



December 2013

Newsletter of Initiatives of Change USA

Issue No. 24

Greetings!

As we approach the season of Thanksgiving we are grateful for everyone in this network of changemakers.

Four 2013 Caux Scholars came to support the Metropolitan Richmond Day events last week. We were joined by people from Dayton, Memphis, Montgomery and DC. A class from Eastern Mennonite University started their journey at 6:00am to join the 20th anniversary walk on the Slave Trail. One descendent of slave owners described the personal impact of the walk: "You are making a difference in our community - and helping others of us make a difference."



Dr. Paige Chargois, an initiator of the original walk, wrote, "It is my hope and prayer that it will be a walk towards greater and deeper efforts of reconciliation for a country in more desperate need of it today than it was 20 years ago."

Afterwards, a young woman posted on Facebook, "If you work for a nonprofit or you are just interested in learning how you can really make a difference in Richmond and in the world, get to know the work of Hope in the Cities...You'll be glad you did!"

A senior citizen, aged 93, who sends a check each month, is looking ahead to our national forum next spring and writes, "We hope all is going well with you and the plan for the national conference is great! We will pray for that!" (read more about that below)



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Sixty percent of our support comes from people just like you! No gift is too large or too small.

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IofC National Forum



More information to follow

Metropolitan Richmond Day 2013

Courageous philanthropy

By Rob Corcoran

"The work of this century is the work of dealing with unconscious bias," said Dr. Gail Christopher of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, speaking at the Metropolitan Richmond Day forum sponsored by Hope in the Cities on November 8.

Christopher, who serves as vice president for program strategy, underscored the power of stories. "Data is critically important, but when it comes to touching hearts and minds and moving people, our brains are wired for story," she told the more than 200 guests.

She said that after decades of working on "diversity and inclusion... the [Kellogg] board said 'it's not getting us there. We have got to address racism.'" Five years ago the foundation launched America Healing, to work for healing in divided communities and to bridge racial gaps in such areas as the areas of education, health, juvenile justice, economic success, and the media. It addresses the issues at the core of structural racism: those policies and practices that continue to create barriers for children of color.

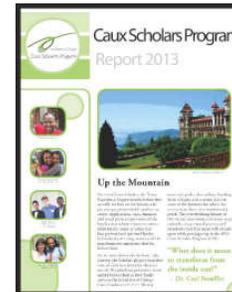
Christopher said, "We have never dealt with the belief in a hierarchy of the human family... We built a nation on this belief... Part of the work is to move beyond denial. First, we have to face facts; then face the consequences [the "extreme inequities" that are still with us today]. Then it gets harder because we have to face the implications... Under all this are feelings. Feelings are powerful. They move us or paralyze us: feelings of hatred, guilt, shame or fear. Once faced, they can be transformed."



Quoting Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner's work on "Changing Hearts and Minds," Christopher highlighted the importance of reason, research, re-description (bringing diverse groups together to hear stories from different points of view), resonance (you have to touch the heart), resistance (expect it,

Caux Scholars Report

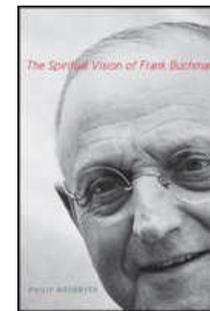
[Read the 2013 Report](#)



Hard copies of the report can be ordered from the IofC office

[The 2014 application process is open online](#)

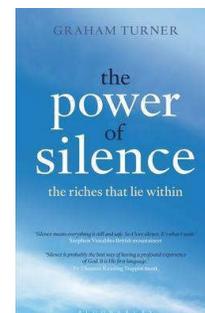
Great gift ideas!



The Spiritual Vision of Frank Buchman

by Philip Boobbyer
Penn State College Press

[Review](#) by Dick Ruffin
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The Power of Silence

British journalist and author Graham Turner explores the world

but don't be stopped by it), rewards and resources (this is where the role of policy is vital), and response to real world events. Emphasizing the scope of the challenge, Christopher noted that the cost of racism is no less than the cost of HIV/AIDS. The world responded by creating a global fund. "We need a comparable fund to enable the world to heal from the pathology of racism."

Offering the invocation, Dr. Niraj Verma, dean of the Wilder School for Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University, said: "Tolerance is an important virtue in each faith and culture. And yet, tolerance is the floor and not the sky. It is an asymmetrical relation between the tolerant and the tolerated. To stop at toleration is to create walls around ourselves. Participation and empathy make fissures in the walls. Engagement and community nourish its transcendence."

Tom Silvestri, president and publisher of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, which provided media sponsorship for the event, spoke of the commitment of the newspaper to nurturing civil dialogue in the community. Jeanné Isler, US director for Search for Common Ground, and Don King, a partner with McGuire Woods law firm, co-chaired the forum. Rev James Somerville of First Baptist Church gave the benediction.

At a private reception co-hosted by the University of Richmond, the Community Foundation, and Hope in the Cities, Dr. Christopher met with the mayor and other elected officials, members of the city's anti-poverty commission, leaders of local foundations and representatives of nonprofit organizations. She discussed the negative impact of stress in health outcomes for vulnerable populations.

In response to questions about how to address the underling causes of inequity, Christopher said, "We are kidding ourselves if we always stay in the service mentality. We won't heal Richmond or any other community until we have a strategy for ending segregation." Time alone would not cure structural racism. "It will not get better without intention and action." "We must reverse the permission to 'otherize' and create capacity to empathize."

Walking the historic slave trail

Retracing the steps of enslaved Africans

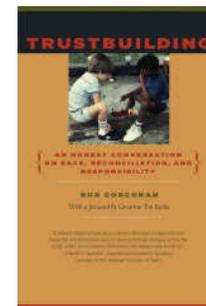


Laurin Hodge was a Caux Scholar in 2013. She lives in Washington, DC, and will begin working with Initiatives of Change later this month. She writes:

As a recent Caux Scholar the invitation to join Hope In The Cities as they celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Richmond Slave Trail Walk was both an honor and privilege.

Learning the roots of such a historical city - Richmond, VA - inspired mix emotions within me. As an African-American woman

of silence ... and those who recognize its value.
[Review](#) by Charles Aquilina
 Order from you local bookstore or on online



Trustbuilding

by Rob Corcoran

Read his latest blog,
[A fair day's work for a fair day's wage](#)



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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I was fully open to experience the trail for both cultural and educational reasons. Rationally I understand the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade was a business but to experience first-hand where so many of my ancestors traveled to a lasting legacy of suffering was emotionally volatile. As a college graduate of a university based in Virginia and a resident of the Washington region the proximity to such a racially charged city is something I never considered until this experience. Curiosity, compassion, frustration, peace and hope all pulsed through me throughout this weekend.

Retracing the steps of enslaved Africans in silence with my fellow Caux Scholars, as well as women and men I have never met before, was the most memorable experience by far. It was amazing to discover ways in which my body felt oddly at home walking along the water. It was a natural tendency for me to walk with my head down to carefully trace my steps, because somewhere deep within me I felt the urge to carefully keep my eyes on what was immediately in front of me. I was unaware that this experience was unique. Walking hand-in-hand I later noticed that different people were having a different experience - some were looking around at the sights, sounds, smells while others were having more of a meditative practice to try and imagine what it would have been like if they were stepping off of a boat for the first time in a far away land.



One thing is for sure, the experience of reliving what it was like to be stripped of everything and forced into captivity is personal and special. The entire experience involved discussions in preparation of our walk, the walk itself, as well as various site visits and a debrief of the entire experience. Of all of the words shared, I will carry with me this: "When you know what is right put your whole energy and being into that, because if you do not, well then you are in effect blessing what is wrong."

How we go about healing the history of slavery I do not fully know, but when I find a solution I am committing myself fully to doing what is right.

Hope in the Cities

Find more gifts ideas in the 2013 Books & Media catalog



Hard copies of the catalog can be ordered from the IofC office

Two up-coming global events

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

February 14-19, 2014
'Encuentro' of the Americas
 From the heart of the Americas weaving a community of change Bogata, Columbia
[For more information](#)



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.

Visit our [website](#) for more information.

Calling Richmond Home

A new 6 minute film by Karen Elliott Greisdorf was premiered at the Metropolitan Richmond Day lunch forum. Through voices from around the Richmond community, *Calling Richmond Home* highlights the impact made by Hope in the Cities over the past 20 years.

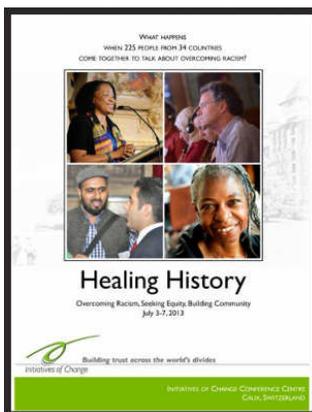


This video can be seen on our website at www.hopeinthecities.org

Healing History

Join the conversation

Grant Rissler, (CSP 2001) a PhD student in public policy at Virginia Commonwealth University, authored the report of the Healing History conference in Caux, Switzerland. He writes:



In the final plenary of the Healing History conference this past July, Ciraj Rasool, a professor from South Africa, challenged participants to continue a "deep discussion about questioning hierarchy (in the human family)... as we go down the mountain."

Our hope in drafting this report on the conference, including the embedded hyperlinks, was that it would serve as a door through which you can enter into the conversations

that took place at Caux.

As you read the report and explore the links to speaker's presentations, work group reports and videos, I hope you'll ask some of these questions:

- How does a belief in hierarchy based on race or another

quality impact the structures of my community and nation, of the IofC network, of my own thinking?

- What would changing that belief and structures look like, sound like, feel like?
- Who around me (physically or virtually) should I be in conversation with about this?

The answers we each develop in our circles of conversation are some of the next steps in this work of healing history and overcoming racism. Perhaps you'll let IofC US know what answers you've discovered in a future column for Breakthrough.

Hard copies of the report can be ordered from the IofC office.

Intern from Ukraine

Healing a divided society



My name is Lena Kashkarova, I'm from Ukraine and I am currently an intern with Hope in the Cities in Richmond.

Back in the Ukraine I am involved in [Foundations for Freedom](#) (F4F) an NGO that aims to foster the

development of a truly free, democratic and just society, where people live a commitment to the values where freedom thrives.

In particular I'm in charge of the [House in Baranivka](#) project, which is a spin-off from F4F. We are building a meeting place, open to everyone, that aims to establish a community of people who will work to improve society.

I'm also a dialogue facilitator of the [Healing the Past](#) project. And it's this involvement that has brought me to Richmond.

Ukraine has a very different past from the US: for one thing it is very recent, with major traumas in the 20th century. Just to outline the scale: 6 million people died in 2 years of man-made famine in 1932-1933, 14 million were lost during World War II, and there is still an unknown number of victims of Stalin's repressions. Some sources give the number of 40 million, which means every third adult was condemned to death, sent to labor camps, or forcefully deported during 1923-1953.

All of this has left us with the legacy of fear, blame, anger and denial. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and gaining independence in 1991 many issues became a subject of arguments: we argue about who's a hero and who's an oppressor; which holidays to celebrate; which language to use; whose heritage to treasure. We have become a deeply divided society because of the very different perceptions we hold of the past. This trauma in the lives of individuals, if not healed, rules over their lives governing reactions to the present and shaping

the future. This is also true of whole nations.

That is why we decided to make healing the past a focus of the project on historical wounds and why we use dialogue as one of the tools in our work.

Richmond, with its 20 years of experience of working in the sphere of dialogue and reconciliation seems to be the right place to come to learn. I have already participated in a weekend workshop on How to build a dialogue and took part in the Metropolitan Richmond Day events and the 20th anniversary walk on the Richmond slave trail. I am grateful for this opportunity and hope to take back new ideas and tools for our project.

Commentary

Overcoming racism, building community

This column by Rob Corcoran appeared in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* on November 3, 2013. Excerpts are reprinted with permission.



One of the great challenges facing societies everywhere is discovering how to build healthy, inclusive communities in places where wounds of history still scar memories and discrimination based on race or ethnicity continues to impact our social and economic structures.

In July, I was among a delegation of 15 from Richmond who attended an international forum on the theme of "Healing History: Overcoming Racism, Seeking Equity, Building Community." Two hundred and twenty-five participants from 34 countries met at the international conference center in Caux, Switzerland, which has been operated by Initiatives of Change since 1946.

The forum drew racial justice advocates, healing practitioners, scholars, faith leaders, entrepreneurs and government officials. While the largest delegation was from the US, significant groups came from Africa and Europe as well as South Asia and Australia. The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs brought leaders from Chad, Mali and Niger. A delegation came from South Sudan, the globe's newest country.

The forum was a partnership between Initiatives of Change, best known in Richmond for its Hope in the Cities program, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Five years ago the foundation launched "America Healing," a \$75 million initiative to help heal divided communities and bridge racial gaps in the areas of education, health, juvenile justice, economic success and the media. The focus is on issues at the core of structural racism - those policies and practices that continue to create barriers for children of color.

"My dream is that all children will grow up in a world that no

longer clings to the hierarchy of the human family: the fallacy that some of us are worth more than others," said Gail Christopher, the foundation's vice president for program strategy, in her keynote speech. She called for a "global fund" dedicated to "the healing of racism [and] for healing from racism."

Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson and biographer of the Mahatma, came with a distinguished group from India and Pakistan. He recalled the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., which reminded us that every nation must now "develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies."



Eighteen working groups explored topics such as museums and public history sites, human trafficking, residential and school segregation, criminal justice, immigration and citizenship, and the social determinants of health. Participants also built relationships as they served fellow delegates by chopping vegetables, serving tables or washing dishes.

Here are some conference themes that seem particularly relevant to Richmond:

- Ending false hierarchies makes good business sense. "Experience shows that racism is bad economics," said Tim Carrington, a journalist and development specialist who worked with the World Bank in Africa. "Race has led America to make non-rational economic decisions," said Algernon Austin of the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, noting that the US imprisons more of its citizens than any other country. "Emphasizing prevention makes more economic sense than emphasizing punishment."
- Place matters. According to David Williams of the Harvard School of Public Health, a national study of the effects of segregation on young African-American adults found that the elimination of residential segregation would significantly erase black-white differences in high school graduation rates, in unemployment rates and in earnings. It would also reduce racial differences in single motherhood by two-thirds.
- Stories move people more than data. John Powell (University of California - Berkeley) told us that the human brain processes about 11 million bits of information in a second, but we are conscious of only about 40 of these at best.

We used to believe that we could eliminate stereotypes by providing more accurate data, he said, "but neuroscience science suggests this isn't possible [if efforts only engage the conscious mind]. ... We have to learn to talk to the unconscious and it's not interested in facts. It reads the environment, it reads patterns, it reads stories."

The determination of the Richmond community to tell its history in all its complexity and ambiguity without blame or

avoidance was of great interest to this global assembly.

Edward Ayers, president of the University of Richmond, voiced the feelings of all of us when he said, "I felt humbled looking at the suffering and wounds [of people from other continents], many of them so recent and severe. I felt that if we could tell our story honestly and whole it can help others."

Rob Corcoran is national director of Initiatives of Change and author of "Trustbuilding: An Honest Conversation on Race, Reconciliation, and Responsibility."

We hope you enjoyed this issue of *Breakthroughs*. Please share this newsletter with your friends and forward it to those you know have a passion for trustbuilding.

Thank you!

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