

Worship and Action Update, 7/13/04

Very dear Friends in New York Yearly Meeting:

We write today out of urgency, pain, and hope. Even as we rejoice in one another's company at summer gatherings, and many of us prepare for our time together at New York Yearly Meeting sessions at the end of July, the world's news is bad, including terrible news of killing in the Sudan. Over 1,000,000 people have been displaced in the Darfur province and are at risk of lethal attacks and starvation. For more information, see the web site of Oxfam, a British charity dedicated to working with others to overcome poverty and suffering: www.oxfam.org.uk/.

Today we receive word from Bob Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, of actions of conscience planned for tomorrow, Wednesday, July 14, 2004, including his own arrest, to prompt effective international intervention in Sudan. His letter appears below.

Ervin Staub's heartfelt scholarship invites deep understanding on our part of terror and genocide and shows that prompt action by states, groups and individuals can make a difference. He says: "Nations and the community of nations – as well as nongovernmental organizations and individuals – need to respond, as active bystanders, to early signs of victimization. They can inhibit, by early actions, the evolution of extreme violence.")"Preventing Genocide: Activating Bystanders, Helping Victims and the Creation of Caring," *Other Voices*, v.2, n.1 (February 2000), at www.othervoices.org/2.1/staub/preventing.html.)

In her study of genocides after World War II, Samatha Power finds actions at home are needed to compel our government to act. She says:

It is in the realm of domestic politics that the battle to stop genocide is lost. American political leaders interpret society-wide silence as an indicator of public indifference.... Potential sources of influence - lawmakers on Capitol Hill, editorial boards, non-governmental groups, and ordinary constituents - do not generate political pressure sufficient to change the calculus of American leaders.

"A Problem from Hell," *America and the Age of Genocide* (Basic Books 2002), at page xviii. In the conclusion of her book (at pages 515–16), Samatha Power reminds us that sometimes "unreasonable" acts are necessary to change the world:

During World War II, Arthur Koestler described those frustrated few who spoke up in the newspapers and public meetings against Nazi atrocities as "Screamers". The Screamers succeeded in reaching

listeners for a moment, Koestler wrote, only to watch them shake themselves "like puppies who have got their fur wet" and return to the blissful place of ignorance and uninvolvedness.

* * *

George Bernard Shaw once wrote, "The reasonable man adapts himself to the world. The unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man." After a century of doing so little to prevent, suppress, and punish genocide, Americans must join and thereby legitimize the ranks of the unreasonable.

Extreme violence has already occurred in the Sudan. If we open ourselves to the horrors of the news, we may also open ourselves to inspiration, to seeing ways we can "respond, as active bystanders," support those who are taking action, or stand in witness in our communities. As John Calvi wrote on September 12, 2001, "Dear Great and Holy Spirit, . . . wash us of our unknowing."

In care,

Linda Chidsey, Vicki Cooley, Fred Dettmer, Lu Harper
NYYM Worship and Action for Peace working group

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

From: Robert Edgar [mailto:redgar@nccusa.org]
Sent: Tuesday, July 13, 2004 7:59 AM
To: Peace Colleagues
Cc: retreat@list.nccusa.org; justice&advocacy@list.nccusa.org
Subject: Sudan Genocide

Dear friend in the faith community,

In the Darfur province of Sudan, over one million black Africans have been bombed and burnt out of their villages and chased into the desert by government planes and Arab militias allied with the country's oppressive regime. Their camps are now surrounded, and anyone who tries to leave is raped or killed. According to the US government's 'conservative' estimate, 370,000 human beings are already dead or certain of dying of starvation in these extermination camps. The death toll could reach 1 million within the next few months. As people of faith and members of the human family, we can't let this horror continue, the way we did in Rwanda exactly 10 years ago.

The US has tough words for Sudan but threats to act are mild, suggesting only sanctions on the militia leaders, and perhaps later the government. The

Sudanese are used to sanctions, and even the toughest sanctions take months to have any impact. We don't have that kind of time. Only one thing will stop the killing in Sudan: an immediate international intervention to protect the people of Darfur and deliver aid to them.

**CALL FOR INTERVENTION IN DARFUR
A MORAL OBLIGATION**

When: Daily 12:00 noon - 1 PM

Where: Sudanese Embassy, 2210 Mass Ave. NW, Wash. DC

Who: You, and Everyone Else Called to Save 600,000 Lives

Also 1000 person die-ins in Lafayette Park, DC and the United Nations, NY, dates TBA

Also Wednesday July 14th, 12 Noon, Rev. Bob Edgar, General Secretary of the NCC will be arrested at the Sudanese Embassy, following Rep. Charles Rangel on Tuesday or Wednesday - Join Them!

We need to update ourselves, share information, and plan this and next week's activities in DC with all possible urgency. Rev Walter Fauntroy has already been arrested and with CSI and radio personality Joe Madison is helping to turn out 50 people a day at the Embassy. Joe Madison has decided to go on hunger strike. Please go to the following web site for more information on Darfur:
www.darfurgenocide.org; <http://www.darfurgenocide.org/>

For more information on DC protests, and particularly if you would like to join Bob Edgar in civil disobedience on Wednesday, please contact Keith Roderick, Sudan Campaign Coordinator at Christian Solidarity International, on 309-836-2809 (w) or 202-490-8644 (m), or hr@macomb.com.