



Peaceworks Quarterly Newsletter – Summer 2008

Meteorologists would tell us that we are now in Autumn. Well call me old-fashioned – as Dame Edna might say – but it ain't Michaelmas yet and I still haven't given up on the British summer – so here's our Summer Newsletter! This is mailed with thanks to our supporters whether in finance, friendship, prayer or solidarity.

Europe Africa Reconciliation Process – Kinshasa, DRC: June 2008



As we trailed in our last newsletter, the journey of reconciliation between Europe and Africa reached an amazing climax back in June as Peaceworks travelled with a European delegation to Kinshasa, DRC. It was a much contested trip at a number of levels but a huge door of reconciliation was opened there. The church in Kinshasa was very much ready for us and had secured a very high level response to our visit. As with previous visits to Harare and Libreville, we spent the first few days in Kinshasa juggling between being hosted liked kings (to our embarrassment most of the time), trying to plan the conference inputs and fielding the intrigued media. Once we were into the conference proper around 5,000 Africans from dozens of countries joined our small European delegation to pray for reconciliation, to worship the Lord and to offer and receive statements of repentance.

A full report should be available soon, but the clear highlight for those involved was undoubtedly when the Vice-President of the Democratic Republic of Congo accepted our statement of repentance on behalf of the sins of Europe to his country and dedicated his country to the Living God. This wasn't in our script but naturally we took it as a great confirmation of God's grace on the whole venture. **So please thank God for this work – for the safety for all concerned, for the amazing response of the Congolese government and for the clear breakthrough in the heavenlies over the wounds in land and across our continents.** Recommended reading on the colonial legacy in DRC and in Africa is *Blood River* by Tim Butcher.

Peaceworks Mediation Skills Training – accredited carried forward

On a more mundane level, we are pleased to say that we heard in August from the College of Mediators that they are willing to endorse our acclaimed training course, originally approved by Mediation UK in 2006. This means that delegates who successfully complete the assessed course will be able to apply for personal membership of the College of Mediators. This body is fast becoming recognised as the successor to Mediation UK as the umbrella body of community mediators in this country.



Our next course runs for a week from 29th September (yes, Michaelmas!). We will be at a new venue to us, the Beachcroft Hotel, in Felpham, which won the Arun Business Partnership Award in 2007 so we are hopeful of excellent service to match the training. There are currently still two places available so if you know anyone who might be interested in taking part in the course please contact us for a leaflet. **Please do pray for this course to fill and for a great dynamic and learning experience for all.**



Mediation Interventions – going strong



Since our last newsletter we have concluded two successful mediation cases in two completely different spheres of society. One was with a parish council that had been in conflict over a long period. Peaceworks staff members have now attended training in the New Code of Conduct for Councillors. This is an area in which Local Authorities are now frequently using mediation as a constructive approach to non-compliance.

The other was a workplace mediation case where a chief executive and a senior manager had again been in conflict around management styles which had led to a disciplinary hearing. One of the parties sent in their evaluation form yesterday, “Many thanks for making such a difficult and stressful situation turn into something that we can now move forward in a positive manner.” Nice. **Please pray for more opportunities to mediate – we always welcome the experience and the opportunities to make a difference.**

Peer Mediation in Schools – here we go again!

The first week of September always means the whole Peaceworks’ team bracing ourselves for the hard graft of a new year’s work in schools. This year we are extra stretched as we have lost David (pictured far right) who has moved on to continue to his ministry training in Reading – all the best from us David and thanks for your contribution. Also Jona (pictured far left) will end his productive internship with us at Christmas so we have loaded this term with lessons to make the most of him!



We are really proud of what we have achieved through the schools programme – at the end of last year we estimate that we have reached over 8,000 pupils overall including over 2,000 receiving 6 or more hours of training in lessons. We have also passed the 500 mark of staff trained, launched 15 peer mediation schemes and worked with 48 schools. **Please do pray for us – for our team, for on-going funding streams and for new education team members.**

Staff issues & changes

Members of our office staff have suffered a lot this year with illness. Please particularly pray for Sharon who has ongoing auto-immune issues that are most debilitating. Also, please pray for Tony Wood, who leaves us this month after the end of a three year contract funded to help us develop our mediation programmes. Thanks to him for being part of the team and every blessing in your retirement. Finally, we will be advertising for a new post – Programme Co-ordinator – later this month so please pray for the right person to join our team.

Finally, big thanks for your support – this really is a team effort!

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