

September 19

Loving My Neighbor as Jesus Loved Me

The Reverend Haroldo Nunes
Pastor of Salem Mennonite Church, Wooster and Executive
Director and Pastor of Open Arms Hispanic Ministry

September 26

**A Second Chance for Returning Citizens, for
All Citizens: Faithful Witness for 2018 America**

The Rev. Andrew D. Genszler
President and CEO
Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry-Cleveland

October 3

**"You Break It, You Fix It."
See Enclosed Instructions.**

Dr. Joan Friedman
Associate Professor of History and Religious Studies
The College of Wooster

October 10

"All the King's Horses and All the King's Men"

Dr. Charles L. Kammer, III
The James F. Lincoln Professor of Religious Studies
The College of Wooster

October 17

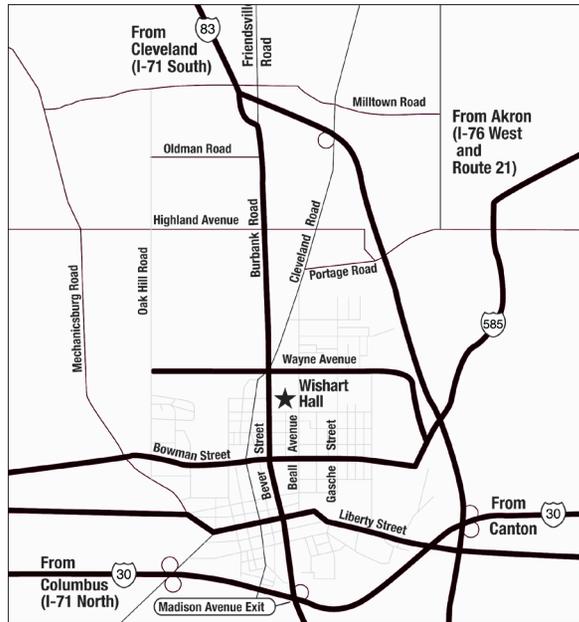
**Recognizing the Worthwhile in the Futile:
A Personal Reflection on Working Within the Syrian
Conflict in Hope for Healing to Come**

Nellika Little
Has worked in conflict zones in Afghanistan, Kosovo,
South Sudan and Syria for The Asia Foundation,
The United Nations, The United States Institute
for Peace and USAID/OTI

October 24

Children in America

Max Lesko, J. D.
Chief of Staff and Director
National Organizing and Intergovernmental
Outreach Children's Defense Fund



All sessions are held in the Lean Lecture Room on the lower level of Wishart Hall, at Bever and University Streets on The College of Wooster campus.

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Tikkun Olam:
To heal a broken world

*"The wound is the place
where the Light enters you."
- Rumi*

Wednesdays, 7:30-9:00 p.m.
September 19 - October 24
Lean Lecture Room, Wishart Hall



Tikkun Olam:

“To heal a broken world”

*“Forget your perfect offering.
There is a crack, a crack, in everything.
That’s how the light gets in.”*

*(Leonard Cohen, “Anthem”)
– Rumi*

Tikkun Olam is a Hebrew phrase deeply embedded in the history in Jewish thought, religious reflection and action, grounded in the voice of the Hebrew Prophets. Often rendered as “repair the world” or “heal the broken world”, it presents the requirement that all Jewish people have a responsibility to work for the political, material, moral and spiritual well-being of the entirety of all of creation. And while this phrase has its roots in Judaism, we find similar concepts in many other religious and secular traditions.

This responsibility is often summed up in various paraphrases of a quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson, who writes: “To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived - that is to have succeeded.” Here is the understanding that our life is not an entitlement but a gift to be used responsibly.

The underlying observation on which this responsibility is built is that the world, our societies, our very selves, are to some degree broken. This brokenness is evidenced in unnecessary suffering and unnecessary destruction that impacts the lives of all and of all of creation. Wars, poverty, oppression of the weak by the strong, the destruction of the natural world are all products of this brokenness.

The nature and cause of this suffering is explained differently in different traditions. In the Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions the brokenness, presented in the myth of the Garden of Eden, is described as sin, an overriding egotism that blunts our concern for others and the world. In Buddhism, the cause is our focus on the ephemeral material world and not on the true depths of reality in which all is interconnected. For many traditional religions and spiritual practices, the cause is human actions and attitudes which disrupt the natural harmony of the world. For many modern secularists, the cause resides in our inability to subject all aspects of life to rational, scientific control.

Embedded in the idea of tikkun olam is the recognition that we, as human beings, have the freedom and capacity to engage in the healing of this brokenness. Our actions may

be as small as planting a garden or as large as leading a movement for dramatic social change, but we should act in such a way as to help heal the brokenness of our own lives and the brokenness of the world. In religious terms, this is the work of salvation, deriving its meaning from the Greek word, *soteria*, which implies both deliverance from one’s enemies and being healed and from the Latin word *salvus*, meaning to heal or make whole.

But the brokenness is not just a function of individual attitudes and behaviors, it is also a product of our social institutions and social values. The mass poverty in the world is not primarily due to individual greed and indifference. Massive hunger is a product of our social and economic systems that place economic profit and political power above concern for human well-being. Likewise, the massive violence of war is not due to individual choices but is a product of political systems and their competition for resources and power.

“To heal the world requires, then, not simply an attempt to heal our individual brokenness, but to heal and reform our social and economic systems. “To heal the world” is thus a monumental task, one that often seems so daunting that we are overwhelmed and so often find it easier to escape back into our private lives and try to ignore the suffering in the world and of the world.

Additionally, as we see over and over, the good that we do is often later undone, an insight that causes the author of Ecclesiastes to declare: “I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind. What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be counted.”

What has been healed is again broken. Wars continue, poverty grows, environmental destruction seems to go on unabated despite all our efforts and sacrifices.

So we often lose hope in the possibility of healing the world or even healing ourselves. Daniel Berrigan in his poem, “Some”, reflects on this natural human tendency as he writes:

“Some stood up once and sat down
Some walked a mile and walked away
Some stood up twice then sat down
I’ve had it, they said.
Some walked two miles then walked away
It’s too much they cried”.

Buts as Father Berrigan notes, some few continued on try-

ing to heal a broken world.
“Some stood and stood and stood
They were taken for fools
They were taken for being taken in.
Some walked and walked and walked
They walked the earth
They walked the waters
They walked the air.”

What allows some persons to continue to engage in the work of “healing”? Father Berrigan offers his own reasons:

“Why do you stand they were asked, and
Why do you walk?
Because of the children, they said, and
Because of the heart, and
Because of the bread.
Because
The cause
Is the heart’s beat
And the children born
And the risen bread.”

Still, our brokenness, our wounds, may be a key to healing and our work, for in our wounds we discover our interconnectedness with others and with the whole of creation so that the pain of others becomes our own. Here, perhaps is the source of compassion, but also the discovery that as we seek to heal the world, we ourselves are healed.

In this Academy we will hear from people who are engaged in the work of healing the world, sometimes risking their own lives and their own well-being. We will hear about the work they do and where they find the courage, the strength and the hope to continue work that often seems futile.

We hope that in the context of the Academy’s presentations and the open discussions that all will take time to reflect on how their lives can be a healing presence in the lives of others, their communities and the world.

“Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human.”

– Henri J. M. Nouwen