



September 2013

Newsletter of Initiatives of Change USA

Issue No. 23

Greetings!

In August, America marked the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington. As a nation we reflected on how far we have come but also about how much still needs to be done for freedom and justice.



Rajmohan Gandhi was among those who spoke to thousands gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. (His remarks are printed below.) He reminded us of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s warning against what he called "the apathy of conformist thought."

Relevant to these events is Dr. Gail Christopher's vision and the further evaluation by those who attended the [Healing History, Overcoming Racism, Seeking Equity, Building Community](#) conference in Caux, Switzerland.

We draw your attention to upcoming events in Richmond, Virginia, scheduled in November, to mark 20 years of Healing the Heart of America. Please consider joining us for this special opportunity!

Healing History - Caux, Switzerland

Bringing the spirit of Caux home

By Rob Corcoran

In recent weeks many of the US delegates to the [Healing History](#) conference in Caux have expressed how the experience impacted them. "I learned to listen in a different way, with no judgment," said Mary Ann De Trana from Richmond, VA, who told how since

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The Amazing Raise

Hope in the Cities is participating in the **2013 Amazing Raise**

This 36-hour online giving campaign is organized by The Community Foundation of Greater Richmond.



6:00 am, Sept. 18 - 6:00 pm, Sept. 19

returning she had "made connections with Native Americans in a very intimate way" as a result of getting to know indigenous peoples while in Caux.



The Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, Dr. Dan Jones, writes: "The conference was enlightening and inspiring. The speakers challenged some of my assumptions about race and offered me new ways of thinking. The opportunity to interact with people from around the world provided new context and insight into the challenging issues in my own community." The university is home to the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation. Its executive director, Susan Glisson, was a participant along with the chancellor.

"I felt humbled looking at the suffering and wounds [of people from other continents], many of them so recent and severe," said Dr Edward Ayers, president of the University of Richmond. "I felt that if we could tell our story honestly and whole it can help others." He and other Richmonders reported to a packed room of community leaders, including a member of the Virginia General Assembly, a city council member, leading clergy, and representatives of corporations and nonprofits. Don King, a partner with McGuire Woods law firm, said he returned with an appreciation for "people of courage in their effort to discover and proclaim the truth."



Many spoke of the power of reflection: "Wordless quiet times, sitting together looking out at the mountains and the mist," recalled Annie Campbell, a Richmond teacher, who found herself longing for this back home in Richmond.

In Washington, a group met at the office of the Poverty & Race Research Action Council, hosted by its executive director, Phil Tegeler, who spoke of the new learning he gained from the "substantial content" of the plenary meetings and working groups. Brenda Jones, communications director for Representative John Lewis, GA, commented, "I was amazed at the commitment to break down barriers." Dushaw Hockett was struck by how people took intellectual and emotional risks with each other.....There were moments of tension but this is what Caux is about." Tim Carrington, a former World Bank Consultant and writer for the Wall Street Journal, noted that people found "a new sense of who were their soul mates, their partners."

During these 36 hours, visit www.giverichmond.org and give!

Support Hope in the Cities!

[For more information](#)

What is hope worth to you?



Raising Hope

This video about Hope in the Cities was created by Karen Elliott Greisdorf. It is entered in the Amazing Raise competition. Like it and share on your Facebook page!

Global Update



This issue features steps towards reconciliation in South Sudan, Initiatives for Land, Lives and Peace in Switzerland and Kenya, and the Dialogue on Democracy in Panchgani, India.

Two up-coming global events

January 10-14, 2014
Making Democracy Real
 Learning from Democracy's Journey
 - Panchgani, India
[For more information](#)

Mee Moua, who heads the Asian American Justice Center and who served in the Minnesota state legislature, wrote of deep conversation and shared learning with a senator from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and with a general from the new nation of South Sudan who "fought so hard for independence but now is confronted with the challenge of governing." She concluded, "These interactions will live with me for a long, long time."

"Most compelling was that our experiences are so similar," said Christy Coleman of the America Civil War Center. As an African American, she identified with the story of a Roma woman who recalled how, as she got ready to start kindergarten, her mother told her that she would need to try harder and be smarter because she was Roma (a community that suffers extreme discrimination in Europe). "There is a longing to be heard, and a desire on the part of the listener to hear and work toward a solution," said Coleman. A group from Chad was particularly interested in discovering how to tell their whole story, recognizing that all people in their civil war were both victims and perpetrators.

A report of the conference will soon be available. Right now you can find photos, speeches, presentations and notes from the working groups online at www.us.iofc.org/healing-history.

The Caux Scholars Program 2013

Seeds of hope for Armenia and Azerbaijan

For many, the "Caux Experience" begins months before they actually set foot in this Swiss mountainside conference center. Visas, applications, and travel plans are just some of the practical hurdles that challenge scholars, not to mention the personal and spiritual battles that some face, before finally arriving at their destination. All 24 of the 2013 Caux Scholars have a story to tell about their experiences this summer but these two young women, who come from the South Caucasus region that has suffered decades of conflict, tell their story of finding seeds of hope for the future.



Anush and Lamiya (Photo: Karen Elliott Greisdorf)

February 14-19, 2014

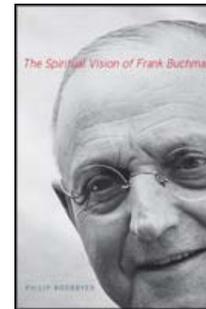
'Encuentro' of the Americas

From the heart of the Americas
weaving a community of change
Bogata, Columbia

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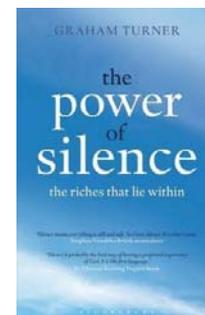
The Spiritual Vision of Frank Buchman



By Philip Boobbyer
Published by
Penn State College Press

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British journalist and author
Graham Turner explores the world
of silence ... and those who
recognize its value.

[Read the review online](#)
by Charles Aquilina

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Anush Araqelyan from Armenia

Participating in Caux Scholar Program was a turning point of my life. I decided to apply for the program, to present the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and get some support from the CSP participants and staff. The conflict had a direct impact on my family, which made me live with hatred towards all Azerbaijanis. I used to believe that there is no other solution for the conflict but war. However, the Caux Scholars Program totally changed my thoughts and plans.

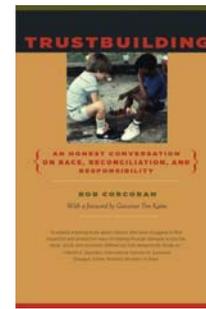
The most challenging moment was a meeting with Azerbaijani participants since I had never met Azerbaijanis before. Thus, during the first week I was trying to overcome my fear in their presence, seeking to avoid conversation with them. However, the last two weeks brought a major change in me. I started to concentrate on their personalities, their feelings. My personal transformation I noticed every day, every hour and minute. I was living without fear, without hatred, with calm and peaceful feelings. I discovered another person in me, who dreamt of living in peace without any hatred, without any trouble, without losses and war.

I realized that if we want a peaceful resolution for Nagorno-Karabakh and other conflicts we should concentrate on ourselves, and our beliefs. The best solution is hidden in us, since only personal transformation can help us to get rid of the hatred we are living with. I wholeheartedly believe that it is the only way to reach a long-term peaceful resolution, which is a task for the youth both in Armenia and Azerbaijan. This lesson which I got from Caux Scholar Program is the highest achievement of my life.

Lamiya Adilgızı from Azerbaijan

I remember the first week of the program when we were both expected to give our presentation on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict - one conflict from two very different perspectives. I was looking forward to the presentation by Anush, as I was waiting to hear what this young generation of Armenians thinks about this decades-old conflict that has left millions of refugees and IDPs out of their home towns in a desperate situation. Millions of Azerbaijanis hope to return to their lands and resume the life they had before the conflict erupted in a bloody war in 1988-1994. I wanted to hear solutions. Instead I saw an "armed" Anush in front of me -- so well prepared, delivering all the arguments that the Armenian government has voiced all these years. She was so young and so beautiful but it was like she was screaming all her hatred and prejudices about Azerbaijanis to the class.

While listening to her I was like a stone. I felt I was in a battle and I needed to intervene and counter-argue rather than wait for my turn to deliver my perspective. It was too emotional and I was furious. At the same time, I did not want to leave the room, as I wanted to hear her to the end. I wanted to understand why she was so full of hatred. My fury turned into sorrow and despair when she ended her speech saying she did not believe that there is a peaceful solution to the conflict. Something was broken in



Read author
Rob Corcoran's latest blog,
[Standing our ground](#)



The Imam & The Pastor

*"The African model for finding
peace amid the continent's warring
communities"*
The Times (London)



[An African Answer](#)
The second film about
the work of these two
African peacemakers.
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Initiatives of Change

focuses on the link between
personal and global change
and seeks to inspire, equip,
and engage individuals as
trustbuilders.

It starts with listening and
responding to the still small
voice within, applying values of
integrity to everyday living, and
taking risks to bridge divides.

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me, hope vanished. Going to Caux my aim was to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict young leaders coming from different parts of the world and especially to talk about the ways to find a peaceful solution with the Armenian participants.

Then it was my turn to present the conflict. I did not know how to start, because I had not come with arguments but rather hope for solutions based on Track II diplomacy. I had a choice: either to change my presentation and harshly respond to those arguments or to go with my original presentation and help the people understand the importance of a peaceful settlement based on people-to-people diplomacy and the role of young people from both nations in solving this dispute.

And there in the midst of the presentation all of a sudden I remembered Frank Buchman's phrase when he met French resistance leader, Irene Laure at Caux in the 1940s and said to her, "Do you think you can build Europe without Germans?" I asked the same question to the audience with the Armenian participants. There was silence. I answered "Of course NO. Neither Azerbaijanis, nor Armenians can build South Caucasus without each other." We have lived together for centuries in the same region, hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder. And we were there in Caux with Anush to challenge those people and leaders who are insistently saying that the two nations cannot come together to live peacefully anymore.

A few days later I heard why Anush was so outraged during her presentation. I heard about her personal trauma and I was shocked with the risk she took in coming to Caux. She was there all alone with her feelings. She was there to deal with her past and see her future without hatred of Azerbaijanis. It was a brave step by a person who has lost both her parents in the war. I am not sure whether I could do the same in her shoes. That's why I applaud her for her courage and I am thankful that she gave her hand to me and walked with me in this path even after the Caux Program.

After coming back, I have decided to write an article to deliver her voice to the people around and show her personal transformation. It was a call for peace! Totally opposite of her presentation in Caux.

We have agreed to disagree. We respect each other's differences. We have tried to identify common values that help us come together and communicate more. Along with that we have gone beyond our inner conflict and proved the role of the young generation in the settlement of the conflict. To forget is sometimes impossible, but I do believe in forgiveness and reconciliation. Only through this can we get to inner liberation and personal transformation.

Follow-up Links

[Initiatives of Change](#)
[Hope in the Cities \(HIC\)](#)
[Caux Scholars Program](#)
[IofC on Facebook](#)
[Trustbuilding on Facebook](#)
[HIC on Facebook](#)

Hope in the Cities

20 YEARS OF HEALING THE HEART 1993 OF AMERICA 2013

20th Anniversary Events

November 8-9, 2013



In 1993 Hope in the Cities, in partnership with Richmond Hill and the City of Richmond, launched a sustained movement of honest conversation on race, reconciliation and responsibility in Richmond, Virginia, that continues to gain momentum today. This citizen-led effort has resulted in a network including nonprofit and business sectors, local government and faith communities, media and education that share a commitment to honor our many different stories.

- **Metropolitan Richmond Day Lunch Forum - November 8, 12:00 noon - 2:00 pm**

Omni Hotel, 12 S. 12th Street, Richmond, VA 23219
Join leaders from Richmond's public and private sectors to hear keynote speaker Dr. Gail Christopher, vice president for program strategy at the W. K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan. Her expertise is the social determinants of health and public policy that impact minority populations. Dr. Christopher leads the America Healing Project, launched by the Foundation in 2010 to support programs that promote racial healing and address racial inequity, with the goal of ensuring that all children have a promising future. [For more information and to register call 804-358-1764](#)

- **Walking the Historic Slave Trail - November 9, 8:30 am - 12:00 pm**

The first Unity Walk in 1993 marked sites previously too painful or shameful to remember. Richmond became the first U.S. community to give its racial past such public and formal acknowledgement. Hope in the Cities and Richmond Hill invite you to walk through history on the historic Richmond Slave Trail. Meet at Richmond Hill (2209 E. Grace Street, Richmond, VA 23223) A bus will take us to the docks where enslaved Africans were brought to the city and also sold down the river to southern plantations. From there the slave trail follows a route to Lumpkin's Slave Jail. We conclude the walk at the Reconciliation Statue erected in 2007 to commemorate the international triangular slave trade. [For more information and to register call 804 358 1764](#)

NOTE: After the walk there will be lunch at Richmond Hill followed by a time for reflection and facilitated dialogue. Space is limited (first come first served) Cost of lunch \$10. Call [804-358-1764](tel:804-358-1764) to register

- **Overnight at Richmond Hill - November 8**

2209 E. Grace Street, Richmond, VA 23223

There are a limited number of spaces to overnight at the Richmond Hill retreat center for those coming from out-of-town to participate in this program. The hospitality includes dinner, breakfast as well as lunch following the walk and facilitated dialogue Friday evening and Saturday afternoon.

NOTE: Total event cost for the Friday Forum, overnight at Richmond Hill and Saturday Slave Trail walk: \$150. For more information and to register call [804-358-1764](tel:804-358-1764).

March on Washington 50th Anniversary

Overriding loyalty to humankind

Fifty years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made his famous "I have a dream" speech to the crowds attending the March on Washington. Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson and biographer of Mahatma Gandhi, was invited by Martin Luther King III and the Rev. Al Sharpton, on behalf of Communities Without Boundaries International, to join them on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial for a commemorative event and to march from there to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial. We print Rajmohan Gandhi's remarks:



Gandhi, my grandfather, never visited the US, but his heart was fully involved in the struggle of African Americans and Native Americans.

In February 1936, he had a meeting in a hut in western India with the philosopher Howard Thurman, then Dean of Rankin Chapel at Howard University, Thurman's wife Sue Bailey Thurman, who was a historian and a singer, and another Black couple, Edward and Phenola Carroll. At his request the four African Americans sang two spirituals for Gandhi, who then said:

"Well, if it comes true, it may be through the [African Americans] that the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world." (62: 202)

In 1967, four years after the 1963 march, Dr. King said in New York city,

"Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies...."

Dr. King added a warning against what he called "the apathy of conformist thought within one's own bosom and in the surrounding world."

Today Dr. King's phrase, "overriding loyalty to humankind," demands our attention, for we see human beings willing to slaughter one another, or going silent forever, before their time was due.

Yet conformist thought stops us from trying to assist.

We must ask: Do we want democracy here, but only "dependable friends" elsewhere? Is the life of someone not an American of smaller value?

If we love and respect Dr. King and Gandhi, we must stand for democracy, human rights, and human life everywhere.

Let us be prodded today not by conformist thought but by the values that pushed Gandhi and Dr. King.



We hope you enjoyed this issue of *Breakthroughs*. Please share this newsletter with your friends.

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