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Introducing the Journal of Social Encounters

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Introducing the Journal of Social Encounters

The Journal of Social Encounters (JSE) is an interdisciplinary online journal with limited copies in print that publishes scholarly, peer-reviewed essays on peace, conflict, and social justice issues in any part of the world. The JSE was founded in 2011 as The Christian Social Encounter by the Center for Social Justice and Ethics (CSJE), Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) with its first editor Dr. John Tenamwenye, as an exclusive print journal to encourage interchange of ideas on issues of current interest across disciplines. In keeping with this aim the current online issue, is published by CSJE at CUEA in Nairobi, Kenya, in collaboration with the Department of Peace Studies at the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University (CSB/SJU) in Collegeville, Minnesota, and co-edited by Dr. Joseph Okumu, CSJE/CUEA, and Dr. Ron Pagnucco, Department of Peace Studies, CSB/SJU. The JSE will be published once a year, in August, online on the CSB/SJU Digital Commons, with open, free access. While the JSE will publish essays by authors from any country in each issue, some essays by African authors always will be included in each issue so that African scholarship on peace, conflict and social justice will become better known.

The special theme for this, our inaugural online issue of the JSE, is "Peacebuilding," which encompasses all activities before, during and after conflict aimed at reducing intergroup tensions, building positive intergroup relations, and developing an environment that guarantees rights, prevents violence and sustains human flourishing. Peacebuilding involves many different activities and projects that address the causes of intergroup tensions, conflict and violence, both structural and direct, and that seek to establish both negative and positive peace, the absence of violence and/or the presence of social justice.

Each of the essays in this issue touch on some aspect of peacebuilding. Gerard Powers discusses some of the ways members of the Catholic community in Africa have been involved in peacebuilding, and explores some of the distinctive characteristics of Catholic peacebuilding. Fr. Joseph Healey provides us with a close look at Small Christian Communities (SCC's) and how they engage in peacebuilding at the grassroots level. Maria Power and Christopher Hrynkow take us to the other end of the Church's organizational structure and examine how papal teaching on dialogue relates to nine forms of multi-track diplomacy. Ayokuna Adedokun does a careful social scientific analysis of the factors in Mozambique that could lead to serious conflict. Shamsia Ramadhan describes a form of interreligious dialogue that combines discussion of religious beliefs and values with concrete collaborative action on common community concerns as a way of building interfaith relationships. Jon Armajani focuses on how Muslim and Christian discussions of Jesus and Mary in the Quran and the Bible might contribute to the discovery of common beliefs, inspiration in faith, and the development of relationships between Muslims and Christians.

Introduction

Our section on Reviews and Recommended Reading links combines reviews of books and other educational media such as films and documentaries, as well as links to open access materials the editors thought would be useful for JSE readers. We intend to have book reviews in future issues. The texts we are recommending are on topics covered in this issue. We are especially pleased to be able to provide a link to the new publication, Maridhiano Mashinani (*Reconciliation at the Grassroots*), which describes concrete examples of reconciliation efforts in the Eldoret region of Kenya that have followed the serious 2007-2008 post-election violence there. The other recommended link, the extensive literature review on effective interreligious action in peacebuilding, is a very valuable look at the research that helps us to see which types of interreligious programming are more effective.

Finally, our Resources section in this issue has an essay written by Gerard Powers on The Catholic Peacebuilding Network that describes its history, purpose, activities, resources and upcoming events.

We hope you will find the JSE informative and useful. Our goal is to provide a venue for high quality essays on peace and justice issues by scholars from different countries and cultures, in different disciplines, be they the social sciences, the natural sciences or the humanities; a venue in which we can encounter one other and build the common good together.

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