

Greg Mortenson - bio as of July 2010

Greg Mortenson is the co-founder of nonprofit Central Asia Institute [www.ikat.org](http://www.ikat.org), founder of Pennies For Peace [www.penniesforpeace.org](http://www.penniesforpeace.org), and co-author of New York Times bestseller 'Three Cups of Tea' [www.threecupsoftea.com](http://www.threecupsoftea.com) which has sold over 4 million copies, been published in 47 countries, and a New York Times bestseller since its 2007 release, and Time Magazine Asia Book of The Year.

Mortenson's new book, *Stones Into Schools: Promoting Peace with Books Not Bombs*, In Afghanistan and Pakistan, was released by Viking on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

As of 2010, Mortenson has established over 145 schools in rural and often volatile regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan, which provide education to over 64,000 children, including 52,000 girls, where few education opportunities existed before.

In 2009, Mortenson received Pakistan's highest civil award, *Sitara-e-Pakistan* ("Star of Pakistan") for his humanitarian effort to promote girls education in rural areas for fifteen years.

Several bi-partisan U.S. Congressional representatives have nominated Mortenson twice for the Nobel Peace Prize in both 2009 and 2010.

Mortenson was born in 1957, and grew up on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania (1958 to 1973). His father, Dempsey, founded Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center (KCMC) [www.kcmc.ac.tz](http://www.kcmc.ac.tz) a hospital, and mother, Jerene, founded the International School Moshi.

He served in the U.S. Army in Germany (1977-1979), where he received the Army Commendation Medal, and later graduated from the University of South Dakota in 1983.

In July 1992, Mortenson's sister, Christa, died from a massive seizure after a lifelong struggle with epilepsy on the eve of a trip to visit Dysersville, Iowa, where the baseball movie, 'Field of Dreams', was filmed in a cornfield.

To honor his sister's memory, in 1993, Mortenson climbed Pakistan's K2, the world's second highest mountain in the Karakoram range.

While recovering from the climb in a village called Korphe, Mortenson met a group of children sitting in the dirt writing with sticks in the sand, and made a promise to help them build a school.

From that rash promise, grew a humanitarian campaign, in which Mortenson has dedicated his life to promote education, especially for girls, in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

His work has not been without difficulty. In 1996, he survived an eight day armed kidnapping by the Taliban in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province tribal areas, escaped a 2003 firefight with feuding Afghan warlords by hiding for eight hours under putrid animal hides in a truck going to a leather-tanning factory. He has overcome two fatwehs from enraged Islamic mullahs, endured

CIA investigations, and also received threats from fellow Americans after 9/11, for helping Muslim children with education.

Mortenson is a living hero to rural communities of Afghanistan and Pakistan, where he has gained the trust of Islamic leaders, military and militia commanders, government officials and tribal chiefs from his tireless effort to champion education, especially for girls.

He is one of few foreigners who has worked for sixteen years (over 74 months in the field) in rural villages where few foreigners go, and considered the 'front lines' of the 'war on terror'

TV newscaster, Tom Brokaw, calls Mortenson, "one ordinary person, with the right combination of character and determination, who is really changing the world".

Congresswoman Mary Bono (Rep – Cali.) says, "I've learned more from Greg Mortenson about the root causes of terrorism than I did during all our briefings on Capitol Hill. He is a true hero, who exemplifies the true ideals of the American spirit."

In addition to his advocacy for female literacy and education, Mortenson is an advocate for the global abolishment of the manufacture and usage of land-mines, and actively campaigns for the U.S. to join the 158 countries that have already signed an anti-land mine pact.

While not overseas half the year, Mortenson, 52, lives in Montana with his wife, Dr. Tara Bishop, a clinical psychologist, and two young children.

Book tour, reviews and media on [www.threecupsoftea.com](http://www.threecupsoftea.com)

Central Asia Institute website [www.ikat.org](http://www.ikat.org)

Pennies For Peace website [www.penniesforpeace.org](http://www.penniesforpeace.org)

## MILITARY

Admiral Mullen has advised senior U.S. military commanders to read Three Cups of Tea. It is mandatory reading for officers in the Norwegian War College, *Forsvarsnett*, for U.S. Special Forces deploying to Afghanistan, all U.S. Marines training at MARSOC Camp Lejeune, officers in counter-insurgency training, and Canadian Defense Ministry members.

Three Cups of Tea book has been read by General David Petraeus – CENTCOM Commander, Admiral Mike Mullen - Chairman Joint Chief of Staff, and Admiral Eric Olson – SOCOM Special Forces commander, (ret) General McKiernan, and several other U.S. military commanders who advocate for empowering elders and building relationships as a part of an overall strategic plan.

Mortenson has spoken and has had discussions at SOCOM, MARSOC, NORAD the CSF at the Naval War College, Naval Postgraduate School, Naval Air Command, NORAD, and been to the Air Force, Naval and West Point Academies. Annually he voluntarily visits about one to two dozen military bases, without charge or honorarium to help troops deploying to Afghanistan understand cultural issues, tribal etiquette and the nuances of tribal warfare.

He has also met several times with most senior military U.S. commanders to help advice and brief them on Afghanistan and Pakistan with issues related to cultural understanding, tribal etiquette. These include General David Petraeus (CENTCOM commander), Admiral Eric Olson (SOCOM –Special Forces) Commander, Admiral Mike Mullen (Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff), General Conway (U.S. Marine Corps Commander), General Stanley McChrystal, ISAF / U.S. Commander Afghanistan, Major General John Macdonald, Deputy commander – Afghanistan, Secretary Gate (DOD Secretary) and several other military commanders.

## AWARDS

1975 US Army Commendation medal  
1998 American Alpine Club David Brower Conservation Award  
2002 Peacemaker Award from Montana Community Mediation Center  
2003 Climbing Magazine "Golden Piton Award" for humanitarian effort  
2003 Vincent Lombardi Champion Award for humanitarian service  
2003 Peacemaker of the Year" Benedictine Monks, Santa Fe, NM  
2003 Outdoor Person of the Year - Outdoor Magazine  
2003 Salzburg Seminar fellow, sponsored by Microsoft  
2004 Freedom Forum "Free Spirit Award" - National Press Club, D.C.  
2004 Jeanette Rankin Peace Award - Institute for Peace  
2005 Men's Journal 'Anti-Terror' Award by Senator John McCain  
2005 Red Cross “Humanitarian of The Year” Montana  
2006 Golden Fleur-de-lis Award from Comune Firenze, Italy  
2007 Medical Education Hall of Fame Award, Toledo, OH  
2007 Rotary International Paul Harris Award for Promoting Friendly Relations Among People  
2007 Mountain Institute Award for Excellence in Mountain Community Service  
2007 Dayton Literary Peace Prize – Book Award, Dayton, OH  
2008 Citizen Center for Diplomacy - National Award for Citizen Diplomacy  
2008 Courage of Conscience Award – The Peace Abbey, Sherborn, MA  
2008 Graven Award - Wartburg College, IA  
2008 National Award for Citizen Diplomacy - Citizen Center for Diplomacy  
2008 Academy of Achievement Award  
2008 Sword of Loyola – St. Louis University  
2009 Sitara-e-Pakistan “Star of Pakistan” (Pakistan’ highest civilian award)  
2008 Mary Lockwood Founders Medal For Education - Daughters of The American Revolution  
2009 Archon Award - Sigma Theta Tau International (Nursing Award)  
2009 National Education Association NEA – Human Rights Award  
2009 Austin College Leadership Award – Sherman TX – Promoting education issues for peace  
2009 City College San Francisco Amicus Collegii Award – Promoting peace through education  
2009 Jefferson Award for Community Service: Harvard Kennedy School of Business  
2009 US News & World Report: America’s Best Twenty Leaders  
2009 Gambirinus Giuseppe Mazzotti Literary Prize (Italy)  
2010 Toronto School District (Canada): Peace Award  
2010 Honorary Induction – Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society  
2010 Loyola Marymount University (CA) – Doshi Bridgebuilder of Peace Award  
2010 The Common Wealth Awards: For Public Service  
2010 The Salem Award for Human Rights

2010 The Christopher Award: “To affirm the highest values of the human spirit”  
2010 The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Lantern Award “Excellence in Education Innovation” (MOSTE-LA, CA)  
2010 Distinguished Service to Education Award: National Elementary School Principals Association  
2010 Smithsonian Institution: Benjamin Franklin Laureate Award for Public Service  
2010 Literature to Life Award – American Theater Place  
2010 Viking Award – Norway House for pursuit of bold, dangerous and important undertakings  
2010 Freedom Award – Freedom Festival for extraordinary devotion to the cause of liberty at home and abroad  
2010 American Peace Award – representing the spirit of the world peace through thoughts

#### HONORARY DOCTORATE DEGREES

Concordia College , Moorhead , MN 2007  
University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD 2007  
Montana State University, MT 2008  
Villanova University, PA 2008  
University of San Francisco, CA 2008  
University of Washington – Bothell, WA 2008  
Lewis & Clark College, OR 2008  
Seattle University, WA 2008  
Colby College, ME 2009  
Simmons College, MA 2009  
St. Louis University, MO 2009  
University of Pennsylvania, PA 2010  
Brookdale College, Lincroft, NJ 2010

#### THREE CUPS OF TEA BOOK – AWARDS AND MENTIONS

2006 Time Magazine Asia Book of The Year  
2006 People Magazine – Critics Choice  
2006 Publisher’s Weekly – Starred Review  
2006 Kirkus Review – Starred Review  
2006 Borders Bookstore Original Voices Selection  
2007 Banff Mountain Festival Book Award Finalist  
2007 Kiriyama Prize Nonfiction Award  
2007 Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association - Nonfiction Award  
2008 Montana Honor Book Award  
2008 Dayton Literary Prize Nonfiction Award – Runner up  
2009 Mom’s Choice Award – Author of the Year  
2009 Gambrinus Giuseppe Mazzotti Literary Prize (Italy)

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