For more than 27 years 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 on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for Thurston County's cable TV subscribers. Each program airs **every Monday at 1:30 p.m. and every Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. and every Thursday at 9:00 p.m. for a full month.** This creates **THREE OPPORTUNITIES EVERY WEEK** to watch each program**.**

You can also watch the program described below (and about 100 of our previous interview programs and special programs at the Olympia FOR's website, **www.olympiafor.org**, after they have debuted on TCTV. Simply click the **TV programs** link, scroll down, and click the program you want to watch. Many of our website's monthly TV program listings also include a .pdf document describing the program.

JUNE 2014

"Igniting a Grassroots Compassion Movement"

by Glen Anderson, producer and host of this TV series

The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's June 2014 TV program explores some fresh ways to address serious social problems. Specifically, we explore the potential of applying **compassion** to a wide range of social problems.

Our four guests (listed near the end of this article) are active in Compassionate Seattle, which began in 2008, when the Dalai Lama visited Seattle and promoted the Seeds of Compassion, which Archbishop Desmond Tutu supported. Another boost came in late 2009 when Karen Armstrong won a TED award for her Charter of Compassion movement based on the Golden Rule.

After the Dalai Lama's visit, a huge number of people in Seattle spent several days immersed in the possibility of exploring compassion for working on issues and developing Seattle as a compassionate city. They organized at the grassroots and convinced the City of Seattle to adopt its Compassionate City Proclamation of 2010. Seattle was the first city in the world to do this.

The organizers kept pushing ahead and connecting the dots throughout greater Seattle, created a network of people working with several "constellations" (youth, poverty, etc.) to interconnect and move ahead. They are working hard to help people in Seattle and throughout the Puget Sound region to form relationships, build trust, inspire hope and catalyze action to reduce pain and suffering in our communities. With enough people they can create "tipping point" changes for positive and sustainable improvements in our region's quality of life.

On Friday March 14, 2014, Compassionate Seattle held a well-planned and well-attended (310 persons in the daytime and 700 in the evening) event in Seattle. Karen Armstrong participated. This event was inspired by Karen's saying that "Compassionate cities are uncomfortable cities." This means that a compassionate city will not rest if young people or hungry people or oppressed people do not have their needs met. The event promoted **profound listening** to the people who are hurting, in order to devise compassionate solutions to social problems.

Compassionate Seattle seeks to feel and understand the pain and suffering of people with unmet needs, to hear their stories, and to creatively explore solutions to alleviate those needs and change those stories. They want each person to commit to take some action – large or small – to alleviate the suffering. This is what the Friday March 14, 2014, conference addressed.

They offered 6 different sectors ("constellations") that attracted about 60 people each: homeless/housing, at-risk youth, compassionate education, health & wellness, economic justice, and alternative economy/environment. People attended the conference from several cities throughout Western Washington, and they will go back home to follow through in cities throughout our WW region. Work is continuing, and they are planning their next big event for October 2014.

The campaign for **Compassionate Cities** spread around the world, so the **Compassionate Action Network International** emerged to advocate for the Charter. Now about 222 cities have proclaimed or are considering proclaiming their decisions too. Some officials at the United Nations say that city-level action of this kind is very important.

The Olympia FOR's June 2014 TV program featured four guests who work actively with Compassionate Seattle:

- John Hale is the Executive Director of Compassionate Seattle and collaborates extensively with the national and international levels of this growing movement.
- Stephanie Lane had a very rough youth but turned her life around. Now she has a Master's degree in Social Work. She is a Licensed Mental Health Professional who works in a compassionate and collaborative way with young people who experience various kinds of problems.
- Lisa Sterling has worked with Compassionate Seattle, especially regarding health & wellness and several other aspects. She has served on boards of several nationwide non-profit organizations and has personal experience with several areas of concerns that Compassionate Seattle addresses.
- Jeff Sterling has a background in economics and business. He also participated in the Occupy Movement and is working to offer compassionate alternatives to the dominant economic system.

The Dalai Lama said, "Compassion is the radicalism of this age." Yes, it would indeed be radical to build a new system based on compassion. Let's do it!

Buckminster Fuller said, "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." OK. Let's use compassion to build a new model that can make the existing unjust and unworkable systems obsolete.

Building new systems based on compassion would require finding ways to include the people who have been excluded. This requires good listening and compassionate hearts. The results will be much more practical and workable than the dysfunctional systems we have now.

We have exciting challenges. Let's face them with compassion and creativity!

Near the end of the TV program we offer the following resources:

www.compassionateseattlehome.org

www.compassionateseattle.org

www.compassiongames.org

www.charterforcompassion.org

www.youthnaction.org

www.sacred-economics.com

www.wsipp.wa.gov has research by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy.