

ROTARY DISTRICT 5440 PEACEBUILDER NEWSLETTER
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RACE, SYSTEMIC CHANGE AND PEACEBUILDING

William Timpson, Del Benson, Robert Meroney, and Lloyd Thomas,
Fort Collins Rotary Club; Jim Halderman, Rotary District 5450; and
Roy C. Bath, Fort Collins Dan Lyons Chapter of Veterans for Peace

In these newsletters of the Rotary District Peacebuilders, we want to invite readers for contributions and ideas, suggestions and possibilities for our efforts to promote the foundational skills for promoting peace, i.e., nonviolent conflict resolution, improved communication and cooperation, successful negotiation and mediation as well as the critical and creative thinking that can help communities move through obstacles and difficulties. The lead essay examines the characteristics of love—consider these qualities when you read through the other contributions and consider how we get more “love” in our discussions and race, systemic changes and peacebuilding.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LOVE

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Lena Tabori, publisher and founder of Welcome Enterprises, Inc., wrote, “*I think growing into a loving person is a little like becoming an artist. You start with yourself, then you learn by imitating the ‘masters’---parents, writers, film makers---and finally, with everyone else’s experiences rattling around in your head, you begin to absorb it all and find your own form.*” If Ms. Tabori is correct, all of us would become more loving if we could easily identify and imitate the people who are most loving. What are some of their character qualities? In what actions do they regularly engage? Here are a few characteristics of love that have been recognized for centuries.

LOVERS ARE:

- *Givers.* They give to others even in the midst of crises. They give even when others are feeling a lack of some kind. They give of themselves without complaint or resentment.
- *Non-judgmental.* They accept “as is” the reality of any situation or circumstance even when others are angry and judgmental (and complaining).
- *Courageous.* They take caring actions and risks even when they are scared.
- *Peaceful.* They demonstrate a peace of mind and heart even when threatened or when others are fearful.
- *Kind.* They show kindness even when others are displaying hostility, aggression, or destructiveness.

- *Cooperative.* When the majority of others are aggressively pushing to be “first” or “the winner” no matter what the cost, lovers remain cooperative and willing to collaborate instead of competitive.
- *Welcoming.* They confront adversity with a sense of calm curiosity and desire to understand.
- *Aware.* They attend to the present moment with an open heart and an open mind. They expand and strengthen their awareness with focused attention.
- *Self-accepting.* They are aware and accepting of who they really are...their talents, weaknesses, biases, attitudes and habits.
- *Joyful.* They enjoy being themselves and they celebrate being alive.
- *Grateful.* They acknowledge that *everything* in Life is a gift for which they very grateful.

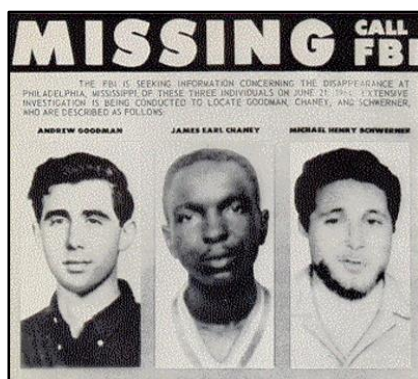
Probably the best thing about being a loving human being is: *you set an example for others to imitate and you give permission to others to be the same.*

Most of us probably would like to become more loving. If we were to pick one or two of the above characteristics and practiced them daily with focused attention for at least 21 days, they would become unconscious habits (automatic). Thereafter, we could choose another couple of loving qualities to strengthen in ourselves. If we followed that schedule of development, in a year’s time we would transform ourselves, our character into maximally loving human beings. Let’s begin.

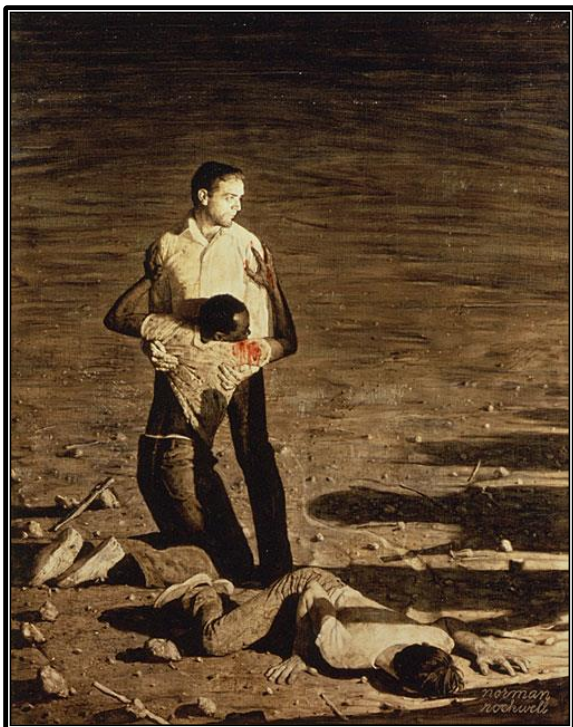
“MURDER IN MISSISSIPPI” aka “SOUTHERN JUSTICE” by Norman Rockwell

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The death of George Floyd in Minnesota is only one additional obscene act in the name of racism, bigotry, white supremacy, and corrupt police enforcement. Fifty-six years ago, on June 21, 1964 three civil rights workers were murdered by Mississippi law enforcement officers and KKK white supremacists in Philadelphia, Mississippi.¹ Those murdered were Michael Schwerner, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman members of CORE (Congress on Racial Equality) who had gone to the site of recent attacks on blacks and arson at the local Mount Zion Church. As they drove away, they were stopped and arrested by Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price on unclear charges possibly speeding or accusations of having set the fire themselves.



¹ Murders of Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murders_of_Chaney,_Goodman,_and_Schwerner#Masterminding_the_conspiracy



Unknown to them Schwerner had been targeted by the local KKK for his attempts to register blacks and organize a black boycott of white-owned businesses. The local White Knights Imperial Wizard Samuel H. Bowers and Edgar Ray Killen, a Baptist Preacher, sawmill owner, and KKK member coordinated the capture of the three men, arranged to hide the CORE station wagon, directed the beating and killing of the men, and ordered their burial in an earthen dam on a KKK member's farm. The white victims were shot each once in the heart, the black victim was beaten, castrated, and shot three times (an autopsy found dirt in his lungs, which suggests he was buried still alive). Eighteen men, including the Neshoba-County Sheriff who had previously shot and killed a black motorist who was getting out of a car but never prosecuted, another 25-year veteran of the Philadelphia police known for his cruelty to blacks and previously indicted in a separate civil rights case, the local Deputy Sheriff,

and fifteen others who included local business owners, and supposedly honorable discharged Army, Marine and Navy service men were identified by the FBI for indictment, although it was believed many others took part.

After the three victims were buried, Deputy Sheriff Price told the group:

Well, boys, you've done a good job. You've struck a blow for the white man. Mississippi can be proud of you. You've let those agitating outsiders know where this state stands. Go home now and forget it. But before you go, I'm looking each one of you in the eye and telling you this: The first man who talks is dead! If anybody who knows anything about this ever opens his mouth to any outsider about it, then the rest of us are going to kill him just as dead as we killed those three sonofbitches [sic] tonight. Does everybody understand what I'm saying. The man who talks is dead, dead, dead.

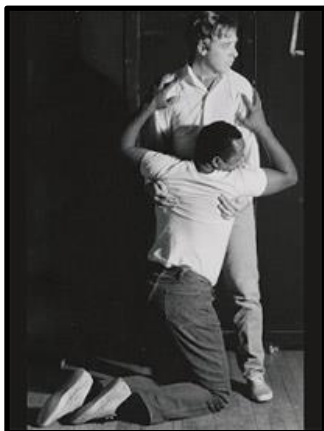
In a federal trial in 1967 seven of the men were found guilty, a dead-locked jury occurred for two of the defendants including Edgar Killen about whom a lone juror stated she "could never convict a preacher." Sentences ranged from three to ten years, but none served more than six years. Four decades later on June 21, 2005 (the 41st anniversary of the crime), a state court convicted Edgar Killen on three counts of murder based on a taped conversation and additional evidence. He was convicted of man slaughter and sentenced to 60 years in prison. He died in prison six days before his 93rd birthday on January 11, 2018.

The oil-painting shown above was prepared by Norman Rockwell for a 1965 issue of Look magazine.² The painting depicts the three victims, but Deputy Price and his gun, stick and chain

² Murder in Mississippi, Norman Rockwell Museum <http://www.nrm.org/MT/text/MurderMississippi.html>

wielding posse were removed and represented only by menacing shadows. Rockwell originally conceived the Murder in Mississippi as a horizontal composition to run across two pages. The young victims would be pictured to the left and Philadelphia Deputy Price and the posse of Klansmen wielding sticks and guns on the right.

Rockwell used models to compose the painting, and the original sketches are shown below.



CONFLICT, VIOLENCE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A PEACE CURRICULUM


William Timpson, Ph.D. has been a professor at Colorado State University in its School of Education and a member of the Fort Collins Rotary Club. What follows is an adaptation from a chapter for our 2015 book, "Conflict, Reconciliation, and Peace Education: Moving Burundi toward a Sustainable Future" (New York, NY: Routledge), I was joined by two Burundians. Elavie Ndura is now a Vice-President for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Gallaudet University while Apollinaire Bangayimgaga continues his work as the Rector of the University of Ngozi. He can be reached at william.timpson@colostate.edu.

Every nation and every citizen in every nation must learn to handle their conflicts, any violence that erupts, as well as the possibilities they have for sustainable peace and development. Those countries that consistently top the charts for quality of life, economic performance and school success—e.g., the Scandinavian nations of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark—have a good mix of public and private investments, equitable expenditures per student regardless of the per capita income of their communities, national health care, generous foreign aid and a limited military. The U.S., for example, scores quite low on these measures and the recent waves of protests over the killings of African-Americans highlights the consequences of a "lower quality of life."

As one of the poorest nations on earth, Burundi scores poorly on every factor of economic and societal well-being although peace has stopped the hemorrhaging of blood and resources that characterized the forty years of civil war. Sadly, this nation must invest a sizable amount of its budget to maintaining the security necessary to preserve the peace and prevent another slide into violence.

Colonization and conflict

As the U.S. is forced to revisit the legacy of slavery, of the taking of Native lands, of the forced removal of Japanese Americans into internment camps during World War Two, and of the historic undervaluing of Hispanic farm workers that continues today, Burundians face a parallel legacy imposed by first the German and then Belgian colonizers. Historic divisions between Hutu (84% of the population), Tutsi (14%) and Twa (2%) were exploited to ensure their control and profit. Taking advantage of these tribal divisions and reinforcing them with social, economic and educational privileges kept the minority Tutsi in power and dependent on the colonizer's advantages in weapons.

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| <p><i>This small, impoverished, and crowded nation of nearly eleven million people, considered one of the poorest countries in the world, is now making a transition out of an historic and imposed tribalism, reinforced by the pseudoscience of racial hierarchies, as well as the forty years of civil war and violence that erupted after independence in 1962.</i></p> <p><i>To the right is an artistic rendition of the unchaining of Black Africans from European colonizers that unleashed independence movements throughout the continent. Although there was much violence that accompanied these expressions, some of this must be attributed to the active competition of the superpowers during the "Cold War".</i></p> |  |
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In 1972 these factors exploded into a horrific and violent assault as the ruling Tutsi unleashed its army, predominantly Tutsi in its make-up, on the majority Hutu population and murdered some 200,000 of their leaders, i.e., those with an education. When tensions rose again in the late 1980's and early 1990's, civil war erupted and another 250,000 to 600,000 were killed. In addition, 800,000 were forced to flee the country, and another 150,000 displaced.

Helped by the involvement of Nelson Mandela, emerging as a leader respected throughout the world, the Arusha Peace Accord in 2000 forged an agreement between the combatants about real power sharing with required minimums for each tribal group in civic posts, the military and the police. With large numbers of both tribal members at every level of the military and police, it would be unlikely that any one faction could impose its rule on the other. It is striking to note that the U.S. military is the most integrated segment of the U.S.

In the City of Ngozi, Hutu and Tutsi leaders banded together to maintain the calm despite the bloody chaos elsewhere. This small city of approximately 21,000 became a refuge when violence erupted elsewhere and villages were burning on neighboring hillsides, the rising smoke making the nightly sunsets a hauntingly blood red. But local leaders went further and created the first private university in Burundi in 1999 just as all that violence was subsiding and dedicated it to promoting peace and reconciliation.

RACES, CHANGE, SIMPLE LESSONS FORM NATURE AND THE ROTARY 4-WAY TEST

Del Benson, Ph.D. is a Professor and wildlife specialist for Extension at Colorado State University. His work is with wildlife and recreation enterprises on private land, conservation education, hunter attitudes and behavior, public input to resource management decision making and campus environmental management.

Peoples have historically overpowered others, claimed space, defended territories, became refuges or slaves, or were killed. With expansions and conflicts, societies also developed systems of order to behave more “fairly.” Laws, treaties, compacts, regulations, and ideologies change over time. Some rulings were purposefully neglected and that added to the conflicts.

We face new human realities more quickly in modern times as societies become more mobile and diverse. Members of society need civil thoughts, words, and actions if we are ever to understand and to accept positive changes to human nature.

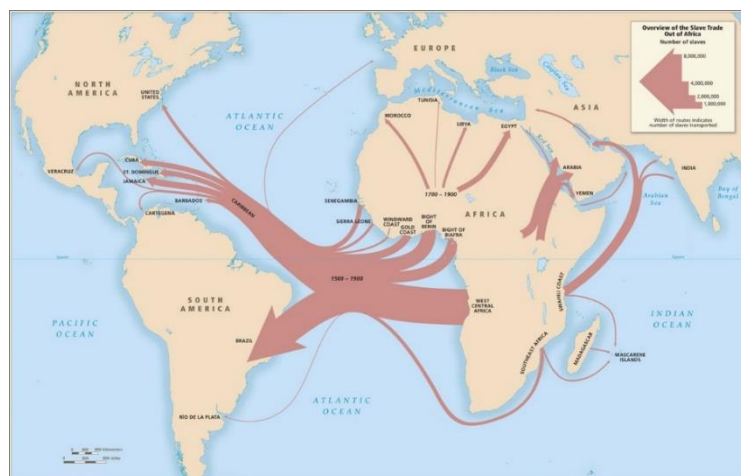
Current race relations in the US and world have both social and economic realities. Poor persons may poach, steal, and forcibly try to overcome their status if they must. Rich people will continue to protect what they have “earned” and learned. Aside from bringing economic and social wellbeing to higher levels, society has the added angst and desires for reparations from how humans were treated and mistreated over time. But where and when can a line be drawn about fair treatment...except in the present.

Current racial tensions in the US are sometimes traced to and are suggested to be caused by colonial expansion from western Europe. However, perspective about slaves should not be relegated to skin color, nor should it be viewed as a relatively modern phenomenon. Peoples have oppressed others over history and around the world.

My favorite read of the summer is my second read of **The Silk Roads: a new history of the world** by Peter Frankopan, Vintage Books, 2015. Aside from being inclusive of eastern cultures and not just western-centered as I learned in school, he also acknowledges with detail about the uses and abuses of slaves by most peoples, most everywhere, most of the time. The word “slave” came from Scandinavian movements inland who claimed people in modern Slavic regions that were sold primarily in the east and which resulted in the general term of slave. These “Viking Rus” from the north led to the naming of Russia. The image of “raping and pillaging” from the North Sea and Atlantic as we might have learned, is not totally correct or fair. What we know depends on what we experience, read, learn, and retain. Slaves did not come just from Europe.

Over the past 400 years, more than 15 million men, women and children were victims of the transatlantic slave trade according to the United Nations. Slaves also were sold to the east.

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent/slave-trade>



Overview of the slave trade out of Africa, 1500-1900. David Eltis and David Richardson, Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (New Haven, 2010).

To commemorate the memory of the victims, the General Assembly, in its [resolution 62/122](#) of 17 December 2007, declared 25 March the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, to be observed annually.

Unfortunately, more slaves are sold currently, and skin color is only one factor. Contemporary slavery, also known as modern slavery or neo-slavery, refers to institutional [slavery](#) that continues to occur in present-day society. Estimates of the number of slaves today range from around 21 to 46 million: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery_in_the_21st_century.

Most cultures in time exploited natural resources and local peoples for necessity and survival, progress and expansion, ideologies and beliefs, for personal gain, and to defend what they currently possessed. Peoples who stood in the way of expansion were either indentured as workers, novelties, prized possessions, sold as merchandise, or killed. Persons of little use could not be fed when resources for the victor were limited. Local peoples sold their own and opposing tribe members to the highest bidders.

Non-human animals know this survival process well, but not the human-trafficking propensity of homo sapiens except by establishing social pecking orders among their groups. Animals of the same species defend territories for food, shelter, space, and mating. They avoid intruders when they can. They leave the area if the social system is too crowded. If too many try to stay together, they might run out of food or be forcibly excluded from it. Animals sometimes fight to the death when posturing (negotiation in human terms) is not working. When there is no place to flee and find resources and mates, then the animals, populations, and some species become endangered or are eliminated.

Species of animals avoid other species to prevent inbreeding and some species are the predators while others are the prey. Those roles seldom change. Even herbivores that eat vegetation are predatory on the plants and numbers must ideally be balanced with the production from lands and waters or the animals die.

Humans are capable to expand their ranges widely, and progressively more easily, which adds to dilemmas of peaceful and civil interactions.

Dwelling on the past and blaming others seems to serve us with few solutions. Rather, it is up to each person, nation, and culture, to learn the principles of civil thoughts, words and deeds.

Using the Rotary 4-Way Test would seem to reduce many roadblocks that societies face for reacting civilly toward the other.

Of what we think, say and do:

1. Is it the Truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build Goodwill and Better Friendships?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

LOOKING AT THE ESSENCE OF WAR

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With responses from William Timpson (WT)

We abhor the thought, talk and sight of war, yet it remains ubiquitous. We say, “War is hell” while spending billions of dollars to improve our skills at it. War remains paradoxical: blood nourishes the olive branch; peace is war’s purpose; order is established through the harsh tools of disorder. This paradox begs the question: Is war essential in an intelligent society? Is war innate in man? Could there be another way to achieve the intended outcome?

(WT) Given this argument, do we need a different metaphor for addressing public protests? The President of the US has used the language of “dominance”, for example. Given that we as a nation we seem very reluctant to really look seriously at underlying inequalities in housing, schooling and wealth, do we need to use other metaphors, of “exploration” for example?

I have thought about these questions quite often since that sunny day walking along a stream. As many twelve-year olds would do, I picked up a stone and tossed it at an object. This day the object was a frog perched in the sun on a stone in the middle of the rushing stream. Knowing the safest place to be was the object of my throwing intention, I did not fear for it. And the next moment changed my life forever. I could never go back to where I was. I hit the frog and....killed it. Looking at the guts of the frog scattered on the rock, I was stunned at what just happened. An insignificant action, so it seemed, instantly took a life. Perhaps, you would say, it was ONLY a frog’s life, but at least to the frog it was a major consequence. For me, it was an unintended consequence that has changed me forever.

(WT) It seems obvious to me that many segments of the American culture systematically favor those with wealth leaving poor people with far fewer chances to improve their lives over what their parents had provided. Yet the COVID-19 pandemic certainly made these inequalities so clear and striking with the poor and people of color having far higher infection rates and fatalities. Seeing this and using Hardeman’s wording, I find that I can “never go back to where I was”.

There is a lot of work to be done to benefit many. Maybe the best preparation for discussing war is having a heart at peace. Remember, it is not necessary to change all hearts because most are already at peace. We need only to change the hearts of a few that lead the many. No, in an intelligent society, war is not essential. What is essential is a discussion about the possibilities for peace with hearts that are truly at peace.

(WT) Hearing Jim's call to "benefit many" hopefully enough of us will respond and address some of the deeper social class and racial inequities that have plagued the U.S. for far too long and are the source for so many enduring conflicts and problems.

SHAKING THE TREE

Roy C. Bath has been active in the Fort Collins Rotary Peacebuilder Fellowship. He is a former Marine with combat service in Vietnam who then worked with public defenders in Colorado. He is the Coordinator of the Fort Collins Dan Lyons Chapter of Veterans for Peace.

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Someone once said that the corona virus was like shaking a tree so hard that a lot of things fell out of it. The corona virus has shaken our planet quite hard, and has given the tree of our nation quite a shaking, and the time to see what has been shaken loose. Thanks to the time given us to examine and ponder things, some of what has fallen is now available for us all to see. One of the things we are able to see more clearly now are the "giant triplets".

The triplets are "giant" obstacles to the promotion of peace here in the communities of America and the rest of the world. The three "giant triplets" are referred to in a speech given in 1967 by Martin Luther King: "When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered."³

The giant triplets—racism, militarism, and extreme materialism—are closely related. The triplet of "extreme materialism" in its present form is very similar, if not synonymous with "Capitalism" as it exists in America. Many of our nation's capitalists today and in the past, leave our nation in order to exploit other nation's people's labor in order to pursue even greater profit for themselves.

Many corporations don't pay taxes at all, while funds for food stamps for those in need are cut. This is considered "necessary" by some because the food programs cost "too much", and some of the people who get the food stamps are "gaming the system". People lose their homes when they commit the "crime of cancer" and are unable to pay their mortgage. In America we have inequality—extreme, obscene, and cruel. Our elected representatives and the rich get the best health care possible. Other Americans don't go to the doctor for real physical ailments because of

³ <https://www.alternet.org/2015/04/riot-language-unheard-9-mlk-quotes-mainstream-media-wont-cite/>. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhh3CMkngkY> — "Revolution of Values," 1967

the cost let alone for preventative counsel. Some people have to fight for a “living” wage while others vacation in yachts. Currently, due to no fault of their own, over 40 million Americans are unemployed.

CBS News reported in January 2020:

“The [gap between rich and poor in America](#) is the worst it's been in more than a half century. It's a concern cited by every leading Democratic presidential candidate in the 2020 election, but many may not realize what it actually means.

“If a pie represented the [estimated \\$98 trillion of household wealth](#) in the United States, nine pieces, or 90% of the pie, would go to the wealthiest 20% in the country, according to [a National Bureau Of Economic Research study](#) of household wealth trends in the United States from 1962 to 2016. Out of those nine slices, four would go to just the top 1%.

“The upper middle class and the middle class would share one piece, or about 10%, and the lower middle class would get 0.3% of the pie. The poorest Americans, people in the bottom 20%, wouldn't get any. On average, they are more than \$6,000 in debt.”⁴

Martin Luther King noted:

*“And one day we must ask the question, ‘Why are there forty million poor people in America? And when you begin to ask that question, you are raising questions about the economic system, about a broader distribution of wealth.’ When you ask that question, you begin to question the capitalistic economy. And I’m simply saying that more and more, we’ve got to begin to ask questions about the whole society...”*⁵

The notion of “extreme materialism” appears to be doing quite well in America. The giant triplet of “militarism” also appears to be “alive and well” here in America.

Working with our form of capitalism in our democratic republic, under our Constitution, we spend more money on militarism than the next ten nations combined. We have a nuclear arsenal capable of destroying our planet. We are currently on pace to spend more than a trillion dollars on the maintenance of that nuclear arsenal.

“Militarism” is synonymous with war. “Sun Tzu said it best: all warfare is based on deception.”⁶ We don’t have a department of “War”, we have a department of “Defense.” In America we now have

⁴ CBS NEWS January 31, 2020, 7:44 AM **How \$98 trillion of household wealth in America is distributed: "It's very depressing"** <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/income-inequality-in-america-how-98-trillion-of-household-wealth-is-distributed/>

⁵ Excerpts from King’s speech “[Where Do We Go From Here?](#),” delivered at the 11th Annual SCLC Convention, Atlanta, Georgia, August 16, 1967.

⁶ Paul K. Chappell, *The Art of Waging Peace*, page 87. Prospecta Press PO Box 3131 Westport Conn. 06880. Paperback ISBN:978-1-63226-031-4

“endless” wars. The war in Afghanistan is still going on after twenty years, and recently we have had other wars too. There seems to be no end in sight. Our Pentagon cannot pass an audit, and is known for its deception, bloated cost overruns, and other forms of corruption. If our Pentagon were a person, we would have sent it to prison long ago.

From the time of the founding of our nation to the present, those who are extremely well off and well connected have not had to worry about serving in a war zone if they chose not to serve. It is the poor who are used for fodder in our wars. Want to get ahead, get an education but can't afford it? Well, be all you can be, put your life on the line, and if you survive we'll help you get an education, promises Uncle Sam. The debt comes later.

During the Vietnam conflict, the brunt of the casualties and deaths were suffered by the poor and the racial minorities. This brings us face to face with the giant triplet of racism. In the 1960's there was talk of “Black Power”. Today, in large part because of the rampant racism in America we have the “Black Lives Matter” movement. The giant triplet of racism has not been eradicated—far from it.

Martin Luther King stated: “I contend that the cry of "Black Power" is, at bottom, a reaction to the reluctance of white power to make the kind of changes necessary to make justice a reality for the Negro. I think that we've got to see that a riot is the language of the unheard. And, what is it that America has failed to hear? It has failed to hear that the economic plight of the Negro poor which has worsened over the last few years.”⁷

It seems evident that the three giants of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism have grown and prospered under our present capitalist system. The question is, have the three giants become so powerful they are “incapable of being conquered”? To shed some light on this question, let us look at a recent interview with Angela Davis, Professor Emerita at the University of California, Santa Cruz, that appeared on Democracy Now:

“The Industrial Revolution, which pivoted around the production of capital, was enabled by slave labor in the U.S. So, I am convinced that the ultimate eradication of racism is going to require us to move toward a more socialist organization of our economies, of our other institutions. I think we have a long way to go before we can begin to talk about an economic system that is not based on exploitation and on the super-exploitation of Black people, Latinx people and other racialized populations”.⁸

Angela Davis continues:

“But I do think we now have the conceptual means to engage in discussions, popular discussions, about capitalism. Occupy gave us new language. The notion of the prison industrial complex requires us to understand the globalization of capitalism. Anti-capitalist consciousness helps us to understand the predicament of immigrants who are barred from

⁷ — Interview with Mike Wallace, [1966](#)

⁸ June 14, 2020 “Democracy Now” interview with Amy Goodman.

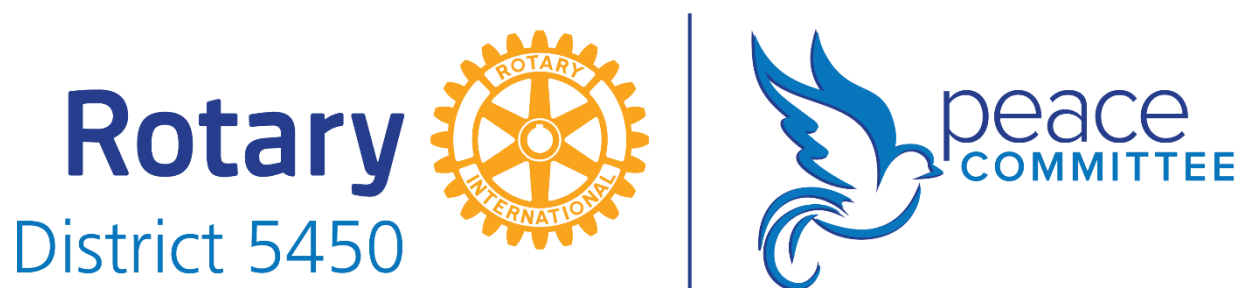
the U.S. by the wall that has been created by the current occupant. These conditions have been created by global capitalism. And I think this is a period in which we need to begin that process of popular education which will allow people to understand the interconnections of racism, heteropatriarchy, capitalism".⁹

Militarism, extreme materialism, and racism are alive and well in America today. We need to educate people about all of these giant triplets since defining the problem is only half of the solution.

Our nation has overcome slavery; slavery is no longer "legal". In America, the last time the oligarchs paid their fair share of taxes, a great middle class was born. Militarism/war, based on deceit, can be engaged by the use of "truth" as employed in Satyagraha, Gandhi's reference for passive political resistance. This nation *has* made some progress in providing the promise of equality as mentioned in the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

We can continue to make progress. We can and must explore the use of peace literacy as advocated by West Point graduate and Iraq veteran Paul. K. Chappell. We can and must learn how to use the method(s) of Satyagraha. We need to learn for ourselves what peace literacy and Satyagraha can do for us and our community.

A NOTICE AND APPEAL FROM JIM HALDERMAN AND DISTRICT 5450 PEACE COMMITTEE



In speaking to several Rotary clubs, I hear first-hand that most claim to want peace, though few believe it is possible. That creates a dilemma for us. I want it to be true, and I recognize the challenge of this belief system. At this point, of course, those who don't believe peace is possible, they are right. Consider Henry Ford's quote: "If you think you can do a thing or think you can't do a thing, you're right." It appears that so many individuals limit what is possible by their belief system.

For example, there was a time we knew the earth to be flat. There was a time we knew the sun rotated the Earth. There was a time we believed telephones needed to be attached to the wall. There was a time we believed dial-up internet was a great thing.

We believe something is true when we see no other alternative, have no idea of how to make the change, and have seen a consistency in our past, as in the examples above.

⁹ IBID

Indeed, peace may be difficult to grasp, like a moving cloud. Some believe peace is the absence of immediate violence while others define it as a feeling of security. If someone has no water, perhaps Rotarians can get together, drill a well, add a pump and some piping, and deliver water. Peace, on the other hand, is more vague.

Our District Peace Committee is often asked “what can we do?” Our committee is fortunate to consist of Rotarians with a great deal of knowledge and extensive backgrounds in peace making. Recently we completed some future planning around programs that we can offer Rotarians, their friends, families, and communities. Our plan consists of ongoing discussion groups, speakers, and classes.

The first program will be an all-day free ZOOM event on Saturday, September 26. Randall Butler, who has taught conflict resolution throughout the world and currently working in South Sudan, will share critical communication skills. This event will focus on the difficulties we face in simple conversations and will be experiential by design. More information will be coming soon with details including how to sign-up. It will be limited to 100 maximum so you will want to stay tuned.

Jim Halderman, Chair D5450 Peace Committee

PRIORITIES OF THE ROTARY FOUNDATION

See the RI website: <https://my.rotary.org/en/learning-reference/about-rotary/our-priorities> If you would you like to respond to one of the pieces in this newsletter, check out our blog www.rotarypeacebuilder.com and join the conversation! If you would like to contribute to a future newsletter, visit www.rotarypeacebuilder.com/submit/. You can find some of our past issues at the Rotary District 5440 website: <https://www.rotary5440.org/sitepage/peace-building-newsletters>. Future issues may explore the following: SEPTEMBER— Civil Discourse as a Key to Civility; OCTOBER (Thomas) Human diversity and leadership skills for peacebuilding; OCTOBER—(Thomas) Characteristics of successful families and peacebuilders; NOVEMBER: (Timpson) The role of a peace park. If you have ideas for future topics, please send them to any of our writers.