



Iowa Chapter MFSA 2011 Banquet & Awards Night

Mark Braverman

**“A Kairos Time: The Role of the Church
in Achieving Peace in the Holy Land”**

Sunday, June 5 - 5:30 p.m.
Scottish Rite Consistory, 515 Park St, Des Moines

Mark Braverman's roots are in the Holy Land – his grandfather, a fifth generation Palestinian Jew, was born in Jerusalem, emigrating to the U.S. as a young man. Growing up in the United States, Braverman was reared in the Jewish tradition, studying Bible, Hebrew literature, and Jewish history. Trained in clinical psychology and crisis management, Braverman devoted his professional career to working with groups and individuals undergoing traumatic stress. Returning to the Holy Land in 2006, he was transformed by witnessing the occupation of Palestine and by encounters with peace activists and civil society leaders from the Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities.

Since then, Braverman has devoted himself full-time to the Israel/Palestine conflict. He is the executive director of the Holy Land Peace Project, an interfaith and ecumenical organization that promotes education about and action for Middle East peace in the U.S. faith communities. Braverman is a co-founder and Executive Director of Friends of Tent of Nations North America, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting peaceful coexistence in historic Palestine. He also serves on the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions-USA, Friends of Sabeel North America, Washington Interfaith Alliance for Middle East Peace, and American Jews for a Just Peace. (Mr. Braverman's website is <http://markbraverman.org/> Read more about the banquet on pages 4-5)

MFSA Iowa Chapter will Caucus after evening sessions on June 4 - 5 - 6
Chet Guinn's Fire Station - details on back page



March for Peace and Social Justice

Monday, June 6 at Noon

Leaders: Clint Twedt-Ball, Judy Kading & Linda Nicholson

Sponsors: MFSA Iowa, United Methodist Women,

Conference Board of Church & Society & Board of Global Ministries

HyVee Hall to Nollen Plaza - details on back page

Support for a Changed United States Policy In Afghanistan

by Gil Dawes

The death of Iowa soldiers and the occasional reports of civilians killed in Afghanistan reminds us of that largely forgotten war our nation continues to wage. Without a draft which might take away one of our own loved ones, and with off budget hidden financing of the war, it remains out of sight and out of mind. And so we go on, largely oblivious to what goes on in our name and with our tax dollars. Unfortunately our resulting silence is read as support by our own political leaders, and as complicity by others in the world who believe our claim to be a democracy!

The Afghan people have voiced their desire for foreign armies to leave their land, and allow them to settle their differences in their own way. They are convinced that whatever the result, it couldn't be worse than the suffering they are now experiencing, and at least it would be of their own doing! Are we too far from our own beginnings as a nation to remember our own plea for the right to self determination to now hear that cry from others?

Increasingly cries are heard from our own people as well; those who have lost loved ones in that war, marriages, or the presence of fathers and mothers when most needed! And now under the demand for "deficit reduction" the dawning recognition that we cannot afford "bombs and butter too", that choices must be made! Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, even education are suggested by some as trade offs. Suddenly what was out of sight and mind is staring us in the face and decisions will be made in our name and with our

resources!

For any or all of these reasons and more, **we urge approval of the resolution for a change of policy in Afghanistan.**

Inadequate and incomplete though it is from the standpoint of the calling of our faith, the hope that its appeal will reach beyond those who share our faith to those who share our common humanity.

...we go on, largely oblivious to what goes on in our name and with our tax dollars....

ACTION

Jim Winkler to Keynote MFSA Fall Statewide Gathering Saturday, October 22 - Walnut Hills UMC

Jim Winkler, General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society, will be the keynote speaker for MFSA's Fall Statewide Gathering, to be held on Saturday, October 22nd, at Walnut Hills UMC in Des Moines, beginning at 10:00 AM.

A keen observer of world and national issues, Jim is focused on what he calls, "The Perpetual War." Mark your calendars and don't miss this special opportunity to hear our denomination's outstanding spokesperson for justice and peace.



MFSA IOWA CHAPTER MISSION STATEMENT

The Iowa Chapter of the National MFSA, an affiliate organization of the Iowa Conference of the United Methodist Church, seeks to move the church to be an inclusive, justice seeking, and risk taking Body of Christ in the world. In the Wesleyan tradition, MFSA seeks to transform the social order until it resembles the reign of God announced by the prophets and Jesus where justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream.

Divestment: A Call from Palestinian Christians
by Kathleen McQuillen

The land of Palestine has been under an oppressive Israeli military occupation since the Six-Day war in June 1967. Numerous peace negotiations, peace processes and road maps have failed to change the plight of the Palestinians. Checkpoints, separation walls, and settler raids are their daily reality.

“Kairos Palestine -- A Moment of Truth” issued in winter 2009 is a call from Palestinian Christians to their sisters and brothers in the church to stand with them in their pain and in their resistance. Reminding Christians around the world that the “mission” of the church is to “raise her voice against injustice,” Palestinian Christians ask the Christian churches “take a position of truth with regard to Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land.” The Kairos Palestine document affirms “...boycott and divestment as tools of justice, peace and security ...” The United Methodist Church has a positive record of embracing peace, security, and justice for all involved in the Palestine – Israel conflict ([BOR #6073, 6074, 6075; Iowa 2009 conference #9610](#)). The voices within Palestine are now asking that the church put its words into action by supporting the worldwide campaign of divestment from companies supporting and sustaining Israel’s occupation of Palestinian lands. After multiple UMC resolutions opposing the occupation and settlement construction, affirming international law and the internationally recognized human rights of the Palestinian people, the UMC continues to hold investments in companies profiting from the occupation and denial of those human rights. As noted by the United Methodist Kairos Response Group, “We are called to live out our faith, as individuals and as an institution. We have a responsibility to make our portfolios reflect our beliefs by aligning our investments with our

resolutions.”

Why Now?

- The United Nations has failed, largely because of US vetoes, to hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law. Court rulings such as the 2004 International Criminal Court opinion that Israel’s wall on Palestinian land violates international law go unenforced.
- Palestinian Christians are disappearing from the land of Jesus’ ministry. Driven by land annexation, house demolition, and economic deprivation, Palestinian Christians are in exodus from the holy land at alarming rates.
- The *Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions* (BDS) movement comes from inside the heart of Palestine and is echoed in the Palestinian Christians Kairos document. As Christians we are called to stand with the suffering, and our sisters and brothers in Palestine tell us this is their “Kairos” moment.
- The lament of Jeremiah has hung over the Palestinian people for far too long. “They dress the wound of my people” mourned Jeremiah, “as though it were not serious. ‘Peace, peace,’ they say, when there is no peace.”

Our Iowa Annual Conference Board of Church and Society is standing with our Palestinian sisters and brothers by offering a petition to the 2012 General Conference calling upon the church to divest from those corporations “whose business and products are supporting the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.” **A copy of the petition is available at MFSA’s display table. MFSA asks you to support this action by letting members of the Iowa delegation to General Conference know of your support.**



For more information see the following websites:
<http://whoprofits.org> and www.kairopalestine.ps



2011 Social Action Award Recipient Marian Solomon

Marian Solomon is a lifelong passionate activist for peace and justice on a local, national and international scale.

Starting a year after her graduation from college, Marian spent a year and a half in India working with the Ghandhians, providing health care and promoting social reform for 300 children. In the 60's in Florida and North Carolina, Marian was involved in Civil Rights work and registered blacks to vote. In the late 60's and 70's, she participated in marches and demonstrations against the Vietnam War. In 1984 she was part of Witness for Peace in Nicaragua. Marian was part of the first Iowa delegation to stay on the border between Honduras and Nicaragua to lessen violence done to young people by the Contras. She returned again in 1987. She was a member of a Restorative Justice task force in Ames in the 90's. She also taught health skills to women prisoners at Mitchellville for several years in the 90's.

For five months in 1998, she lived in Comer, Georgia, at Jubilee Partners, a refugee reception center for the International Rescue Committee, helping mostly Serbian and Bosnian refugees learn skills to acclimate to living in this country. A trip to Jerusalem in 1999 with our Iowa Methodist Bishop and 120 other United Methodists left her frustrated with what she perceived as an inadequate view of what was really happening in the Middle East. She returned in 2000 and 2001 with a Christian Peacemaker Team, escorting Palestinian children to and from school to deter attacks by Israeli settlers, as well as participating in nonviolent demonstrations against settlement expansion and punitive checkpoint practices that strangled Palestinian travel and commerce.

In 2002, she traveled to Iraq with Voices in the Wilderness and a Christian Peacemaker Team, interviewing Iraqis and investigating the after-effects of depleted uranium weapons used by the U.S. military during the first Gulf war. She has actively participated in weekly local demonstrations against our involvement in the war in the Middle East, and traveled to Washington, D.C., to take part in a protest. Most recently, she was part of a Veterans for Peace demonstration in Des Moines. Over the course of all of these events, she has been jailed "four or five" times for her nonviolent protests.

In addition to these more dramatic (and sometimes dangerous) actions on behalf of peace and justice, Marian works tirelessly on a daily basis for causes in which she believes. She writes newspaper editorials, letters to elected representatives, and the President of the United States, always advocating for peace and justice. She has taught about peace in the Middle East to a culture sharing group of the Iowa State Women's Club and her United Methodist Women's Circle. She is a vocal supporter of nonviolence and justice and advocacy for the marginalized in book groups, Sunday school class and many other groups in which she participates. Now 80 and living in a retirement community, Marian has become an advocate for her neighbors, giving rides to appointments, advice on health issues and assistance to individuals and their families as any need arises. Marian is a remarkable individual who has devoted her life to working for peace and justice to prevail in this world. For this lifetime of commitment to peace and justice issues, we are privileged to present Marian with one of the Social Action awards for 2011.

Social Action Awards will be presented to Marian and Darrell at the MFSA Banquet on Sunday, June 5 prior to Mark Braverman's keynote address.

If you wish to attend but do not have tickets, check at the MFSA display table to find if banquet tickets are still available, or call Rita Carter at 515-633-0037.

2011 Social Action Award Recipient Darrell Mitchell

A concern for social justice began very early in the Rev. Darrell Mitchell's pastoral career in the Iowa Annual Conference. In the late 1950's and 1960's, Darrell hosted the Rust College singers and was an active participant in the Civil Rights movement. He hosted several forums in southwest Iowa, inviting members of an African-American Church in Omaha to speak and choirs to sing. After one such event, the tires on Darrell's car were slashed. He led youth groups to the UN to build peace and understanding.

During the Vietnam era, the Rev. Mitchell gave leadership to efforts opposing the war. He set up anti-war meetings in Shenandoah and wrote letters to the draft board on behalf of two young men who did not want to take part in the war. While serving as a chaplain at the juvenile home, Darrell organized a peace committee in the Tama-Toledo area and sent literature to churches concerning the anti-war effort. He also wrote editorials to *The Des Moines Register* and set up a coffee shop below the Toledo Hotel for people to express opinions about the Vietnam War in a safe environment.

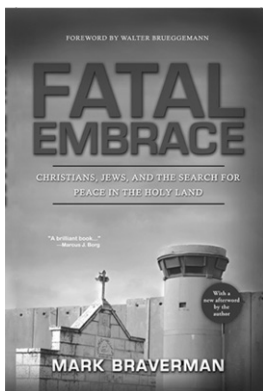
In the late 1970's Darrell formed a group in Marshalltown to address peace and justice issues. This group continued for some 15 years. Darrell spoke at a rally in downtown Marshalltown to support people living in

poverty. He also led meetings in the Conrad area concerning the situation in Nicaragua during the 1980's. He participated in a march held in Kansas City, led by the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

For many years, Darrell was a chaplain at the Woodward State Hospital, working tirelessly for the rights of patients and challenging cuts in state funding for persons with disabilities. He organized a PFLAG chapter at Hope UMC, Marshalltown and helped high school students better understand their legal rights.

In 2008, the Rev. Mitchell went to Palestine with the General Board of Global Ministries, where he learned more about the plight of the Palestinian people. He lived and worshipped with Palestinian Christians and has become very passionate about Israel's violation of agreements and basic human rights. He continues to give presentations concerning Palestinian conditions. Darrell has also been joining with others to teach a course about peace and non-violence in both Ames and Marshalltown.

Pastor Darrell shows no sign of slowing down. He continues to work for peace and justice among all God's people! For this lifetime of commitment to peace and justice ministries, we are privileged to present to Darrell a Social Action award for 2011.



Banquet keynote speaker Mark Braverman is author of *Fatal Embrace: Christians, Jews, and the Search for Peace in the Holy Land*, about which Walter Brueggemann writes in its forward: "Mark Braverman has written a courageous evocative book that merits close attention and continued pondering. It is a book with a critical edge and an urgent summons that calls for fresh decision making."

The book will be available for sale at the MFSA Banquet & Awards event and at the MFSA display table.



Changing Lives through Grace

By the Rev. Bill Steward

Grace UMC in Des Moines affiliated with the Reconciling Ministries network by a 2007 church conference vote. We had approved a statement of welcome three years earlier in which we publically announced that we welcomed all and, unlike our denomination, did not discriminate against anyone because of their sexual orientation. Our people are fiercely committed to this witness.

Part of our commitment included compiling a booklet titled **STORIES OF SACRED WORTH...OPENING THE DOORS OF GRACE**. In this booklet, gay and lesbian members and friends of Grace and their allies told their stories:

- *honest stories of anguish and struggle, vulnerability and courage;
- *personal stories that make clear we are not discussing an abstract issue but the lives of real people;
- *passionate stories that helped define the kind of congregation we wanted to become: a place of hospitality where all can be themselves, where the gifts and graces of all are honored, where resistance to our destructive denominational policies is a matter of simple justice---and ongoing commitment.



In the four years since the publication of this booklet much has happened in our church and society that called for an updating---and the telling of new stories. We have now completed a second volume titled: **STORIES OF SACRED WORTH...CHANGING LIVES THROUGH GRACE**. We invite you to come to the Methodist Federation for Social Action display table at Annual Conference and take a copy of each of these booklets (while supplies last).

We also invite you to join with us and other sponsoring congregations (Trinity UMC in Des Moines, St. Timothy's UMC in Cedar Falls, & Faith UMC in Cedar Rapids) in approving the petitions to General Conference that would rid our denomination of the prejudice we have preached and practiced against gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgendered people (Action items 508-514 begin on page 138 of your pre-conference manual).

The statement by 36 retired United Methodist Bishops on inclusion of LGBT persons will be available to sign at the MFSA display table.

The Rev. Bill Steward is retiring from Grace United Methodist Church in Des Moines.



Registration is open for "Sing a New Song," a joint collaboration of MFSA and RMN.

"Sing a New Song"

August 25-28, 2011

Sawmill Creek Resort

Huron, Ohio <http://sans.2011.org>



MFSA IOWA MEMBERSHIP

We celebrate faithful members of Iowa Chapter MFSA. Current membership stands at 194, representing 257 people. Mike Biklen is our membership secretary. To check your membership status, contact Mike at 563-299-7347, or e-mail wmbiklen@juno.com.

Member form/donations can be sent to Mike at: 515 E. Eleventh Street Muscatine, IA 52761-3920



Who Cares About the Bible? Recognizing Biblical Fruits

by Tyler Schwaller

John Wesley teaches that the Bible is our primary source for Christian teaching insofar as it demonstrates how God works through those who have faith and love for God in order to bring love, joy, peace, mercy, righteousness, and justice into the world.

Surprisingly, this approach might actually lead us to find God outside some biblical regulations. Imagine the criticisms: “You are picking and choosing the values you want to uphold!” “You would have us go against words of the Bible!” Frankly, the reality is that all of us always highlight certain parts of the Bible over others, and each of us lives in ways contrary to at least some parts of scripture.

The real issue is how we choose what we value, and this is where the church needs to get honest about the ways we read the Bible. Again, Wesley is helpfully instructive. John Wesley was no biblical literalist. For Wesley, living biblically was not a matter of judging whether every scriptural rule was followed. Rather, biblical living was measured by the fruits born of faith.

That means that we should look for the ways in which love for God brings love and goodness into the world for others. *And we should be prepared to be surprised!*

When Mary Bosanquet expressed to Wesley that she felt called to preach, John wrestled with the biblical limitations to women’s leadership. But he also looked for the Spirit’s movement and could not deny the lives being changed by women preachers. Against literal interpretation, Wesley responded:

“It is plain to me that the whole work of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of [God’s] providence. Therefore I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul’s ordinary rule was, ‘I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation.’ Yet in extraordinary cases he made a few exceptions; at Corinth, in particular.”

May we strive at this Annual Conference to be a church that believes in the extraordinary dispensation of God’s providence. As debates heat up leading into General Conference, let us pray that the promises and hopes of scripture will compel us to look for God’s good work in the world.

And like Wesley said, as Methodists we should “not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline.”

Tyler is a doctoral student in New Testament and Early Christian Studies at Harvard University and is a certified candidate for ministry in the Iowa Conference.

**MFSA Iowa supports
justice for our neighbors
www.iowa-jfon.org**

MFSA Selects

Jill A. Warren Executive Director

Jill A. Warren has been unanimously selected by the Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA) Board of Directors to serve as the next Executive Director of the organization beginning July 5, 2011. To learn more about Ms. Warren go to www.mfsaweb.org.

OnFire: the young adult chapter of MFSA
www.umonfire.blogspot.com/

OnFire invites young adults to the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) North American Regional Assembly in Chicago: Oct. 14-18: “Swords into Plowshares”
[Read more on the blog](#)

PEACE

POVERTY

people’s rights

Progressive Initiatives

MFSA Display Table

Look for our distinctive MFSA banner to locate our display table at Annual Conference. MFSA brochures, membership materials and other resources will be available on the table.

Once again we will have Putumayo Music available but at a new price. CDs will sell for **\$10 each or 2/\$15**. Please stop by to check on membership, browse the merchandise and resources, **to sign petitions and greet our volunteers.**

Websites, Blogs, Online Resources

Links can be found on our website to national MFSA resources, events, vigils and gatherings, articles, an immigration resource page, and much more at www.mfsaiowa.org.

March for Peace & Justice Monday, June 6 - Noon Bring a sign and March, Sing, Pray!

The Iowa Chapter of MFSA, along with the United Methodist Women and the Conference Boards of Church and Society and Global Ministries sponsor this march. We will walk from HyVee Hall to Nollen Plaza led by Clint Twedt-Ball, Linda Nicholson and UMW activist Judy Kading. At Nollen Plaza we will hear remarks by Bishop Trimble, sing songs led by musicians from the Osceola United Methodist Church, and share in prayers for specific justice concerns led by Willy Mafuta, Bonnie Campbell, Manuel Catalan, Larry Hoch and Dick Clark.

Please join us in the march. Invite your friends. Bring signs expressing your concerns for peace and justice related to specific issues.

This is another opportunity for United Methodists and other folks to "do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God" Micah 6:8.



Share the News of Your Events

Friends, we would like to publicize **events around the state** that might be of interest to MFSA folk. Please send information by the last week of each month for inclusion in the next month's E-Mail Memo to MFSA Iowa Chapter coordinator Eloise

Cranke. Also, please email address changes to; ecranke@mchsi.com.

**MARCH FOR PEACE
& SOCIAL JUSTICE
MONDAY, JUNE 6
NOON**



Caucus at the Fire Station:

Always wanted to slide down a fire pole? This may be your chance. MFSA will caucus each evening of Annual Conference (**June 4, 5, 6**) at Chet Guinn's home in Old Firestation # 4, corner of 8th & Day, just west of the Holiday Inn downtown. It's not far from Hy-Vee Hall, and MFSA members will be glad to meet you at our display table following the evening session to be sure you can find it and have a way to get there. Besides talking about Annual Conference business, rumor has it that we might even have popcorn! See you there!