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Fostering Healing and Reconciliation

The Heart of My Enemy:

Rwandan Friends Rebuilding
After the Genocide

By Laura Shipler Chico

Love Has Replaced Hatred:

A Visit to Gitega, Burundi Prison

By Adrien Niyongabo

Speaking Across the Divide

Presentation at St. Louis Meeting

By Cecile Nyiramana



African Great Lakes Initiative
of the Friends Peace Teams



African Great Lakes Initiative Friends Peace Teams

The African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI) of the Friends Peace Teams strengthens, supports, and promotes peace activities at the grassroots level in the Great Lakes region of Africa (Burundi, Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda). To this end, AGLI responds to requests from local religious and non-governmental organizations that focus on conflict management, peace building, trauma healing, and reconciliation. AGLI sponsors Peace Teams composed of members from local partners and the international community.

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Editorial Comment

Understand that you are called to do good to the one who did wrong to you. In that way, instead of pushing the person away from you, which will put all of you into isolation, you bring the person back to you, which will put all of you into communion.

Andre-Claude, Mi-PAREC driver

This statement was made after a group of Tutsi from Mutaho went to visit the officials in prison responsible for the deaths of their loved ones (see *Love Has Replaced Hatred: A Visit to Gitega, Burundi Prison* page 6). I found it to be such a profound statement, particularly because I realized that we in the United States have made it a habit of pushing away from us those we perceived to have done wrong—whether it is in Iraq or those we incarcerate here in the United States. This pushing away has made us all isolated, in the world as well as in our communities. “During the genocide, they killed my mother, father and our relatives. It was our neighbors who killed them. The killers were our friends. I started to believe that no one is good. So I isolated myself from others,” so says, Nyiramajyambere Francoise, an AVP facilitator (see *The Heart of My Enemy: Rwandan Friends Rebuilding after Genocide*, page 4).

It is easy to help the victims of a disaster whether from natural causes such as a tsunami or from man-made ones such as a genocide. But it is as important to help the perpetrators as well. Andre Ndeyimana, the Hutu administrator responsible for the killings in Mutaho, commented on the visit by saying, “You know, since we entered here in this prison, we do not know how the moon is like, neither the stars because before the night comes, we all are obliged to enter our rooms until the morning. It is too painful being here. From one morning to the next one, we are locked inside. It is during that time that one remembers all of what happened. And what follows the bad emotions, regrets, images of what we saw and so on. It is too heavy for us.” The more one deals with these conflicts, the more the distinction between “victim” and “perpetrator” becomes inexact and hazy—and ultimately less significant.

AGLI's work is based on the premise that there is that of God in everyone which means that even those who have done evil deeds can be transformed, resurrected, turned into good, loving people. This attitude is a lonely voice in the world today, but this is what we in AGLI have been called to do.

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Workcamps for 2006

AGLI will be sponsoring five workcamps; one each in Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, and two in Burundi. The dates are June 23 to July 29, 2006. For more information and an application, contact AGLI's Program Coordinator at dawn@aglionline.org.

The Heart of My Enemy:

Rwandan Friends Rebuilding After the Genocide

By Laura Shipler Chico

If, for example, you see your children being killed by machetes and that stays in your mind, that can cause trauma.

A woman with a bright orange headscarf is standing and sharing her thoughts with a group of community women. She is a participant in a trauma-healing workshop run by the Rwandan Friends Peace House. The participants in the workshop are all members of a long-term group called Women in Dialogue [see article by Cecile Nyiramana on page 8] that brings together Tutsi widows of Rwanda's 1994 genocide with Hutu women whose husbands are in prison accused of perpetrating acts of genocide.

"She is a genocide survivor," my interpreter whispers. "She lost almost all her children and her husband was killed too."

The women are answering a question posed by the facilitators: "What causes trauma?" Rather than simply listing things like war, rape, or accidents, the women are answering with stories. Although they seem to talk generally, everyone in the room knows that the examples they are sharing come straight from their own lives.

The woman in the orange scarf continues. "If you see your children killed then you cannot sleep, you cannot eat, you think about how they would be now, you think always of your children." In the same breath, with the same passion, she goes on. "Also, another cause of trauma is if you kill somebody. For example if someone kills his friend and then always thinks about his friend or even carries the head of his friend with him to jail. And he is in jail and can only think about what happened and that is very hard."

She sits down and I turn to double-check. "She's a survivor, right?" I whisper to my interpreter. "Oui, oui" she says, "Yes, yes." I feel the sting of sudden tears but then the next woman is speaking and then the next

and the next. From each side they speak out of their own pain but never forget the pain of the women sitting next to them. They do not minimize, they do not equalize, they do not dilute. To these women, pain is pain. It is not to be compared or competed with. It is only to be felt. In the face of Rwanda's bloody history these women have sat with each other until slowly, finally, they have found God in the hearts of their enemies.

Go to the library and do a literature search for "Rwanda." Most of what has been written about Rwanda in recent years is riddled with words like "hell," "Devil," "blood," "murder," and "killers." These are apt words, given that almost a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed here in 100 days during the summer of 1994. It has been dubbed the "most efficient genocide in history" in spite of the grisly fact that the Hutu Power government did not use gas chambers like the Nazis nor did they have access to a large number of firearms like in Bosnia, but instead relied heavily on grenades and machetes. The consequences are devastating. In 1995, UNICEF found that 99.9% of all Rwandan children had witnessed violence, 79.6% experienced death in the



Solange Maniraguha leads HROC workshop

family, 69.5% witnessed someone being killed or injured, 87.5% saw dead bodies or parts of bodies, and 90.6% believed they would die. With these statistics, one might imagine Rwanda to indeed be a living hell.

But live and work with Rwandan Quakers and you will find – in a nation filled with suspicion and distrust, in a country where most believe that people are fundamentally bad – a small but growing group of people that hold onto to the radical notion that there is good in everyone. Live and watch the work of the Quakers here, and God begins to reappear.

Healing Wounds

Solange Maniraguha watched her Tutsi parents being killed with machetes after the *Interahamwe* [local youth militia responsible for much of the killing during the genocide] broke into their house through the roof. On April 11th, 1994, five days after the genocide began, a relative working for the UN pulled her at the last minute from a gathering of 5000 people slated to be slaughtered just up the hill from the Friends Church. Neighbors hid her for two days and how she survived the remaining 93 days I don't know. She breaks down and cries silent tears and cannot tell the rest, her body curved around the hollow aching pain. She is a trauma healing facilitator for Friends Peace House.

Everyone who works with the Friends Peace House has a story that has propelled him or her into this work. As a result, the work of the Quakers here is raw, real and courageous, deliberately bringing people together across the chasms that have been torn across this small country. Every time Solange facilitates a workshop she sits not only with survivors of the genocide, but also with those who perpetrated the violence designed to exterminate her people. Recognizing that here in Rwanda healing trauma and rebuilding peace are

inextricably intertwined, every trauma workshop brings together people from all sides, intermingling stories of survival with stories of violence, seeking to find the common human ground on which to begin to rebuild this wounded nation.

The workshops introduce the concept of “trauma” – a concept that is imported from the West, and yet has a curative power here as people realize that what they are experiencing is normal in the face of the unspeakably abnormal. The workshops define trauma and then invite the participants to look at the causes and consequences of trauma. Slowly, people share their stories – first indirectly and then directly – dipping into their losses, paying tribute to their grief, and finally exploring the possibility of building new trust in their communities.

The trauma-healing program, called Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities, is only one among many of the programs run by Rwandan Quakers in the wake of the 1994 genocide. In 2000, the Evangelical Friends Church established the Friends Peace House to coordinate its peace building and reconciliation activities throughout the country. Now, five years later, its staff and its programs continue to work closely with the church and are guided by the Quaker conviction that there is that of God in everyone.

Seeking Alternatives to Violence

Pastor David Bucura was only 29 when he saw Solange, 13 years old and suddenly the head of her household, walking down the street, alone and dazed. He asked her if she was in school and when the answer was no, he told her to go to the Friends school, that he would pay her tuition. She was one of at least four orphans Pastor Bucura took under his wing in the wake of the violence of that summer, and by doing so he, as a Hutu, stepped across the lines of hate and fear

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“ *The work of the Quakers here is raw and real and courageous, deliberately bringing people together across the chasms that have been torn across this small country.* ”

Love Has Replaced Hatred:

A Visit to Gitega, Burundi Prison

By Adrien Niyongabo

Agnes Ndayishimiye [see picture on front cover] is a Tutsi woman living in the Mutaho IDP (internally displaced persons) camp. On October 21, 2004 on the last day of a Healing and Rebuilding Our Community workshop she was attending, she said,

I am happy that I leave this workshop with a new dream that there will be a special day. That day, I see myself going to the Gitega prison where our former administrator is kept. I will ask to see him. I will be bringing him food (a sign of reconciliation in Burundian culture). I will hug him. He will not, maybe, recognize me. I will tell him that I come from Mutaho IDP camp. I will show him that love has replaced hatred. I will be happy that day.

Agnes's husband and many family members were killed in late 1993 when violence swept through Burundi after the assassination Melchior Ndadaye, the first democratically elected Hutu president in Burundi. She fled with most of the remaining Tutsi in the area to the Mutaho IDP camp where she has been living for more than a decade.



Group from Mutaho that visited Gitega Prison

Mutaho is about 25 miles north of Gitega which is right in the center of Burundi. The Mutaho area was one of the regions most destroyed by the fighting in Burundi. The commercial center of Mutaho—once a large square with two story buildings on all sides and a market place in the center—has been completely destroyed. During the conflict in 1993 many Hutu and Tutsi killed each other in this area. The two groups became separated as the Tutsi moved to IDP camps, while the more numerous Hutu stayed on their plots in the countryside. The former neighbors and friends became enemies. For the last ten years there has been little communication between the two groups.

Andre Ndereyimana, the man Agnes was referring to, was the Hutu administrator of Mutaho District in 1993 and has been jailed since that time, along with many other men from Mutaho accused of leading and participating in the killing of the Tutsi in the area.

During a follow-up Healing and Rebuilding Our Community workshop, a number of women from the Mutaho IDP camp agreed with Agnes in wanting to meet with the former administrator and others accused of killing and destruction in the area.

The Healing and Rebuilding Our Community program invites ten Tutsi from Burundian IDP camps and ten Hutu from the surrounding community to come together to try to re-establish normal relationships which have been mostly non-existent for the last decade. The workshops describe psycho-social trauma and its symptoms, deals with the stages of grief, distinguishes between negative anger and positive anger. On the last of three days, attempts are made to restore trust between the two groups. One particularly effective exercise is to draw a tree of mistrust and then a tree of

trust allowing the participants to envision how they may move from the place of distrust to one of trust.

Why would Agnes and the other women want to meet with the person who is accused of organizing the deaths of their loved ones? The testimonies in the workshops indicate that there is a very heavy burden when someone keeps the trauma, grief, anger, and hatred inside him/herself for years on end. People frequently feel that they are “lightened” when the heavy burden is lifted from them. The women in particular see the effects on their children. Do they want them to grow up in this divided society with the hatred of the enemy? Will not the division bring another round of violence in ten, twenty, or thirty years which, most participants think, will be worse than the last cycle in 1993?

Sebastien Kambayeko, is a pastor of the Friends Church in Burundi, a Tutsi living in the Mutaho IDP camp, and one of the facilitators in the workshop that Agnes attended. He reported the following:

A group of Tutsi widows living in the IDP came to me and told me how the two trees: Trust tree and Mistrust tree have impacted them. From their sharing, they emphasized that in order to give a place to the Trust tree, as single parents, they need to prepare the way for their children and grandchildren by forgiving their wrongdoers. Thus, one of the ways to do that would be to support the idea expressed by one of them during their last workshop. This idea was to go to Gitega prison and meet the Mutaho Hutu former officials, and tell them that, “Maybe, they would doubt about our act because what they did to our families is woeful, but we will not give up. We would go there for a second time, sit with them and talk. We need peace for our next generation.”

The women decided to go to Gitega to ask the Provincial Administration for permission to visit the prisoners. On Saturday, August 20, 2005, eighteen people from the Mutaho IDP camp, including some men, went to Gitega to visit the prison. Before they

went to the prison the group gathered at the conference center in Gitega called Mi-PAREC, Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross. They waited for Pastor Elie Nahimana, the General Secretary of Burundi Yearly Meeting of Friends, Levy Ndikumana, the Director of Mi-PAREC, and me, the Coordinator of the Healing and Rebuilding Our Community program. When Levy arrived, he told the group that the Gitega prison Director was very happy and excited to receive us as promised. However, he mentioned that due to the overwhelming schedule, the prison officials did not have time to gather prisoners from Mutaho to get ready for the visit. That is why he suggested that we might postpone the real visit for the following Tuesday. In spite of that, he allowed us to meet with a delegation of the prisoners from Mutaho for a short time. Nevertheless, many of the folks remained with the same enthusiasm as before and we went to the prison. The gate was opened and a few seconds later, five men came up including the former Mutaho Administrator, the former President-Judge of Mutaho tribunal court, two former teachers and one farmer.

Then they started hugging each other—a very touching and emotional scene!!! Unbelievable! Watching them hugging each other with such open smiles and nostalgia, I could not think that the horrible killings did happen between these people. I could hear some saying, “Yes, he is the one. Let me hug him!” “Oh, yes I do recognize you! You were my neighbor. How is your family doing? Good to see you!” “Amahoro, Amahoro! [Peace, peace] Praise God for we can meet here after so long a time!” “This one looks like the ones that I know. Are you the daughter of...?” “Yes, I am.” Ohh! Amahoro, Amahoro! Thanks to God for you are still alive.

After the greetings, the people started a self-presentation. I can remember, Andre Ndereyimana, the former Mutaho Administrator, saying, “I am Andre Ndereyimana. You would understand that, as a head of the administration in those times and knowing what happened in our area, I can have a lot on my back.” After Pastor Sebastien shared with the group their motivation for coming, he said, “We know that many

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Speaking Across the Divide

A Presentation by Cecile Nyiramana

At St. Louis (MO) Meeting, 29 June 2005

Recorded by Thomas Paxson

Cecile Nyiramana, Secretary to the Legal Representative of Rwanda Yearly Meeting, visited the United States as a guest of the African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams. She was invited to discuss Rwanda Friends' work in her country, with special attention to Women in Dialogue, an organization she formed to help reknit her community in the aftermath of the genocide in 1994.

During the genocide, Cecile, a Tutsi descendent, while pregnant hid under a bed for three months in the home of some friends of her Hutu descendent husband. After the genocide, she and her husband fled Rwanda, as so many others had done. After their return, they were struck by the terrible changes that had occurred. Most people in Rwanda, regardless of which side they were on during the genocide, were traumatized. Over a hundred thousand (mostly) men accused of perpetrating the genocide had been rounded up and imprisoned. Hutus and Tutsis had stopped talking with one another and avoided one another as much as possible. Rwanda Yearly Meeting helped survivors and established the Friends Peace House. In 2001, Alternatives to Violence Project workshops were begun and it became evident that a program was necessary to address people's trauma more directly. It was also necessary to help the prisoners who were being kept indefinitely, as the genocide had destroyed the nation's justice system.

In 2001 Cecile was sent to an AVP workshop by Rwanda Yearly Meeting. Her mother had been killed during the genocide. After she and her husband returned in 1999, her husband was imprisoned. Someone had accused him, apparently, of being a perpetrator. He is still in prison. Cecile was left with her two children, not knowing how to provide for them. After attending the AVP workshop, and then a second follow-up

workshop, she heard a calling to forgive those who tried to kill her and to forgive those who took her husband.

Given that she was both victim and a woman whose husband had been imprisoned, she felt called to bring together the two groups of women - widows of the genocide and wives of imprisoned husbands, Tutsis and Hutus. She thought that if she could change the women, she could change the community. She gathered a group of survivors and asked them what they wanted for the future and suggested that they meet the killers' wives. They answered that they didn't want to understand these women, but they did want the prisoners' wives to come to them and tell them the truth about what happened. She then went to the prisoners' wives and tried to get them to meet with the widows. It was a tough sell. They were afraid to go to their "enemies." Cecile took her vision to Friends Peace House. The people there were surprised at her proposal, but at length agreed and helped organize the workshop. When the women came each side sat separately from the others and didn't speak across the divide. This stand off lasted the whole day. On the second day the "light and lively" game (an AVP staple) involved changing seats—thus engineering a physical integration of the two groups. Nonetheless, they wouldn't talk to each other. When the third day began, however, they started to talk to one another about trivial things. It was a real breakthrough. My sense is that during all three days, the workshop involved people in sharing their experiences (even if ostensibly only with members of their own group—with the other group listening in).

After three months, the same group of women from the same neighborhood came back for a second workshop, women who had known each other well

prior to the genocide, prior to the social division. On the third day of this workshop the women were asked what they wanted in the future. They wanted to meet more and to rebuild relationships. They had gotten past their almost ten-year old stereotypes of the others as “enemies.” They also recognized that they shared many responsibilities, including care of their own families. They decided to meet once a month to talk about reconciliation and peace, as well as to help one another in practical ways (food, shelter, etc. being major concerns). Each three months they invited other women (presumably from the same neighborhood) to join them. This group became the prototype. Cecile has now organized two other such groups, one in the North of the country and the second in eastern Rwanda. They have come to use dance and song to demonstrate reconciliation to other members of their communities.

Now Cecile is faced with the question whether to let the three groups grow in size, or whether they need to be kept relatively small, requiring that many more groups be formed. She also wonders how these groups will be able to change the whole community, as she had originally hoped. With respect to this second question, she is hoping that the women in the groups can have a big impact by:

- Being good models of reconciliation
- Helping their own (extended) families on the path of reconciliation
- Helping the prisoners while they are imprisoned and then helping them when they are released to become reintegrated in society.

Cecile tries to show the women the good they have in common.

I asked whether the local *Gacaca* judges knew of the Women in Dialogue. She replied that the *Gacaca* process is a community process. The whole community attends the *Gacaca* proceedings, so she was confident that the judges in the three communities were indeed aware of the Women in Dialogue among them.

One of the more interesting exchanges happened when someone in the audience asked how she could forgive

those who tried to kill her. Cecile’s first response to the question was that she prayed for God to give her love for those who tried to kill her. But then, rather than describing a method by which she could have come to such a prayer or a method to forgive, Cecile recounted her experience with one of the men who had tried to kill her. He, too, had fled Rwanda; he left when the Tutsi army was making good its effort to end the genocide and gain control of the country. She had known this particular man when they were both students at the university. When in 2001 she heard that he had returned to Rwanda, she tried to meet him and hunted him down. When they met, he was surprised to see her and was frightened. No doubt he expected her to denounce him and to make sure that he was sent to prison. But she talked with him about her life. He then, warily, told her that he was jobless and in distress. At length she was able to introduce him to someone who would train him in computer skills. Nonetheless he didn’t trust her. She then invited him to visit her family. He came, but expressed his bewilderment and his inability to understand what she was doing for him. She told him it was the only way she could show that she forgave him. After he finished his computer training she found a job for him at a school in the North of Rwanda.

We have much to learn from Cecile and her colleagues in the African Great Lakes region. Their amazing work deserves our attention and support.



Cecile (first on left) with Women in Dialogue members

Comments on AVP

Lugari, Kenya by Linda Heacock

Today [October 14, 2005] was the last day of our Training for Trainers workshop. We had 15 participants who completed all levels of AVP. I've found that AVP in Kenya is essentially the same as in the US in terms of structure and organization of daily agendas, with some cultural adaptation in the exercises. It is what participants bring to the training that is different. After a sense of trust and community builds within the group, they begin to share their stories. It would appear that no one has escaped incidences of overt violence in their lives. The region where our workshops took place experienced what is known as "The Clashes" in the mid-90's as a result of festering tribal conflict and land disputes. Whole farms and livestock were burned to the ground, many were killed and many others fled for their lives. Bitterness and bad feelings continue today among many people who remain in the region, although this may not be expressed in an open and direct manner. Some in our group did speak from personal experience. Other stories were revealed through conflict scenarios that small groups came up with, or in their role-plays (a part of every workshop). Violent outcomes – or the potential for violence – was shared in countless examples: disputes over land and animals, quarreling between neighbors, domestic violence, alcoholism, and extra-marital affairs. Although women are slowly gaining more of a voice and even empowering themselves through the formation of support groups and other organizations, gender violence and subjugation of women remains a serious issue nationwide.

Some of the role-plays were very powerful with emotions becoming quite real. Although in most cases characters were successful in coming to a "win-win"

solution, demonstrating evidence of "Transforming Power" (the core of AVP philosophy), there were a couple instances where facilitators were forced to act quickly in cutting the role play (and in effectively debriefing) in order to avoid the occurrence of actual physical harm to a participant. During one such role-play, a man in the role of an irate father-in-law had taken a dry piece of sugar cane from a field next to the church (to use as a weapon—unbeknownst to us) and began beating two of the other characters! Although this conflict was obviously not resolved non-violently, much learning was gained during our follow-up processing and discussion.

I was struck by the often concrete and literal understanding of concepts by participants, despite the



An AVP committee meeting in Rwanda

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fact that all appeared to be educated at least through the secondary level (high school). It was difficult for some to see us as “facilitators” vs “teachers”. Some folks needed constant validation and approval. Much of this I believe is cultural; even the Kenyan facilitators, Getry and Susan noticed the extremes. At the same time, and perhaps because collectively they have experienced their share of violence in their lives, people understood the “roots and fruits” of violence in all its forms without question. So they were ready and willing to look at its alternatives and how to apply them. Perhaps this is why our role-play exercises were so effective at each level of the workshops. Over and over again, evidence of Transforming Power was observed and noted by participants.

Eldoret, Kenya by Nancy Shippen

In the Eldoret prison workshops, we spent quite a bit of time on the differences between approaching a conflict situation passively, assertively and aggressively. When I present these ideas in US prison workshops, there is almost always a focus on decreasing the intensity and nature of a reaction from aggressive to assertive. They initially see nonviolence as giving up power but come to see an assertive response as one which is a skillful and effective way to meet their real needs in a conflict situation. For the Kenyans, this concept had an enormous impact on their desire for a more open and egalitarian society. We used several discussions and role-plays at each workshop level to realize the benefits of empowering women, youth and the poor in their culture. At first, the idea of a child, woman or inmate making an assertive statement of personal need was seen as ‘cheeky’ and inappropriate. As we worked with the concept, it became a whole new level of communication with enormous potential for incorporating everyone’s gifts and needs into the community. Kenya faces enormously challenging development tasks and it was clear that the community built in this program offers a solid base for working on these issues. Due to the centrality of this concept, I was struck by the realization that ‘I’ messages which are actually a formula for making an assertive statement about a potential conflict situation. We all gained

enormous respect for the power and centrality of this concept.

Since AVP in the US is organized at the local level with little centralized control, each program develops a somewhat unique flavor. Intervisitation is always recommended but seldom happens due to lack of time, funds and the complication of getting people cleared to enter prisons. In Kenya, I was delighted to find an evolving program with a growing group of very competent local facilitators. They had a solid set of agendas and generally excellent grasp of the exercises and flow of the workshops. They were quick to appreciate the contributions of previous international facilitators; Sandy Grotberg, and the team of Giri Sequoia and Bob Barnes. I can foresee a time when there is no clear need for visiting facilitators from overseas. However at this time, I was delighted to be able to support this group. I hope that the focus on assertive responses will continue to be a fruitful part of the program. I was told that my English was too good; meaning that my vocabulary and syntax challenged the generally excellent English of the participants. Certainly, the time is coming when AVP workshops will move beyond the educated levels of Kenya’s society and many other countries in Africa. In order to facilitate this we have begun to explore the need for AVP manuals to be written in Swahili which seems to be the most useful language for African facilitators.

Bukavu, Congo by AVP Facilitators as Recorded by Mary Kay Jou

(To receive the full report, email dave@aglionline.org)

This great energy for exchange and cooperation continued on the second day as the group grappled with an exercise called “Broken Squares” [Small groups are given odd shaped pieces of paper to fit together into squares]. Workshop participants disperse into small groups; each receives minimal instructions for the task they are to complete together. Success requires cooperation and laying aside of competitiveness. One person formed a square which prevented the others in the small group from being able to complete their squares. Unfortunately, this

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Continued from page 5: The Heart of My Enemy

dividing Tutsis and Hutus and answered that of God in himself. Pastor Bucura was instrumental in bringing the Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) to Rwanda in 2001 and served as its National Coordinator for the past four years.

The Alternatives to Violence Project was first developed by a small group of Quakers in New York in 1975 and has since been used around the world. When I arrived, I entertained private questions about the efficacy of a program that is imported from abroad, but after having conducted an in-depth evaluation of AVP's impact ("Peace Cannot Stay in Small Spaces") it is clear that the program has been thoroughly adapted to Rwanda's complex context by its creative and committed team of Rwandan facilitators. Using experiential and community-building activities, AVP quietly invites participants to begin to see the possibility of good in themselves and others, to seek truth even when it contradicts strongly held beliefs, and to find a deep source of reconciliation and transformation.

"AVP can bring people to know that they themselves are people," remarked Nyiramajyambere Francoise, a genocide survivor from the mountain town of Byumba and interviewee for the evaluation conducted earlier this year. She continued:

Before, in Rwanda people could behave like animals. They behave like humans now. After AVP, people bring back love.... We were people who lived without love after the war. When we see people, we see no good things in them. But after knowing Transforming Power [an AVP concept that proposes that there is a power that is able to transform violent and destructive situations and behavior into liberating and constructive experiences], people start to see the good in others. Now transforming power brings back the love. During the genocide, they killed my mother, father and our relatives. It was our neighbors who killed them. The killers were our friends. I started to believe that no one is good. So I isolated myself from others. It was my Pastor who told me to go to the AVP workshop. I didn't want to go because when you go to a workshop, you have to make



Pastor David Bucura

friends and to have a friend is to invite an enemy into your life. But I decided to go for just one day. Then I ended up staying for three days and saw how people started to bring back their hearts to love people, and how they talked to each other and this started to change me in the workshop. [When the facilitators] asked people to tell where they worked, I didn't want to tell them about my work. I hid it from them. But with transforming power, you can start to believe in the good in others. It helped me to start talking freely.... Then, with the two trees [participants create two trees as a metaphor for understanding the root causes and the "fruit" of violence and nonviolence], I saw that nothing good can come from the tree of violence. So I decided to have that good tree. I started to have friends, speak freely, and to not be alone. I made friends through AVP. I'm not sure how it happened, but it did. Nyiramajyambere Francoise, AVP Facilitator

After her first workshop, Francoise continued through the levels of training and is now an experienced AVP facilitator, using her own story of betrayal to plant new seeds of trust in her small mountain town.

Reintegrating Perpetrators

Large trucks have been rolling through our narrow dirt roads this week, kicking up clouds of dust so thick we squeeze our eyes shut and pull our shirts up to cover our noses. They rumble past us, top heavy with loads of young and old men crowded into the back with no room to sit. They are the prisoners. They are a small fraction of the 36,000 accused genocide perpetrators

that are being released this August in Rwanda. Most have been held in prison for five to ten years, without trial. Now, after having confessed, they await trial in *Gacaca*, a traditional form of community-based arbitration revived to handle thousands of genocide-related cases.

Many of the men we see cramped into the trucks are guilty of looting and destruction of property. Some are guilty of murder. Others are innocent. Some are both, because nothing is pure in Rwanda. People who hid Tutsis also killed Tutsis. One of the men who hacked Solange's parents to pieces told her and her sisters to run before they too were killed. Her parents' murderer saved her life. How can Solange and the countless others like her know whether to love or to hate? Whether to fear the killers or thank the rescuers?

These are the questions the Friends Peace House grapples with via its *Gacaca* and Reintegration Program as prisoners return to their communities and new facts about neighbors and family members are uncovered by the *Gacaca* process. Sizeli Marcellin, Coordinator of the Friends Peace House and founder of the Reintegration Program, is himself a *Gacaca* judge and a survivor of the genocide. As he watched prisoners coming back to his community, he began to think of ways to encourage the released prisoners and the community members not only to interact, but also to actively rebuild their country together. Now, he brings prisoners and survivors together for intensive three-day seminars on conflict resolution, restorative justice and peaceful coexistence. After the workshops, graduates form diverse work teams to build houses for vulnerable families in their communities. Friends Peace House provides the roofing, but participants find the rest of the materials themselves. What makes this project unique is that perpetrators and victims work side by side – not only to build homes for genocide survivors, but also for prisoners' families and families that have been affected by AIDS.

"I, I am a survivor sitting with people who killed my whole family," Sizeli quotes a recent participant in the program as saying. "My whole family is gone, but we are here together. And we are working together. And together we are sensitizing our community to *Gacaca*, urging people to tell the truth."

Finding God

Without forcing forgiveness, without pushing reconciliation, the Quakers in Rwanda simply bring enemies together. In a land where Tutsis were called "cockroaches" and "snakes" and now Hutus are sometimes viewed as "génocidaires" and "demons", Rwandan Friends look for the human being behind the hate.

They are reaching for each other: the woman with the orange head scarf, speaking with compassion for prisoners' wives; Solange, trying to heal those who tried to kill her; Bucura, reaching across the divide to help a hurt child; Francoise, venturing out and finding good in others; Sizeli, dreaming of a time when the hurt is finally gone; and the countless others, slowly finding their way toward one another, to sit and work and cry together, to listen across Rwanda's deep wounds, to reweave the fabric of a torn nation. In the wake of unspeakable violence, in the face of fear and grief and rage, they have stepped out into no-man's land and found what makes us human: We all cry when we lose someone. We all love, or have loved. We all rage against those who hurt us. We all harbor guilt. We all harbor hope. There is that of God in each one of us.

Note: *Peace Cannot Stay in Small Places*, an evaluation of the AVP Rwanda program with *Gacaca* judges, may be obtained by emailing your name and address to dave@aglionline.org.



Members of the AVP Committee

of you who are kept here have held us in your hands on our birth days, others are our brothers and sisters. We remember that we used to be living in harmony. That is why we have been missing you so much for these last ten years. We came here to testify how we love you. This would look contradictory, but that is real! You are still important to us. We still hope that one day, you will be back home with us again. God's will is always good. We had wished to sit and chat with you today but the prison authorities have said that it would better to have such a gathering next Tuesday. We will come! This idea of coming to visit you started by one of us here after a HROC workshop we attended in Mutaho. And since then, many in the Mutaho IDP have supported it. Only eighteen could get a room in the van, if not there are still so many others who would wish to visit with you today. For sure, God will give us that day of Tuesday for us to share what is in our hearts." Then he asked one of his colleagues to hand over the envelope of money that the group had been collecting for their "friends" in prison. The delegation of prisoners was very touched and surprised by the loving heart showed by their former neighbors. They were also very thankful for their initiative in supporting them morally and financially, as life is not easy in prison.

The group would have preferred to stay for long but as the time given was over, they gave each other a goodbye hug hoping to meet again the following

Tuesday. "One never knows. We asked God for a one-day visit and then here we have been given one more. We are looking forward for next Tuesday." Mi-PAREC volunteered to cover transportation cost for the group from Mutaho on Tuesday.

On Tuesday, 23rd of August 2005, eighteen people from Mutaho, mainly from the Mutaho IDP camp, came for their second visit to their former neighbors who are in the Gitega Prison. If more transportation would have been available, many more other people would have joined in the visit. Nevertheless, those who were able to come were representing all those with such willingness. As in the first visit, the group was joined by Pastor Elie Nahimana, Levy Ndikumana, and myself.

After we entered the prison, we were welcomed by one of the prison officials and with the prisoners native to Mutaho. I remember this scene when folks were greeting each other. It was moving! Around twenty prisoners were hugging with those who came to visit them. And, Louis from Mutaho IDP camp said: "Is that old man my former neighbor? Oh, no, that one is too old!" And when he came closer, they hugged and laughed. "Do you know my friend, I could not recognize you." And the prisoner answered, "Don't you see that I have become old! It is not a joke, my brother. This place would have taken me half of my life, I tell you! The conditions are too bad! Tell me,

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Uganda

George Walumoli

how are my wife and children? I heard that some died from malaria. How are the remaining doing?" And Louis said, "Fine! But you would know that poverty is shaking every one there. But they are doing fine—they can manage." After the greeting time, individuals introduced themselves. It struck me that among the twenty prisoners there was no woman. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to ask if no woman would have been suspected or accused of killings.

Levy helped in being the master of ceremonies. As introduction, Levy Ndikumana expressed his joy at seeing the visit happening and indicated it as a big step towards reconciliation after what happened in the Mutaho community. He then wished a very enjoyable time to all gathered.

Andre Ndereyimana, the former Administrator of Mutaho Commune in 1993 and now kept in the Gitega prison, thanked the people from Mutaho IDP for their visit. It showed a real caring heart for those in prison. It is then that he said, "I am very touched to see you again. Last time, when we met for a short time and you said that you were going to come back, I could not believe it. Because, I said to myself that Mutaho is too far from here and I do not see how these people would get this energy and courage. And today, you accomplished what you had promised. It brings a big relief to us. You know, since we entered here in this prison, we do not know how the moon is like, neither the stars because before the night comes, we all are obliged to enter our rooms until the morning. It is too painful being here. From one morning to the next one, we are locked inside. It is during that time that one remembers all of what happened. And what follows the bad emotions, regrets, images of what we saw and so on. It is too heavy for us. So, to see your coming to visit us is like a miracle. The heavens are open for us and we rejoice. This gives us hope that another day, God will give us an opportunity to meet in the community."

As it is a custom for all Christian gatherings, Pastor Sebastien Kambayeko led us into worship using the passage in Eph 4:25-27: "Therefore, each one of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his

AGLI Resources

Burundi 2005 Workcamp, Parker Bennett, 15 minute CD on Nyarurambi workcamp.

Healing and Rebuilding Our Community, one hour DVD, talk by Adrien Niyongabo at Salem (OR) Meeting.

Friends Peacemaking in Burundi, 40 minute video, Judi Paxson

If you would like a copy please email dave@aglionline.org. There is no cost.

neighbor, for we are all members of one body. In your anger, do not sin: do not let the sun go down while you are still angry and do not give the devil a foothold."

It would have been our preference to stay for more time, but when the worship was done, we had only five minutes to say good-bye to one another. That was then the time folks started sending little messages to their families. "It is too bad that we did not get time for testimonies. It would have been a very wonderful way to put on the surface what this day has brought to us," said one of the prisoners. However, during that tiny time for a good-bye hug, we got to question two prisoners who shared how they were feeling.

"How did you feel when you saw the people [Tutsi] from Mutaho here?"

"Beyond the belief, beyond my belief! Sitting with them here, I just forgot the sentence pronounced against me. They brought me a new light. It is a new birthday for me!"

When we asked Athanase Barajingitwa, a Hutu and former primary school teacher, how he finds his stay in the prison, he said, "I would say that there are three categories of prisoners who are communally accused of what happened in 1993. 1) Those who really did kill, 2) those who are suspected of having collaborated

Continued from page 16: Love Has Replaced Hatred

with the killers or other wrongdoers, and 3) those innocently accused of genocide though they did nothing harmful. The last category is for people who were only disliked by their neighbors because of their ethnicity. In order to have them pay the 'broken pots,' bad things were put on their backs so that they would be jailed."

"The people who came to visit you acknowledged having been helped by the HROC and conflicts resolution workshops they have attended. What do you think about such opportunity here in the prison?"

"It is really powerful and impressive! I would want to attend them."

"Would you be willing to be trained as facilitator and afterwards volunteer to facilitate such workshops here in the prison?"

"That would be super. It would be much more impressive if we can go around the country with you conducting those workshops. I am sure that soon I will be released!"

We wished all good things to Athanase and may all his wishes be done.

Outside the prison, I was able to question some of the Mutaho IDP people. I was impatient to hear from Angès Ndayishimiye, the woman who the first suggested the idea. I asked her, "How do you feel after this visit in the prison?"

"Great joy, enthusiasm, proud! I am very excited because I have been able to unfold the love, forgiveness that I have been holding for a long time. I miss words to express my feelings. It is a special day for me and for us!"

"Did you get a sense of having achieved something by going to the Gitega prison today?"

"Oh, yes! I have showed my loving heart to those in prison. I am sure that it has been a good surprise for those in the prison to see so many people with such caring heart coming from our IDP camp. They would

never have imagined that! Well, I am certain that I have planted a tree of trust (big smile!)."

Another handsome man we talked to is Marius Nzeyimana, a Tutsi from Mutaho. Many of his relatives were badly slaughtered. Marius is now staying in the IDP camp with many of his in-laws orphans and widows.

"Marius, could you tell me what you are feeling after this visit?"

"As my colleagues are, I am also very happy, joyful, overwhelmed! It is a new step we made, an important one towards the recovery of our commune."

"What would you tell to all those who would hear about your heroic visit?"

"The wheel has turned!' We should not stay stuck in the past. We need to rebuild our country, our communities. Actually, I would not want to interfere with the justice's job [punishing those found guilty], but it would be my strong wish to see those in prison [Hutu] being released. It is true that I have lost many of my relatives and loved-ones. They are no longer alive. What sense would it make to lose two persons when you can rescue one? Even if the one to be rescued used to be your enemy, one needs to get the necessary strengths to rescue that person. That is where my forgiving power comes from."

"How did you get to that commitment, Marius? I find it very courageous!"

"We have attended many workshops organized by Mi-PAREC on conflicts resolution. But I was still traumatized though I was not aware of it and for me there was a conflict within myself. After I attended the HROC workshop, I realized how traumatized I was and found how I could heal. Holding all the bad emotions inside of me had kept me a prisoner of hatred. As soon as realized that I could let it go, I found the strength to forgive. HROC has been a real catalyst in all that!"

Pastor Sebastien Kambayeko, the HROC lead-facilitator from Mutaho IDP camp, did not want to hide his pride.

“My heart is full of happiness, joy and excitement. The dream has become reality. Last Saturday, after our short visit with the prisoners’ delegation, I was astonished by the congratulations that we received from those with whom we are staying in the Mutaho IDP camp. Years ago, not many in the IDP camp would have appreciated such a visit to the former Mutaho leaders kept in the prison. Instead, we would have been threatened. Praise God for that! I express my feelings of great gratitude and thankfulness to my teammates here, to HROC and Mi-PAREC for their undeniable support. It is true that I cannot change people, but I am sure that people could learn from what has been achieved.”

Pastor Elie Nahimana and Pastor Levy Ndikumana also took the opportunity to thank all the actors for this big achievement.

Pastor Elie said, “This is a great event for our Friends Church in Burundi. Most of the time, many people quickly recognize this or that organization because they see the many houses and roads built or can count how many people have been given food, blankets and so on. It is not often that the community healing and peace building organizations are familiar to those who would not have been in the program. I am fully convinced that the valuable work done by HROC and Mi-PAREC has brought a lot to the Mutaho community and elsewhere. One of their fruits is this visit that you have made. It is a big testimony that you have showed. We strongly recognize the good collaboration in peace building between the Friends Church in Burundi and local administration. We wish to keep this collaboration with the new government too. As Friends, we will never give up, with our diverse services, to be near the population, especially the vulnerable ones.”

Pastor Levy Ndikumana stated, “We praise your ongoing efforts in spreading out the peace building work. I am very excited to realize that among the peace committees that we are working with, the Mutaho one is among the best ones. It would be my great joy to

see Mutaho being rebuilt after the massive destructions that occurred there. This would never happen if the Mutaho folks are not involved in peace building, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa together. We congratulate Pastor Sebastien Kambayeko for his leadership. He has been a wonderful contact person in Mutaho. I think that we need to have many like him. We are very enthusiastic to hear you saying that the HROC workshops and Mi-PAREC conflict resolution seminars have enabled you to get to this stage. This shows how complementary these two programs are. Back in your communities, please keep peace with everybody. We are now observing many changes in our country’s leadership. The 1993 conflicts should have been a lesson to all of us. Then, we should not let ourselves be used by anyone who would want to disturb the peace in our community. Instead, resist them and be an instrument of change for the community’s well being.”

I approached Aimé-Claude, the driver from Mi-PAREC, who helped with driving the group back and forth from Mutaho, “How do you see this visit?”

“There is no way that you can do such a thing without being led by God’s Spirit! The Spirit led this group! I have a great respect for them.”

“What do you mean by being led by God’s Spirit?”

“Understand that you are called to do good to the one who did wrong to you. In that way, instead of pushing the person away from you, which will put all of you into isolation, you bring the person back to you, which will put all of you into communion. This group has showed a wonderful way of communion. May all Burundians follow this excellent example.”

As Friends, we will never give up, with our diverse services, to be near the population, especially the vulnerable ones.

group was not open to breaking that person's square or looking for another way to resolve the situation so they were unable to successfully finish the exercise. They received a great lesson about observing what we possess, and what we think we possess, and how sometimes we need to give something up for the greater good of the larger group.

In another small group there were members who were satisfied with their own square and did not lift a finger to help the other members complete their squares. They learned that even when times are good, we need to be looking out for the needs of others. Another small group learned that they need to find new ways to look at their problem if they are to find a solution. In one group a member had all the pieces he needed to complete his square, yet he could only see one way to place the pieces together, which did not create a square. He placed the pieces in the same incorrect way over and over again. How many times do we find ourselves doing the same thing over and over even when we know that it does not work? In another small group, one member finished her own square and had some pieces left over. She never gave these pieces to her group members so they were unable to complete their squares. She had the solution to their problem but was unwilling to share the resources. Many lessons were learned from this exercise.

All of the role-plays were very interesting; one in particular bears mentioning. One group took on the very real problem of rape in the Congo. Soldiers use rape as a weapon leaving the raped women traumatized and rejected by their husbands and families. Participants asked the following question, "Is it possible for a woman to accept being raped in order to save her life, and is it possible to refuse being raped?" A guideline that became a central focus of this discussion was—"be willing to suffer for what is important." A range of experiences was shared; from a woman who escaped rape by fighting back, to a woman who was killed when she tried to fight back. There followed an intense discussion of where Transforming Power fits in these two scenarios.

The AVP activities brought out many issues facing the Congo right now, particularly around the question of

identity. The group discussed how difficult it is to approach people they don't know with simple introductory questions when they are living in such traumatic times. Simple questions such as "Where are you from?" can lead to great conflict when there is so much tribalism in the country. We discussed how to counteract that, and how to ask questions in a way that is not intimidating to another person. In our exercises and discussions on leadership, they experienced first hand how egocentrism, lack of communication, selfishness, and the use of force are just not effective. This led to our exploration of consensus as an alternative model. The group had a very difficult time comprehending consensus and how it fits into the democratic model that they are currently trying to construct in The Congo. They had such a difficult time with the consensus process, that they asked the facilitators to leave the room, thinking that it was the facilitators who were causing the difficulties. On their own they were finally able to come to consensus and chose the focus topic of Anger, with two people standing aside.

The class also greatly appreciated the exercises, which require participants to demonstrate both sides of a situation. They became able to understand how anger escalates and how forgiveness can diminish anger. In one of our forgiveness exercises, a participant shared how this exercise helped him to forgive his brother in law who had stabbed his sister to death. His example became the role model for other participants and added a whole new dimension to the experience.

On the morning of the day that we were scheduled to leave for the basic apprentice workshop in Bunyakiri, we received word that there had been a massacre there recently and six people were dead and many wounded. After much research and a visit to the local hospital where the wounded were brought, we found out that the massacre had taken place a week before and was in a village 12 kilometers away from Bunyakiri. The facilitation team of Mbakwa Malenga, Mawazo wa Mahango and Mary Kay Jou, using a consensus process, decided to travel to Bunyakiri as planned.

When the team arrived we were warmly welcomed by a group of people who were very happy to see us.

The church choir and the children's choir sang songs for us, and everyone prayed for a successful workshop.

On the first day we were happy to see the diversity of participants. Included in the group were a Rwandan refugee, a Pygmy, a former child soldier; as well as representatives from the local human rights committee, the association of women for peace, and the Chief of the village. It soon became clear that this was a group of quick learners, ready to work, and extremely open to the teachings of AVP. The community building exercises on the first day gave them the opportunity to get to know each other and broke some of the stereotypes they had about each other.

They found many lessons pertaining to the war and the plight of refugees within the AVP exercises. This led to a great discussion of people who flee for safety and they still don't land in a safe place, and they need to flee again. This was a very important lesson for a community like Bunyakiri where war has raged for years and Rwandan refugees still live.

On the second day, we chose the theme, "How I plan to use these teachings in my life." The former child soldier shared with the group that he had a 14 year-old brother who was still in the army and that he was determined to go and speak to him about all he has learned through AVP in order to help get him out of the army.

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AVP-Rwanda: Nyamata "Hot-Spot" Project Funded

The Drane Family Fund of the New Hampshire Foundation has granted AGLI and the Friends Peace House in Rwanda funding to implement intensive AVP workshops in the "hot spot" district of Nyamata, the site of some of the most brutal massacres during the genocide. Local leaders in Nyamata want AVP to bring together genocide survivors, *Gacaca* (local community courts) witnesses, and genocidaires who have repented. The leaders believe that AVP's approach has the potential to begin to build pockets of peace within this community.

Nyamata is home to two of Rwanda's most disturbing and haunting memorial sites: two churches in which a total of 15,000 people were murdered. The Director of these memorial sites told Laura Shipler Chico that before the genocide, Nyamata had approximately 120,000 inhabitants, 70,000 of whom were Tutsi. Of these Tutsi, only 2,000 survived the killings of 1994. Today, tens of thousands of genocide perpetrators have been released and are returning to their home communities. Nyamata has many young and old men who are coming back after 10 years in prison. This has renewed conflict, and according to the Director of the memorial sites, perpetrators have threatened to kill again saying, "We are used to prison. We will kill you all again and go back to prison." On the other side, a survivor from Nyamata said, "Among all these Hutus, there is not one man who has done well. They all have done bad. Almost their entire race has killed." It is clear that much work is needed in Nyamata – it is a wounded and tense place with hatreds and fear that run very deep.

Over a six months period, AVP-Rwanda plans to conduct twenty AVP workshops for 400 people. These will include women, youth, community leaders, and elders/opinion leaders. It will be the first time that AGLI has invested such a great amount of resources in one area to attempt to make a significant impact not only on the individuals involved, but the total community. Laura Shipler Chico and Joyce Akejesu will assess the impact of the program in the district. Interviews will be conducted both one-on-one and in focus group settings and will be designed to identify shifts in behavior, attitudes and core beliefs that result from AVP.

Estimated Deaths Due to War

US Civil War	1,100,000
World War I	8,500,000
Africa's World War	10,650,000
Darfur, Sudan	200,000 (and counting)
Southern Sudan	2,500,000
Uganda	300,000
Rwanda	850,000
Burundi	300,000
Congo	4,000,000 (and counting)
Angola	2,500,000

The Friends Peace Teams will be hiring a full time coordinator to administer and fundraise for Friends Peace Teams' programs including the African Great Lakes Initiative. The preferred location is St Louis. For more details please contact Val Liveoak at FPT@friendspeaceteams.org or 877/814-6972 by January 10, 2006.

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