

FRIENDS IN SAN ANTONIO

7052 North Vandiver at Eisenhower

February 2016

AVP Defuses Political Violence in Burundi & Transforms Hostile Relationships

“It all started with the protests. During these, some youths related to the opposition decided to search the houses of the families of Imbonerakure [militia aligned with the government] in an effort to find arms.³ Grenades were found and given to the police. Because of this, the youth of the opposition angrily destroyed houses belonging to the Imbonerakure’s families as well as the ruling party’s centers. 870 t-shirts belonging to the ruling party’s campaign uniforms were burned.

The Imbonerakure considered this as aggression and they prepared a punitive attack. Imbonerakure got reinforcements from members of the ruling party from a neighboring commune, and they attacked the youth of the opposition parties with sticks and stones. Many people were injured including one death of the Imbonerakure. Many youth on both sides were taken to hospitals and many others had fled.

THARS (Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services) intervened when another attack was being prepared. THARS got the news about this and decided to go there with the objective of defusing the tension and preventing the attack.

After two AVP workshops with 40 participants from the groups who had participated in the violence, both the Imbonerakure and the youth of the opposition parties confirmed that the workshops had caused them to totally abandon the plan. They confirmed that they had resolved to seek dialogue on the questions that divided them instead of fighting.

The representatives of the protesters said that even if the protests would continue to put pressure on the president to give up his candidacy, they will not use violence because they have now understood that it does not solve problems but aggravates things. Even the Imbonerakure representatives expressed regret of launching the attack first and that they will not do it again. THARS thinks that even those who had fled might be able to return.

As participants wait for lunch, they discuss the conflicts that oppose them as well as the last violence. The Imbonerakure and youth of the opposition exchange ideas with no incident. THARS AVP facilitators

Calendar

7. Sunday
Potluck lunch at 11.30 a.m..

9, Tuesday, Quaker Study Group (see below.) Discussion, 6:00 pot luck, 7:00 worship sharing

14. Sunday
Forum – Climate Change, the earth-system and humanity

21. Sunday.....
Meeting for Business, 11.30.

24 . Wednesday
Midweek Meeting, 7.00, Gary’s home.

28, Sunday
Forum – Climate Change: mitigation and adaptation.

observed them with great interest. One of the achievements of the workshop was that each had an opportunity to express her/himself and allowed others to do the same.

During the self-esteem exercise, the participants found an opportunity to talk face to face,

After the workshop the leaders of opposing groups gave speeches of appreciation for the AVP approach. They were amazed that the program could make them speak to each other easily!

The information that came to the THARS office is that youth from the two opposed parties are no longer sleeping outside to maintain security. AVP has enabled them to speak to each other after the workshops and they are no longer suspicious of each other.:"

David Niyonzima, Executive Director,(THARS)

Burundi is undergoing a great surge of violence.



Do I maintain as part of my personal and family life those daily practices that focus on continued spiritual growth, with disciplined worship, inward retirement, and communion with the divine spirit?

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice 1972

Personal News

We have reached the end of the year and can see, again, how Meeting has fared through it. We are not greater in numbers, though it could be that we are greater in spiritual insight. But as a small Meeting we are less able to fulfill the leadings to action for our testimonies, Equality, Integrity, Peace, and Simplicity.

Gary's sister has moved into a hospice....he will be up in Dallas a lot in the weeks to come. We are sad to hear that two of our member couples seem to be heading for separation. We hope that we may be of help in reconciliation.

Quaker Study Group

Feb 9, 6:00 pot luck, 7:00 worship sharing:

623 Mission St.

Redemption/Salvation: Do Quakers seek redemption? What are we being saved from? Does redemption come from inside or outside of ourselves?

What have you found personally redemptive in your life? What leaves you uplifted?

The group suggested participants bring or have in mind a piece of art, music, book, movie, etc that you have found redemptive in your journey. Please put it on your calendar now, more details to come.

Several films were suggested to view as examples of redemption before the next Group:

Christmas Carol, Alistair Sims version; Restoration, speaks to early Quaker experience. Also Babette's Feast and The Green Mile, Shawshank Redemption; Oh Brother, Where Art Thou? Also Moby Dick and perhaps Friendly Persuasion.

Business Meeting

Meeting for Business commenced with an advice of Martin Luther King:

Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that.

Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.

After silence, the treasurer gave his report for both month and year. Expenses unmet in 2014 were met in 2015. This will not be repeated this year. Extraordinary expenses for repairs and RAICES were encountered during the year. But for that, Meeting's accounts would have balanced. No unusual expenses except for a RAICES payment were incurred in December. Year-end income from Friends Fiduciary has not yet been received.

Meeting approved the budget for 2016, which is increased by \$1,700, matching income in 2015. The increase is mostly seen in costs for Grounds and Minor Repairs,

Meeting now has a military chaplain to serve the bases, Fabian, for whom a minute of support was approved.

There was lengthy discussion of a minute of support for the Muslim community of this city. Final approval was delayed while minor differences were eliminated. (See below for the statement.) Names of Friends willing to send this out were approved. Use of the meetinghouse by Gary and Vivian for therapy of severely injured people was approved.

Meeting closed in silence.

A meeting of the Meeting Corporation was held, as required, to approve Nominating Committee's list of trustees. Approval was given. The Meeting concluded in silence.

Forums (Fora?)

These are the Forum topics for February, both by Bill Sweet:

14 February

Climate Change, the earth-system and humanity: a Personal Investigation

Climate change (anthropogenic global warming, global warming, etc.) is a topic of active scientific research for over 40 years, with antecedents going back into the 1800s. Human-caused, or anthropogenic, changes in the composition of the global atmosphere are conclusively shown to warm the atmosphere and thereby the land and water of the earth's surface. The consequences of this heating, that is, what will happen, where it will happen and the rate (timing) of changes, are very much harder to predict. Predictions, and opinions, have ranged from "global warming isn't happening or, if it is, it is good" to "we're all gonna die", resulting in calls ranging from "stay the course" inaction to near-panic-level "Manhattan Project/Apollo Moon Program-style" all-out efforts.

28 February

Climate Change: mitigation and adaptation, with Gus Loeffelholz, City of San Antonio

What measures do we need to do? How hard do we need to work, that is, how quickly do measures need to be implemented. What is being done now in San Antonio and Bexar County?

John Woolman's Perception

This was written by John Woolman three centuries ago and is always worth repeating:

"There is a Principle which is pure, placed in the human Mind, which in different Places and Ages hath had different Names; it is, however, pure, and proceeds from God. It is deep, and inward, confined to no Forms of Religion, nor excluded from any, where the Heart stands in perfect Sincerity. In whomsoever this takes Root and grows, of what Nation soever, they become Brethren."

We have a great need for this thought nowadays.

Statement of Support for Muslims

This statement, available for public distribution, will be sent to a variety of places:

"Friends Meeting of San Antonio (Quakers) affirms our continued support for our Muslim neighbors at this time of potential danger to them. As Quakers we have had a history of persecution and prejudice ourselves, and we hope to do what we can to prevent others from suffering similar treatment. We also have a long history of opposing discrimination and prejudice against others. There are 30,000 plus Muslims in San Antonio and there is no excuse for treating any of them badly. We ask all Americans to reject prejudice and to treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves."

Empowerment for peace

Women peace activists in Syria define peacebuilding as a process, which starts with an immediate ceasefire and inclusive negotiations to reach a political solution, and results in justice and equal rights for all citizens of Syria. They also perceive a direct link between a strong civil society and peacebuilding in Syria because they see civil society as the only true representative of the people – in comparison to political parties and international actors.

Many of the women activists became active in peacebuilding work, because of personal experiences of discrimination or after watching others being subjected to oppression by the state. They also say that the deteriorating situation in the country has made them feel obliged to act. Most of the women activists believe peacebuilding, amidst the ongoing violence, is their gateway towards reconstructing society .

This information comes from Kvinna Till Kvinna, a Swedish organization devoted to helping the promotion of peace and the rights of women worldwide.

Yearly Meeting

The theme for this year's South Central Yearly Meeting Sessions is: Living Water from the Well: Renewal in Quaker Community; Indwelling and Outpouring, Sustainability and Sustenance. you can check out the newsletter on SCYM's website at <http://www.scym.org/sites/default/files/documents/newsjan2016.pdf>

Registration for the Annual Sessions is now open! Go to the website for further information or to register! <http://www.scym.org/yearlymeeting>

Once and Future SPICE Fair

Fair 2015 Report & Needs for 2016

Prepared by Gretchen Haynes, with input from many Fair workers.

There is general agreement that the 2015 Fair was a success – in raising over \$1000 for the Refugee fund, in creating community bonding, in reaching out to the wider community and to the spiritual community. The initial problems of setting up were overcome by the excitement and joyous reception.

In considering whether to hold a 2016 Fair, we recommend the following: setting the date of May 21; beginning preparations with a meeting 3 months in advance to see if there is **enough enthusiasm for commitments to specific tasks**. The collaboration with IWC & RAICES is essential in providing wide publicity to their constituents. Keep the activity in the upper parking lot with the same hours [set up 7:30-10; open 10-1, take down 1-2] and basic offerings [Meeting:books, jumble sale, refreshments, kids' corner, Peace Teams; farmers' market vendors]. We can explore expanding our reach. Needs: **Personnel**: One person dedicated to the **publicity** efforts; these need to be revised and followed up to be sure that all announcements are published.

One person to invite & stay in **contact** with guest vendors, Meeting & other groups.

One person to make a **site plan** and **oversee set up** and take down [see details below].

One person to **put up signs** on the site and the street in advance & on the day.

A dedicated **Cash Master** and **Trash Master(s)** are essential, as are 1 or 2 maintenance men to secure the tents in case of wind or rain during the day.

One **Over-all Coordinator** to receive reports & monitor task completion.

Total of seven [7] people prepared to commit to their responsibilities.

On the Day: In addition, we need a commitment from 6 men for set up 7:30 to 10 a.m. and 4 from 1-2 p.m. to take down. We need 2 people for books and 2 for jumble, 1 for baked goods & drinks, 2 for kids' corner, and 1 floater for relief. [TOTAL 18, some may be among the 7 listed above.] Starting at 7:30 a.m., 4 will set up the tents and tarps. 2 will bring up tables on the trolley, and chairs on their

trollies. No tables will be carried up individually. Once these are in place, the trollies can be used to bring up the boxes of books and jumble. Those staffing tables will unpack the boxes, starting about 8 a.m. The person with signs will put up temporary ones on the streets. Guest vendors will bring their own tents & tables; we can provide chairs. They should begin setting up 8 a.m. We should rent 2 additional tents. Pack-up and take-down will follow the pattern in reverse at 1 p.m.

Further suggestions: solicit donations from local food providers {Molina, Taco Kitchen & Daily Bread, e.g.} Rent two additional tents for the day. Print banners to hang in the street “Quaker Fair next Saturday,” can be used in future years.

Miscellany

Diane Randall, in the January Issue of *Friends Journal*, says, from experience, “Should Friends engage in the political process? Yes! YES! The political world needs Friends. We should engage in the political process with the joy and love we know from our lives in the Spirit. The deep sense of community and peace that we experience in worship can motivate our actions in every aspect of life.”

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We know that Quakers were once known for their grey clothing, which has led people to confuse us with Amish. Well, remember also what Margaret Fell Fox said about this:

“We must all be in one dress and one color: this is a silly poor gospel”

Margaret was important among early Friends, but the tradition of grey clothing outlasted her. A silly poor gospel? Work to create a Pennsylvania with religious freedom and to free slaves – that’s more like it!

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“Here at the American Friends Service Committee, we envision a world where lasting peace is possible. A world where conflicts are resolved without force or coercion, where governments and institutions are fair and accountable, where economic development reinforces community well-being, and where people have access to the basic resources they need,” says Hector Cortez, of AFSC.

But we read on that day that terrorists, identified as Taliban, attacked a Pakistani university as it honored Abdul Ghaffar Khan,, “the Frontier Gandhi,” a Muslim advocate of nonviolence before the independence of India and Pakistan.

And Umar Khan, a Taliban leader, says “Now we will not kill the soldier in his cantonment, the lawyer in the court, or the politician in parliament but in the places where they are prepared, the schools, the universities, the colleges that lay their foundation,”

We need a more reinforced community of peace.

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The Fellowship of Reconciliation has launched a new video asking our political and community leaders: Is this still a land of promise and opportunity? Grassroots efforts to pressure political leaders to support refugee resettlement, champion immigrant rights, and end Islamophobia are so important.

But we have not been able to see and hear the new video.

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There is now another Quaker organization devoted to climate change issues, with care for other Quaker concerns such as racial imbalance. It is the Earth Quaker Action Team. EQAT. It uses nonviolent direct action, believing that such action is necessary to stir concerns among the wider community. It has been created to provide an explicitly Quaker outlet for Friends, and others, who are led to such action. This frees Meetings from problems of activity when members cannot reach agreement.

And its clerk of the board has suggested that perhaps Meetings should lay down their Peace and Social Concerns committees to recognize Friends’ varying leadings. The EQAT website can

longer present to raise the child and is limited in ways to provide for them financially-not to mention the stigma that children of incarcerated parents carry with them.

Flint

Flint is in the news Ken remembers it for different reasons. In, he thinks, 1967, the Michigan Area Committee of AFSC, of which he was clerk, went there to help consider whether AFSC should hold a summer camp for innercity children. He remembers two people.

The first, a Black man, worked in a Community Center. Kids came there. He found that, trying to learn more about them, they were reluctant to answer his questions; except when he played ping pong with them. Relaxed by the movements, he told him what he needed to know. And one thing was that he could tell what part of town they were from by asking if they knew anyone who had gone to college. If no, he could tell they were from a part from which none had ever gone.

The other was a nun who taught in a parochial high school. Two schools had merged and she met with the new students individually to know more about them. Two, she said, had stood out, and she found that both had been to AFSC workcamps. Please, she said, hold that camp. "I know you'll be sure to have integration everywhere, staff, counselors, and children."

Sadly, AFSC, nationally, stopped holding such camps after opposition in Black neighborhoods - white people coming into Black neighborhoods. QVS has been able to renew that kind of service and experience.

Brother Outsider

By the time you read this, Martin Luther King Day will have passed. You will have read about it, or marched in it, or gotten our banner out of storage for it, or just known it was going on. But how amazing it is that he was memorialized in this way so soon after his death. And we should also memorialize (except that we don't have special days for such) Bayard Rustin, Brother Outsider, that man who combined both those unacceptable characteristics, black and gay. And even socialist. But who also introduced King to the spiritual depths of nonviolence during the Montgomery Bus Boycott and was so important, behind the scenes, on so much nonviolent resistance to injustice. He was silenced, threatened, arrested, beaten, imprisoned and fired from important leadership positions. Yet he is credited with bringing Gandhi's nonviolence philosophy to the US campaign for black rights and acceptance. John D'Emilio calls Rustin the "lost prophet" of the civil rights movement.

Raised as a Quaker, in 1941, at 29, he joined A. Philip Randolph's campaign for railroad sleeping car porters. He completed an activist training program of the American Friends Service Committee, which sent him to California in 1942 to aid Japanese-Americans being herded into internment camps.. As a CO, he spent three years in a federal penitentiary. It was as part of a Free India movement that he went to India and saw Gandhi's nonviolent principles in action. After the war he helped plan the "freedom rides" by which riders challenged segregation in southern bus stations. Doing this, he was arrested and served 22 days on a chain gang.. He was "instrumental" in securing President Truman's order eliminating segregation in the armed forces.

In the 1950s, he consulted with Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria. Arrested on a "morals charge," he was fired from an FOR position but then worked for War Resisters League. He was a great inspiration to King and actually organized the 1963 March on Washington. By founding the A. Philip Randolph Institute, he honored his mentor. As a Vice Chairman of the International Rescue Committee, he traveled the world working to secure food, medical care, education, and proper resettlement for refugees. He observed elections in Zimbabwe, El Salvador, and Grenada to ensure fairness. In 1983 he visited S. Africa, supporting peaceful change there..

Is there anything Friend Bayard didn't do in service to, not just justice, but love, for his human brethren? The name "Brother Outsider," is that of a film of his life. Why the name? We don't know, but it's easy to see that, while he was a brother to all those movements, he was necessarily an outsider due to being gay, a quality which would have negated his work and philosophy if he had

worked with them openly.

And with all this he was an art collector, finding museum-quality work in New York's trash. We treasure the vision of him sifting through that trash, finding value.

Walter Naegle, his partner late in life, has written [http://rustin.org/?page_id=11] of his life and we are indebted to his short account.

Cathedral Trees

Leaves battered,
torn,
no shape perfect,
holding still colors,
red to gold to brown.
Then the light comes through
and not all the glass cathedrals
can compare to
the glory light
through leaves of these
cathedral trees.

Michelle D

Query from (and for)British Friends

Are you honest and truthful in all you say and do?

Meeting for Worship is held on Sunday at 10 a.m., followed by refreshments and a Forum discussion at 11.30, usually lasting until about 12.45. Children are invited to join worship for the first fifteen minutes, after which they may go to join with the Young Friends program. Child care is available during Forum.

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