



Rev. Paul "Chip" Jahn,
Member of the IKC
Sri Lanka Mission Partnership

A Conference E-Pistle

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Reflections From
The Indiana-Kentucky Conference



Sept. 26, 2016

Just Peacemaking

The Indiana-Kentucky Conference voted to become a Just Peace Conference in 1989 -- at the same annual meeting, we entered into partnership with a church in Sri Lanka. This led us into a ministry of justice and peace advocacy in one of the world's most violent and intractable conflicts.

Our partnership with the Jaffna Diocese gave us greater access to the conflict zone than most better known human rights organizations. We opened conversation with Christian ethicists who were developing specific "just peace practices" that are the concrete undergirding of this new paradigm. The Indiana-Kentucky Conference Sri Lanka Mission Partnership Committee used these practices as we engaged in our work.

Congressman Lee Hamilton and Senator Richard Lugar helped us access the State Department and international organizations like the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank. Over the years, we were deeply involved with an asymmetrical conflict with a strong terrorism component. Our goals were to minimize the violence directed at non-combatants. We worked with a variety of international organizations, most particularly the International Working Group on Sri Lanka.

Our relationship with a Tamil church allowed us to move in and out of the conflict zone. We were responsible for making and staying in contact with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). We did this at the advice of both our partners and members of our government. As a small organization, we didn't raise unwanted attention. We were one of the few outsiders who could get into the North and East of the country during the conflict, crossing into Tiger controlled territory.

Using "just peace practices" enabled us to create a conflict transformation training for the LTTE peace negotiation team in 2003. From 2001 to 2009, the U.S. State Department relied on the Indiana-Kentucky Conference to communicate messages to the LTTE. In 2009, with the International Working Group, we

developed protocols for the protection of civilians that President Obama read in a Rose Garden news conference.

At the same time, our little group was using these practices to surprising effect, the UCC seemed to allow "Just Peace" to fall into disuse. This while the United States was waging the longest war in our country's history. We are trying to get the denomination to look again at this important tool. If you would like to help, contact [Rev. Paul "Chip" Jahn](mailto:Rev.Paul%20Chip.Jahn) at (812)529-8232.

Chip Jahn

Sincerely,

Indiana-Kentucky Conference
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The Indiana-Kentucky Conference of the United Church of Christ was selected as a Constant Contact All Star in 2011, 2012 & 2013

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