

# Deaths

News in the [April 20, 2010](#) issue

**Gene Stoltzfus**, 69, the founding director of Christian Peacemaker Teams, which inspired thousands to personally resist violence and support peaceful alternatives, died March 10 of a heart attack while bicycling in Fort Frances, Ontario, Canada. Stoltzfus, a Mennonite, served as CPT director from its inception in 1988 until 2004. He went to Iraq just before the Gulf War in 1991. His dedication to peacemaking began as a conscientious objector with International Voluntary Services during the U.S. military escalation in Vietnam from 1963 to 1968. His death came on the fourth anniversary of the murder of CPT worker Tom Fox in Baghdad. He was one of four Christian peacemakers taken hostage and later released in Iraq in 2005-06.

**Girija Prasad Koirala**, 85, a former prime minister of Nepal and the architect of a secular republic in what was once the world's only Hindu state, died after a protracted illness in Katmandu on March 20. He headed a pro-democracy struggle in 1990 that led to his appointment as prime minister in May 1991. The government relaxed its vigilance on the church and dropped legal cases against Christians accused of proselytizing. In 2005, Koirala led a new protest against the Hindu king, Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah, who tried to rule the country with the help of the military. The protests resulted in the abolition of the monarchy in 2008. Koirala's death creates a political vacuum as Nepal prepares to adopt a new constitution on May 28. His Nepali Congress Party admitted that a consensus among major parties will be difficult to reach.