

Peace Teams NEWS

Fall 2002 • Volume 7 Issue 2

By David Zarembka

AN EXCITING POSSIBILITY

After the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, 120,000 people suspected of involvement in the genocide were imprisoned. Eight years later, they remain there. The Rwandan judicial system was destroyed during the genocide and it has not recovered enough to be capable of dealing with the large number of suspects. Consequently after much discussion, the Rwandan Government decided to resurrect the traditional

village court system called “gacaca” in Kiyarwandan (the language of Rwanda). Of course, these courts had to be modified from adjudicating minor cases, such as boundary disputes, into cases which determine the guilt and fair punishment for those who participated in the genocide—the intent here is not to deal with

the leaders of the genocide, but those who played only minor parts. Each gacaca court has nineteen members and are elected by the members of the community. There are 9,000 gacaca courts at the lowest level and 1500 courts on the higher level! Therefore the average court might try around 10 cases. This is a bold experiment in trying to put Humpty-Dumpty back together again so that peaceful coexistence is possible between the perpetrators of the genocide and their families, the survivors of the genocide, and the many bystanders who lives were disrupted by the genocide and its aftermath. Revenge, intimidation, hostility, anger, and hurt must all be dealt with in a way that heals the society.



Rwandan AVP Facilitators in a small-group discussion.

The African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI) had already trained fifteen Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) facilitators in Rwanda. The Quakers in Rwanda were very concerned about the fact that many of those imprisoned for eight years would return to society, perhaps still with violent, anti-social thoughts and behaviors. Consequently AGLI and AVP-Rwanda had developed a proposal to hold five

basic AVP workshops with the soon-to-be-released prisoners, an evaluation, and then 24 more workshops in Kigali, Kigali Rurale, Ruhengeri, and Kibungo. AVP-Rwanda is awaiting sufficient funding (\$20,971) and Governmental approval to begin.

On July 16, an AFSC delegation to Africa, including myself,

met with Aloysie Cyanzayire, the head of the Supreme Court’s Gacaca Department, who would be implementing these 10,500 courts. She described the Gacaca system to us and Mary Ellen McNish of the AFSC described the work of the AFSC around the world. I suggested that David Bucura, General Secretary of Rwanda Yearly Meeting and the AVP-Rwanda coordinator, report what the AVP facilitators were planning with the prisoners. He spoke for about five minutes in Kiyarwanda—but I did hear the words “Transforming Power” being used. Mme. Cyanzayire’s immediate reaction was that AVP should be holding workshops for the gacacas. So AVP would

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FriendsPeaceTeams

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This has been a busy summer for me as I participated in the FPT Exploratory Team to Colombia, and then three weeks after returning from that trip, went to Africa for four weeks. Five weeks after returning home from Africa, I moved to Pendle Hill. I had the opportunity to see FPT and the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) in action on both trips. I was surprised to see that, despite differences in class, education and culture, the workshops brought hope, some new skills and more confidence in existing skills in nonviolent conflict resolution to people on both continents .

I hope more Friends will become active in AVP—I know that many are already, and I also know that the Friends involved in AVP are only a few of the ~100,000 Quakers in North America. It seems to me that AVP is a very appropriate way to clearly communicate not only Friends Peace Testimony, but the belief that there is “that of God in everyone”. This is a message that Jesus’ ministry expressed, and that Friends hold dear. It is a message that gives comfort and sustenance to peacemakers in countries where overt violent conflict has nearly overwhelmed their societies, and where widespread hopelessness might be expected.

I think Friends who live in less difficult situations may be paradoxically more prone to hopelessness about the nature of conflict and violence in the world. In the US we find little hope in not only our government and the economic systems in which we live, but also in the media, our homes and communities and in our own thoughts. At times it seems insurmountable. We can learn from the sometimes desperate hopefulness of peacemakers in Colombia, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya and other places. They gladly grasp at anything that can give them the opportunity to find a way out of the violence with which they struggle.

This Fall FPT enters its tenth year of work. We have several invitations to work which we have to defer because of a lack of funds, and to some degree, a lack of trained personnel. At some point soon, I hope, I can step away from the duties of Administrative Co-Clerk, but since I am working as a volunteer, funds to allow that will also have to be raised. In a few weeks, we will send out our once-each-year fundraising appeal. Please remember these facts when you receive it and respond as you are led. It is also very helpful to encourage your Monthly and Yearly Meetings to include FPT in their annual gifts to Quaker groups, so please ask the appropriate committee to include FPT in the budget.

On Oct. 10-12 FPT’s Coordinating Committee will meet in Nashville TN. On Friday night (Oct. 11) we plan to have a potluck dinner and public presentation about our work, including reports from Africa and Colombia. Please join us for this event or for our working meetings on Friday and Saturday. If you plan to sit in on our meetings, please let me know at <valliveoak@juno.com>. For details about the potluck and presentation, please contact Kathleen Hardie, 615-352-7890 (Home). ■



Val Liveoak cutting “ribbon” to open a THARS Listening Center in Bujumbura, Burundi.

FPT's Colombia Exploratory Team, May 29-June 19, 2002

Note: A more detailed report will be mailed to donors and others on the Colombia mailing list. To receive it, please notify Val at the e-mail address below. The report will also be published on the Web at: www.quaker.org/fptpic_report2002.html

The team, made up of three US citizens and one Ecuadorian was in Colombia May 29-June 19, at the invitation of Mennonite agency, JustaPaz, the Christian Center for Justice Peace and Nonviolent Action. Our time was divided into three major parts: meetings and interviews with Colombian groups and individuals; travel to two sites away from Bogotá, the capital; and offering four Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) workshops.

We had twenty interviews/meetings in the first week in Bogotá, with Colombian and international groups—some as long as two hours and some as short as 30 minutes. All were intended to

help us understand the current situation, the work of the group or organization, and/or what place there might be for FPT or AVP work in Colombia. We met with the American Friends Service Committee's QIAR (Quaker International Affairs Representative), representatives from several Mennonite agencies, Peace Brigades International, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Fellowship of Reconciliation volunteers, Witness for Peace, the International Red Cross, the Committee in Solidarity with Political Prisoners, the Catholic Justicia y Paz group which supports several Peace Communities, a representative of the Permanent Assembly for Peace, the Evangelical (Protestant) Council, and the US Embassy's Human Rights Officer. We worshipped with several Mennonite

churches and with the Bogotá Meeting of Friends.

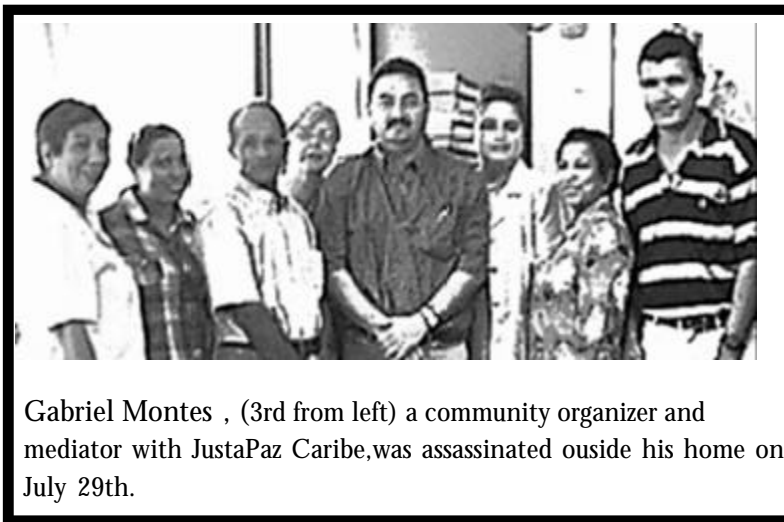
Outside of Bogotá, two of us traveled to the city of Sincelejo and two to the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó. In Sincelejo we were hosted by the Caribe branch of JustaPaz. We visited the school they run for children of displaced families, two communities of displaced people, the governmental Red de Solidaridad (Solidarity Network) which offers services to some displaced people, a town of weavers, and the farm that JustaPaz hopes will help support the school in the future. In the Peace Community of San José

de Apartadó we visited the town of San José (in which Peace Brigades International has a permanent presence) and the hamlet of La Unión in which two Fellowship of Reconciliation volunteers, one of whom is a Quaker, live. These communities are at risk of attack from all of the armed actors (the

Army, paramilitaries and the guerrillas) and have formally stated that they will not accept any armed group inside their communities. Despite this, armed groups have passed through several times, and over 70 people have been killed by paramilitary groups over the last 5 years. Our team members met with many individuals and with the community councils of both San José and La Unión.

In these first two weeks of our visit, we were repeatedly told that there was a need for more international groups to accompany Colombians in their search for peace. In the case of the Peace Communities, the need is mainly for physical

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Gabriel Montes , (3rd from left) a community organizer and mediator with JustaPaz Caribe, was assassinated outside his home on July 29th.

Quaker/CPT Delegation to Palestine

The Durlands traveled to Israel and Palestine on July 11 as part of their duties as “Reservists” in the Christian Peacemaker Teams, an organization initiated by the Quakers, Mennonites and Church of the Brethren to intervene nonviolently in situations of lethal conflict worldwide.

As delegation leaders, the first week of the Durlands’ time there was spent making preparations for the delegation of twelve volunteers from all over the United States and Canada, who would arrive on the 26th. Their second week was spent in the city of Hebron, about twenty miles south of Bethlehem, where Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) has a permanent presence. While there, Bill and Genie worked with the permanent team members monitoring checkpoints, accompanying Palestinians in danger of harassment or attack by Israeli settlers, patrolling vulnerable neighborhoods and visiting in Palestinian homes to learn, first hand, of significant human rights violations. An example of such violations which the Durlands personally witnessed is the firing of live M-16 ammunition at defenseless children who allegedly threw marbles or small stones at the occupiers, Israeli soldiers.

On July 26th the Durlands returned to Tel Aviv to meet their delegation members and accompany them to Jerusalem for orientation. From there, they took the delegation to Ramallah for a three-day stay where they visited in Palestinian homes and schools, toured the city. There they viewed the ruins of the destroyed Palestinian Authority Headquarters, and visited the offices of the Palestine Monitor where they heard a presentation by Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, president of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees and director of the Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute in Ramallah.

From Ramallah, the Durlands and their delegation members returned to the Jerusalem area for additional meetings with various organizations such as Rabbis for Human Rights, the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions and The Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between Peoples (Beit Sahour). While in the area, the group toured the

Old City of Jerusalem, including the Jewish Quarter, and visited Bethlehem to see the extensive damage suffered by that holy city over the past month. They also visited Israeli citizens in Tsur Hadassah.

Finally, the group traveled to Hebron to live and work with the CPT permanent team for the last four days of their stay in the country. While there they visited the village of Beit Ummar north of Hebron.

Beit Ummar is a farming community, which lies between two Israeli settlements and is intersected by an Israeli by-pass road. Consequently, the farmers of Beit Ummar suffer extensive intrusions upon their fields and orchards by settlers, are under constant threat of violence when they attempt to harvest their crops and are being subjected to systematic confiscation of their ancestral lands. The CPT delegation headed by the Durlands spent two days in Beit Ummar, being hosted by the farm families there, touring their land and hearing their stories. On the second day, the group accompanied farmers to their fields to help them pick plums under threat of violence by the settlers.

Delegation members left the country on August 6 after a two-week experience. The Durlands remained for another week to debrief with the CPT team in Hebron and make a visit to Bir Zeit University near Ramallah in response to a request by the University’s administration for CPT members to confer with them on how to improve student and faculty access in the face of permanent Israeli blockades. (The Israeli army invaded the campus with tanks in early August without provocation.) Finally, Bill and Genie took some personal time in northern Israel visiting the crusader ruins in Acre and ancient Philistine and Canaanite sites at Dor, just south of Haifa.

A principal purpose of the Durlands’ work in Palestine is to gather and document information about the realities of the Palestine-Israeli conflict through first-hand observation, interviews with individual Palestinians and Israelis and input from both Palestinian and Israeli NGO’s. They are available to share their information and experiences. Contact the Durlands at (719) 846-7480, e-mail: bgdryland@activematrix.net ■

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presence in the hope that international witnesses can prevent killings or disappearances of their members. In the case of organizations working to build peace, there is a need for physical accompaniment of some of the leaders, for international contacts which will provide some funding and other resources, and for training or information about techniques that they can use for peacebuilding.

We offered four complete Basic AVP workshops which were attended by 61 people. Attenders included workers for Mennonite groups, the Committee in Solidarity with Political Prisoners, the ecumenical Christian Prison Ministry, and demilitarized guerrillas. Among both the secular and religiously oriented groups, the answer to our question of whether AVP was useful for Colombians was "Yes!" The head of JustaPaz, Ricardo Esquivia, said, "The groups involved in the peace process need to learn about Transforming Power and nonviolence, because they need to be able to work together better." AVP workshops helped us to understand the lives and needs of Colombians in a much more intimate way than visits with organizations—we learned that de-

militarized guerrillas live in special safe hostels and have to take new names to protect them from both reprisals from the paramilitaries and their former comrades in arms; that a vital personal faith—expressed often in very Evangelical terms—animates much of the efforts for peace and justice; and that desires for peace don't always translate into an every-day commitment to nonviolence.

We believe that further work in Colombia will offer Friends a chance to refine the Peace Testimony. In the very real fire of violence, we can offer some of the tools we've developed in our 350 years of work as pacifists, challenge ourselves to take some concrete steps to address violence that has some roots in the policies of the US government and share the lives of courageous and inspiring people. FPT will consider offering further AVP and other peacebuilding workshops in Colombia in the near future. If you are a Spanish-speaking AVP facilitator who would be willing to consider participating in our work, please notify Val Liveoak at <valliveoak@juno.com>■

Friends' Peace Witness in a Time of Crisis **A conference on Friends' responses to the growing danger of global war and terrorism.**

January 17-20, 2003

Guilford College, Greensboro, NC

Participants will be drawn from Yearly Meeting nominations, young Friends (ages 18-30) and others who would like to be part of this event. Friends from all traditions are encouraged to attend.

Through worship, speakers, workshops and prayerful discussion, the program will focus on Friends wrestling with the Peace Testimony—both historic and current—and how we might be called to a difficult witness in today's increasingly violent world.

Check out our new on-line "virtual conference" at www.friendspeace.org. We invite your participation as Friends dialogue and wrestle with these issues prior to the conference.

For more information and registration forms contact:

Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas

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FWCCpeace@fwcc.quaker.org

Working Together in the Light

Consensus decision-making is often used by groups working for peace and justice, with varying success. My understanding of the consensus process has been enriched by my deepening understanding of how the Quaker “sense of the Meeting” compares and contrasts to it.

The most important benefit of consensus decision-making process for peace team work is how it actively involves each team member in the decision, helping the group comes to a decision that is enriched, rather than weakened, by concerns raised by those who at first do not agree with the proposed action. In both Quaker Meeting and secular consensus process, the process of refining a decision by incorporating dissenters’ concerns and input is essential to achieving the goal of a decision that will be carried out whole-heartedly by the entire group. (As I understand it, Quaker process adds to the secular process the dimension of seeking a spiritual leading to propose an action or to dissent from it.)

I have learned more about these processes by being a dissenter than when I have been in agreement with proposed actions. It has been hard for me to go against what I assumed to be a group’s direction. When the process works and my concerns have been respectfully received and effectively incorporated into the final decision, it is with great joy and relief that I can join in accepting it. Respectful listening to those who disagree is essential for the consensus process, and also for any type of peacemaking work. (We get to practice on our F/friends!) The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) adds some other aspects to the mix, and although it is not an exclusively Quaker program, it comes from deep Quaker roots.

AVP’s two central values, “Respect for Self” and “Caring for Others” are well demonstrated in a carefully Clerked or Facilitated process. Setting a tone of respect for those with hesitations or dissent by calling for careful listening can be done in a secular setting. In Quaker settings this tone can be enhanced

by listening in expectant waiting on the Spirit. When everyone can expect to be listened to with respect and care, participants in the process can speak their own truth, which can enrich and refine the proposal.

“Expect the Best” is another part of AVP’s teaching. I have come to understand that expecting the best is not only in terms of the outcome of the decision-making process, but also in regard to my perception of the motives of those who differ with me. In my case, when I’ve dissented from a proposal, I’ve done so for reasons which seem good to me. If my concerns are dismissed or categorized as wrong, bad or frivolous, then I feel less a part of the group and less interested in working toward the group’s goal when the proposed action is undertaken.

A third AVP principle is “Think before Reacting”. When I facilitate an AVP workshop, I always say, “This means not only stopping to think before acting, but also preparing myself to react in the way that is best.” I have had to practice responding in a calm, respectful and loving way to those who oppose me, both in decision-making processes and in other conflicts, and I still have a long way to go to consistently doing that. At my best, I try to center down and listen deeply to those who oppose or criticize me. In a group decision-making process (either secular or Quaker), some people who are already in agreement with the proposal may feel impatient with those who aren’t quite there. It is up to the Clerk or Facilitator to help them remember to listen to and value the concerns of those who have hesitations.

Finally, “Ask for a Nonviolent Path” is a principle of AVP that can be applied by the Clerk or Facilitator or any of the participants. I think that in terms of the Quaker process, “Ask for God’s Path” might better express what we aspire to do. Seeking such a path helps us to leave aside personal issues, ego needs, and animosities that naturally arise in group work. If we can learn to unite, rather than divide ourselves as we work together, we will indeed be walking a nonviolent path. ■

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CPT announces delegations to Iraq, Colombia and Middle East

"GENERATIONS FOR PEACE" DELEGATIONS TO IRAQ: Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), in cooperation with Voices in the Wilderness (VitW), is recruiting peacemakers to travel to Iraq as the U.S. government engages in discussions about waging war with that country. Applications are being accepted immediately for two-week delegations, which may begin as early as October.

Interested persons of all ages are invited to apply now for the multi-generational teams (minimum age 21, no upper age limit.) Older adults especially are encouraged to consider joining the delegations, recognizing that there is a certain moral weight to "grandmas and grandpas" being willing to stand in the way of U.S. bombs.

Cost of the delegation is \$2000 US, which includes round-trip airfare to Amman, Jordan, simple accommodations and food, all on-ground travel, and other team support.

COLOMBIA: Oct. 4-16, 2002; Feb. 15-27, May 17-29, July 19-31, Sept. 27-Oct. 9, 2003. Participants will meet with human rights workers and church leaders in Bogota, travel to the industrial city of Barrancabermeja where CPT's long-term team is based, and spend time in the countryside where the lives of displaced people are threatened by paramilitaries and other armed groups. Cost is \$1800 US.

MIDDLE EAST : Nov. 19-Dec. 1, 2002; Feb. 24-Mar. 8, Apr. 1-13, May 27-June 8, July 29-Aug. 10, Sept. 16-28, Nov. 20-Dec. 2, 2003. Palestinian and Israeli human rights workers continue to call for international observers in the region. Teams will meet with representatives of Israeli and Palestinian peace and justice groups, then join CPT Hebron in their work of violence deterrence, documentation, and challenging the structural violence of the Occupation through nonviolent public witness. Cost is \$1800 US.

Cost covers round-trip airfare from a designated U.S. or Canadian city, all on-ground travel, two meals a day, simple accommodations, and all honorariums and delegation fees.

For more information or to apply, contact CPT, POBox 6508, Chicago, IL 60680, TEL. 312-455-1199 FAX 312-432-1213 or see CPT's website at: www.cpt.org

To receive news or discussion of CPT issues by e-mail, fill out the form found on CPT's WEB page at <http://www.prairienet.org/cpt/>

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I imagine doing 10,500 AVP basic workshops. Then imagine putting a country back together with justice and reconciliation. . .

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be working with the judges in addition to the suspects! What an exciting possibility! She asked David Bucura to return the next day to talk more about the possibilities. But by the next day, a person on the gacaca staff was visiting David.

Imagine doing 10,500 AVP basic workshops. Then imagine putting a country back together with justice and reconciliation. I discussed the possibilities with David and other AVP facilitators and we recommended that we start with 3 basic workshops for the gacaca department staff and then 25 workshops in the same four areas we planned to do with the prisoners. We thought we would start by taking 3 or so members of 6 gacaca in order to do one AVP workshop with 20 participants. But clearly some of these people would ask AVP to hold workshops for their whole 19 member gacaca.

In our discussions, it became clear that fifteen facilitators were not near enough for even the beginning programs we envisioned and that we would have to train their best facilitators more so that they could adequately lead advanced and training for facilitator workshops and mentor apprentice facilitators. Therefore we would need another international team to come for four weeks to do two advanced and two training for facilitator workshops. Then if AVP was going to expand in Rwanda as we envisioned, the Basic AVP manual would have to be translated into Kinyarwanda. David Bucura proposed that three of the facilitators who knew English well would translate the relevant parts of the manual and then all the facilitators would review the work to look for weak areas of translation.

This all implies a budget of approximately \$60,000 to launch this exciting AVP program. Please pray with AGLI and AVP-Rwanda that we can seek and find sufficient funding for this opportunity.■