

Advance praise for *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles in Religious Peacebuilding* – Volume II

“Peacemakers in Action provides timely and exemplary stories of people who live fully into the belief that their religious faith can mobilize a creative and courageous response to violence. While our daily news broadcasts insist on loading us up with the sensational images of religiously motivated violence, division, and fear, this wonderful book portrays the hope for our mutual humanity and world: understanding, love, compassion, and dialogue are not just remote ideals. They exist in flesh and bone and give us practical examples of how religious imagination opens the way toward flourishing relationships and vibrant communities in the midst of diversity and historic division. I cannot imagine a timelier message!”

John Paul Lederach, Professor of International Peacebuilding at University of Notre Dame, author of *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* and *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* among others

“Today, the average world citizen comes to know his Godly sisters and brothers through distorted sound bites and generalizations packaged to sell shock. By and large, we don’t hear the stories of courage, hope, and heroism found among people whose faiths are unlike our own. And that is dangerous, because it gives radicals the upper hand in the ideological battle to define the common values of our religions. But more thoughtful voices have emerged, like Tanenbaum’s *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles in Religious Peacebuilding* – Volume II. By documenting religiously motivated individuals and their heroically selfless acts in the face of great personal risk, Tanenbaum brings to light the socially indispensable, shared values that women and men embrace in their various traditions. Through their altruistic endeavors, these very different *Peacemakers in Action* present us with a mosaic of the many faces and faiths of peace. Tanenbaum has given their stories to us: an important step in turning the ideological tide back toward sanity – back toward a world of interreligious understanding. The world I want to live in.”

Reza Aslan, internationally acclaimed writer and scholar of religions, author of #1 *New York Times* bestseller, *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, founder of AslanMedia, and cofounder and Chief Creative Officer of BoomGen Studios

“The second volume of *Peacemakers in Action* provides graceful, yet very powerful portraits of religious leaders and religiously inspired actors who dedicate their life to advancing peace, security, and human rights worldwide. Their

vibrant stories should inspire and enlighten the daily work of both religious and secular actors who are engaged in conflict prevention and management, peace-building, and the promotion of human rights and social cohesion. At a time in which we see religion being manipulated for political ends and over-simplistically associated with violence and suffering, this volume also contributes to broadening our horizons and increasing our understanding that religious leaders and religiously motivated actors can and must be part of the solution.”

Adama Dieng, UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

“It is good for the world that now there is a second volume of *Peacemakers in Action* because it signals that Tanenbaum has found *more* peacemakers, more people around the world, steeped each in her or his own faith and committed to resolve conflict, challenge injustice and violence, make the world a better place. At a critical point in world history, when religion shows up as a divisive force in too many conflicts in too many places, we are reminded of religion as a force for good. The book tells us something about the life, the good works, the brave efforts of each of these peacemakers to work for social change in some of the most demanding spots on the globe, and it does even more.

We learn in this second volume about the ongoing work of those who were written up originally. We get more insight from Tanenbaum itself into what these leaders and change-makers have in common, how they use their faith to create peace and how it helps them to stay the course. It reminds us all to find and celebrate those doing the best work, those who need more of all of our help to make change in a world so waiting for that change.”

Ruth Messinger, President of American Jewish World Service (AJWS)

“This second volume of Tanenbaum’s *Peacemakers in Action*, documenting the personal stories and strategies of an incredible group of religiously inspired and nonviolent warriors for peace, sates a thirst. Too often in the field of religious peacebuilding, we point to the same saints: Martin Luther King, Abdul Ghafter Khan, the Dalai Lama. While these are certainly exemplars worthy of admiration and emulation, there are many other religious peacebuilders – male and female – whose stories have not been adequately heard, and strategies analyzed, to help inform and shape the peacebuilding field at large. *Peacemakers in Action* helps meet that need. In these pages are stories of personal and social transformation, and of the complex and sometimes hidden role of faith in motivating and shaping the work of peacebuilders. May we heed these stories, welcoming a new retinue to the religious peacebuilding canon.”

Susan Hayward, director of Religion & Inclusive Societies at United States Institute of Peace

“Peacemakers in Action is an inspiring, insight-filled collection of profiles in courage. Readers learn from seven prominent architects of interreligious peacebuilding, discovering ways to broker peace and stability at the local, national, regional, and global levels. Tanenbaum’s commitment to diversity and inclusion shines through this volume with new accounts of women faith actors, leading community activists shaping the future. *Peacemakers* offers role models and pragmatic tools for transforming conflict through dialogue, and inspires its readers to follow in the footsteps of some of the best.”

Jerry White, formerly at the State Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Partnerships and Learning at Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, CEO of Global Impact Strategies Inc., and Executive Co-Chair of Global Covenant Partners, known for leading International Campaign to Ban Landmines (for which he was co-recipient of Nobel Peace Prize)

“These previously untold stories of peacebuilders from different world regions are both riveting and heartening. Above all, their stories demonstrate that motivated individuals can have an impact – perhaps even a decisive impact – on some of the world’s most intractable conflicts. In this book, Tanenbaum takes us through several journeys. It identifies the broad process of peacebuilding as distinct from the narrower action of peacemaking or conflict resolution. *Peacemakers in Action* pinpoints and recognizes the courageous and creative work of relatively unknown people whose often dangerous efforts to bring about understanding among parties to conflicts is motivated, albeit in different ways, by religious convictions. And it highlights how important networks are – the more so in the often lonely work these individuals do. Tanenbaum’s *Peacemakers in Action Network* is a mechanism that makes possible a continuous sharing of experience and inspiration, allowing peacebuilders to enhance their own work, learn from each other, and inspire others. This book allows others to share in that process.”

Katherine Marshall, Senior Fellow & School of Foreign Service, World Faiths Development Dialogue Executive Director

“With so much attention given to the religious dimensions of war and conflict, it is inspiring to see examples of religion as a source for peace. *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles in Religious Peacebuilding – Volume II* changes the frame on religion and conflict. It provides compelling examples of religiously inspired peace advocates as difference-makers in war-torn communities around the world. *Peacemakers* reminds us that the redemptive power of religion is accessible and practical. It may in fact be the key to making progress on so many of the seemingly intractable conflicts that beset us today.”

Joel H. Rosenthal, President, Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs

“By making available this second volume in its *Peacemakers in Action* series, Tanenbaum continues to lead the way in highlighting the experiences and accomplishments of religious ‘practitioners of peace’ around the world. Their inspiring lives and devotion remain an indispensable resource for learning how to make peace, and where religion fits in. A book like this brings discussions of ‘religious peacebuilding’ down to earth fast. It is an invaluable contribution.”

David Little, editor of Volume I, Research Fellow, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Georgetown University

“The second volume of *Peacemakers in Action* honors the extraordinary work undertaken by remarkable people of faith, in some of the world’s most challenging contexts. In what is now a classic and unique Tanenbaum manner, these profiles illuminate the vocation of religious peacebuilding; amplify the voices of the ever-shifting periphery–center dynamics of peacebuilding in contemporary geopolitics; and provide evidence of the effectiveness of religious peace activists mirrored through the very words and actions of actual faith pioneers. As we listen to the words of people such as Hind Kabawat, Canon Andrew White, and Fr. Sava Janjic, we are irrevocably called upon to stand in witness to this very real phenomenon of religiously motivated individuals driven by a vision for peace and justice. For those academics, human rights activists, and policymakers who continue to request ‘evidence’ of religious ‘good’ – especially as they encounter gruesome images and rising body counts attributed to religion – I have two words to say: *read this*. For those in the international community who would seek any religious leader merely because they are representative of their institution, I would say: *read this and register these voices of leadership too*. And for those of us who are pained by the way our faiths are torn asunder to justify violence, I would say: *read this, and be healed*.”

Azza Karam, Senior Adviser, Culture, UN Population Fund, and Coordinator of UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development

“At a time when religion plays an important role in global politics, especially in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East, dialogue between and about religions is imperative. One of the most successful groups that promotes such dialogue is the Tanenbaum Center, which is known for its ability to bring together Abrahamic and other faiths in a search for common ground. The center’s second volume of its publication, *Peacemakers in Action*, is an extension of that mission, telling through seven thoughtful, absorbing case studies the stories of remarkable individuals who, motivated by faith, strive for peace and understanding in some of the most violent and fraught areas of the world.”

Vartan Gregorian, President, Carnegie Corporation of New York

“The second volume of *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles in Religious Peacebuilding* comes in a timely manner and is a much-needed guide for practitioners and scholars of religion and peace. It has an inspiring set of stories and examples that we all need to learn about during these challenging times. This volume strongly illustrates the power of faith and the sacrifices that many peacemakers make to confront ignorance and exclusion in the name of religion.”

Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Professor at School of International Service, American University in International Peace and Conflict, Senior Adviser to KAICIID, expert on conflict resolution and dialogue for peace, and cofounder and coeditor of *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*

“This is a remarkable book. It tells and analyzes the stories of many religious peacemakers who are advancing the cause of peace in each of their regions. Since I know and have worked with most of these peacebuilders, I can vouch for the authenticity of these extraordinary accounts of peacebuilding under the most difficult circumstances. It is inspiring to read these stories both for their human interest and for their insights on peacebuilding. Hopefully, these stories will encourage others to follow their examples and become religious peacebuilders themselves. Tanenbaum is to be commended for recognizing these peacebuilders and sharing their stories with a wider audience.”

David Smock, former Vice President and Director of Religion and Peacebuilding Program, United States Institute of Peace

“This is more than a worthy successor to the first volume of *Peacemakers in Action*. It not only gives rich and moving new case studies (often grassroots and hitherto obscure) of religion-inspired peacemaking, while summarizing and updating those in the first volume; it also offers perceptive commentaries by some of the best thinkers and practitioners in the field, not least the experienced Tanenbaum Center staff. The result is a profound response to violence and extremism, and a distillation of practical and theoretical wisdom that cries out to be learnt from and acted upon in one conflict situation after another. Such religion-inspired peacemaking needs to become a widespread twenty-first-century practice.”

David F. Ford, Emeritus Regius Professor of Divinity, Co-Chair, Global Covenant Partners, University of Cambridge

PEACEMAKERS IN ACTION: PROFILES IN RELIGIOUS PEACEBUILDING – VOLUME II

Every day, men and women risk their lives to stop violence in religiously charged conflicts around the world. You may not know their names – but you should. *Peacemakers in Action, Volume II* provides a window into the triumphs, risks, failures, and lessons learned of eight remarkable, religiously motivated *Peacemakers* including:

A Methodist bishop in the Democratic Republic of the Congo who confronts armed warlords on his front lawn.

A Christian who travels to Syria to coordinate medical aid and rebuild postwar communities.

A Muslim woman, not knowing how Kabul's imams will react, arrives to train them on how to treat women – respectfully.

Volume II offers students of religious and grassroots peacebuilding informative techniques and methods for organizing community action, establishing trust in conflict, and instilling hope amid turmoil. The book also features updates of case studies presented in *Volume I*.

Joyce S. Dubensky, Esq. is the CEO of Tanenbaum, a secular, nonsectarian nonprofit that systematically dismantles religious violence and hatred through *Peacemakers* in armed conflicts and by tackling religious bullying of students, harassment in workplaces, and disparate health treatment for people based on their beliefs. Internationally in demand as a speaker, Ms. Dubensky has presented at the United Nations, the Interfaith Kosovo 2nd Annual Conference, the United States Institute of Peace, and Harvard University, among others.

Tanenbaum is an international nonprofit that recognizes the power of religion and establishes institutional practices of respect to combat religious prejudice, hatred, and violence. In its peacebuilding work, Tanenbaum identifies religiously motivated *Peacemakers in Action* who counter violence and pursue peace in twenty-two conflict zones worldwide. In schools, workplaces, and health care facilities, Tanenbaum's nonsectarian programs stop bullying, harassment, and unequal treatment by reaching students and educators, employees and managers, and patients and health care providers.

Peacemakers in Action: Profiles in Religious Peacebuilding – Volume II

Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious
Understanding

Edited by
Joyce S. Dubensky, Esq.



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To Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke, for envisioning the unique power of these religiously motivated women and men, and to all of the *Peacemakers in Action* including those who have passed on from our world. We honor Osnat Aram-Daphna, Rabbi Menachem Froman, Reverend Roy Magee, and Father Alec Reid by our continued work toward a more peaceful world.

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Clayton Maring is currently working on the Caribbean coast of Colombia with Tanenbaum's *Peacemaker in Action* Ricardo Esquivia, where he directs the administrative wing of Sembrandopaz, as well as helping design and evaluate its grassroots peacebuilding initiatives.

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Kiersten Rooke is an Associate at Chemonics International in Washington, DC, providing home office project management support for USAID contracts in West Africa. She completed her MA in International Development at American University in 2015.

Foreword

George Rupp

“Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.”

Genesis 37:19–20 (New International Version)

These words are attributed to the brothers of Joseph, all sons of Isaac, in the Hebrew Bible. Though the intention is a quick death for the young dreamer, the story does not end that way. Joseph was not devoured by ferocious animals. Rather, in the multiple religious texts that recount the story – including those of Islam and Baha’i – we find in Joseph a gifted and determined man who understands the power of dreams and who suffers for his convictions after being sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. We also learn that, despite his trials, he is ultimately recognized as a great leader and, indeed, a prophet.

As you read through the pages of *Peacemakers in Action: Profiles in Religious Peacebuilding – Volume II*, you will encounter men and women who evoke the story of Joseph. Though they are not scriptural prophets, you will find the volume filled with today’s visionaries and dreamers, men and women who, like Joseph, do more than dream. They take action. They take risks. For the most part, they do not fear those who would do them harm. And, to date, they have been delivered from danger. Yet you probably have never heard most of their stories – unlike the biblical account of Joseph. Like so many working for peace, they labor at the margins of the bloody headlines, often falling outside the official record. Thanks to the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, the courageous and instructive stories of some of these unknown peacemakers can now be studied and their techniques adapted for use by others.

Tanenbaum is a New York-based nonprofit with a big – and critically important – mission: combating religious hate and prejudice. During my time as the president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee (IRC), I all too often saw hatred and prejudice in practice and the dire consequences that followed. Working with the IRC's dedicated staff, I regularly came face to face with the suffering of civilians who had through no fault of their own become the world's beleaguered asylum seekers, undernourished refugees, and war-weary families struggling to survive.

In too many circumstances, our brothers and sisters suffer because religion has been appropriated to stir human hatred, to stoke dangerous passions, and to draw divisions on the basis of belief and ethnicity. This association of religious commitment with horrific strife stalks the front pages of our daily newspapers. Tamil Tiger suicide bombings in Sri Lanka, provocative public demonstrations in France over the wearing of hijabs in schools, vandalism of historic Orthodox churches in Kosovo, violence against Sikhs in the United States after September 11, 2001, covert and overt anti-Semitism across Europe, the kidnapping of school-girls in Nigeria by Boko Haram, beheadings and rapes presented as acts of devotion in Iraq and Syria – each of these examples is complex, and results from a range of causes, but each also illustrates the horrendous excesses of religiously fueled zealotry.

Too often overlooked in the daily news is the crucial fact that religion also plays another role in conflict, one that draws on the core of religious commitment across traditions: kindness, generosity, empathy, selflessness, grace. Though rarely to be found in the media or in our public discourse, there are stories that illustrate this other side of religious activism in conflict zones. A few – like Mohandas Gandhi's nonviolent struggle against British colonialism – are well known. But we owe it to ourselves and our children to seek out the stories of our contemporary religious peacebuilders, to learn from them, and to be guided by them.

Tanenbaum is an integral part of this work, helping us to understand such individuals. It thereby shows the less-publicized side of religion in conflicts. Through a variety of techniques – including this book – Tanenbaum shows the world how its *Peacemakers in Action* award winners draw on religion to create and sustain peace in conflict zones right now.

I had the good fortune of meeting many of Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers in Action* in the summer of 2013 as a member of its Conflict Resolution Advisory Council. Tanenbaum brought these very isolated peace activists

together from the four corners of the globe to talk, share experiences, and support each other spiritually. In my short time with them, I was exhilarated and challenged in conversations with these religious actors who – by blood and by choice – dedicate themselves to creating peace in the midst of unspeakable violence. I was inspired by seeing how they dream of what is attainable and then pursue pragmatic strategies for developing communities of collaboration to counter the violence of war and inhumanity.

We need more efforts to develop such communities of collaboration to counter the violence that drives us apart. The world continues to find new and creative ways to destroy in the name of religion. It is through studies like *Peacemakers in Action – Volume II* that we discover reasons to hope. This volume, along with its 2007 companion, suggests new ideas for the burgeoning field of religion and peace. Through personal stories and sound critical analysis, Tanenbaum lays bare lessons worth learning – from Syrian statehouses to Colombian sick houses – lessons that can be put into practice on a broader scale.

Though Joseph was not killed by his scheming brothers, his story of triumph was not without pain, setbacks, or personal shortcomings. Similarly, the people profiled in this volume have suffered, faced uncertainty, and erred. Despite setbacks, they, like Joseph, are compelled by faith to continue. In so doing, they give us the gift of envisioning the prospect of reconciliation, together with roadmaps for the journey. In this volume, Tanenbaum has helped deliver these very human activists and their complex gifts. In the end, the fact that such individuals and communities exist around our conflict-torn globe may be the most important message that we can take away from this valuable book. If we just look, we can find modern-day Josephs today, in the twenty-first century – men and women whose actions show they dream with their eyes wide open.

Acknowledgments

Many books say it, and certainly many authors and editors mean it. This book would not have been possible without the energetic and creative contributions – and, at times, the fierce perseverance – of many talented and dedicated individuals. For sharing the vision that we could make a contribution and move the vocation of religious peacebuilding forward, and then for working tirelessly to realize that vision, I thank you all.

To begin, I want to acknowledge Tanenbaum's *Peacemakers in Action*. First my heroes, the individuals featured in this book are now also dear friends. I cherish our time together and thank them for their openness and honesty in sharing their stories. These *Peacemakers* are exemplary people doing extraordinary things – but they are still people, with all the complexity and nuance that implies. It takes great courage to do the work they do and just as great courage to bare their lives for the readers of this volume. I have tried to portray them fairly and accurately. I hope that is evident in the text you are about to read but any failures in that regard are mine alone.

Several of the cases in this volume were created with Tanenbaum's university partners, who embarked on an experiment with us to bring new voices from the field of religious peacebuilding to the forefront. Specifically, I extend heartfelt appreciation to Scott Appleby of the University of Notre Dame, Marc Gopin at George Mason University, Pamela Couture at the University of Toronto, and Emory University's Edward Queen. Though our process was long and not always simple, I believe our many conversations and different perspectives resulted in a series of high-quality – and highly engaging – case studies, all created through engagement with promising younger academics. I am grateful for your honor, creativity, and dedication. You are all leaders in building

this field, and each of you does even more through the many ways you nurture the peace scholars and practitioners of tomorrow.

The students who participated in our university collaboration also have my great respect and appreciation. Thank you to Hyunjin Deborah Kwak of the University of Notre Dame, Thanos Gatsios of George Mason University, Monika Bartha-Bereczki of the University of Toronto, and Maria Presley at Emory University.¹

Each of these younger scholars gave of themselves throughout the drafting of this volume, and drove the cases with which they worked. As you read the different cases presented, I am proud that you will find a thought-provoking diversity of ideas, which is a testament to the contributions and dedication of these individuals.

I also want to acknowledge my staff at the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding. Many have been part of this effort over the course of this volume's production – too many to thank individually. But, if you have worked with us in our peacemaking program over the course of the past decade, you have contributed to this volume and I thank you. That said, over more recent years, the staff of this program have driven this project, seamlessly passing the baton as several extraordinarily talented professionals have moved on to further study or new accomplishments. It was they who conceived that this volume could be more than a publication of cases – that it could also include critical analyses and contribute to the field and diversity of thought by partnering with top universities, professors who are thought-leaders in the field, and their students. Several who were involved in the earlier planning deserve special recognition. Sheherazade Jafari, then Assistant Director of Tanenbaum's program with the *Peacemakers*, helped to conceptualize this volume and contributed valuable research and drafting to its early formation. Heather DuBois, who later took on the role of Assistant Director, guided research and interviewing for parts of this book, likewise contributing to early drafts of several cases.

Clayton Maring later took up the mantle as the leader of the program, contributing focus, direction, and research to the volume, as well as working directly with our university partners and managing a peer review process in which these leaders from the field exchanged recommendations and ideas. Clayton gets full credit for adding short critical reflections to the cases. He and Program Associate Kiersten Rooke also aided with early edits to the chapters of this book and in taking the lead on the particular cases for which they are credited as the final, primary authors. Even after Clayton moved to Colombia to partner with one of our

Acknowledgments

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Peacemakers in the field, he stayed with the project and continued until the last word in the conclusion was finalized.

Carla De Ycaza, who followed Clayton as Assistant Director of the program, was an integral driver in finalizing chapters, researching and writing final components that were still missing from the greater puzzle, editing, and beginning to prepare this work for publication. And, finally, I thank Janie Dumbleton, who joined the team and made sure that this publication was finalized with excellence.

I am personally and professionally grateful to all of you for keeping this project on track. I know that moving forward the work of the *Peacemakers* is a labor of love for each of you: a love that we share.

I also thank John Berger and Cambridge University Press for their patient and encouraging accompaniment throughout this process. We have taken great pains – and a bit of time – to ensure the quality and rigor of this volume. Throughout, John and Cambridge University Press have been supportive and instructive guides, and have helped us to create a text designed to be useful for the classroom and the field, and interesting to the lay reader.

This volume was produced only because of the generous support and judicious counsel of the Henry Luce Foundation, Michael Gilligan and Toby Volkman. The Henry Luce Foundation – which supports so much necessary and visionary work in the field of religion and conflict resolution – has been a staunch ally in our efforts to bring these stories of religious peacebuilding into the mainstream. Toby has offered her sage guidance generously, has encouraged our collaborative partnerships with universities, has made us stronger, and has become a cherished friend.

Many at Tanenbaum helped create the foundation for this book. In addition to the contributors listed in the table of contents, to whom I am deeply indebted, many of the updates benefited from the input of others. Interviews for Chapter 2 were conducted by Heather DuBois, with additional research by Rebecca Walter. Chapter 3 relies greatly on the research of Monika Bartha-Bereczki and Danny Salim. Chapter 4 is built on the research and early drafts completed by Heather DuBois, Anais Caput, and Matt Lucas. Chapter 5 draws on the early research and drafts of Sheherazade Jafari, Matt Shineman, Greg Leventis, and Kiersten Rooke. Sana Rais, graduate of University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies and current Ph.D. candidate at the Centre for Trust, Peace, and Social Relations at Coventry University, contributed to much of the drafting of Chapter 6. Chapter 9, which updates the stories

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Joyce S. Dubensky
CEO

Note

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| 1. Though unforeseen difficulties in data collection did not allow her chapter to be included in this volume, Maria’s perseverance and professionalism throughout the process | are deeply appreciated, as are her contributions to the book through peer review of chapters and analyses in which she participated with Tanenbaum staff. |
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