Opinion
Letters to the Editor

by NCR Staff

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Pax Christi International hosted a conference in Rome Dec. 5-7 in conjunction with the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission of the Union of Superiors General/International Union of Superiors General with theologians, church officials and grassroots activists. According to Bishop John Stowe, who addressed the event, Pope Francis is teaching us that the peace which the world cannot give will be produced by recognizing the dignity of the human person and the global fraternity that we are called to live. Following are letters to the editor responding to Stowe's address. The letters have been edited for length and clarity.

As a Kingian Nonviolence trainer, and a Catholic, I have been following NCR's coverage of the church's pressing need to articulate nonviolence.

On the day Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was killed, he had mentioned to Bernard Lafayette Jr., national coordinator of the Poor People's Campaign, that their next step should be to "institutionalize and internationalize nonviolence." These last words to Lafayette inspired a lifetime of work developing a curriculum of nonviolence and teaching it. He collaborates in this work with activist David Jehnsen and others.



Kingian Nonviolence emphasizes the courage of nonviolence and is motivated by the desire to build a beloved community (a phrase used by Josiah Royce, popularized by King and understood to mean a community that images the kingdom of God).

Kingian Nonviolence focuses on attacking systemic evil, not individuals, and stresses the importance of maintaining our personal reservoirs of inner peace, from which we draw for teaching peace. It believes that the moral arc of the universe bends toward justice but does not wait for it to bend itself. It offers practical strategies for doing the work of peacemaking.

The University of Rhode Island Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies, On Earth Peace, East Point Peace Academy, and Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth and Reconciliation are several groups that are teaching Kingian Nonviolence.

Thousands of people around the world have earned Kingian Nonviolence trainer certification and are using it in varied and exciting ways. The Catholic Church has a resource of trained leaders ready to assist in bringing about peace, and a philosophy and methodology that is compatible with Gospel values and the example of Jesus Christ.

MARY E. QUIGLEY
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Wouldn't it be wonderful if Bishop John Stowe were as well-known as Bishop Robert Barron? He really needs to be boosted online in a big way. Hopefully the Holy Father will make him a cardinal at the next consistory.

JEFFREY JONES
Hamburg, New York

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It was a joy to read Bishop John Stowe celebration of Pope Francis' renewal of peacemaking in the church because he speaks so eloquently of the successes great men bring to the church. Too often, "the church" is spoken of as being force behind change. The author tells us it is a person with a vision of the needs of the world at each point in history and the courage to fulfill them. On the other hand, the article recalls the sadness Pope John XXIII and Francis experienced when their visions are thwarted by those who are expected to support their ministries fail to do so, diminishing much of the good that can be obtained.

Thankfully, Stowe is not one of them. He recognizes John XXIII as a humble man who left an enormous positive imprint on the church, the extent of which is not yet realized. Stowe recognizes the results of the past, as many do, yet he also understands the present. Francis is in the church spotlight carrying out what Stowe refers to as a prophetic ministry, "Our prophetic pope is calling us to witness that kind of reconciliation, focused on human dignity and the interrelationship of all creation, that will make it truly possible to beat swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks and where lion and lamb can lie down together in peace."

Yet, Francis is more than that. Stowe states Francis was elected to reform the curia. True, yet his vision was not that of his electors and herein lies the rub. Francis set to

not only reform the church's organizational structure but its spiritual structure as well. This is a daunting task with "all hands on board." It is Herculean when opposed by clerics with their own agendas.

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