

Stepping Forward

By Ellen J. Kennedy, Ph.D., Executive Director

Last summer I was invited to speak at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church in Minneapolis about human rights and genocide. That parish has been very supportive of our work for years; we have received grants for our exhibit, *Tents of Witness: Genocide and Conflict*, they have hosted the exhibit, and they also sponsored a workshop about the Rwandan genocide several years ago.

What happened that Sunday morning overwhelmed me.

It's a large parish and there were perhaps 600 people at mass that morning. I gave my remarks and returned to my seat. Shortly after I spoke, the priest, Fr. James Cassidy, invited people to step forward to receive communion.

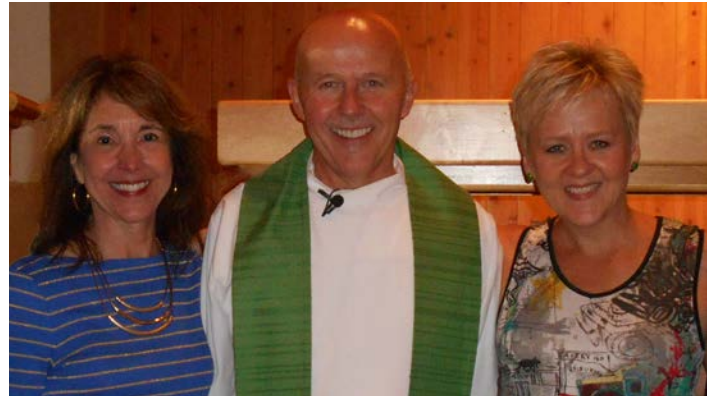
I remained in my seat. Julie Madden, the Peace and Justice Ministry Director and my host that morning, was sitting next to me. She leaned over and whispered, "Please feel free to take communion."

I replied, "Thank you, Julie, but I'm Jewish. I can't do that; it's only for Catholics."

Julie said, still in a whisper, "You wouldn't invite people to your home for dinner and then not let them eat, would you? Please join us."

And so I, a Jew, stepped forward to receive communion that Sunday morning. As Fr. Jim gave me the wafer, I could feel the tears streaming down my cheeks.

After the service, I told him how much those moments of inclusion had meant. I have been to many Catholic services and I have often been the only person still seated while everyone else rises and moves to the front of the church. I have felt isolated, alienated, and very much the stranger. That morning I was not a stranger.



Left to right: Dr. Ellen Kennedy, Fr. Jim Cassidy, and Julie Madden at St. Joan of Arc Church, Minneapolis.

As I shared these thoughts with Fr. Jim, he smiled and said, "Do it again." There was a second mass that morning, at which I also spoke, and I did, indeed, do it again – I took communion not just once that morning, but twice.

A few months later I gave a talk at my synagogue on a Friday evening Shabbat (Sabbath) service honoring Kristallnacht. My topic was religions and genocide, about the horrific Christian-Muslim violence in Nigeria and Mali, increasing danger of radical Muslim fundamentalists in ISIS and its threat to many religious minorities and to other Muslims, and about growing anti-Semitism throughout Europe. I concluded with the story of that morning at St. Joan of Arc. That evening I had special guests at the synagogue: Julie Madden and Fr. Jim, and this time they were the ones to join me at the front of my place of worship.

We must learn to reach out beyond the barriers that separate us. That small step in a church in Minneapolis is a powerful message of hope for us all.

World Without Genocide, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, **educates** to raise awareness about past and current conflicts and **advocates** at local, state, and national levels for policies and legislation to protect innocent people, prevent genocide, prosecute perpetrators, and remember those whose lives have been affected by genocide.

Religions and Genocide

Summer Institute for High School and College Students, August 2015

The fifth annual World Without Genocide Summer Institute for High School and College Students will explore the connection between religion and genocide. This three-day institute looks at past and current human rights abuses and teaches students leadership strategies for local and global action to address these issues. The Institute received the *2014 Minnesota Ethical Leadership Award*.

Learn - This summer, students will learn about different instances of sectarian violence, both past and current, and the underlying, or ultimate, causes of the conflict. Students will examine why religious groups are targeted and how to prevent this violence. They will participate in critical thinking and reflection activities, learn from experts and survivors, and build the skills to become human rights leaders.



Summer Institute students participated in a day of service with Habitat for Humanity.

Serve - Students make a commitment to year-long involvement in human rights and social justice activities. As part of this commitment, they participate in a day of service with Habitat for Humanity. This spring, students helped rehabilitate a house for a recent refugee family in the Twin Cities. Students form a connection with new members of their community while helping to eliminate poverty housing.

Advocate - Students learn different techniques to advocate both locally and globally on a number of human rights issues including ending human trafficking, calling for an end to the use of child soldiers, and promoting responsible consumer purchases to reduce resource-driven conflict. They meet with community leaders and elected officials to learn about organizing for legislative and policy advocacy.

Lead - The Summer Institute not only educates; it fosters leadership development. Participants build skills to become human rights leaders in their schools and in their communities. Students have gone on to support human rights in a number of ways, including starting social justice student groups, holding educational events, and advocating for issues in their communities and at the state level. The Institute has helped many students pursue academic and professional opportunities in human rights both locally and internationally.

The Institute welcomes high school and college students from around the country. The Institute will be held August 11-13, 2015 at William Mitchell College of Law, 875 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota. Register by July 31 at www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/events. Needs-based scholarships are available. Contact admin@worldwithoutgenocide.org for more information.

Legislative Action

In Minnesota, we celebrate many important cultural, national, and religious holidays. However, we do not have a day to celebrate American Indian culture or to commemorate the history of native peoples.

World Without Genocide has initiated a bill to designate the second Monday in October as American Indian and Indigenous Peoples Day in Minnesota. This bill will encourage us all to celebrate past and present contributions of American Indians and other indigenous peoples to our local, state, and national culture. It will also encourage us to address present and future disparities and challenges facing indigenous communities.

Encourage your elected officials to support this important bill.



Supporters and legislators at the Senate bill hearing.
L to R back row: Annamarie Hill, Minnesota Indian Affairs Council; Sen. Sandy Pappas; Sen. Jeff Hayden; Dr. Ellen Kennedy, World Without Genocide.
Front row: Bill Means, Lakota activist; Sen. Chris Eaton; and Jay Bad Heart Bull, Native American Community Development Institute.

Winter Highlights



Law students on the *Exploring Human Rights* trip at the Supreme Court, Washington, D.C. (left), and the United Nations, New York City (right).



David Feinberg, director, *Voice to Vision* art exhibit; Dr. Ellen Kennedy; and Bunkhean Chhun and Fred Amram, *Voice to Vision* artists, at the exhibit reception, William Mitchell College of Law.



Dr. Ellen Kennedy (right) with the American NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court (AMICC) delegation at the International Criminal Court Assembly of States Parties at the United Nations, New York City.



Students at the winter reunion of the Summer Institute for High School and College Students.



Summer Institute students at a build-day with Habitat for Humanity.



Fred Amram, Holocaust survivor, with members of the World Without Genocide Student Chapter.



World associates Christie Nicoson and Nicholas Webb, front center, spent a month teaching English and human rights at a Buddhist monastery in Burma (Myanmar).



Left to right: Sen. Sandy Pappas, Minnesota State Senate; Dr. Ellen Kennedy, World Without Genocide; Patti Weber, President of The Woman's Club of Minneapolis; and Safia Khan, Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, at the event *Taking Action against Gender-Based Violence* at The Woman's Club.

April - Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month

Every April in Minnesota is marked as Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month. Six genocides have their official dates of memorialization in April: the Holocaust, the genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur, and the Armenian genocide. This designation in Minnesota, along with California, Texas, and New Hampshire, urges people to learn about past genocides and atrocities happening today, and to take steps to prevent violence.

This April, World Without Genocide will collaborate with community partners to host a number of events commemorating important genocide anniversaries.

The 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

During World War I, leaders of the Ottoman Empire (modern-day Turkey) perpetrated mass atrocities on Christian Armenians, killing 1.5 million innocent men, women, and children. This year marks a century since this genocide.



Armenian refugees

Professor Emeritus Dr. Richard Hovannisian will speak about the genocide, the survivor communities throughout the diaspora, and attempts to seek restitution and other forms of justice. His talk, *The 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide*, will take place on **Tuesday, April 14, 7:00-9:00 pm** at William Mitchell College of Law Auditorium, 875 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota. Admission is \$10 for the public, \$5 for students and seniors, and free to Mitchell students.

Preventing Genocide

The Human Rights Commissions of Crystal, New Hope,

Golden Valley, and Robbinsdale will host Dr. Ellen Kennedy, Executive Director of World Without Genocide, who will speak about the causes and consequences of genocide, efforts towards justice, and steps toward genocide prevention.

This program will take place on **Saturday, April 18, 10:00-11:30 am** in Meeting Rooms A and B at the Crystal Community Center, 4800 Douglas Drive North, Crystal, Minnesota. Free and open to the public.

Days of Remembrance: From the Armenians to the Holocaust

The City of Edina will hold a special event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide and the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and the Holocaust. Holocaust survivor Dora Zaidenweber will share her personal story of incarceration in a Polish ghetto, imprisonment at Auschwitz, and liberation. Dr. Ellen Kennedy will speak about Holocaust denial and genocide denial; and community members will perform the play *Upstanders: Saving Armenians and Jews*.



Dora Zaidenweber, Author and Holocaust survivor

This event will take place on **Sunday, April 19, 1:00-3:30 pm** at Edina City Hall, 4801 West 50th Street, Edina, Minnesota. Free and open to the public.

All events are open to the public; no reservations necessary. Continuing education credits are available for lawyers and educators: \$35 for 2.0 CLE credits, 2.0 educator clock hours free of charge. More information at www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/events.



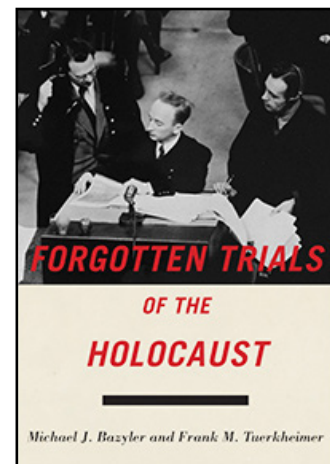
Michael Bazylar, J.D., author and Holocaust scholar

Justice After the Holocaust

World Without Genocide will host a talk by Professor Michael Bazylar, J.D., co-author of *Forgotten Trials of the Holocaust*, which examines ten largely-unknown trials of Nazi perpetrators that occurred over the last seven decades. He will discuss trials that occurred in courtrooms around

the world - in the former Soviet Union, England, Israel, France, Poland, and the United States.

The event will take place on **Wednesday, May 13, 7:00-9:00 pm** at William Mitchell College of Law Auditorium. More information at www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/events.



Spring Gala - Tenth Anniversary Celebration

A World of Upstanders - Honoring Rescuers and Prosecutors



Eli M. Rosenbaum, J.D., internationally-known 'Nazi hunter,' Director of Human Rights Enforcement Strategy and Policy, U.S. Department of Justice

Eli M. Rosenbaum, J.D., has been called the world's most successful 'Nazi-hunter.' As the former director of the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Special Investigations, Rosenbaum spent over a decade identifying, denaturalizing, and deporting Nazi war criminals and perpetrators of other genocides around the globe.

Rosenbaum will be the guest speaker at World Without Genocide's spring gala, *A World of Upstanders - Honoring Rescuers and Prosecutors*. He is among a number of 'upstanders' who will be honored for their work to end genocide and other mass atrocity crimes.

The gala celebrates World Without Genocide's tenth anniversary and will be held on **Tuesday, May 19, 7:00-9:00 pm at The Woman's Club of Minneapolis, 410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota**. Registration due by May 12 at www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/gala.

World News Update

BOSNIA

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia issued life sentences for crimes of genocide by two Bosnian Serbs, former security officers in the Srebrenica massacre of 1995. The massacre resulted in the killing of 8,000 Muslim men and boys. In addition, the United States is working to deport 150 Bosnians believed to be responsible for war crimes in Yugoslavia during the 1990s.



CAMBODIA

Two former Khmer Rouge leaders have been charged with genocide by a United Nations-Cambodian hybrid war crimes tribunal. The Khmer Rouge is responsible for the deaths of 1.8 million people during the 1970s.



SRI LANKA

The Sri Lankan government will conduct an inquiry into human rights violations that occurred during the 26-year civil war, which resulted in the killings of over 40,000 Tamils by the Sri Lankan Army. This investigation occurs after many years of efforts to end impunity for the crimes.



UGANDA

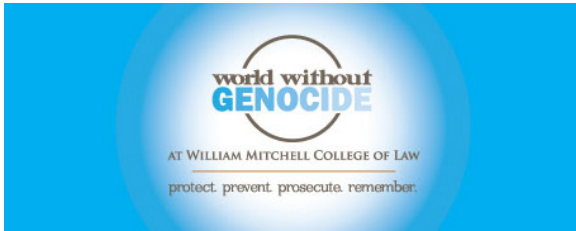
The International Criminal Court has begun the trial of Dominic Ongwen, a former child slave turned commander for Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army. Ongwen is accused of crimes against humanity including murder and enslavement. The Ugandan conflict has spread throughout Uganda, southern Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic since 1987.



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875 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105

A WORLD WITHOUT GENOCIDE- *Making it our legacy.*

SPRING 2015 EVENTS

- April** *Violence against Rohingya Muslims in Burma*
12 **Talk; free and open to the public.**
Sunday, April 12, 2:00-4:00 pm
Southdale Library, Ethel Berry Meeting Room
7001 York Avenue South, Edina, MN
- April** *The 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide*
14 **Talk by Dr. Richard Hovannisian, scholar and historian**
Tuesday, April 14, 7:00-9:00 pm
William Mitchell College of Law Auditorium
875 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN
- April** *Preventing Genocide*
18 **Talk; free and open to the public.**
Saturday, April 18, 10:00-11:30 am
Crystal Community Center, Meeting Rooms A and B
4800 Douglas Drive North, Minneapolis, MN
- April** *Days of Remembrance: From the Armenians to the Holocaust*
19 **Talk; free and open to the public.**
Sunday, April 19, 1:00-3:30 pm
Edina City Hall, 4801 West 50th Street, Edina, MN
- May** *Seventy Years After the Holocaust*
8 **Talk by Fred Amram, educator and Holocaust survivor**
Friday, May 8, 12:00-1:00 pm
Ramsey County Courthouse
15 West Kellogg Boulevard, St. Paul, MN
- May** *Forgotten Trials of the Holocaust*
13 **Author talk by Professor Michael J. Bazylar, J.D.**
Wednesday, May 13, 7:00-9:00 pm
William Mitchell College of Law Auditorium
875 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, MN
- May** *A World of Upstanders:
Honoring Rescuers and Prosecutors*
19 **World Without Genocide Benefit Gala**
Tuesday, May 19, 7:00-9:00 pm
The Woman's Club at Loring Park
410 Oak Grove Street, Minneapolis, MN
- Most events offer **CLE credits** for lawyers, **clock hours** for educators,
and **PLP credit** for Mitchell students.
Please confirm events at
www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/events