

Preaching Peace Annual Report August 1, 2010-July 31, 2011

Michael Hardin, Executive Director

Preaching Peace has concluded its fourth fiscal year. This report will detail the progress made during this year and take a look at our progress in the five-year goals we set during our first year.

Once again we offer thanks to Lindy Fishburne and the Board of Imitatio for their continued support of our work. Through good fiscal management we were able to hire Lorri Hardin to become our Administrative Manager in February 2011 and myself as Executive Director in June 2011. Lorri and I worked as volunteers in these positions on a limited basis during the earlier part of the fiscal year. A big thanks to our individual donors who continue to believe in our work and support us. Thanks also to John Kleist and Bryce Rich for their IT work on behalf of Preaching Peace and Daniel Miller who volunteers as our Webmaster. Our gratitude also goes out to our Board members, Bob Wyble, Dick Leaman, Paul Myers and Ron Vogt who this year have begun fundraising efforts and kept us on task. Thanks also to Bob for his dedication in editing our DVD's for production. Finally, we express our gratitude to our friends and supporters at Akron Mennonite Church for believing in us and our vision.

Inasmuch as our motto is to "Educate the Church and World in Jesus' Vision of Peace" we continue to develop curriculum that can be used in colleges, universities, seminaries and local congregations. During this year we saw published *Compassionate Eschatology* that featured talks from our 2008 Conference. For churches we produced the final sets of *The Jesus Driven Life* DVD's, as well as a DVD featuring James Alison, *Discovering the Nonviolent God*.

Highlights of this fourth fiscal year include:

- Speaker at the *Atonement Conference* at North Park Theological Seminary Chicago, IL (Sept 23-25 2010)
- Jim Warren's seminar on *Magic and Mimetic Theory* at Akron Mennonite Church (Nov 9)
- Attendance at the AAR/COV&R meeting in Atlanta, GA (Oct 28-Nov 2)
- Preaching Peace's Advent Party for our Supporters (Dec 11)
- Opening of the Discipleship Academy, First Baptist Church, Silver Spring, MD where they will be using *The Jesus Driven Life* as their first year curriculum (Feb 4-6 2011)
- Evening Seminar on Mimetic Theory at Tavern Talks, Trappe PA (Feb 17)
- Seminar on Mimetic Theory and the Bible Trappe Pa (April 10)
- Teaching the *Dying God, Living Word* course at Akron Mennonite Church (April-June)
- Keynote Speaker at Theology and Peace, Baltimore MD (May 30-June 2)

- Speaker, PAPA Festival, Nottingham PA (June 16-19)
- Speaker, Wild Goose Festival, Shakori Hills, NC (June 22-27); Preaching Peace also held an open discussion tent with mimetic theory resources and publications.
- Preaching Peace Table at MC USA, Pittsburg PA (July 4-9) where we distributed 300 *Jesus Driven Life* books and the first set of JDL DVD's to clergy and Christian Education leaders. These were made available by a gift from several members of Akron Mennonite Church.
- Preaching at St Luke's Lutheran Church, Shafferstown PA (July 17)
- Teaching via Skype to a class at Grace Lutheran School, Brisbane, Australia (July 31 and Aug 7)

It was an honor to be invited to speak at so many events this past year, especially to share the stage with Brian McLaren at Theology and Peace. Our attendance at the Festivals and MC USA allowed us to make hundreds of new contacts. These contacts were added to the new database begun this year so that we now have over 3,500 people to connect with as we use the database for announcements of events, webinars, fundraising and eventually our Preaching Peace e-newsletter.

As we close this fourth year and begin our fifth year, I have two more books in the works: *Reading the Bible with Rene Girard* and *Dying God, Living Word*. The former will be completed by early fall and I plan on writing the latter the remainder of the calendar year. I have also been invited to contribute to a book titled *Four Views on Spiritual Warfare* to be published by Baker Academic Press.

Several DVD projects are near completion: *Transforming our Minds* with Dr. John Carmody which explores the science of neurophysiology and mimetic theory as it applies to discipleship (good mimesis), Jim Warren's series on *Magic and Mimetic Theory* which will be a great introduction to church groups on mimetic theory and finally the series *Dying God, Living Word* which will be a companion to the book.

In the course of this next year we plan on holding monthly webinars that will feature top-notch speakers from around the world addressing mimetic theory as it relates to theology, biblical studies, church life and cultural events. They will take place on the "Third Thursday" of each month beginning in September. We are introducing several on-line courses that I will teach utilizing the same technology, beginning next spring.

The website features a new **Video Page** where we will be releasing presentations from our conferences and seminars that will not be turned into DVD projects. Our first release is Rene Girard speaking on the concept of Apocalypse.

We are now engaged in an application process to see if we will go to India to teach mimetic theory and the Bible from January-April 2012 at the Union Biblical Seminary in Pune. UBS is the largest Evangelical seminary in India. As far as I know, India is virgin territory for the mimetic theory and this opportunity is especially timely given the recent publication of Girard's book on the Vedic Scriptures (*Sacrifice*).

I will be interviewed for the film *Hellbound* October 7-8, 2011. This is a major PBS style documentary produced in Canada and I have been asked to bring the perspective of Rene Girard and mimetic theory to the discussion.

As we enter our fifth year it is important to review the five-year goals we set back in 2007. With regard to production they were as follows:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Completion/Implementation</u>
<i>Nonviolent Atonement</i> Major Conference Book: Stricken by God? (Eerdmans) One-Day Seminar DVD 10 week course	<i>project completed</i> January 2007 November 2007 September 2007 August 2008
<i>On Being A Peace Church</i> Major Conference Book: Peace Be With You (Cascadia) One-Day Seminar DVD 10 week course	<i>project completed</i> August 2008 April 2010 November 2008
<i>Reading the Bible from Below</i> Book Series: Rene Girard & the Christian Tradition (Wipf & Stock) 5-7 volumes projected One-Day Seminar DVD 12 week course	<i>project transitioned</i>
<i>Compassionate Eschatology</i> Major Conference Book: Compassionate Eschatology One-Day Seminar DVD 10 week course	<i>project completed</i> September 2008 May 2010
<i>Book of Peace, Book of Power</i> Major Conference Book One-Day Seminar DVD 10 week course	<i>project completed</i> June 2009
<i>James Alison Lecture Tour (PA)</i> Lecture Tour DVD 8 week course	<i>project completed</i> September 2009 April 2010
<u><i>Adult Education DVD Series</i></u> Nonviolent Atonement How Jesus Read His Bible (Hardin) Transforming our Minds (Carmody) Rene Girard & the Mimetic Theory (Girard) Understanding the Mimetic Theory (Bartlett) Transformative Anthropology (Hardin)	 August 2008 September 2008 September 2011 project transitioned incomplete incomplete

The *Nonviolent Atonement* project has been completed.

The *On Being a Peace Church* project is 75% complete; we are discussing releasing the filmed series on the website rather than in DVD format later this year.

The *Reading the Bible from Below* project never materialized; instead it has now become just the book *Reading the Bible with Rene Girard*. As Preaching Peace does not own the video of these interviews, we cannot make plans for them.

The *Compassionate Eschatology* project is complete as stands. It is still possible to create a one-day seminar and DVD project although this has now gone to the back burner.

The *Book of Peace, Book of Power* Conference, though a great success just did not have enough to produce a seminar. We may yet revisit the subject and filmed sessions as part of our website Video Page.

The *James Alison Lecture Tour* project is complete.

In 2007, we had not yet envisioned *The Jesus Driven Life* project (teaching series, DVD series and Book), or the *Blessed Brutalities* project, both of which have been completed in 2010.

Tony Bartlett's *Understanding the Mimetic Theory* is complete as stands. We have the filmed sessions of Tony's talks but they are at this point not DVD material for lay people although we may release them on the website for clergy and academic audiences. *Transformative Anthropology* has yet to be conceived and produced for seminar and DVD.

Given the financial challenges we experienced these past four years, the fact that we produced four major conferences, four books, two one-day seminars and nine DVD projects, along with hundreds of speaking engagements and now almost a half-million visitors to our website, is an indication that we are on the right track and have been faithful to our supporters. Preaching Peace has established a reputation for cutting edge theological work from a peace perspective and is a leader in promoting the mimetic theory around the world. We have many reasons to feel elated for the good work we are doing.

As we move ahead we will be seeking to develop our support base so that the financial challenges of the past will not be a future burden and so we can expand our work to develop even more resources. Lorri has begun to develop a plan to utilize volunteers to help with general office tasks that will also be a benefit to us. Our goals for our fifth year include:

- Continued growth and use of our database for promotion and networking invitations
- Publication of two books
- Production of four DVD series
- Teaching locally and globally
- Teaching through on-line courses
- Monthly Webinars

It is my hope that our work will continue to be a blessing as people learn about the powerful implications of reading Scripture and doing theology informed by the anthropological perspective

of mimetic theory. It is possible with continued support to not only continue but to grow our work so that it reaches tens of thousands each month and in so doing may help alleviate many of the social crises we have experienced this past year in particular. The financial instability of the markets, the Arab Spring, violent worldwide uprisings and the vicious discourse of American politics are all helpfully understood by mimetic theory. But it is Jesus that models for us a way of transformation so we may live in a world of peace with one another, with the earth and toward a more hopeful future.

As I close this year's report I want to recall that auspicious day in July 2007 when Rene Girard suggested that I contact Bob Hamerton-Kelly who was working on a new venture to promote the mimetic theory. A few days later I spoke with Bob who told me to "dream big" and then made sure that we were brought under Imitatio's wings. Without Bob's vision little of the work accomplished these past four years would have occurred. So thanks to Rene for suggesting this, to Bob for dreaming with us and to Lindy Fishburne, Imitatio's current Director. As well as our faithful individual supporters who enable us to continue our mission, we ask you all to keep our work and us in your prayers. May the peace of the Lord Jesus be our reality.