

BRENDAN MCKEAGUE AND THE SPIRITUALITY OF NONVIOLENCE



Woundedness lies at the roots of violence in ourselves, in others, and in our culture.

Active nonviolence comes face to face with these wounds.

This includes identifying and gradually transforming our personal and social 'scripts' that keep us in the rut of violence. But even more profoundly, active nonviolence makes contact with the sacredness that lies deeper than our wounds.

This sacredness is the presence of the God who longs for our wholeness.

It is where our truest selves live, the depths where we receive the gift of our richness, our authenticity, and our capacity for compassion.

(From Violence to Wholeness)



Brendan McKeague

Brendan McKeague has been working in the area of non-violence and restorative justice for many years and is a national leader in promoting and conducting active nonviolence workshops all across Australia.

At the heart of Brendan's overcoming violence work is the importance of personal and spiritual as well as social transformation. For when we look simply at ourselves, we find we need better ways of dealing with our own personal woundedness, our bad memories, and tendencies to blame others for our own faults. Brendan's work helps us identify some of the ways we unconsciously adopt that make us react violently to situations where we feel threatened. He also shares habits that can be learned for dealing with situations in a different, non-violent, way, leading to a healing of relationships instead of reinforcing the barriers that can divide us. In so doing, we make our own personal contribution to the first of the four themes of the worldwide Decade to Overcome Violence: *'transcending the spirit and 'logic' of violence'*.

'I got interested in nonviolence', says Brendan, 'as a result of my childhood and young adult experiences in Northern Ireland. Many of my childhood school friends were lost to the vicious and indiscriminate "cause-based" violence that knew no boundaries in pursuit of goals that were unattainable.' Since moving to Perth, in 1981, after 7 years of High School teaching in England, Brendan has nurtured new ways of living beyond the deeply embedded patterns of prejudice and demonisation, working in a wide variety of settings, in adult faith education, retreat and community-based facilitation, Catholic schools, social justice and the development of a spirituality of active nonviolent peace-making.

People of the Way and Pace e Bene

As part of the foundations of his work, Brendan is a member of the Perth-based *People of the Way* (a notable West Australian peace and justice network, including other leading peacemakers such as Neville Ward). Internationally, he has also been associated with the US-based *Pace e Bene* agency since first visiting Las Vegas in 1994 (en route to the Nevada Nuclear Test site), when he was inspired by the vision and practice of 'the old grey wolf', Alain Richard. On the *Pace e Bene* staff since 1999, Brendan has helped provide training, resources and ongoing support for the *From Violence to Wholeness* and other *Pace e Bene* programs.

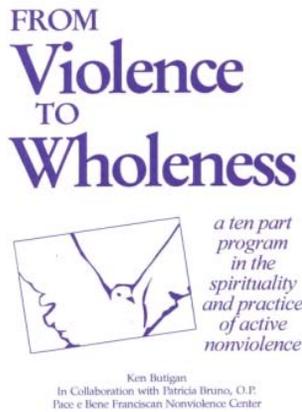
PACE • BENE



PEACE • ALL GOOD

SEEDS OF PEACE

From Violence to Wholeness



From Violence to Wholeness has been a widely-welcomed program which has invited individuals and groups to explore, experiment with and practice the vision and dynamics of creative nonviolence in their daily lives and in the effort to make their communities and the larger world more just and peaceful. Presentations, discussions, small group reflections, readings, music, role playing, journaling and other creative techniques and processes are incorporated to help participants deepen their knowledge of active nonviolence and learn how to put that knowledge into practice in their daily lives. Grounded in an inductive, popular education process, *From Violence to Wholeness* seeks to ‘begin where people are’ and to return, again and

again, to their experience as the foundation for discovering alternatives to violence. It offers a vision of creative nonviolence and a toolbox of techniques that we can use in our daily lives.

From Violence to Wholeness offers the possibility of improving the health and well-being of its participants by inviting us to:

- break free of oppressive personal and social patterns of victim/victimizer
- exercise the ‘people power’ of active nonviolence to confront patterns of personal and social dysfunction
- create and nourish meaning in our lives
- find life-giving support from others who also long for transformation.

Putting the Spirituality of Nonviolence into Practice

In addition to his *Pace e Bene* commitments, Brendan's commitment to active non-violence has also engaged him in the following:

- Planning for and implementing *Leviticus Loans*, a No Interest Loans Scheme for unemployed people and low-income earners in Western Australia
- Supporting a *Restorative Justice* movement in Western Australia to provide an alternative to the current retributive system of punishment and revenge (and working with others with some of the most marginalised men in prison, and providing avenues for their transition back into society - predominantly with long-term sex offenders and other alienated prisoners who have little or no supportive social networks)
- Exploring the links between *Celtic and Aboriginal spirituality* as a vehicle for reconciliation for non-Aboriginal Australians from a Celtic background
- Facilitating the creation of ‘*open space*’ for groups of any kind or size to gather and to deal with their own issues by using self-directing, nonviolent processes.

Sources and more information:

Pace e Bene www.paceebene.org
Open Space www.openspaceworld.org