

## A New Face for America?

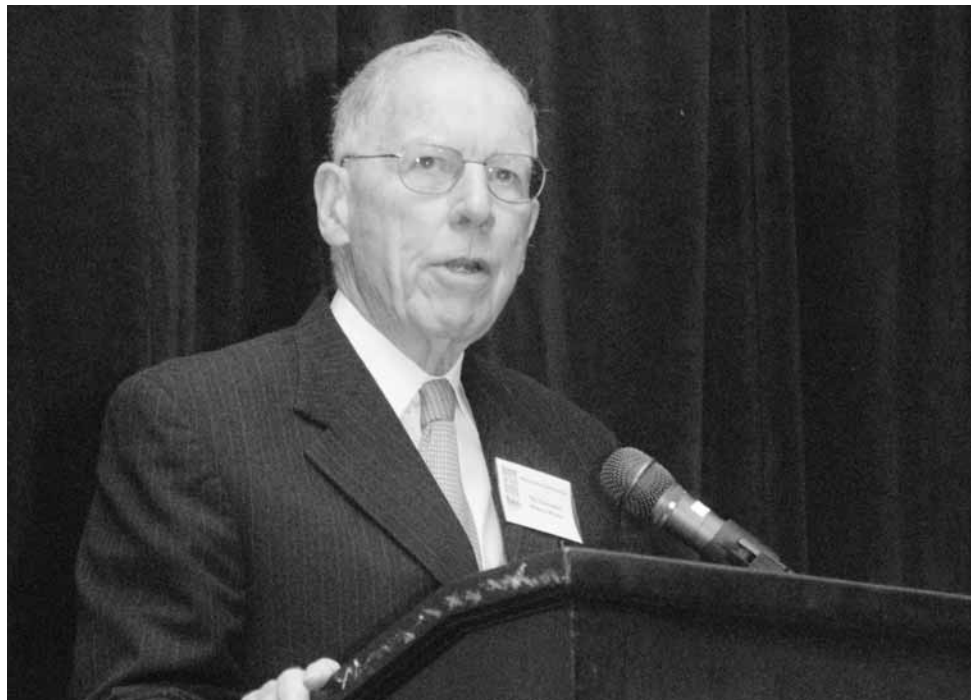
Americans enter the election year uncertain about their place in an increasingly insecure world. Many are fearful about their personal future as recession looms. No single individual or political party can offer solutions adequate to the challenges we face at home or abroad. The old ways are not working; it's time for a new start.

Columnist Richard Cohen writes that a new beginning must involve "a fresh face that will reconcile the country with itself and the world, get over divisions – internal and external – and speak with honesty about America's glory and shame."

What quality of leadership can offer this fresh face? "Nothing to prove, nothing to justify, nothing to gain for myself" was the guiding principle of Kim Beazley, a great Australian politician who died recently. His personal integrity and a desire to encourage the best in others won trust across party lines and led to far-reaching educational reform for aboriginal children. How would the political landscape in this country be transformed by such an approach? How would the US be welcomed by the rest of the world?

Reconciling America with the world and with itself is not just the responsibility of politicians. It is the task of each one of us. This was the belief of Frank Buchman, a small town American who launched Initiatives of Change. He said that IofC "creates the qualities that make democracy function," by giving everyone the inner discipline they need and the inner liberty they desire. "It calls out and combines the moral and spiritual responsibility of individuals for their immediate sphere of action."

In this issue we feature inspiring stories of Americans who are accepting the challenge of personal change and putting their convictions to work. This summer some fifty graduates of our Caux Scholars Program – many of them Americans – will return to Caux to share their experiences as peacemakers. Is this the new face of America the world is waiting to see?



## "Encourage Innovation and Risk," Leaders Told

### Metropolitan Richmond Day Focuses on Area Schools

In a call for courageous, far-sighted leadership, William Winter, former Governor of Mississippi, said responsible citizenship means "doing the things that may not immediately and directly benefit us but will create for those who come after us the opportunity for a more fulfilling and productive life."

Can we create an environment that encourages and rewards innovation and risk? Four hundred and fifty Richmond leaders wrestled with this question at Metropolitan Richmond Day, organized by Hope in the Cities on November 8 as they considered the future of the region's schools.

Winter was keynote speaker at the kick-off breakfast, which was also attended by students from public and private schools. Thirty-five non-profit organizations and twenty corporations supported the event.

According to Winter, closing the racial gap is "our most important unfinished business," and it is not just a Southern problem. "All of this is a matter of trying to be honest with ourselves and with each other. It is a matter of developing a sense of trust. That is admittedly harder for blacks to do than for whites. For black people have more to forgive even if they cannot and probably should not forget. But there must come a time when we have to recognize that we are all in this together – when we must move past the old divisions of race and understand our common interests and our common humanity."

"A high quality public school system is the highest priority for the advancement of our cities," said Winter, who served on President Clinton's National Advisory Board on Race. Winter is also credited with reinventing public education in Mississippi. When he became Governor in 1982, the state's schools ranked last in the nation by most measures. His

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*Winter cont'd.*

sweeping education reform created the first publicly funded kindergarten in Mississippi. Winter noted that fifty years ago Mississippi and Virginia had made common cause in massive resistance against school integration, but now they could be allies in finding constructive solutions to today's complex and difficult challenges.

In the last twenty years the percentage of low income students in the South grew from 37 percent to 54 percent. "These children are automatically at risk." Meanwhile schools are becoming re-segregated. "I must tell you that the problem of race, despite all the progress we have made, remains the thorniest, trickiest and most difficult barrier that we confront in achieving a truly united country."

"The huge demographic shift – the number of children in the South grew by over 3 million in the nineties, and half of the increase was among Latino children – means it is vital that we make schools places where people of different races can learn to respect and understand one another," Winter said.

Winter referred to the 2004 State of the South Report by researchers at MDC, a non-profit organization in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, which works to close the gaps that separate people from opportunity, primarily in the South.

The report asked: "Can the South muster the will to develop public schools aligned with the demands of a fast-changing economy? Can the region develop schools that meet the needs of a multi-ethnic, democratic society? ...Southerners must

recognize the consequences of economic isolation and a divided society as a threat to their self-interest."

When he joined Clinton's Advisory Board, Winter admitted he had misgivings on learning that one member was a black woman preacher from New York City. "All of my old Southern white male biases started to surface. I thought to myself without ever having met her, 'That woman is going to cause trouble.' And then I met her. She was absolutely delightful. We bonded immediately. Later, after we had gotten to know each other well, I told her of my initial reservations. 'Let me tell you something,' she said, 'When they told me there was going to be an old ex-governor of Mississippi on the commission, I knew I wouldn't be able to get along with him!'" The audience responded to Governor Winter's speech with an enthusiastic standing ovation.

## Panel Responds to Keynote Address

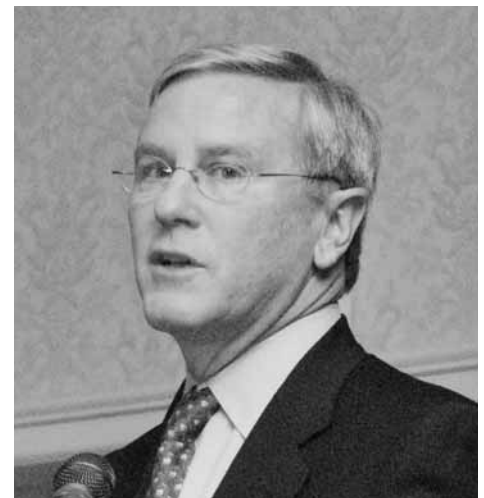
After delivering his keynote address former Mississippi Governor William Winter joined a panel moderated by *Richmond Times-Dispatch* columnist Michael Paul Williams.

Other panelists were: Robert Bobb, president of the Washington [DC] Board of Education, and former Richmond City Manager; Tichi Pinkney-Epps, president of the Richmond PTA and member of the NAACP; and Don Cowles, a former corporate executive who now heads Hope in the Cities' dialogue initiative on healthy integrated public schools.

"We've got to declare a reading emergency," and also dedicate resources to programs from birth to five years for children from low-income families, Bobb said. "We have to create not just centers of excellence, but excellent schools in every neighborhood," he emphasized.

Don Cowles observed two hopeful indicators: "There is a growing appreciation among people like me – the privileged – of the capacity of those who are not privileged. Through the Micah Initiative, which is pairing scores of faith communities with elementary schools, people like me are beginning to meet, trust and love all kids. There is also a growing desperation for change among business leaders who need everyone for their future workforce." But he acknowledged, "I need to have more conversations with my peers. We don't really know what happens in schools, and recommendations are made without real knowledge."

Many members of Governor Winter's breakfast audience stayed to hear the panel and formed small groups to discuss the issues raised. More than twenty students from the region's public and private schools added their voices to the discussion.



*Don Cowles*



*Tichi Pinkney-Epps, Don Cowles, Michael Paul Williams, Robert Bobb, William Winter*

## Newsbreaks

**The Imam and the Pastor** won First Prize at the Africa World Documentary Festival, held this fall in St. Louis, MO, and in Nigeria. Godwin Agbara, a Nigerian working in Washington, comments: "More important than this much deserved award are the many lives I believe the film has touched, and will continue to." See page eight for more details and ordering information.

**Pakistan Update** at IofC Washington office: International lawyer Farooq Hassan, from Lahore, Pakistan, spoke about the current situation in his country at a brown bag lunch on December 12, in IofC's Washington office. Dr. Hassan, who is also an American citizen, expressed concern that the US is losing its moral authority in Pakistan, and said that it is not in America's long term interest to support a regime that is so out of favor with its people. He thanked those in the US Congress who are forthrightly challenging the current government's actions. Randy Ruffin commended Hassan's moral courage for his remarks.

**Caux 2008:** The 62nd Annual Caux Conference will focus on addressing the root causes of human insecurity. The IofC summer season at Caux opens July 3, 2008, with a conference on the theme, Global Servant- Leadership: Contributing to Human Security. Make plans to attend. More information on page seven.

**Canadian IofC** marks 400th Anniversary of Quebec City. A weekend of activities, starting Friday evening, May 23rd, 2008, and concluding at noon on Sunday 25th will provide a unique opportunity to revisit Quebec's and Canada's history and to build a future of rich diversity. The weekend will be based at the Chateau Bonne Entente in Quebec City.

To request a registration form, contact RandyRuffin@aol.com (703-821-1930) or write to Laurent Gagnon (Initiatives of Change, 195 avenue Gerald, LaSalle QC, H8P 2A2, Canada) lgagnon@ca.iofc.org.

## Honest Conversation Opened His Eyes

In 1998, Bob Armstrong, a prominent member of the white community in Selma, Alabama, came to Richmond, Virginia, along with eight other Selmians of varied backgrounds to participate in Hope in the Cities training in "Honest Conversations."

"I had never heard of the concept of white privilege before I encountered Hope in the Cities," says Armstrong. "At one point I asked, 'Why does it always have to be about race?' An African American responded gently but firmly, 'Maybe you're not being honest with yourself; maybe it often is about race.' I have never forgotten that moment of truth. It opened my eyes to my own arrogance," he recalled recently.

Selma gained global notoriety in 1965 when police attacked civil rights marchers on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The incident spurred Congress to pass the Voting Rights Act. But local racial attitudes were slow to change.

Judge Armstrong is a deeply committed Christian who believes Selma is ready for a spiritual awakening. In the summer of 2005 during his morning quiet time, he reflected on how the period of forty years in the Bible often symbolizes a time of penance and trial. It had been 40 years since the Civil Rights movement came to Selma.

"It occurred to me that forty years ago Selma and Dallas County had a great opportunity to move into the Promised Land by working together to share leadership, but many in the white community wanted to stay in the wilderness and hold on to power. Now, forty years later, we are finally beginning to move on."

Now the Dallas County District Court Judge in Selma, Armstrong has helped to launch a Fatherhood Initiative to support young fathers, many of them African American, who pass through Child Support Court. Parenting classes and counseling take place in the Judge's courthouse; the local community college provides short term skill training; and job placement services are provided separately by a team of three case workers.

In January 2006, Judge Armstrong was chosen as guest speaker at the annual Martin Luther King Breakfast in Selma, sponsored by the local Chapter of Links.

"The breakfast was started as a symbol to promote friendship and harmony among the races in this community. Judge Armstrong was chosen as speaker this year because he is a

person of great integrity who has, through the years, worked and touched all races and all ages of people in our area," says Juanda Maxwell, president of the Selma Chapter. Links is a not-for-profit organization of women of color, committed to enhancing the quality of life in their communities.



Bob Armstrong

# YOUNG AMERICANS

## Richmond Couple Opens Hearts and Home

### Taking Personal Responsibility for Creating A Just and Inclusive Community

by Matthew Freeman

I grew up in a suburb of Richmond built largely during Virginia's "Massive Resistance" against court-mandated racial desegregation. My middle school was named after the architect of Massive Resistance legislation, Senator Harry F. Byrd, and my high school was named after a confederacy historian. Our high school mascot was a confederate soldier brandishing a sword; my junior year we titled our yearbook "We're not just whistling Dixie." I attended a prestigious Virginia university where only 5% of the

student body was African American.

In light of this personal history, it often surprises me that I now find myself in a very different part of Richmond spending my time working towards racial reconciliation. I recently moved to a neighborhood where I am overwhelmingly in the racial minority and I lead worship at an African American church.

My personal awakening to the tragedies of Richmond's history happened, ironically, while studying in a Canadian seminary. But it was the Initiatives of Change network in Richmond that helped me find my way once I moved back home. I was encouraged and inspired by the commitment to acknowledging and healing Richmond's painful history, having honest conversation with people from different walks of life, and taking personal responsibility for creating a just and inclusive community. IofC equipped me with tools to further the work of racial justice and introduced me to an incredibly diverse network of people who shared their vision.

My wife and I have just moved into a house in a predominantly black and working-class neighborhood. We are living here with 3 other people, all seeking to be involved in the neighborhood by opening our home to everyone. We have community dinner three nights a week, to which all are welcome. We have space for people who need a place to stay for a while. We advocate for justice in our neighborhood and city. At the heart of it all, we're seeking to open our hearts and our home in order to break down the barriers that many of my Richmond ancestors worked to create. And we're grateful for the support of the IofC network, who continually challenge and inspire us to persevere in this effort.

*Matthew and Sarah Freeman both graduated from William and Mary College in Virginia and Regent College in Vancouver. They now live at Gabriel House Catholic Worker in Richmond, VA, where they work for racial reconciliation and justice.*

*Emily Harry, Matthew & Sarah Freeman*



# ACTING ON IDEALS

## Sudan Introduced to “Peace Circles”

“Forgiveness Comes From Strength,” Says Participant

by *Clementine Lue Clark*

This last October, I joined a Creators of Peace team of seven women who went to Sudan to introduce ‘Peace Circles’ to Sudanese women. Creators of Peace (CoP), a program of Initiatives of Change, had been invited to the Sudan by Angelina Teny, Minister of State and Deputy Minister for Petroleum and Energy in the Khartoum government.

The CoP team came from Switzerland, India, Australia, South Africa, United Kingdom, Nigeria, Jamaica, and the United States. Through the “Peace Circles” we hoped to equip Sudanese women to unlock their potential as agents for peace and take action for the betterment of the country.

The group facilitated two workshops: one in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, and one in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. The participants

included a mixture of scholars, politicians, social activists focused on women's issues, local NGOs, and students. Our Sudanese hosts welcomed us warmly.

Sudan is Africa's biggest country and its population is divided along religious, ethnic and socio-economic lines: between Muslims and Christians, Arab and African, nomad and farmer.

*Clementine Clark leading a Peace Circle in Khartoum*

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*Sudan cont'd.*

Under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in 2005, the civil war between the Arab, Muslim North and the Christian and Animist, black African South came to an end. But the implementation of the CPA has been weakened by lack of trust and political will. There still remain other unresolved internal regional conflicts, particularly the Darfur region in western Sudan.

In Sudan, women have led the effort in rebuilding the local communities. As caregivers, the individuals most commonly responsible for raising children, women have a choice between perpetuating cycles of violence and prejudice or fostering families and communities that value forgiveness, positive change and peace. CoP can be effective in this vital stage of the country's development, because it challenges women to forgive and take individual steps in their lives to right the wrongs.

Many workshop participants expressed appreciation for the often overlooked spiritual and personal introspection fostered by CoP's peace circles. Others commented on the uniqueness of the approach, the depth reached and the opportunity for Northerners and Southerners, Muslims and Christians, to sit together and share in a deeply personal way.

One participant said, "This is the first workshop that dealt with me as a human being. There are many things I will not forget. Forgiveness is not a weakness but comes from strength." During both workshops the women faced decisions around forgiveness. One said, "My conclusion is that forgiveness has to be unconditional."

The team's showing of the documentary film *The Imam and the Pastor* had a surprising impact. The film is about two Nigerian men – one Muslim, the other Christian – who develop a personal relationship that leads to regional peace. It resonated with the participants because of the Muslim/Christian nature of the North/South conflict in Sudan.

They could see the impact of an individual's choice on their nation.

Each morning CoP team members shared reflections from our morning quiet time. This helped to build a sense of honesty and trust in our team. These times also gave our hosts a much needed opportunity to reflect and listen for guidance.

After hearing Sudanese women talk about strained relationships with family members and their need and desire for forgiveness, I was compelled to take a personal step. I wrote a letter to my stepsister apologizing for not valuing our relationship enough, and being jealous of her relationship with my own father growing up. Upon my return from this trip I've started a Creators of Peace Circle here in Boston to bring some of these same ideas of personal responsibility closer to home.

Visit the website to learn about Creators of Peace: [www.iofc.org/en/programmes/cop/](http://www.iofc.org/en/programmes/cop/)

*Clementine Lue Clark has an MA in CoExistence and Conflict from Brandeis University. She is an independent consultant based in Boston, focused on peacebuilding and teambuilding.*



*Clementine and Dinka woman Nyandeng Malek, from the South. "She had a significant personal transformation when she decided to join us in Khartoum, after not going there for 18 years because of her hatred for the North."*

# Opening the Way to Peace at Caux

## Americans Urged to Attend

By Richard Ruffin

A unique conference, addressing the root causes of human insecurity, will be held in Caux, Switzerland, next July 18-23 (see schedule below). Americans are especially invited to play a part. It will bring together those who work for peace by seeking to bring answers to the deep fears and insecurities of people everywhere. The aim is to provide a spiritual oasis where those who work to build trust across the world's divides, whether at the community level or in the midst of violent conflicts, can learn from one another, develop a greater trust among themselves and find inspiration and encouragement for the work still ahead.

The conference is inspired by Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, President of IofC International and a man widely respected for his contribution to resolving some of the world's most intractable conflicts. Sahnoun brought Kofi Annan to Caux last August and he has personally invited over 100 influential personalities from the worlds of politics, thought, the media and civil society to join him in Caux next summer. A former prime minister of Australia, a current head of state from West Africa and senior officials at the UN have indicated they would like to attend.

Who will they meet? What will they find? Certainly, those working at the grassroots, whether in regions of conflict such as Sierra Leone and the Middle East, or in local communities struggling to overcome racial or religious tensions, have a significant part. So do ordinary people who are finding answers to their personal fears and insecurities.

A particular hope is that those who come from around the world will meet Americans ready to listen and to learn and who can speak humbly and confidently of their own efforts to build trust across the world's divides. The presence of such Americans could do much to overcome a distrust that has grown to alarming levels in recent years. It could also lay a basis for the collaboration across the world that will be essential to bring answers to the causes of human insecurity everywhere. Please consider your participation in this conference so that you can add to the world's hope.

## Caux Schedule, Summer 2008

Throughout the summer conference season, which opens July 3, 2008, Mountain House will continue its role of supporting those engaged in trying to bring change, healing and peace. Caux will also offer a neutral and inspiring venue where participants can share their experiences and learn from each other and gain training and tools for personal change. This is the 62nd year of Caux conferences. But each year marks new beginnings. Here are some of them for 2008:

- **July 3-9 - Global Servant Leadership: Contributing to Human Society** - What are the leadership, life-skills and tools that could help overcome fears, superstitions and misunderstandings? We invite you to seek and find answers in discussions and practice at Caux.
- **July 11 – 16 - Trust and Integrity in the Global Economy (TIGE)** - The TIGE conference organized by Caux Initiatives for Business explores how positive change in the global economic system can be achieved through a shared commitment to personal integrity.
- **July 18-23 - Addressing the Root Causes of Human Insecurity** - An Interactive Dialogue The underlying cause of insecurity is to be found in society, but also in each and every one of us. Through stepping back and discovering the world afresh everyone can see things in

a new light and create solutions that will consolidate security.

**July 25 – Aug. 1 - Tools for Change** - An experienced international faculty will lead interactive courses in peacebuilding, dialogue, communications, strategic partnerships, and the core values of Initiatives of Change as resources for community change agents.

**Aug. 3 – 10 - Renewal Arts** - We invite people of all cultures and faiths to share a week of interactive creative workshops, discussions with artists, master classes and performances.

**August 12 – 17 - Developing Cultural Dialogue: Learning to Live Together with Difference** - The way different groups and communities move towards one another can help to bridge differences and reduce tensions, for example between the West and the Muslim world.

**Caux Scholars 2008 Reunion** - Former Caux Scholars are invited to return to Caux to participate in and assist with the July 18-23 and the July 25 - August 1 conferences, and to brainstorm about the future of the program. A 'Reunion Day' celebration will be held on July 24th.

**Caux Artists Program** - The Caux Artists Program (CAP) is a pilot project of Renewal Arts taking place in Caux from July 20 - August 17. Twenty young artists from diverse cultural and faith backgrounds, who feel a strong calling to work in the fields of drama, musical theatre or music, will study and perform with four distinguished artists from the Renewal Arts faculty. The program will explore the power of art as a catalyst for change in people and society. For additional information, write Bev Appleton at: [bev@renewalarts.net](mailto:bev@renewalarts.net).

The complete conference schedule may be viewed on the Caux website: [www.caux.ch](http://www.caux.ch).

Invitations are included with this issue of Breakthroughs. Contact the Richmond office if you need a copy.

# SHARE THE CAUX EXPERIENCE AND VISION WITH THESE EXCITING NEW FILMS AND BOOKS

**VISIONS FOR PEACE** - (DVD) Produced by Mike Lowe, Chris Hartnell, Erik Parsons, and Mike Smith; filmed, directed and edited by Bo Giss and Eric Rosen; funded by IofC Sweden. Featuring:

- Kofi Annan's Speech and Q&A at the 2007 Caux Conference
- A Conversation with Mohamed Sahnoun, President of IofC International; the conversation includes his vision for Caux

**TOOLS FOR CHANGE** - (DVD) Eight short features filmed and produced by members of the 2007 Caux Communications Learning Track

- *The Story of the Great Mountain House* by Le Ngan (Vietnam).
- *Around the Coffee Table with Kofi*, featuring Howard Grace, Sam Pono, and Obas Ukoko, by Kofi Bassaw Quartey (Ghana).
- *The Celery Peace, a story* by Alex Birnberg (Australia), co-produced by Cristina Cojocaru-Parsons (Moldova).
- *The Sound of Service, a tribute to Brian Thirlaway* by Sturla Johnson (Norway).
- *Renewal Arts and Tools for Change*, by Bev Appleton (USA).
- *My First Experience of CAUX*, by Elkana Folorunso (Nigeria).
- *A Christian-Muslim Encounter, between Rev Tony Bradley and Imam Musharraf Hussain*, produced by Mike Smith (UK).
- *A Look in the Mirror, featuring Fabiola Benevente* (Mexico), produced by Mike Lowe (UK/Australia).

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1-10 Copies:	US \$15.00 plus freight
10-49 Copies:	US \$12.00 plus freight
50 + Copies:	US \$10.00 plus freight

Shipping Costs will vary depending on order weight and method of shipment. To order DVD's in NTSC format for North America, contact Charles Aquilina in the Washington Office of IofC: Phone: + 202-872-9077; Fax: +1-202 -872-9137; email: ckaquilina@aol.com

**THE IMAM AND THE PASTOR** - (DVD) Produced by IofC and First Prize winner at the Africa World Documentary Festival in 2007, the film tells how Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa became co-directors of a Muslim-Christian Interfaith Mediation Centre, leading task-forces to resolve conflicts across Nigeria.

The DVD is available from the Washington office for \$25.00 for personal use; \$60.00 for non-profits; \$200.00 for institutional/educational use. Contact Charles Aquilina as above.

**A SONG FOR THE WORLD** - (BOOK) The story of the Colwell Brothers and Herb Allen whose lives and music touched millions worldwide in the 50's and 60's when they founded and toured with the musical group Up With People. Available from [www.asongfortheworld.com](http://www.asongfortheworld.com), special offer at \$15.00 for softcover (originally \$24.95); two hardcover books for the price of one at \$34.95.

Announcing a valuable new book, inspired by Hope in the Cities:

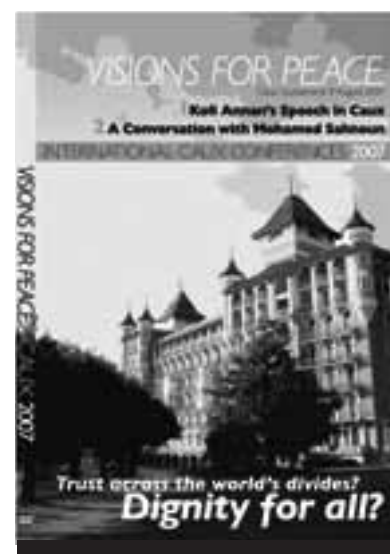
**THE LITTLE BOOK OF DIALOGUE FOR DIFFICULT SUBJECTS** by Lisa Schirch and David Campt offers an excellent step by step guide on how to effectively utilize dialogue to ease tensions around divisive issues. The book can be valuable in assisting communities as they seek to forge more united communities. Order advance copies (\$4.95) on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) or at [www.bookofdialogue.com](http://www.bookofdialogue.com)

Breakthroughs is published by Initiatives of Change (IofC), an open, global network committed to building trust across the world's divides where the needs of the human family are met. Your tax-deductible contributions are vital in sustaining this work. Learn more about IofC and how you can be a part of this work at [www.us.iofc.org](http://www.us.iofc.org).

Please send your Breakthroughs ideas, stories, comments or questions to Rob Corcoran ([Rob.Corcoran@us.iofc.org](mailto:Rob.Corcoran@us.iofc.org)) or Don Cowles ([Don.Cowles@us.iofc.org](mailto:Don.Cowles@us.iofc.org)) at: 2201 West Broad Street, Suite 200, Richmond, VA 23220. Phone: (804)358-1764

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*The Imam and the Pastor*