Nevada Test Site Oral History Project
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Interview with Peter Ediger

June 24, 2005
Las Vegas, Nevada

Interview Conducted By
Suzanne Becker

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Produced by:

The Nevada Test Site Oral History Project
Departments of History and Sociology
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 89154-5020

Director and Editor
Mary Palevsky

Principal Investigators
Robert Futrell, Dept. of Sociology
Andrew Kirk, Dept. of History

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[00:00:00] Begin Track 2, Disc 1.

Suzanne Becker: *If you could begin by stating your name, where you're from and when you were born?*

Peter Ediger: My name is Peter Ediger, I was born in Kansas in 1926. I grew up in a rural community, a Mennonite community, just after the Depression, and still feeling some of the results of that.

So what was it like where you grew up? Where in Kansas was it?

Central Kansas, in wheat country. I grew up on a wheat farm with the usual milking of cows and slopping of hogs, et cetera, et cetera.

Good Midwestern stuff.

Yes. It was a good growing-up. But the clouds of World War II were hanging over us, and with my Mennonite heritage, I became conscious of the war in some particular ways. We have this history of thinking that to be Christian and follow Jesus means not participating in war. I struggled with that question in my adolescent years, and when it came time to register for the draft I registered as a conscientious objector. So that's sort of the beginning of my participation in peace activities.

Now, I definitely want to talk about that because I think that that's interesting, but if we could just back up, I'm curious as to how large of a community you grew up in and a little bit about your family.

I was one of six children, and with lots of relatives in this community, we had our get-togethers during holidays when about sixty, seventy cousins from each side of the family would come

together. So there was a strong sense of family in my childhood, and a strong sense of participation in the church. The church was sort of the base of the community life. Rural school, small one-room school. In fact, I taught for one year in one of those one-room schools way back, where I was everything from janitor to principal, and teacher of all the grades. Interesting. A lot of changes since then. This was pre-television, pre-radio for us in our community, pre-electricity. We had electricity coming on when I was about in high school. Before that, it was without. And I drove to school in a horse and buggy.

Did you. Interesting. And you went through high school and then started—

Went through high school, and then the draft caught up with me, and I was in Civilian Public Service as a conscientious objector for two years.

OK. I'm curious about that because that's something related to World War II that you actually don't hear very much about—the conscientious objectors. So you decided to register, but registered as such, and what happens from there? I mean how was that experience?

The so-called peace churches—the Mennonites, the Church of the Brethren, and the Quakers—had been working for several years, when they saw the draft coming on, to try to make arrangements with Selective Service for an alternative to serving in the Army, or the armed forces. So there was this provision for the alternative, being in what was then called civilian **[00:05:00]** Public Service. The process to get that was quite something. You have to apply for it and then you had to meet with the draft board and answer all kind of questions, be pushed for how serious you were about your convictions and where do these ideas come from and what would you do if—all that kind of stuff. But partly because the Selective Service was well aware of the Mennonite position, it wasn't so difficult for Mennonites to get this provision. So I was in

civilian service with the [U.S.] Forest Service in California for a year, and with a mental hospital in Pennsylvania.

What did you do for the Forest Service?

I was on a timber survey crew and did some fire fighting in the back country, the Sierra Nevada Mountains. And then in the mental hospitals, actually one of the I think fairly creative things that came out of Civilian Public Service with the mental hospitals is that they brought about a lot of reform. At that time, there was a lot of warehousing of mental patients and some pretty rough treatment. So I think we were instrumental in bringing about some more humane treatment of people in mental hospitals. But that was the beginning of my struggle with the whole question of war and peace.

What years was this? You were right out of high school?

Yeah, 1945.

And so this brought about—

The other complication for me personally and for many of us in our community was that we were third-generation immigrants still speaking German. So here we were speaking German and being conscientious objectors to fighting Hitler. That complicated stuff, to sort that all out. So we experienced a lot of ridicule and a lot of harassment.

From other people that you were working with?

Yes, here and there along the way. Most of the people around us in our community were well aware of our situation and our convictions, so we had respect from most of the people who knew us personally. The general public was less understanding. But that whole question of violence and the war—the question of how to respond to the violence has been a part of my agenda since that time.

[Do] you remember the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Yes, I remember very well getting the news about the bomb. I was at that time in California with the Forest Service, and I remember vaguely some feelings of relief that the war was over and some questions or curiosity about what this bomb was all about. In looking back, I don't think I realized the horror of that reality. That came many years later, particularly, and I'm getting ahead of my story here, but many years later I had the privilege of visiting Hiroshima, and that was an awesome experience. That came about as a result of an invitation from a Buddhist community, international Buddhist community, but particularly the Buddhists in Japan **[00:10:00]** who invited people from different religious groups in different countries to come for a peace conference. And I was selected of one of their delegates.

What year was that?

That was in 1981, I think, '80 or '81. This was a time when I was participating in protests at the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant in Colorado, where I was living at that time. Pastor of a church there at that time.

In Denver?

In Arvada, near Denver. And we were vigiling there every Sunday afternoon, protesting the nuclear bomb there. And one of the people who was also often there was a Buddhist monk, Sawada, good friend. He came to me one Sunday when we were there and he said, `Peter, you go to Japan.`

And I said, `Ohhh?`

He said, `Yes, you go to Japan.`

I said, `I can't go to Japan.`

He said, `Yeah, yeah, I'll come talk to you.`

So he came and visited, and then he told me about this conference and that he had been designated to select someone from the witness over there. He wanted me to come to this and the Buddhists would pick up all the expenses, which they did. So there was a three-day peace conference in Tokyo, and then for all those who wanted to, they invited us to go to Hiroshima. So I went there, and I went through that museum.

What was that like?

Very, very awesomely awful. Awfully awesome. One of my feelings was that they should provide a place for people to go and cry. They should have a place for people to go and weep when they go through there. That reinforced the call which had been there before to take more seriously the horror of what we had done and what was still being thought of as something that we've got to do if circumstances dictate. So it was a time for more commitment to the cause of peace.

So that was a catalyst for further involvement?

It encouraged [me] further, yes. I had before that already been arrested numerous times in Colorado for crossing the line into Rocky Flats.

Now we skipped a little span of time, but how did your evolution of the awareness and your involvement in this come about?

After my service with Civilian Public Service, I went to college and majored in sociology, by the way, and then went to seminary and had some sense of call to ministry.

Where was this? Where did you do that?

Seminary was in Chicago, a Mennonite seminary. We were affiliated with the Church of the Brethren at that time. The seminary is now located in Elkhart, Indiana. And those were also times for more integrating of a foundation from which to kind of observe what's going on in the

[00:15:00] world. The church had always been very central in my growing-up years. I had some sense that there was something pretty significant in the history of the Mennonite Church and appreciation for that somewhat unique peace position, but also some sense that Mennonites were becoming assimilated and adopting many of the values and world views of the general culture. So that was part of some of my quest for clarification and deepening in the seminary.

After seminary, I went to serve as a pastor at a Mennonite church in Fresno, California. And that was when the civil rights movement was in its early stages. I became somewhat aware of that—

This is early sixties or—?

Late fifties. And then I was called to be a kind of a resource person for the Mennonite Church. Mennonites were moving, along with a migration of the general population, from rural into urban communities, and so Mennonites were struggling with the question of how do we maintain an identity, particularly also a peace church identity, in urban culture? And so I was invited to be a roving consultant with churches that were being planted in urban centers. In that process, I became aware also of some of the racial realities and the racial prejudice and the challenge of racism. We had several churches in black communities. And then I served as an interim pastor in a black community in the south side of Chicago, in the Woodlawn community. This was in the early sixties when Martin Luther King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference were emerging. And that's where I really became aware of structural violence and institutionalized violence, state violence, so that violence became not so much only individual stuff but a structured reality.

Right. Sounds like sociological training was a good basis for this.

Yeah, it's useful. So the whole question of racial violence became very much a part of my guts. And it was that also economic structural violence related to that. I remember driving out every once in a while from that inner city community to the suburbs and feeling a lot of anger within myself [and thinking], something is wrong here. Here are people living in these—two, three families living in a small apartment, and here are these huge houses. So the whole question of economic injustice became part of the mix.

When I went from there to a suburb of Denver, I was challenged to face my own class reality; that I had been and am in a privileged, white, educated, sort-of-making-it economic situation, and then talking to my fellow church people, OK, what do we do with all this? What **[00:20:00]** do we do with all this? We had some interesting experiences in that suburban situation, both with race stuff, the fair housing realities, and then also being aware that just a few miles from where we were located was this weapons plant. So I got involved in the resistance to the nuclear weapons, and the Vietnam War.

There was certainly a lot going on at that time.

Yes. So all of this was a part of the mix.

Were you fairly active in some of those other movements, as well? I know there were a lot, especially with the burgeoning civil rights movement at that time and the protests for the war.

Yes, my experience in Woodlawn, in the inner city church in Chicago, helped me to take the pulpit out to the street, so to speak, to know that my being a fellow human, also particularly being a person of faith and a pastor, meant not just preaching about this stuff in the sanctuary but taking it out in the street. So I participated in marches in Chicago and elsewhere, and that freed me when the Vietnam War came along to become a part of the marching and resistance movements to Vietnam.

In all of that another component that got into the mix was the whole question of homophobia and the movements for human rights and recognition of gays and lesbians. We had some gay and lesbian people in our church, and they became more free to express themselves. So we worked with that question in our congregation. And before that, also, the question of women's role in the church. Mennonites didn't have a strong history of working for women's rights in the church, but in those years we began to address that question also. We took on a woman as a co-pastor in the sixties, and that worked very well. So that helped us also to face, I think, the homosexuality question and so forth, the package of issues. By now Mennonites, they have a number of women pastors. The struggle for the rights of gays and lesbians is still in process in the church, in the Mennonite Church, as well as in others. But that will come.

We're heading in that direction, at least.

With all of this involvement, one of the things that I wasn't really giving enough attention to and wasn't really being aware enough was strains in my relationship with my wife. There were some gaps. It's one thing to preach about and talk about love to people out there, another thing to really know what that means in close relationships. So we divorced at my initiative.

And when had you gotten married in that time frame?

Right after college. And [we] have four children. Beautiful children. Three godchildren now. And that was painful. That was painful for the church where I was pastor, painful for all of us. So in the **[00:25:00]** process, I needed to make a change, and I applied for and was accepted to work with Nevada Desert Experience here. So that was what brought me to Nevada.

This was mid-eighties?

Eighty-seven.

OK. So Nevada Desert Experience [NDE] had been in existence for about five years at that point?

Right.

Were you familiar with what they were doing? Had you heard of them before?

Yes, I had come here for one of their Lenten Desert Experience for a couple days, so I was familiar with the witness and I received their information, their publications. I came here as co-director with another person [Denise Stephenson], and worked with them for five years, and then again made some shifts which brought me finally to work here with Pace e Bene. One of the questions some of us began to ask from all this history but particularly also from the bomb years, what are the roots of this violence? Where's all this coming from? And so that was what stimulated the formation of Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service, to try to look more at the roots of violence in ourselves, in our culture, and to look more deeply at the nonviolence practitioners through the centuries and particularly, recently, King and Gandhi.

Were you one of the founding members of Pace e Bene?

Yes, I was one of their committee, a member of the committee that founded it.

And that was with Rosemary Lynch and Louis Vitale?

Louis Vitale, Alain Richard, and Julia Occhiogrosso. Yes, we were part of an ordinance.

Backing up a little bit to when you first came out to the [Nevada] test site for a Lenten Desert Experience, what did you think of it? I know that's a broad question, but people have such varying reactions when they first get out to the test site and then actually participate. I'm assuming you crossed over the line at that point, as well? The cattle guard, I guess, at the time.

When I first came out—One of the gifts that God has given me is the capacity to forget, so I don't remember. I don't remember whether I crossed any lines on that first visit here. I crossed

the lines numerous times after. But among my recollections of coming out with folks is the sort of amazing quiet solitude of the desert and contrasting with the awareness of what was going on just a few miles from where we were sitting, and sort of pondering that incongruity. And of deep appreciation for the persistence of the witnesses who were here, who at that time went out every morning for six weeks. And more reflection about the reality of the bomb and the awfulness of it, **[00:30:00]** awesomeness of it. And particularly also the reinforcement of a sense that this was a crisis of faith that we were facing here, that we are being more and more led into an idolatry, that the bomb really is the ultimate expression of a God in conflict with the God who we understand as revealed in the Scriptures and particularly in Jesus, but also in other spiritual traditions, that here's a massive sort of a golden calf, drawing on the analogy from the Hebrew experience. And that sense keeps growing, and particularly in recent years, in the current use, abuse, of religion coming from our government at this point that keeps talking religious language, even Christian language, and doing very un-Christian things.

So there's still that incongruity, these polar opposites, almost.

Yes. Yes that sense keeps deepening. And with that, [there is] the question of how am I complicit in all that? And sort of the sense of Isaiah's dilemma: Woe is me, I am a man of unclean lips living in the midst of people of unclean lips here. Woe, woe is me, I am a person of violent nature living in the midst of a violent culture. So there's always the call, I think, to take an inward journey to look more deeply into myself, into ourselves, and at the same time keep looking out there at what's going on and seeing that there needs to be a change, there wants to be a—there is an alternative.

In the mid-eighties, there were some fairly large protests and actions that happened out at the test site. Were you present for those, and had you come to work—I think those were in '84 and '85, in that time frame?

I was not there in '84, '85. We did have some very large protests in the late eighties also, several that were 500 and 600 people, and a few that were organized by the American Peace Test [APT] which were even larger, a couple thousand at some points. So yeah, I was there for some of those. And I was also active in the international movement and went to a conference in Kazakhstan in '89, an international conference against nuclear weapons, nuclear testing. This was prompted by a movement in Russia, the Soviet Union, which was sparked by the poet Suleimenov. I don't know if you've heard of him, but he was a nationally-known poet**.** **[00:35:00]** And he began, particularly one time when he was on the air, to speak out *very* strongly against the nuclear weapons testing going on in Kazakhstan, the Soviet Union, their testing there. And people responded very much to that. There was a lot of fallout from their testing and people were hurting from that. He called his movement the Nevada Semipalatinsk Movement. Semipalatinsk was the site—the Soviet test site. He got some of his inspiration from our movement here. So we began to communicate more and [more].

Interesting.

Yes, you might want to get some more of that history from some people who were there.

Yes, because we hear about the movement here, but you hardly ever hear, or actually I have yet to hear, about whether there was a similar sentiment or similar movements going on in Russia.

There was a movement in Russia that brought even larger crowds to their test site.

Really. To their test site?

They had thousands come to their Semipalatinsk test site. So there was a strong anti-testing movement.

Did you go out there?

Yes. We had a conference in Kazakhstan and then went out from there to the test site.

And what was that like?

Well, similar to the experience here, you know, sobering and inspiring to see the movement there.

Did they ever come here?

Yes, they had delegations to come here. In fact, Suleimenov came here, did some speaking and touring. But I think in some ways it was the combination of the movement there and here that was pretty significant in getting the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Interesting. So you came out here for the job of co-director. I'm curious about your experience with that and what Nevada Desert Experience, what they were at that time. What was going on? That was a pretty active time within the organization.

Yes, it was the time of a lot of growing awareness among people, particularly people of faith which we worked with, faith communities. And it was encouraging to see how people responded to their coming to the desert. I think it helped to open eyes to different ways of seeing the world and seeing the structures particularly, seeing our own government. It was a time of growing consciousness. And the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, I think, did several things. One, it was a sign that these kind of movements have an effect and it encourages that kind of movement. At the same time, the result for Nevada Desert Experience was less people really continued to give attention to the test site and—

Because of the—that everybody assumed the test ban treaty—

We've got the treaty, yes, and we sort of went to sleep again. And I think that's another call to **[00:40:00]** look beyond the symptoms to more roots. And I think NDE keeps doing that in its own way with the challenges of how to keep all of us aware of the fact that in different ways the research and development of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, including the nuclear, keeps going on in different guises. The challenge is how to keep that concern and awareness alive so we don't have the bomb bursting there as it used to.

Right. Yeah, that's something that several people have mentioned, that after the treaty, people just assumed that that meant a stop, that it [testing] was done, there was no more testing. But really that's not exactly what it meant. There seems to be a lack of awareness, but I think given the times that we're in now, it that awareness is starting to rise to the surface again. What kind of sense do you get of the situation?

I think the awareness of the likelihood that our government is doing a lot of things that we're not aware of, that awareness is growing. The awareness that we're not being told the truth about a lot of things is growing. So there are both discouraging and encouraging signs. The discouraging signs are the arrogance and hypocrisy of particularly the U.S. at this point with its clear continuation of developing all kinds of weapons of mass destruction and then going to search all over the world to try to keep other people from doing this. It's so hypocritical. And people are beginning to catch onto that a bit more. I haven't kept up with all the latest figures, but my impression is that the amount of money invested in nuclear weapons research and development is as big as ever or bigger.

Have you seen more involvement in NDE over the past couple of years? Is there an ebb and flow that happens, and where are we in that right now?

I've been on the margins of NDE, so I would have the general impression that it's probably picking up a little bit again, that there's a little bit more awareness and interest and concern on NDE in particular. I think what's happened is that some of the expression of dissent has been focused in other areas, like SOA particularly. The School of the Americas has received huge crowds, and some other centers, [Lawrence] Livermore [National Laboratory]. So there for some years wasn't quite as much attention to the test site because the general public assumed not much was happening there, but it may be picking up a little bit.

[00:45:00] *Going back to your time with Nevada Desert Experience, you mentioned that you were co-director. Who was the other [director]?*

Denise Stephenson came on the same time I did, and we worked together for a number of years.

Are there any specific moments, events or times that particularly stand out in your mind during that time frame with NDE as being really significant or a turning point?

Well, the larger actions each had their own ethos. Generally my sense is one of deep appreciation for the spirituality which was expressed in most of those actions, and in trying to maintain a human and humane perspective in our relationship with the people who worked there, in particular also the sheriff. Jim Merlino as a sheriff was a good friend for us. And that was a great learning experience for me that I'm still trying to keep in perspective; that one can be human and respectful with people who have very different world views or different views about what's going on.

Had you expected that?

That was a kind of a gift from working with NDE. I think I came into the movement when the Vietnam War particularly and civil rights [were] more from an us-against-them kind of mentality and sometimes. To learn from the Gandhi spirit, the King spirit and the Jesus spirit how to be

clear about what one wants to say and what one sees, and at the same time not dehumanize those who differ, that's the challenge. It still is.

Right. Merlino comes up with a lot of people. I spoke to him last summer and he's just a really interesting man and seems like a good guy. Did you guys have a lot of contact with the workers at the test site, not just the security folks but any of the other workers that were [there]?

Not a lot. I have more now. Right now, I worship in a Presbyterian church, and there are numerous retired test site workers there. I sing in the choir with them, and they're working at the [Atomic Testing] museum over here. So I'm still sort of working with that.

You're still in this dialogue with people.

Yes.

What's that like? Do you guys talk about that at all?

Yeah, some. Sometimes I think the talk is productive, and other times you sort of know that we probably won't change much with each other. But for me, this keeps raising some real **[00:50:00]** questions about the kind of a dilemma or the awareness that they're—well, with good hearts, good hearts, engaged in what feels like really destructive and world-threatening endeavors. And I think that's particularly true with a lot of supporters of George Bush and his cronies. Let's see, isn't there somebody who wrote a book on moral man and immoral society? There seems to be in our day a tendency for the individual to be used by some structures and corporate entities, including governments but not only, as in corporations also, and in very destructive ways. That's something you sociologists can figure out, or we all need to keep working at what to do with that. But during my NDE years, I did have a few good debates with Bob Nelson. He's the Episcopal priest and given a lot of leadership at the test site and at Rocky Flats.

What kinds of stuff did you debate about?

Well, this was some public debates basically about morality of the issues here. So I rather enjoy those kind of conversations and confrontations.

And these were publicly set up?

Yes. For instance, when the Episcopal Peace Fellowship brought a group of Episcopalians down, they arranged for a public debate between several of us.

He seems like an interesting guy, too.

He is. He's a very personable guy. Just sees the world and the faith through different lenses, I guess.

How does his view differ from yours?

Well, you've heard his views, you've heard mine, so that's up to you to say, I guess. But my perception is that his view of the Gospel is different from mine at the point of what Jesus asks of us related to the question of violence. He understands that it's OK to use violence to meet violence. His understanding of the structures and government is different from mine, I suppose, especially in our government.

So basic world views are different.

Yes.

I'd like to go back to something that you talked about a little bit earlier and that was this juxtaposition of being out in the desert on this land and then you've got at the same time this destructive force that's happening. And then you mentioned it again. I'm interested in, I don't know if this is the right way to phrase it, the role that the desert plays in this, or how the land figures into it. Because it really is a **[00:55:00]** *huge piece of land and, the desert holds all sorts of meanings. And I think you hit it on the head; it's beautiful out there but at the same time we*

often think of the desert as this wasteland that doesn't really hold any value. So, I guess, does the desert play a role in the spirituality of it, or in your spirituality?

There could be many levels to respond to that. One, it feels to me like our culture, in the last decades particularly, but even before—and this is also a spiritual crisis—even our theology had separated human life from other organic life and assumed that human life has the responsibility not only of—but opportunity, responsibility to use the rest of life in any way it sees fit without much respect to the rest of the creation. So we have a crisis of theology here, I think, in taking the Genesis story of go out, subdue the Earth, etc. Instead of seeing ourselves as co-creatures, we see ourselves as master and creature. So that's one growing awareness that for me—growing up on a farm, I think I grew up a little bit with that mentality, oh, we can control this and we can control that. So I feel a personal need to keep growing on how I view the rest of creation, and the desert helps with that. Jesus' words come to mind often also about if people remain silent, the stones will cry out, and I think in our time the stones are crying out. The Earth is beginning to speak back to what we've done to the earth, the water and the air. The desert is in Biblical history also a very significant place where Moses got his call and the prophets often went. Jesus went to the desert to pray.

I just thought it was interesting that the desert seems to hold all these meanings and how interesting it is that we've got this test site out there.

It's the most bombed place on Earth. The most violence that's done anywhere on the Earth has been done right there. We have violated ourselves. When we understand that we are a part of the land, all that, we are doing violence to ourselves.

[01:00:00] *So we've got about ten, twelve minutes left on this particular CD. You mentioned your family. You have kids. Do they live out here or anywhere [near]?*

Scattered across the continent. A son in Portland, Oregon, a daughter in Denver, a son in Chicago, and a daughter in Boston.

Wow. They are scattered across the continent. Have they come out ever to the test site or participated in anything with you?

Yes. One of my sons has been here several times.

What is his name?

Duane. And he is now working with Christian Peacemaker Teams, which is a nonviolence intervention group that sends people into hot spots: Colombia, Hebron in Israel, and Iraq. So he's very active in peace issues. My daughter Janice has been here and we've driven out to the test site. So they're all sort of finding their way in their own way.

That's neat. How did you meet Louis Vitale? It seems like you guys go back.

Well, he was part of the group that interviewed me when I came to apply for work. He was on the NDE board. I was impressed from the beginning with Louis, and we worked together also with Pace e Bene.

Tell me a little bit about Pace e Bene. You mentioned it earlier. What did that come from? How did that come to be?

Well, it came out of a sense that by focusing on the bomb, we're focusing on the symptom of something that's going on within us in our culture. And so we said, where's this coming from, and we need to look at the roots. Also those of us who had been involved in the anti-Vietnam War movement and the civil rights movement felt that we need to learn more from Gandhi and King, and we need to learn more from St. Francis and from Jesus about the whole question of violence. So it was a sense of really needing to deepen our own understanding of violence, but also deepening our understanding of the nonviolence power, the power of nonviolence, the

power of the Gospel, the power of Jesus, the power of love. Out of that came numerous retreats and connecting with groups in different parts of the country who were working on some similar questions. And out of that came a sense that what was needed was a resource, so we developed a program which we call "From Violence to Wholeness." And this has been very widely used by groups across the country. This is an interactive inductive/deductive resource where people bring their own experiences and interact with other people and their experience, **[01:05:00]** interact with resource, readers, do role plays, exercises of all kinds. I would guess, there have probably been 20,000 people who have been involved in this process. We are now preparing a revised curriculum. This one is pretty heavily drawing from Christian resources. What we're trying to do now is adapt the dynamics of the program into general audience public usage where it's less drawing from—less using religious language and images and more—still trying to maintain the dynamic of nonviolence. So that's a little bit of what we're about at the moment. Our main office now is in Oakland [California] where they do a lot of trainings of facilitators who lead these groups. I have thought sometimes of trying to explore doing this somehow related to UNLV [University of Nevada, Las Vegas]. In fact, one time we had a blurb in the Continuing Ed thing and we had several people from UNLV who we worked with them. It worked quite well. So it's being used quite widely, including in some academic circles. You're welcome to take a book, take a copy.

Oh, I'd love to. Thank you.

We have a newsletter that we publish quarterly, and if you'd like to be on the mailing list—

Yes, I would. I've got a couple of them, but it would be nice to [receive them]. We've probably got about five, six minutes left on this CD. Is there anything that we didn't talk about or cover that you feel is important to this?

We sort of touched on it, but for me one of the real challenges is to relate theology, spirituality, to what's going on in the world. One of the ways I've tried to do that through the years is through using some Scriptural images and relating them to today's society. So if you want, what I could do is read you something I did about the bomb that I'm using in numerous places.

Oh, sure. Yeah.

OK. I call it "Creation and Chaos." [Reading] "God is creating the heavens and the Earth. The Earth is in chaos, wanting for love. There is darkness on the face of the Earth and the spirit of God is moving in the darkness. God is saying, 'Let there be light.' There is light, and the light is good. God is saying, 'Let there be life,' and there is life and the life is good. God is saying, 'Let there be humanity to reflect my love.' God is forming man out of the dust of the ground, male and female, God is creating them, God is forming humanity to reflect God's love, and it is very good. Then as sly as a snake, as appealing as an apple, Satanic power comes, saying, 'Go to the center of the garden, grasp for yourself the fruit from the heart of the garden.' The man and the woman place themselves in the center of the garden, and all hell breaks loose in their lives and all hell breaks loose in their world. The man and the woman raise Cain, and Cain rises up and murders his brother. The Lord says to Cain on the six o'clock news, 'Where is your brother?' Cain replies, 'I don't know. Am I my brother's keeper? Besides, he's not my brother, he's my **[01:10:00]** enemy.' Cain turns his back on the Lord of love and Cain becomes fearful and fashions a gun for his defense. The gun becomes the god of Cain. Cain becomes the son of the gun, and the sons and daughters of Cain worship their god, saying, 'Guns are our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' The gun gods multiply and spread through the land, and fear multiplies and spreads through the land. The sons and daughters of Cain fashion more gods, gods shaped into tanks and missiles and bombs, and the sons and daughters of Cain sing praises

to their gods, ‘These are our gods, oh people who preserve our freedom. These are our gods, oh people who save us from our enemies.’ The God of Creation cries out to her children, ‘How can I give you up, oh children of mine? How can I bear to see you destroying each other? How can I express the passionate heat of my anger toward you? How can I show you the passionate tenderness of my love for you? I am the Lord your God, the God of your Creation, the God of your love. Why have you forsaken me and gone after other gods?’ But the sons and daughters of Cain do not hear, and the missile gods multiply and spread through the Earth. The bomb gods multiply around the world. The sons and daughters of Cain go to the center of the garden. They go to the center of the atom and they fashion a super god, the nuclear bomb. There is an awful silence in the course of the universe. Into the silence come the voice of all our children, born and unborn, conceived and unconceived, asking, ‘Why? Why, when the bombs which buried me were being built, were you so silent? You who could’ve held me in your arms, why did you choose instead to hold the arms of death?’”

Wow. Wow, that’s [powerful].

You’re welcome to have that.

Thank you. [And] thank you very much for taking the time to share that and to talk with me about your experiences and your thoughts.

You’re very welcome. I wish you well in your ongoing work and whatever comes along your way.

Thank you.

[01:12:47] End Track 2, Disc 1.

[End of interview]