

# Quest for Global Peace

1999 was a busy year for  
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a UN NGO Representative of the  
International Union for Land Value Taxation

**B**ANGKOK Member of a delegation working with the Millennium Peoples Assembly Network (MPAN). Mission: establish a permanent Global Peoples Assembly to serve as "inclusive voice of the world's People". My message: affirm the importance of the ground rent of the earth's land, water, and air as the proper and just funding source for global governance institutions.

The Dhammakaya Foundation is a Buddhist organisation working for world peace through inner peace. In 30 years it has become the largest Buddhist group in Thailand. We met for discussions and gala dinners and outings with our hosts of the Dhammakaya MPAN committee many times during our week long visit. The topic I presented was that of Financing Planet Management – Sovereignty, World Order, and the Earth Rights Imperative.

We were given a special place of honour at the Lights of Peace Day ceremonies at the nearly completed Dhammakaya peace pilgrimage site, which is being built to serve 1m meditators. Nearly 200,000 people gathered for meditation and spiritual teachings around the golden domed cettiya, or stupa, upon which sat 10,000 orange robed monks. As the full moon rose high above and the monks chanted, the Abbot lit a torch which was taken by a runner down to our platform. With a long silver lighting stick, we lit a torch which then lit 100 smaller torches and then the lamp in a huge urn. Spreading from there, within moments, the lights of 100,000 other torches were lit in dozens of concentric circles around the stupa and among the people, giving a spectacular and magical display of the Lights of Peace as a choir of children sang songs of jubilation.

**T**HE HAGUE Appeal for Peace conference. With nearly 8000 activists from all over the world participating, this was the largest peace conference ever held on earth. Plenary speakers included UN Secretary General Koffi Annan and Archbishop Tutu. As Co-Chair of the Peoples Agenda Committee, I had helped to compile sections on land tenure and taxation policy which advocate land value taxation. Rob Wheeler, Coordinator of MPAN, and I had several occasions to play our guitars

and lead the MPAN participants in songs of peace and justice. Closing the final meeting, former UN Assistant Secretary, General Robert Muller, now a beloved "Peoples Ambassador", joined us on his harmonica.

You are invited to participate in the Global Peoples Assembly to be held in Samoa in April of 2000. You can view the MPAN website at <[www.ourvoices.org](http://www.ourvoices.org)> or contact me for a brochure at Box 328, Scotland, PA 17254, USA.



**N**EW YORK CITY The UN Department of Public Information's 52nd Annual Non-Governmental Organisations Conference at the UN. I organised and sponsored a noonday workshop entitled Financial Local-to-Global Public Goods: an Integrated Perspective. The workshop description follows:

"World stability and human security require that we re-think the logic of globalisation, including the best ways to finance public goods such as health, education, infrastructure, environmental sustainability and efforts for peace and conflict resolution. Workshop presenters addressed these concerns, discussed successful public finance practices and work-in-progress on 'green tax shift' policies which

harness incentives for both efficient and equitable wealth production and distribution AND sustainable economic and social development."

Workshop presenters were Ted Gwartney, Executive Director, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation; Gina Erickson, State Program Director, Centre for a Sustainable Economy; Joshua Vincent, Executive Director, Centre for the Study of Economics, and Rashmi Mayur, Special Adviser, MPAN.

**O**AXACA Milenio Verde (the Green Millennium) – "A Global Effort for the Conservation of the Planet" – was hosted by the Mexican Green Party in this colourful multi-cultured city six hours drive south of Mexico City. Jeff Smith, President of the Geonomy Society, and I communicated the Georgist economics paradigm to nearly 300 Green Party activists from 30 countries. Simultaneous translation into French, Spanish, and English facilitated the exchange. Interspersed with the highly intellectual content of the week's proceedings were joyous dance performances, beautiful hand craft displays, and chocolate drinking ceremonies presented by local people.

Speaking on the panel on "Urban and Rural Development", I presented an overview of green tax shifting which included the work with land value taxation in cities in Pennsylvania. Jeff Smith, on a panel on "Sustainability", outlined the basics of geonomics and the citizen's dividend.

I moderated a panel on "Electoral and Governmental Experience of the Green Force" which included Green leaders from Africa (Senegal), France, and Mexico's Green Party Presidential candidate Jorge Gonzalez Torres.

The last day of Milenio Verde found us atop Monte Alban, a central mountain ringed by the Oaxaca valley which in turn is encircled by a ring of mountains. Two hundred of us formed a silent circle in the ceremonial centre of this Mayan temple complex. As the full-moon rose, silhouetting the magnificent pyramids, a shaman performed an earth healing ritual and brightly clothed indigenous people danced and drummed.