuck in “fight or flight” and never consider nonviolent alternatives.

Glen Gersmehl agreed, and he mentioned how he and his wife raised their son with nonviolence – humanely connecting with him and figuring out what was going to work well – instead of parenting in the more common way, and this has worked out well for their family.

**Instead of simply doing one action after another, we need strategically savvy nonviolent movements and campaigns that build on each other to help us reach our goals:**

People who are upset by political or social injustices often vent their frustration and anger. But merely venting is not enough. And some of the ways that people vent can backfire on us. Instead of merely venting, we need to **strategize** and **organize nonviolent movements** that will achieve our goals.

It’s not enough to simply do one random action after another. Instead, we need to choose clear **goals** and develop smart **strategies for nonviolent movements** so our grassroots movements can attract more of the public and reach our bold goals. Mary Lou shared insights into setting specific goals (e.g., a goal to protect Social Security, or a goal to establish a \$15/hour minimum wage), and

then – for each goal – figuring out how to build a strategically smart nonviolent movement that includes **a sequence of campaigns** that will help us reach that goal.

Mary Lou said that Martin Luther King’s kind of organizing worked through a sequence of steps. First we must gather information so we would understand what’s really going on. Then we educate ourselves and others about what’s going on. The third step is personal commitment (e.g., how much will each of us invest or risk in working toward our goal? Participate in legal demonstrations? Risk arrest and go to jail?) Based on this information, develop strategies. Negotiate with the people with whom we disagree. Perhaps we can convince them to change what they do. If not, then we can consider nonviolent direct action. Build incremental steps.

Recruit and welcome new people into the movement. Look for potential allies, including unlikely allies, such as people who might be sympathetic to our view even if they are connected with the power structure.

**Strategic nonviolence: The “Movement Action Plan” is a powerful, practical model:**

Fifteen years ago Mary Lou co-authored the book *Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements* – and was a guest on Olympia FOR’s TV program, along with the book’s primary author. The book focuses on the *Movement Action Plan*, a model that is enormously useful. Mary Lou summarized a few of the *MAP*’s main points.

*MAP* says that nonviolent campaigns often go through eight stages. The first three stages are preliminary with just a few people. At first hardly anybody knows the problem exists, but the people who do see the problem educate themselves and start informing other people. These first three preliminary stages prepare for a movement that will attract widespread public attention, interest, support, and participation.

Stage 4 is when our issue really “takes off,” and the general public becomes aware of the problem. Even if not very many people are agreeing with us yet, this “take-off” stage is when many ordinary people do start paying attention and start asking questions. This “take-off” stage is crucial because now the issue is on the public agenda. During the “take-off” stage, we don’t yet win, and this can frustrate some of the people working on the issue, but this stage is crucial because this stage is when we make our issue important for widespread public discussion. Big nonviolent actions during the “take off” stage attract more public attention. The process requires a few more steps of building a nonviolent movement and turning a majority of public opinion onto our side before we ultimately win.

For example, Mary Lou mentioned the “take-off” stage of opposition to economic “globalization.” An important event occurred in 1999 when 50,000 people in Seattle protested the World Trade Organization and economic “globalization,” people started asking, “What’s this ‘globalization’ about?” People

started looking for information, and news media researched it too. Now that this issue had reached the “take-off” stage, more people started researching and sharing information, and more people came to oppose economic “globalization (including WTO, NAFTA and recently actually stopped the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the TPP).

The next stage after “take-off” requires massive public outreach to bring many more people into the movement and achieve majority public opinion for our side. This massive outreach includes bringing new and different constituencies into the movement.

Mary Lou gave an example from Vermont from many years ago during the early part of the climate movement. Although environmentalists and snowmobilers are often not on the same side of an issue, in Vermont the climate movement helped snowmobilers recognize that global warming would seriously reduce the amount of snow for them, so Vermont’s climate organizers brought snowmobilers into the climate movement. This is a great example of the kind of creative outreach to new constituencies that can happen when a movement takes off and we need to bring more kinds of people into the movement in order to achieve majority public opinion for our side.

Strategically smart nonviolent organizing can help grassroots movement achieve victories in changing decisions by governments, corporations, and others. The first victories will likely occur at local levels, and then state levels, before winning victories at the national level.

Because we don’t win right away at the “take-off” stage, some people get frustrated. Also, when we start to win majority public opinion and small victories, we might experience pushback and backlash from people on the other side. For these reasons, we must remain nonviolent and continue updating our strategies for building the movement toward larger victories.

Big progress really does occur in society. During the interview I mentioned that when I attended college, people smoked in college classrooms, but eventually grassroots people organized a strong majority of public opinion to sharply restrict smoking in many public places.

Also, as a teenager when I started looking for jobs, the newspapers had separate column headings for “Help Wanted – Men” and “Help Wanted – Women” with job openings divided by stereotype. Mary Lou pointed out that the newspapers did not voluntarily stop the stereotypes. Rather, the women’s movement organized and forced the newspapers to solve that problem. She said we need to see our personal problems as public issues.

## How to bring new people in – and how to keep them in:

Building grassroots movements requires that we **bring new people in** – and get them to participate – and **keep them active** with us. Glen Gersmehl shared some insights. He said that effective movements need person-to-person connections and relationships and trust among the people working together. Movement organizations that do this – and build a sense of community where people will feel they belong – attract new people and build larger movements. Participants who share values bond with each other.

But social media operate differently.

## Withdraw consent:

Thomas Jefferson recognized that “we the people” create the government – and “we the people” can change or even replace the government.

Likewise, Gene Sharp’s research shows that powerful oppressors lose their power when people refuse to obey them – or at least withdraw their consent from them. Therefore, an important part of Gene Sharp’s advice is to **figure out how people can withdraw their consent from oppressors**.

The American people worry now about increasing oppression, social and economic injustice, environmental abuse, and political corruption. To protect ourselves from these problems, we might look for ways to withdraw our consent from oppressors at governmental levels – and in the economic sector and in other parts of our society – to weaken oppressors’ power.

Mary Lou said that during the Civil Rights Movement people asserted their rights (such as their right to vote) and refused to go away when their rights were denied. Instead, they used this as an opportunity to organize to advance and protect their rights.

Glen Gersmehl said that when we seriously look at what holds the unjust authority together, we see that “it is remarkably thin.” Look for a vulnerable spot and devise a strategy to bring people together to challenge that.

Mary Lou said that boycotts are a good way to withdraw support. We can avoid buying certain things. When many people do this, it has a collective impact.

I mentioned that in the late 1960s some athletes raised fists to protest U.S. policies, and more athletes nowadays are protesting racial injustice by refusing to stand for the national anthem or are wearing shirts with messages of resistance. We can find more ways to nonviolently defy authority and refuse to be nicely obedient.

### **Remove the “pillars” that prop up unjust or oppressive systems:**

A simple model explains one way of doing this. Imagine a Greek or Roman temple with columns holding up a horizontal roof. Imagine the big horizontal roof piece is an oppressive system or unjust political or economic practice (e.g., the death penalty, racial discrimination in housing, the U.S.’s violent foreign policy, abusive payday lending, a certain kind of environmental abuse, or the Port of Olympia’s shipping of fracking proppants to North Dakota).

That oppressive system is propped up by a number of pillars – some political or economic or cultural interest groups or institutions – some social customs or norms – and so forth. If we identify each pillar that props up the unjust system, we can also figure strategies for how to nonviolently remove or weaken each individual pillar. Then when we remove or weaken enough of the pillars, the oppressive top system will collapse.

So, to use the death penalty as an example, we can understand that the death penalty is propped up by “pillars” such as racism, fear of criminals, a psychological need for revenge, politicians who would rather run on “tough-on-crime” platforms rather than solve the underlying problems that lead to crime, and so forth. We could identify additional “pillars” and strategize how to weaken or remove enough of them to cause the death penalty to collapse.

Each nonviolent grassroots movement can consider whether the “pillars” model could be a useful method to strategize how to nonviolently dismantle the specific oppressive system that movement is opposing.

Many other models exist too. I just find this one particularly visual, intuitive, and exciting.

Mary Lou said one of the things she likes about this is that if we oppose an especially oppressive system, we do not have to confront its worst part or strongest point. The “pillars” model helps us see indirect ways to confront it that might be more effective. We can use this model to peel away some of the system’s allies.

### **Systems, not just individual politicians or political parties:**

Our conversation today helps us all see that the big problems we face are not just individual politicians or individual political parties. Really, the problems are in big systems and institutions that are beholden to money and abuses of power. These big systems and institutions are long-standing and entrenched. So **if we want to solve the**

**underlying problems, we need to examine those systems and institutions and figure out how to use nonviolent strategies to fix or replace them.**

Glen Gersmehl offered the climate crisis as an example. Despite the “deniers” who have a financial interest in refusing to admit that this is a serious problem, the U.S. military – another giant and conservative institution – does recognize the climate crisis as a very serious threat for a number of reasons. The military has developed detailed plans to deal with it.

Also, he has friends who work on commercial fishing boats in Alaska, and – after having started out as climate “deniers” – now they are alarmed by the loss of Alaska’s glaciers.

He said that the fossil fuel companies have been using the exact same strategies that the tobacco companies used decades ago to deceive the public and prevent actions that would hurt their profits. The tobacco companies – and now the fossil fuel companies – have spent huge amounts of money falsely claiming that science has not proven that their products cause problems. Actually, scientists have been virtually unanimous on both of those, but the giant corporations have lied to us in order to protect their sales and profits.

### **Shalom is a more profound and holistic nonviolence:**

**We have been talking about how to get rid of what we don’t want. Now let’s talk about what we do want instead.** A “hinge point” to help us transition to the positive alternatives we do want might be in the concept of *shalom*.

Glen Gersmehl explained how the English word “peace” is a very weak and shallow translation for the Hebrew word *shalom*. He said that the prophets and Jesus and the disciples and the early Church all understood this word to fully include rich concepts of wholeness and profound justice and a welcoming community. Therefore, peacemaking is not simply stopping fighting. Peacemaking includes changing the structures that have caused the injustice and violence, so *shalom* requires actually solving the problems, not simply papering them over.

**Therefore, since *shalom* is bigger than merely “peace,” then we need a bigger positive vision of what nonviolence is.** Far beyond merely stopping fighting or replacing individual politicians or parties, the remedies we need must be much broader and deeper. We need to change our **systems** and improve our **culture** with alternatives that are ethical, humane and sustainable.

### **Beyond opposing what we are against, we must also organize for what we do want!**

It’s not enough to organize grassroots movements to oppose what we are against. We must also organize grassroots movements for what we **do** want instead. Indeed, I believe we could

attract more people into our movements – and build more enthusiasm and make more progress – if we organize to replace the status quo with positive alternatives.

When Mohandas Gandhi was organizing for independence from Britain, he called not for merely political “independence” but also for a more profound kind of self-reliance, which he called *swaraj*, in which poor people at the village level on a day-to-day basis would empower themselves for local economic sustainability, better nutrition, public health, fair treatment for women, and other features of what he called the “**constructive program.**” For example, Gandhi spent some time every day spinning cotton so he and others could make cloth at the very local level, rather than buy it from England.

### Resources:

The TV program was running short on time, so we mentioned only briefly a few of the resources listed in the TV program’s closing credits and listed more thoroughly below. These resources can help us move ahead. I invite you to use these resources and share them with other people and non-profit organizations.

- The first step in dealing with the dangerous time ahead is to really understand (and not get stuck simply fearing and blaming). The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation’s **December 2016** TV program, “**Healing from Political Blame, Shame, and Trauma,**” offers significant help in understanding – and healing from – the traumatic 2016 election season so we can move ahead more humanely and effectively. You can watch it and read a thorough summary at the “**TV Programs**” part of [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org)
- The notes you are reading now are based on Olympia FOR’s **January 2017** TV program, “**Nonviolent Grassroots Remedies for Our Current Crisis.**” It follows up from our December program with “where-do-we-go-from-here” insights and strategies. This program is airing on TCTV cable channel 22 in Thurston County WA 13 times during January. You can also watch it – and read a thorough summary in Word and/or .pdf format – at the “**TV Programs**” part of [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org)

Many resources can help us understand what nonviolence is and how to use it effectively. Visit [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org) and click the “**Nonviolence**” link to find information that is both insightful and useful. That web page offers resources under the subheadings “What Is

Nonviolence?” and “Understanding and Using Nonviolence” and “Using Nonviolence in the Real World.”

Many non-profit organizations and their websites offer excellent information, insights, and resources. I especially recommend these:

- For decades I have been recommending the amazingly smart resources by Gene Sharp and others at The Albert Einstein Institution: [www.aeinstein.org](http://www.aeinstein.org).
- Lutheran Peace Fellowship: Visit [www.lutheranpeace.org](http://www.lutheranpeace.org). Click “Resources” link. Then click “Nonviolence” link.
- Nonviolence International: [www.nonviolenceinternational.net](http://www.nonviolenceinternational.net)
- International Center on Nonviolent Conflict: [www.nonviolent-conflict.org](http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org)
- Campaign Nonviolence: [www.paceebene.org/programs/campaign-nonviolence](http://www.paceebene.org/programs/campaign-nonviolence)

Many, many books and resources are excellent for this topic. Here are just a few:

- *Why Civil Resistance Works* by Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan (2011)
- *This is an Uprising* by Mark Engler and Paul Engler (2016) (Also see [www.thisisanuprising.org](http://www.thisisanuprising.org))
- *Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements* by Bill Moyer, JoAnn McAllister, Mary Lou Finley, and Steven Soifer
- *A Force More Powerful* by Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall – and the DVD/VHS series
- Books by and about Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Writings in many places by Michael Nagler and George Lakey

I’m available to provide speaking engagements, discussion-based workshops, and referrals to books, videos, and other resources on the topics we’ve discussed during this hour: understanding nonviolence, building nonviolent grassroots movements, strategizing for social change, Gandhi, King, etc. Contact Glen Anderson, (360) 491-9093, [glenanderson@integra.net](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net)



**Closing encouragement:**

During the long 2016 election season, the American voters rejected the status quo. Clearly, the 2016 election results portend extremely serious dangers ahead for human rights, social and economic justice, the environment and climate, escalating militarism, and governmental corruption. We are in for hard times.

But instead of bigotry and greed, I believe that most Americans actually have better values deep down, and they can be helped to understand and support peace, compassion, fairness, and honest government.

The problems and solutions are more profound than any major political party or candidate recognizes. I believe that most Americans want a future radically better than either of the big political parties has been offering.

So instead of letting dread overwhelm and immobilize us, we need to think clearly and devise smart nonviolent strategies for solving the problems and achieving humane and sustainable goals such as peace, human rights for everyone, an economy that is honest and fair for everyone, an environment that is healthy and sustainable, and a society that practices nonviolence and compassion.

To build this bold new future, we must organize strategically savvy nonviolent grassroots movements. Nonviolence is bigger and bolder in vision and in methodology than anything “politics-as-usual” can offer.

**Now is the time for us to:**

- **Ground ourselves in our best values.**
- **Study the theory and practical uses of nonviolence.**
- **Study how to build powerful nonviolent grassroots movements for social and political change.**
- **Inform and empower large numbers of ordinary people to come together into grassroots movements that will use strategic nonviolence to solve local and national problems.**

This January 2017 TV interview program and the thorough summary you’ve been reading offer exciting information and inspiring opportunities for helping our nation and world during this difficult time.

I encourage you to share these with other people through the “TV Programs” part of [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org)

You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence by contacting the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation at (360) 491-9093 and [www.olympiafor.org](http://www.olympiafor.org)