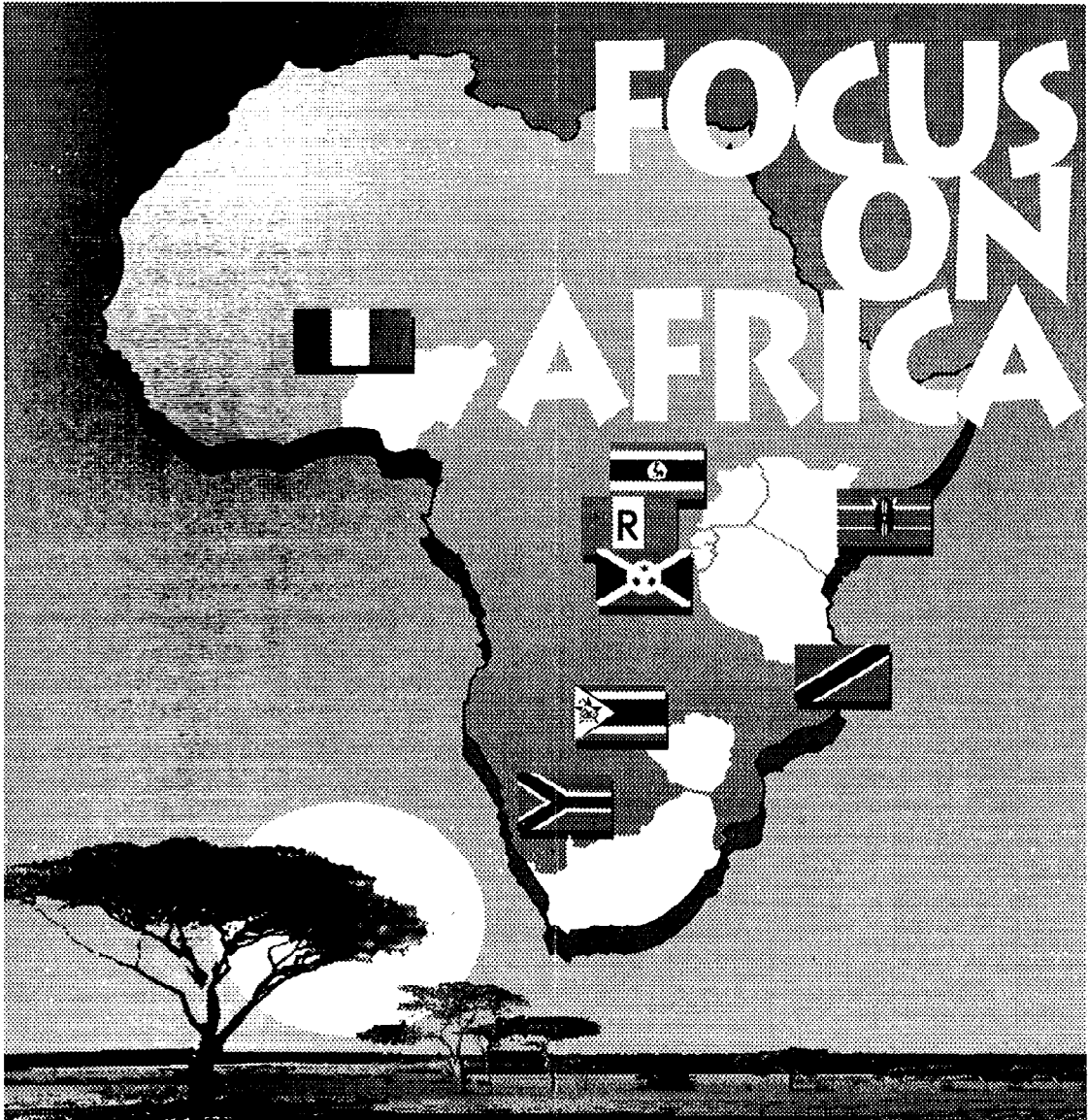


Spring 1999

Alternatives to Violence Project Newsletter for Facilitators

the TRANSFORMER



Transforming AVP-USA



Rebuilding AVP-USA Based on Honesty, Respect, and Caring

*By Kaki Sjogren,
AVP-Pennsylvania*

Almost seven years since the founding of AVP-USA, and four years since the establishment of a national office, the Board met in Albany, NY, over Presidents' Day weekend. Some of us had to outrace a snowstorm, while others had to outwit striking airline pilots. Upon arrival we were warmly greeted and royally treated by our hosts in what had been a tall, stately, turreted mansion, now the Albany Friends Meeting.

We had come with trepidation, but not due to the weather report. Six months before our Executive Director, Marjorie Kerr had reported continuing funding problems, a drop in volunteerism, a drop in productivity of committees and in enthusiasm. Short of a significant change in the trend, she said, we should adopt a plan to shut down the national office and discontinue the salaried staff position. The Leadership Team (our corporate officers and the executive director) were then instructed by the Board to create a shutdown plan. The Structures Committee and an Imagine a New Society ("INSE") Ad Hoc Committee were to review AVP administration, management and governance in antici-

pation of adapting to an all volunteer national organization.

Before leaving for the Board meeting, we had received packets of proposals to restructure AVP-USA. There were six, plus another delivered on site, as well as the Leadership Team plan for shutdown. There were obviously many points of view to be considered. "How", we asked ourselves, "would we come to consensus about anything?"

The Leadership Team had the onerous task of facilitating us through the morass. They had cleverly devised an agenda for the first day and one-half that looked very much like an AVP advanced workshop agenda. Early on the first evening we learned to affirm by standing "ovation", a practice that was to be repeated time and again. We contradicted the perceptions that AVP is too big, and AVP is too serious, and AVP is all mixed up, by forming small groups, singing silly songs, and putting together jigsaw puzzle pieces marked by AVP regions. We brainstormed the goals of AVP-USA and the means to those goals, and then held a "dime auction" to assess the value of the means. Consensus decision-making got some of the highest bids.

We worked very hard at the consensus decision making process. Everyone wanted to be clear that we were doing the right thing. No one wanted even one of us to be uncomfortable with what we were doing. Some were impatient with the process, wanting to get on with closing the office. Others voiced caution, saying that we might be "throwing the baby out with the bath water", that our problem of a lack of volunteerism would remain after closing the national office, leaving us with no organization. When there were three persons still opposed to closing the office at

the start of the second night session, we entered into a fishbowl. By the end of the evening we had consensus. No one would stand in the way of the decision. The office would close, and we would spend the next day and one half determining how the organization would function thereafter.

It was a tearful time, for it meant that Marjorie Kerr would no longer be that friendly voice at the other end of the AVP-USA line. We could no longer lean on her. We would all have to lean on each other. Half of us went to work identifying and prioritizing tasks to be handled during the transition. The other half of us created a vision of an organization that would be nonhierarchical, streamlined and as simple as possible. We would volunteer for tasks to take us through the transition time, and cast a proposed form for restructuring to be decided upon definitely at the annual meeting September 3-6, in Burlington, NJ.

We left believing we had developed a truly egalitarian form for the organization. With this structure and your involvement, we may have time to serve national while serving as facilitators at the local level. In the closing moments of the meeting, we built an affirmation pyramid around Marjorie, opening up new space for her in our community. And as we left, it felt we had "walked our talk"!



New Organizational Structure:

*by Candace Mayer LaRue,
AVP-New York*

In the first year of the development of AVP/USA, two alternative visions

for a national organization were considered. One vision, which was accepted at that time, was a fairly traditional nonprofit corporation model with strong central administration. The other alternative structure was for a non-hierarchical approach - uncharted territory back then, and uncharted territory it remains. However, after more than 6 years of hard and often frustrating work it seems that the traditional, hierarchical approach is flawed for us, and that an alternative vision, one which is more consistent with AVP values and mission, is a crucial and exciting next step.

At the most recent AVP/USA meeting an attempt was made to enter those uncharted waters. The first steps in devising a nontraditional national organization are outlined below. The "final" version will never exist, because if properly designed and executed, our national organization will become a living model for true nonviolent community - and as such will continuously evolve and grow.

The new committee structure is an interim step which seeks to lay the groundwork for a new organizational structure. The new structure as envisioned proposes the elimination of a representative board and a central decision making body (the Leadership Team) and instead relies upon empowered committees and an annual membership meeting. Decisions will normally be made by committees, on a consensus basis and policy changes will come through the annual meeting. Regional organizing, based upon the actual alliances and support networks of the local chapters rather than arbitrary geographical boundaries, will be crucial to maintaining a strong and high quality program. One of the new committees is specifically designed to encourage regional growth and development.

New Organizational Structure continued

Many of the details will require bylaws changes and need to be widely discussed during the next six months. For instance, in the proposed model, officers have mainly fiduciary responsibilities, and are nominated to the annual meeting by the committee with which they serve. So, for example, the Treasurer is nominated by fundraising and finance, and the secretary is nominated by the Products Distribution and Communication committee. In order to facilitate networking and coordination of committees, a "Committee of Committees" will operate, membership to be composed of the co-chairs of each committee. The C of C will not be a decision making body, but rather will send decisions back to the appropriate committee(s) for consensus decision making after ensuring that all important information has been shared.

During the transition period between now and Labor Day (the next annual meeting date) six committees will be fully functioning, with assistance from the current Leadership Team in effecting the transition. Additionally, the Education Committee will continue to exist with a goal of completing the youth manual prior to the conference. The new committees are listed below along with the charges they have been given:

Regional Support and Networking: This committee is charged with encouraging and supporting regional growth and development. The members of this committee are charged with handling general inquiries and requests for support that used to come into the national office, developing communication structures throughout the nation, maintaining the Transformer, and acting in an advisory capacity to local chapters. This committee is also expected to facilitate the collec-

tion of activity data and production of an annual report. This committee particularly needs members from the places other than the East Coast.

Fundraising and Finance: This committee will raise funds, finalize the budget proposal in consultation with the committee of committees, provide financial oversight including the nomination and oversight of the treasurer. This committee is particularly in need of individuals with experience in fundraising and grant writing.

Products Distribution/Communication:

Manual and product distribution, mass mailings, and maintenance of the database and the archives are all responsibilities of this committee. A volunteer has already been found to handle distribution of manuals and materials may be ordered through the Houston address. This committee will certainly be in need of occasional assistance with mailings and is seeking a permanent archives site.

Conference Planning: The next conference will be planned and facilitated by this committee, including planning the agenda and providing conference materials. It will be the responsibility of this committee to draft the needed bylaws changes to be presented at the annual meeting over Labor Day. The Annual Meeting will be held in Burlington, NJ on September 5 to 8, 1999

Technical Assistance: This committee will provide assistance and startup expertise for the organization. They will set up the voice mail system that will route calls after the office is closed and will assist with database development and other similar tasks. They will also be charged with development of a simple guide to email for the Luddites among us. Indi-

viduals with computer or other technical skills, such as phone systems, are needed.

Committee of Committees: This committee will be formed from within the other committees. Members will commit to regular communication in order to coordinate efforts. This committee will be responsible for working with the fundraising committee to develop a realistic budget and for long range strategy planning. This committee will also develop policy proposals in conjunction with the other committees.

A note from Marjorie



Dear AVP friends,

As you read this you are undoubtedly aware of the decision to close the national office and discontinue the position of Executive Director. My remaining time with you is short, and will be filled with the many tasks involved in closing the office and reorganizing. There may not be the opportunity for me to speak my heart to each of you who has so touched mine.

AVP/USA service has reminded me of the Peace Corps slogan: "the toughest job you will ever love". In perfect and very imperfect community we have walked a long path together. With some, our interactions may have been brief and business oriented. With others, more spontaneous. Still, with others I have walked a long path through difficult times, have known your confidences, shared your laughter and sometimes your anger, fears and tears. But always there has been AVP lighting the way, calling ourselves to our highest selves, enflaming our pas-

The committee conveners are listed below:

Regional Support and Networking:

Candace Mayer LaRue - (315) 457-1374
(candacemyr@aol.com)

Fundraising and Finance:

Ann Ward - (ajw109@psu.edu)

Products distribution/Communication:

Diana Couch (Avpcouch@aol.com)

Conference Planning:

Richard Nethercut - (something@somewhere.com)

Technical Assistance:

George Sinnott (gsinnott@his.com)

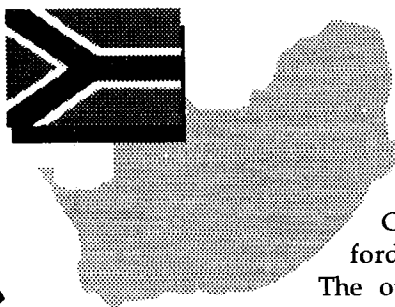
sions. Throughout I have known your respect, warmth, your trust, your humanity. I have cherished my time in your service, the bitter and the sweet. The tasks have been mundane, the wisdom, the light, the love profound. As I leave the national office my heart is full, my vision clear. I leave with trust in our process and positive expectations for the future. To every thing there is a season. It is time for change.

Still, there is that sense of sadness and loss. Only a full heart can break. The hardest part in all this is the thought of losing touch with many of you and the ongoing news of your local community's struggles and growth. I hope to continue the rapport and friendships we have developed. Through May 31 you may be able to reach me at the AVP/USA office. Otherwise my contact information will be in the directory-- I continue to serve as the AVP/USA Representative to AVP International. I will no longer be your Executive Director, but I will continue to be a member and serve the AVP/USA community.

Thank you for the opportunity for rich and rewarding service. May we move into a brighter future.

In AVPartnership, Marjorie Kerr

AVP IN SOUTH AFRICA



by Theresa Edlmann, AVP South Africa

South Africa is a country engaging in processes of profound change. The first democratic elections of 1994 marked the demise of the apartheid government and ushered in a time of complexity and challenges for all its people. The inherent violence of the apartheid system is still in the process of working its way out in our lives and society. Every one of us is constantly faced with the paradoxes of the wonderful changes that have taken place as well as crime, poverty and the legacies of systematic injustice. AVP - and Transforming Power - have come to a situation crying out for the opportunities for change, growth and healing they provide.

Soon after the first democratic elections in 1994, Steve Angell visited Johannesburg to run AVP workshops and train local trainers. The nucleus of the group that he started is still in place and in the process of developing a strong trainer base in order to take workshops into a range of contexts and communities. They have managed to raise funds to employ a part-time secretary and conduct workshops in a range of contexts.

About 18 months after Steve's visit to Johannesburg, Elaine Dyer (AVP Aortorea/New Zealand) visited both Johannesburg and

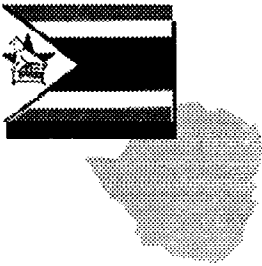
Cape Town (together with Kim Hope and Theresa Holman of AVP Britain), followed a few months later by a visit to Cape Town by John Shuford in November 1996.

The outcome of this was a committed team of trainers in another part of the country, who have also grown in numbers over time and are planning to move into local prisons in the next few months.

The move of a Cape Town trainer into the Eastern Cape – the poorest province in the country and birthplace of both Nelson Mandela and Steve Biko – has resulted in a new wave of workshops being conducted. The first group from this region will attend a Training of Trainers in Cape Town in November this year. There has been wonderful trainer support from AVP Cape Town trainers for this initiative and generous financial assistance from the Quaker Peace Centre. The first Basic workshop was run with the assistance of an AVP USA trainer who was working in the region on a 6 month contract!

AVP in South Africa has grown out of the love and sacrificial generosity of a range of people – the guardian angels from various countries who came to start us off, and the commitment of people whose lives have been changed and enriched through their involvement with the organization at various levels. The patterns of violence run deep in our society and the challenge of finding alternatives is an ongoing, exciting and dynamic journey.

Contacts: Theresa Edlmann
themba@imagnet.co.za



WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN ZIMBABWE

*by Radical Razaan and
Transforming Theresa,
AVP-South Africa
and Journeying John,
AVP-Delaware*

The World Council of Churches held its Eighth International Assembly held at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare in December 1998. The thousands of delegates to the conference came from churches all over the world included bishops, clergy and laymen from Protestant denominations and Eastern orthodox churches as well as many of the new churches from Africa.

The Invitation - AVP International was invited to conduct "taster" AVP workshops for delegates and AVP International Co-ordinator, Bill McMechan, invited AVP in South Africa to take responsibility for the program. Three facilitators went in the end: Razaan Bailey, Cape Town, Theresa Edlmann, Grahamstown, and John Shuford, AVP Delaware.

In Zimbabwe - Linking Up with the AVP Community - Once in Harare, Razaan, John and Theresa met up with Ute Caspers from Germany - an AVP facilitator who was also presenting some exercises in workshops she had arranged directly with the WCC. They were able to help Ute out in one workshop and she was able to step into the breach when Theresa took Razaan to the doctor on the morning of a workshop. Corneliu Constantianu, an AVP facilitator from Croatia, also joined in with some workshops. True AVP community in action!

The Padare - The AVP workshops formed

part of the Padare, a "market place" of workshops, performances and presentations that ran alongside the events taking place in the Assembly. There were hundreds of sessions every day about every topic imaginable and presented by organizations, networks and panels from every corner of the globe. They were divided into six "streams" - AVP being part of the Peace and Justice stream.

Each of the six 90-minute AVP sessions had a similar agenda. Visitors and delegates to the Assembly were given a brief background to AVP and participated in some exercises from a basic Level workshop (Adjective Names, Concentric Circles, Big Wind Blows, Violence /Non-violence Brainstorm, AVP Principles and the Mandala). The participants loved the opportunity to engage at a personal level through the exercises, and having a sense of an AVP workshop made discussion about AVP in the last section of the workshop much deeper and more informed.

86 people attended the workshops. Several had been to AVP workshops or were facilitators themselves - from Croatia, Germany, USA, Canada, England, Zimbabwe and South Africa. There were also people from Pakistan, India, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Sri Lanka (Ceylon) who were interested in helping to initiate AVP in their countries.

AVP was also given a display booth in the

World Council of Churches - continued

Peace and Justice Tent – one of the exhibition venues in the Padare. Again, putting the display together was a team effort. John brought mounted photographs from workshops he had facilitated in USA prisons and internationally. AVP Cape Town contributed a magnificent large colourful banner of the mandala and a collage of photographs from workshops in South Africa. Theresa "borrowed" Marjorie's idea of a display of the flags of countries where AVP is present, with contact details for that country next to each flag. There were also brochures available with information about AVP and AVP International contact details. The combined effect was very eye-catching and effective!

The mandala banner from AVP Cape Town was given to the International Peace to the City Campaign, which collected banners from around the world to form an exhibition at the Hague Appeal for Peace in May 1999.

The media also proved to be very interested in AVP. Several media teams videoed sections of workshops (footage was seen on both Zimbabwean and South African national television), there was mention of AVP in an article in the Harare-based Herald newspaper and Theresa was interviewed for a German national radio station.

The aim of presenting these workshops was to raise awareness about AVP and to encourage individuals and organizations to become part of or initiate AVP in their countries. This was achieved with great success – no question. And John, Razaan and Theresa had a fantastic week in Harare as well. Many thanks, AVP, for giving us such a wonderful opportunity!

AVP TEAM GOES TO EAST AFRICA



*by Bill McMechan, AVP-Canada and
Jill Sternberg, AVP-New York*

There are few areas of the world that are in greater need of conflict resolution than the Great Lakes Region of Africa. In Kenya there were serious tribal clashes in 1990. And although it has been quiet recently, tensions seem to be rising. In Uganda there is fighting in the north of the country between the government and a rebel group. In Rwanda and Burundi the conflicts between the Tutsi and Hutu are far from resolved. There is a great need for healing from the genocide. Sporadic fighting continues and there is political unrest with the Tutsi dominated governments.

During January, 1999, four AVP facilitators participated in a Friends Peace Initiative in East Africa. The purpose of the Initiative was to determine whether a permanent Peace Team in the Region was necessary. Such a team could assist in the training of those working in community building and traumatic stress situations caused by the continuing warfare and AIDS. There are Quaker groups in all of these countries and this provided a starting point for the Initiative.

AVP-Uganda - Rosemary and Bill McMechan of AVP-Canada led two AVP workshops. In the Kampala workshop some of the participants were ex-combatants who had served in the Ugandan army,

not all on the same side. One of them, a Major-General, had been Chief of Staff. However, they were convinced that violence was not the answer and that the AVP way of life offered a viable alternative. Bill and Rosemary teamed with Jolly Joseph

and Hilarious Hilda for this Training for Facilitators Workshop. One very big problem for them is the utter poverty in which they live and the lack of training opportunities available. If they had the funds, they would be very interested in taking the program into neighboring countries where many had spent years in exile.

In the Bubulo Basic workshop, participants were mainly teachers and pastors. Bill and Rosemary were assisted by local facilitators, Joyful Juliet and Joking George. What enthusiasm and interest in learning! To run workshops is very expensive in a country where few people have paid employment and subsist on the food they can grow in small plots. Most of them had to travel long distances each day by uncertain transport. This necessitates paying for transportation and all food consumed by participants during the workshop as well as for the usual expenses for room rental and workshop supplies. They had no newsprint, but a small broken piece of blackboard came to their aid. Food has to be supplied even in prison workshops. The prison does not feed inmates during the program! Lack of funds is the main block to the growth of AVP-Uganda.

AVP was introduced into Uganda by Steve Angell and Ben Norris (USA) and Elaine Dyer (New Zealand). Through the efforts of Hilary

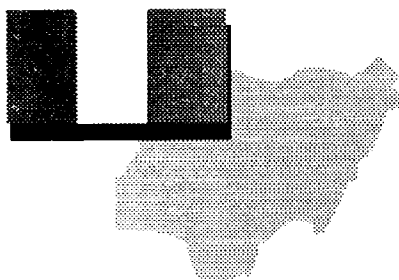
Wright from AVP-England, AVP has become well established with a cadre of facilitators and a formal organization. AVP at the moment, as it has been enthusiastically embraced by the Ugandans. They are giving it already their own flavor, and other programs may well develop from it and perhaps eventually replace it.

Kenya - Jill Sternberg of AVP-New York and Derrick Kayongo (Uganda) explored conflict resolution needs by meeting with peace organizations including the National Council of Churches of Kenya, the Maryknoll Regional Coordinator and the Nairobi Peace Initiative.

Although there are more Quakers in Kenya than anywhere else in the world, they have split into 14 groups and there is a great need for peacemaking between the "peaceful" Quakers. Some of these divisions seem to be related to tribal affiliations. Jill and Derrick led community building exercises at a meeting attended by representatives of all of the 14 groups and a mini-workshop for one of the Quaker groups. Future goals are to visit all 14 groups and to explore possible collaboration to support a joint peace effort so needed in the region.

Burundi and Rwanda - Ute Caspars of AVP-Germany, David Zarembka and Carl Stauffer, conducted several workshops on healing trauma. They were very well received and find that there is a great need for more work to be done. Other groups are also working on reconciliation. The goal is to form a team in Burundi (with outreach to Rwanda and the Congo). Half of the team would be Africans with the goal to support and enhance the peace, trauma healing, and reconciliation work done among Quakers and other groups.

Programs like AVP are helpful, but a program that was designed by Africans with support and assistance from outside might be even more helpful and better suited to their culture.



TRANSFORMING POWER IN NIGERIA

by Mark Bitel, John Conchie, Karin Fry, Oleufemi Hughes and Stavey Primus, AVP-Britain

Conflict is at the heart of every transaction in Nigeria, from buying anything from anyone, to getting on a bus, or making a phone call.

Only Transforming Power could have got five AVP facilitators into Nigeria without visas! At the eleventh hour (and 58th minute), we were given permission to come.

As we arrived in Nigeria it was night, we were tired and longing for rest. On the trip from the airport when we were told to get out of taxis on an unlit street somewhere in Lagos, and then told we were to get into some different taxis to go to our final destination, my heart sank. However, as soon as the taxis were dismissed, we were told we had really arrived and that the story about the other taxis was a way of concealing our destination from the taxi drivers.

Behind us a metal gate topped with barbed wire was unlocked. We entered the gates and they were locked behind us. Was this really going to be our home for the next four weeks? What had we let ourselves in for?

Next morning we discovered that we were not leading a series of three-day workshops but rather what turned out to be a month-long Training for Facilitators!

The Nigerians we met were frustrated by

their military dictatorships, hungry for change, and for an end to military rule that has wrecked the economy. Some have cautious optimism in a new democratic system espoused by General Abubakar while others are skeptical, having seen it all before.

The group brought with them the diversity of their tribal backgrounds and strong Christian and Muslim beliefs. They were a group drawn from the North, South and East of the country, men and women, ex-prisoners and prison welfare officers, human rights workers, administrators, sewing machine operators and social workers. A few had the status of chiefs and others Imams.

Here we were, from England, with American exercises, keeping our fingers crossed that they were robust enough to be transplanted to an African country. Our main man and coordinator, Mark Bitel, set just the right tone saying how honored we felt to be invited to Nigeria to explore issues of conflict. We are not experts and we do not have all the answers. Together you can decide what is most appropriate for you in your culture, in your specific situations.

When we asked in the beginning what would wreck this course, it was taken both seriously and light-heartedly: lateness, a military coup,

refusal to participate, power failure, boycotts. The status differences in the group seemed to be temporarily suspended as consensus and non-hierarchical ways of working were instituted. Chiefs gave up their thrones; women who had initially been quiet started to challenge the men more assertively. Even so, religious differences and the north/south divide remained a ghost.

All AVP ideas seemed to resonate with participants, who were extraordinarily open to learning and sharing ideas. What struck me was the universal nature of conflict, whether infidelity, gender differences or conflict within the family.

The concept of Transforming power was taken with particular relish. Over the month, we saw examples of Transforming Power right there – interactions at home, in the street, at the course itself. What was so disarming and so wondrous in this group was the seeming easy ability to express themselves with fluidity, whether discussing complex concepts, expressing love, or being totally creative in Light and Livelies. The latter were a hoot as people flung themselves into them.

Watching roleplays was like watching theater. Such was the enthusiasm that everything got analyzed and dissected right down to the happy and sad faces on the evaluation sheets. We saw more of this creativity as they adapted materials to local conditions and their own methods during the facilitator training.

By the end of the month we had facilitators workshops with 36 participants. 24 of these started and completed the facilitator's workshop successfully. We ran a community workshop and a prison workshop (for prison

welfare officers) with four facilitators just trained leading each course.

The whole group decided by consensus to set up a Steering Committee to take AVP-Nigeria forward in prisons and the community, in the North and South of the country.

The team left Nigeria on September 7, worn out with the intense schedule but much richer for the experience which was worth every minute.

In early 1999 we hope to host three Nigerian facilitators in Britain. The British council is funding their airfares. Donations can be sent to the AVP-Britain office, 547 High Road, London E11-4PB U.K.

Mark Bitel received his AVP training at Sing Sing and other New York Prisons. After his release, he was the first office staff person for AVP-Britain.

Take a trip to the AVP Web Sites

AVP-International Web Site

<http://www.ndirect.co.uk/~halbright/avp.htm>

AVP/USA Web Site

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/avpusa>

AVP-Canada Web Site

<http://www.golden.net/~respection/AVP.MAIN.htm>

AVP-Minnesota Web Site

<http://www.mmm.com/fnvw>

AVP-Bay Area California Web Site

www.webcom.com/~peace/PEACTREE/avp/homepage.html

Compassion

*by Joe Burgess, Lakes Region Correctional Facility,
Laconia, New Hampshire, November 1998*

To me, compassion means being understanding towards others, and to the self.

It means forgiving others who have wronged us, and forgiving ourselves for the wrongs we have done, and the mistakes we have made along the way.

It means forgiving others, and ourselves for the wrong choices, wrong decisions or wrong thinking or wrongful attitudes.

It means to have empathy and sympathy for self, and others.

When it comes down to the "truth" we are all alike, we feel, we hurt, we cry and we all bleed as one!

We all have personal problems of some sort, and we have trials to go through, whatever they may be, to make us into what we will become in life.

I feel there are no hopeless people, only people with no hope, or unlearned people.

Compassion means seeing all as one, as you see yourself, and realize that we are all alike, just at different stages of life, whether wrong or right.

Compassion is "here" for others, and for ourselves, and for "God" who has the most compassion of all... for all of us everywhere.

the Trust Lift

by Zack Finch

How strange it was to surrender
the posture of myself
to the hands of strangers.
My cells breathed in as one
and the world went shimmering pink
as I fell back and was lifted
up towards a light
warm as a mother's heart.
The raft of a hundred fingers
along my back and down my legs
and a cupped hand beneath my head:
I was being carried away somewhere,
angels were being proven,
boundaries were melting
into the heat of a bloodstream,
I was either dying or being born,
I was being opened like a door,
I was moving through myself,
a passenger, only moments later
lowered to my feet to stand again
within a soft nest of bodies,
feeling I was the tender
and most precious possession
the world had ever brought forth.

From a community workshop in November 1998

AVP-USA Annual Meeting The next Annual Meeting will be held in Burlington, New Jersey on September 5 to 8, 1999. Please reserve the date and plan to attend. There will be more information in the next issue of the Transformer.

Do the Right Thing

A Transforming Power Story

From Gini Floyd, an AVP Facilitator

When I lived in Brooklyn NY with my husband Larry, there was a young woman, Dolores, a tenant on the fourth floor, who was being threatened and beaten by the new man in her life, an angry, surly looking six-foot giant of a man. He had moved in and had apparently taken control. We could hear shouting and crying at times. One evening when Larry was gone, I heard Dolores sobbing, coming downstairs. I went out to the hallway and talked to her.

She said, "He says I have to leave. I'll have to go to my mother's."

"Wait a minute," I said, "it's your apartment. He's the one who has to leave. I'll go upstairs and talk to him. Wait for me in my apartment."

(Transforming Power was in effect at that moment, although I didn't know it. A clue is fearlessness in the face of danger, because the rational mind, which experiences fear, is not directing, but intuition is.)

Upstairs, I looked up at the giant and said, "You'll have to leave."

"I'm not leaving! And get her back up here. I've got more to say to her." he said.

We went back and forth: "You'll have to leave."

"I'm not leaving."

Then something inspired me to stop, look into his eyes, and say, "I KNOW you want to do what's right."

As the seconds passed in silence, something seemed to hang in the air between us. We were looking into each others eyes. The words had touched his heart, I think.

"All right. I'm going," he said.

He collected his clothes and we went downstairs. That's the last we ever saw of him.

A new Light & Lively... What If...

This is a humorous light & lively developed at Sing Sing for the Advanced Facilitator's Training Workshop in October 1998.

The exercise is simple.

Just hand each participant a 3"x 5" slip of paper with the words "What if" written on the upper left corner. Each participant is asked to complete the statement in whatever way they wish, such as: "What if all prisons were closed." or "What if an elephant moved into the house next door

Then each slip is handed to the person on the right and the person is asked to turn the paper over and complete the statement on the front. This might be: "Inmates would have to look for jobs." or "He'd have to buy a cast iron sofa."

Then each slip is handed to the person on the right. Each person is asked to read their slip, reading the answer first and then the question.

The result is a series of non-sequiturs that will have everyone on the floor laughing.

AVP *in* MINNESOTA *by Mike Bischoff*

AVP in Minnesota has been going for five years now, and has been consistently and gradually expanding since its beginning. We owe much of our start to Jon Shafer, who was active with AVP in Ohio before moving to Minnesota. Jon worked with a local, Quaker-based nonprofit, Friends for a Non-Violent World, to get AVP active in the Twin Cities community and a medium security men's prison (Faribault).

We have done monthly workshops at Faribault for all of those five years, with over 600 men completing at least a Basic. Insiders at Faribault also initiated and lead a regular AVP support group. In '98 we started regular workshops at the only Minnesota women's prison, Shakopee. Now that AVP in Shakopee is well underway, we've started to expand into two short-term county corrections facilities this spring. Several other state correctional fa-

cilities are interested in beginning, and our goal is to add one new facility per year.

In the past two years, we have also started doing AVP workshops for youth. Thanks to the contacts of one of our facilitators and her daughter, we are in the midst of a pilot series of workshops with two high schools in St. Paul. A committee of AVP facilitators is working to draw on the best of HIP, AVP, and other conflict resolution models, while sticking with the basic structure of AVP.

Last year we also facilitated a series of workshops in Milwaukee to help their branch of Peace Action begin an AVP program. They are now organizing another round of community workshops to get the program going in Wisconsin.

Thanks to all the rest of you for paving the way and making AVP here possible.

AVP Starts Up in Vermont

by Alan Taplow, AVP Vermont

Recently I moved to the beautiful hills of Vermont after facilitating at New Jersey Prisons. Working with the Vermont State Coordinator, our goal is to train a new group of facilitators to help start AVP in the Vermont prisons.

To that end, we conducted a Basic in Middlebury in November and held another the first weekend in February. We will offer a Training for Facilitators, and begin using some of

those new facilitators in our first prison Basic. The total Vermont prison population is under 1600 inmates, spread over 8 locations. So, it is very possible that an AVP program could have a major impact - reaching most of the inmates in any one institution within its first year. The DOC climate here tends to be more rehabilitative than retributive. The DOC comes under the Vermont Department of Human Services, which is a bit different than in many States where it belongs to something like Law & Public Safety.

We have high hopes for making inroads into the prisons here.

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New Format

We've transformed the Transformer with a more lively magazine-style format. We plan to publish four, sixteen-page issues each year.

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We will have a special theme for each issue. This issue features "AVP in Africa." In future issues we plan to cover "Working With Youth" and "Improving Prison Programs." We will still bring you new exercises, new light and livelies and news from AVP groups around the country.

We've Lost Our Grant

For the last two years we have been fortunate to have a grant from the BetzDearborn company in Pennsylvania which provides industrial water treatment systems. This grant covered the printing costs for the Transformer so that AVP only needed to pay the postage. Unfortunately, BetzDearborn was purchased by a conglomerate and all grants were terminated.

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Our grant enabled us to mail free issues of the Transformer to most of the 1,600 AVP facilitators in the U.S. However, only about 10 percent of our facilitators have supported the Transformer financially by filling out a subscription form and sending a check to AVP-USA. If the Transformer is to continue, we need your individual subscription. If your local AVP subscribes as a group we offer a special \$5.00 discount per person.

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Alternatives to Violence Project-USA
P.O. Box 300431
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Transformer Editor: Fred Feucht

Please send any articles to:
Fred Feucht, 88 Mountain Road
Pleasantville, NY 10570

Facilitator Mailing List: Janet Lugo

Please send any address changes to:
Janet Lugo, 46 Main Street,, Apt. 9
Mechanicsville, NY 12118



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