

# "A Gandhi Gathering" Shriners scheduled for May Day confer

by Charles Goodmacher

*Gandhi*, the major motion picture produced and directed by Richard Attenborough, was awarded eight Academy Awards April 11. The movie has also touched millions with a glimpse at the life and philosophy of Gandhi, the man who showed that active non-violence is a fact, not just a theory. Viewers everywhere are beginning to ask how non-violence can affect their own lives.

Professor and Gandhian scholar David Newhall of Portland State University notes the *Gandhi* film has significantly "broadened the base of discussion" about alternatives to the use of force in both our personal and collective lives. Curiosity about the life of Gandhi and the principles he practiced is at a new high according to Newhall, who will present a seven-part documentary entitled *Mahatma* at 4 p.m., Sunday, May 1. A \$3 donation to benefit the Fellowship of Reconciliation will be asked at the showing at Koinonia House, 633 S.W. Montgomery.

Produced by the Gandhi National Memorial Fund and the Films Division of the Indian government, *Mahatma* provides a wider perspective on Gandhi than was possible in the shorter Attenborough film. *Mahatma* contains many film clips of Gandhi and his followers and a detailed narrative. Attenborough, whose film script was reviewed for authenticity by the Gandhi National Memorial Fund, the Gandhi Peace Foundation, and others, used *Mahatma* as one of his prime sources of information, Newhall said.

That the Academy Award-winning *Gandhi* has triggered a considerable amount of discussion is reflected in increased demand for showings of *Mahatma*. Dr. Newhall has shown parts of the film at numerous churches and schools, including Lincoln and Wilson High Schools. A trip to the Oregon Coast is also scheduled.

According to Newhall, much of the impact of *Gandhi* is being felt by those who have long recognized the need to act for peace yet have been passive. Gandhi's tactic of non-violence was anything but passive, according to Newhall. For Gandhi, non-violence meant an active energetic campaign in which the rebel seizes the initiative. Gandhi himself always managed to keep the imperialist British guessing about what he would do next.

Gandhi's guiding principles of active non-violence and truth combined to form the concept of "Satyagraha" or truthforce. By seizing the initiative using nonviolent tactics to force change, the rebel seeks to show his/her righteousness in contrast to the actions of the oppressor.

How does Gandhian non-violence relate to situations such as El Salvador, where the oppressor is much harsher than the British were in India? Gandhi, according to Newhall, never kidded himself or others that non-violence is without a cost. The important point is always to seek to do more through peaceful means and to realize that in any revolution, violent or not, people are going to get hurt. Achieving non-violence is an incremental process for individuals and nations alike, Newhall pointed out.

For Gandhian non-violence to succeed, it is vitally important that an aggressive action campaign begin as soon as an injustice is known, Newhall noted. By doing so the forces of justice define the terms on which the rest of the struggle is to be played out. Utilizing dramatic acts to arouse the attention of third parties is also vitally important, as Gandhi demonstrated by rallying world opinion (even that of the British working class) to his cause, the professor said.

Empowering people at the grassroots was a major concern of Gandhi, who is shown in *Mahatma* telling villagers: "I am not a helpless creature. Neither are you."

According to Newhall, that the Indian people liberated themselves from their oppressors through an energetic, non-violent campaign is now inspiring people in the U.S. and Europe to undertake similar campaigns to rid the world of the threat of nuclear weapons.



MAHATMA GANDHI

Shriners of Mina Temple #68 and auxiliary, the Daughters of Isis of Mina Court #142, held a one day joint conference. The conference was under the direction of the Shrine Deputy of the State of Oregon, Thomas R. Vickers, assisted by the Isis Deputy of the State, Dorothy E. Vickers.

The Temple and Court were greeted by the Most Worshipful Grand Master of Prince Hall Masons Thomas J. Brown and by the Grand Worthy Matron of Prince Hall Grand Chapter Helen E. Riley. James W. Calvin, Illustrious Potentate of Mina Temple and Frances



Mina Temple #68 and Mina Court #142

Odom, Illustrious Commandress of Mina Court, presented their agendas for the year.

Members attending the conference participated in workshops, training programs and instructional

sessions and heard reports on youth activities sponsored by the organization.

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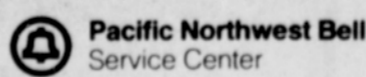
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"Good nonsense is good sense in disguise."  
— Josh Billings