

HEALING REFLECTIONS



INSTITUTE FOR HEALING OF MEMORIES NEWSLETTER



Handing over to the next generation: Tharaki & Tharana Weinman with Fr Michael both children holding a Tamil and Sinhalese edition of Redeeming the Past: "My journey from freedom fighter to healer" in Colombo, Sri Lanka

Healing of Memories Programme in Sri Lanka

"Justice will come in its time – meanwhile we shall heal ourselves".



by Priyanka Mendis
NCC Co-ordinator in Sri Lanka

The prolonged armed conflict has either directly or indirectly affected everyone living in Sri Lanka in diverse ways and at different levels.

To some it has inflicted a lasting and devastating impact and the feelings of pain, revenge and frustration have to be addressed sooner rather than later. Although dealing with the past in itself is complex and intricate, such legitimate attempts could save lives. It

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Youth Conference

Restoring Humanity through love and acceptance

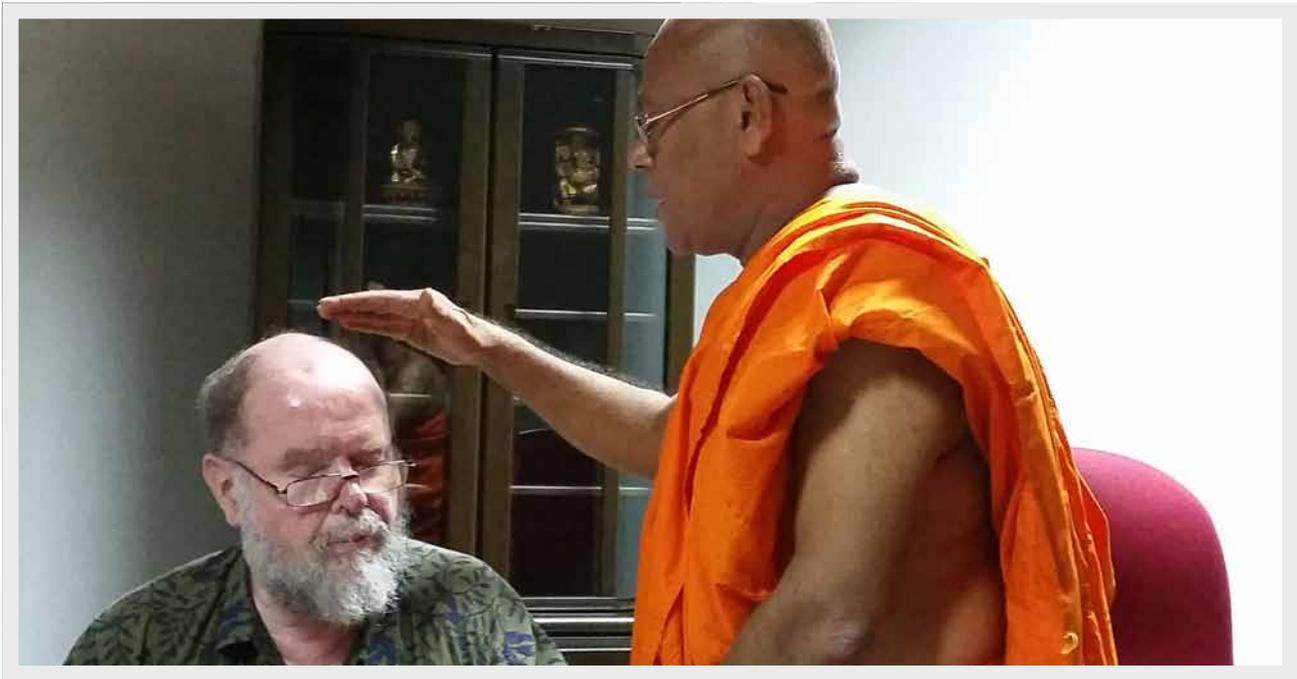
The Restoring Humanity (RH) team held a Youth Conference entitled "Restoring Humanity through love and acceptance" at the Cape Peninsular University of Technology (CPUT) Bellville campus from 14 to 15 February 2015. It was attended by 188 young people from the various areas in which the RH team has been working for some time now.

The aim of the conference was to:

- Expose the RH youth participants to a more diverse group of young people

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Healing of Memories Programme in Sri Lanka



Fr Michael receiving a Buddhist blessing from the Venerable Banagala Upatissa Thero Chairman of the Mahabodhi Society during his travels in Sri Lanka



Map of Sri Lanka indicating the cities where IHOM/NCC joint activities took place

could heal wounds and rejuvenate societies in terms of the impact for generations to come based on stories of hatred and revenge being passed down.

To address this need, the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka (NCCSL) together with the Institute for Healing of Memories South Africa proposed the programme of 'Healing of Memories'. It was launched as a stepping



Participants and facilitators of the Batticaloa HOM Workshop

stone, a process of healing with peace building aspects to make a limited though valuable contribution to inter-community trust building and interaction at local level. The aim is to bring healing "One Story at a Time". The unique feature of this programme is that it seeks healing for the victim as well as the perpetrator with the understanding that both are experiencing pain in a post conflict situation.

Healing of Memories Workshops

Four Sri Lankans experienced one of the workshops in Cape Town (December 2013) with a view to assessing the viability of a long term programme in Sri Lanka. On their positive feedback Fr Micheal Lapsley was invited to visit Sri Lanka in January 2014, June 2014 and March 2015. Under



From the right: The Rev. Arul, Priyanka, Vijula, Bishop Saundaranayagam, Fr Michael, and Charles

his leadership five inter-faith workshops were conducted in various parts of Sri Lanka namely Athurugiriya, Jaffna, Batticaloa and Galle. These were very well received by the Church people, ex-combatants including disabled ex-combatants, persons affected by poverty and other indirect impacts of war. A very keen attempt was made to offer this program to disabled soldiers of the Sri Lankan Forces but it was not possible at this time.

Building friendships and publicising the work of Healing

During his visits to Sri Lanka Fr Lapsley spoke to school children on the theme of 'Choices' and along with the HOM team in Sri Lanka interacted closely with many media personnel and Fr Lapsley was interviewed by several print, radio and TV presenters; visited and had discussions with Faculty of the Theological College of Lanka; Lecturers and Students at the Giragama Teachers Training College for Aesthetic Studies; the Team from Fokus Women (an international NGO); the staff of Oxfam in Sri Lanka: Practitioners in traditional approaches to Healing from the 'Sri Lanka International Buddhist Academy' (SIBA), those using Art Therapy, Homeopathy and alternate drugless therapy and Ayurvedic medicine: The team met Rt Revd Thomas Soundernayagam the Roman Catholic Bishop of Jaffna and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Jaffna, a group of teachers and students at St Johns' College in Jaffna and the General Udaya Perera, commander of the Sri Lanka Army in Jaffna. Meetings were also held with counsellors and psychiatrists with a view to referring participants of workshops requiring further counselling or psychiatric therapy.

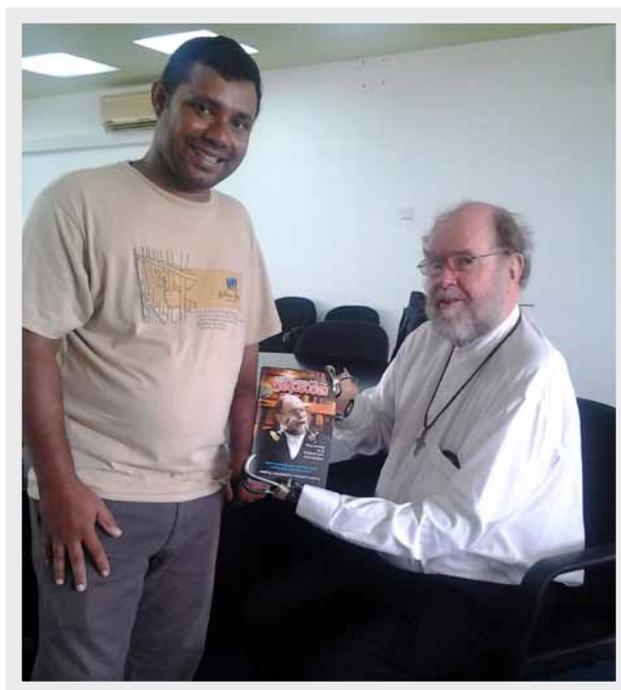
Fr Lapsley and the Team also met with the Ex-President of Sri Lanka HE Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge who heads a Special Presidential Task Force to identify urgent reconciliation needs of the minority Tamil community under the newly elected Government of Sri Lanka. (elections took place on 8th January 2015); the leader of the opposition Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva, Venerable Maduluwawe Thero Sobitha - Chairman of the National Movement for a Just Society.

Three facilitator training workshops have been conducted and Sri Lankan Facilitators joined Fr Lapsley in facilitating the groups during the five workshops held in Sri Lanka. In June this year one or two facilitators will undergo a more intensive training in Durban and Johannesburg workshops so that workshops can be delivered without the participation of Fr Micheal in the future.

The HOM initiatives will ideally be carried out on an interfaith platform.

As the South African experience suggests, the HOM workshops will bring about a change in individuals and also have a ripple effect in the communities they return to and the seeds of reconciliation and tolerance will grow and bear fruit. Our fervent hope is that restorative justice will be a reality one day – but until then the communities will begin to be healed of hatred. As one disabled ex-combatant participating in a workshop put it... *"Justice will come in its time – meanwhile we shall heal ourselves"*.

The memoir of Fr Micheal Lapsley 'Redeeming the Past: My journey from Freedom Fighter to Healer' has been translated into Sinhala and Tamil – the local languages of Sri Lanka and launched in a book launch co-hosted by the National Christian Council and the Mahabodhi Society of Sri Lanka. Wide press coverage in print and electronic media was arranged for the visit of Fr Lapsley, the workshops and the launch of the publications. The 'Fathet Michael Lapsley Story' DVD has also been voiced over in both Sinhala and Tamil and is available on DVD and on YouTube. A Facebook page 'Healing of Memories' carries pictures and motivational quotes on forgiveness and healing in an interfaith context. Ralston Weinman and Raja Uswetakeiyawa were instrumental in getting the translation projects completed successfully.



Ralston Weinman one of the people responsible for the book and DVD translations project

Translation into many languages

Astonishingly Fr Michael's memoir: "Redeeming the Past: My journey from freedom fighter to healer" keeps being published in more and more languages: already a US and South African edition in English and then Bosnian, German, Sinhalese, Tamil, Spanish and Japanese. In 2015 a second and third Spanish editions in Spain and Cuba, French and Afrikaans.

"At many of the book launches and in the book reviews, people speak most about their own lives. To me, this means that "Redeeming..." is a mirror assisting the reader to do their own healing work Sometimes even at book launches people feel safe enough to share deep experiences of their lives... as Professor Pumla Gobodo Madikizela says... "when public spaces become intimate". Fr Michael



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Restoring Humanity through love and acceptance

- Create a platform for young people to discuss and explore the theme of "Restoring Humanity", and the various forms dehumanisation that takes place within society
- Explore the youth's ideas on love and acceptance of self and others and its relevance to building a better world
- Introduce a multi-lingual approach (Afrikaans, English and Xhosa) to working with young people to break down the language barriers that tend to separate people; this arose as a response to previous feedback from workshops where the language barrier created division and clicking between the Youth.

The conference provided a variety of different learning styles. Guest speaker Latoya Maduka from Bush radio spoke on the challenges and opportunities facing young South Africans in building an inclusive, non-racial non-sexist democratic South Africa. The second speaker was Soraya Mentor from Wheat Trust whose talk focused on the many ways in which we behave that make it difficult for reconciliation to take place which contributes to us continuing to dehumanise each other. She urged the young people to be more conscious of the kinds of relationships they build, the language they use to address each other and the choices they make in life that do not sustain or embrace loving supportive relationships.

Plenary presentations focused on the intercultural connectedness of people all over the world. Participants were invited to participate in a host of creative elective workshops on Poetry, Photography, Agriculture, Hip Hop Music, Puppetry, Beading, Wiring, Tai Chi, Capoeira, cartoon drawing and audio visual presentations. The conference closed off with an interactive drama session from the Bonfire theatre group.

Restoring Humanity – Khanyisa Community Centre Khayelitsha – Human Rights Day, 21 March 2015

A Restoring Humanity youth get together was held on Human Rights Day at the Khanyisa Community Centre



Youth Participants at the Human Rights Day activities organised by the RH team on the 21st of March 2015

in Khayelitsha on the 21 of March 2015. The Centre has a special connection to the Institute as the building was officially opened by the Director of the Institute, Fr. Michael Lapsley.

It was attended by 110 participants from the 7 communities in which the Restoring Humanity programme has been working and they are:- Masiphumelele, Mfuleni, Mitchell's Plain, Mamre, Atlantis, Delft and Kahyalitsha as well as 2 schools Langa - and Excelsior High.

The aims of the day's activities was to:

- remind young people about their rights and responsibilities
- create a space where the young people can meet, share and discuss their rights and responsibilities
- motivate the youth to be part of building better communities and fostering a culture of Human Rights.

Men's Imbizo

The IHOM's Community Healing Programme in collaboration with its local partners successfully organized a "Men's Imbizo" (Imbizo is the Xhosa word for gathering or meeting in this context) series in Delft in February and in Atlantis and Masiphumelele in March 2015.



Mandla Klanisi, IHOM's Community Healing Co-ordinator crouching at the center in a check shirt and Maurice Dyer, IHOM's US Intern together with the participants of the "Men's Imbizo" series in Delft

Themes of the Mens "Imbizo's" Series were:

1. **Delft** – "Role of men in a changing society, challenges, frustration and opportunities"
2. **Atlantis** – "Men in the hood, what makes a man?"
Manhood (Personal Power) Fatherhood (relationships), Brotherhood (Communal responsibility)
3. **Masiphumelele** – "Men in the hood, what makes a man in Masiphumelele"

The objective in organizing the three Men's Imbizos was to encourage an increased number of men to participate in the Healing of Memories workshops and other HOM

developmental activities taking place in their communities. An important principle of our work is based on bringing together a diversity of people, so that they can listen to each other's experiences. For this to happen an intervention had to be made to engage the men in the Community Healing Process.

Beyond the highlighted challenges. The "Imbizo" recognises that the social landscape of our society has changed due to political, economic, technological and many other factors. With these changes come issues that affect the way men and women see themselves, how we relate to each other, how our families relate to one another, how our communities organise themselves and develop in our country.

In the midst of this change, there is a realisation that men and women need to work together to improve themselves and society.

The Key objectives of the Men's Imbizo series is:

- To overcome the challenge highlighted earlier about "men not attending healing of memories workshops and other activities".
- To open a safe space for the men of Delft, Atlantis and Masiphumelele to express themselves in a non-judgmental environment in the context of the various themes set out for their communities
- To encourage the men of Delft, Atlantis and Masiphumelele to work together with women in order to improve themselves and their society and take part or play a role in their own development and that of their families
- To challenge perceptions and stereotypes around manhood, and raise awareness on the importance of men taking part in the wellness of their families and their communities
- To create safe spaces so that the men of Delft, Atlantis and Masiphumelele could be informed, heard, encouraged, motivated, empowered and inspired to play a more positive role in the lives of their families and in our society at large.

Community Healing Training

On the 23-26 March the Institute held a Community Healing Facilitation training at the Novalis Ubuntu Centre in Wynberg. Fatima Swartz, the Institutes' Programmes Manager and Loret Loumouamou, the Institutes' HOM Workshops Organiser, were the facilitators of the 4 day training. The training was attended by the Cape Town and Kwazulu Natal Programme staff of the Institute. It also included the representatives of community partner organisations in Delft, Masiphumelele and Atlantis.

The objectives of the training was to:

- Develop an understanding of the Community Healing approach of the Institute within a peace-building framework;



IHOM team with facilitators from across the Institute's Projects and Programs in the Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal who attended Community Healing facilitator training in Cape Town

- Consolidate a committed group of community workers to implement the community healing processes in their communities;
- Create a culture of reflective learning and to document and learn from our experiences.

The first day concentrated on building a learning community, beginning with an Introduction and an overview of the course objectives, process outline and a group contract on how participants should work with each other over the four days. This was followed by unpacking the key concepts of healing, peacebuilding and violence. Participants then explored the impact of violence on individuals and communities with special attention to the cultural, psychological and spiritual aspects. The day was concluded by working with the Community Healing Tree a tool used to assist communities in understanding community healing.

The second day opened with a Review and reflection of the previous day and proceeded with an introduction to "Developing a theory of change". This opened up into talking about the importance of being a "Reflective practitioner". In preparation for the next day a brief introduction on dialogues and documentation took place.

The third day of the training had the participants attending the Men's Imbizo in Masiphumelele. Participants had to participate in and observe the process. In groups they had to draw out the learnings from the activity and produce a report.

The last day started with a review and reflection of the previous day and the sharing of reports from the previous activity which was Men's Imbizo. The group then looked at the challenges for Community Healing - underdevelopment and inequality as fault-lines for violence. The opportunities for Community Healing - from strategy to action planning and building partnerships. The training concluded with the evaluation of the Training.

Advertorial of IHOM proposed activities

International Training Course

“Introduction to Healing of Memories”

Course Leader:	Fr. Michael Lapsley
Duration:	13th August – 23th August 2015 (10 days)
Location:	Cape Town, South Africa
Language of facilitation:	English
Closing date for applications:	1st July 2015

Course fee:

USD 1,000 (include workshop accommodation, meals, training material, transport and all excursions related to the course)

Specifically the course aims to introduce participants to:

- The Healing of Memories healing process and methodology.
- The fundamentals of Healing of Memories practice.

Programme includes:

- An Introduction to the philosophy and work of the Institute for Healing of Memories.
- Participating in a Healing of Memories workshop and the Second phase workshop which deals with anger, hatred and forgiveness.
- Healing of Memories pedagogy and praxis with special reference to people living with HIV/AIDS, people in prisons, refugees and post war trauma.
- Visiting a local community to explore models of community healing.
- Sharing models of self-care.

Facilitators:

Fr. Michael Lapsley, founding member and Director of the IHOM will be the lead facilitator on the course. Institute facilitators take a participatory approach, emphasising experiential learning. In addition to the full-time tutors, resource specialists from external institutions will conduct sessions on particular topics.

Participants

The course is open to participants of all faith traditions, ideologies, cultures and sexual orientation. If you have special needs that you fear may affect your participation please let us know. Every effort will be made to accommodate your needs.

For further information on IHOM and the “Introduction to Healing of Memories” course please contact:

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Appeal for Funding for the IHOM's planned Conference

We hereby appeal to any prospective donor who might be interested in funding the Institute's planned conference advertised below to please contact us. Your sponsorship is sorely needed and would be much appreciated by Indigenous people the world over.

The IHOM Presents an International Conference

On the Healing Journeys of Indigenous people

Provisional Date: 26 August to 29 August 2015 in Cape Town, South Africa

Introduction

For more than a decade the Institute has been involved in "Healing of Memories workshops" and conversations of forgiveness, justice and mercy conducted with indigenous people in Australia, Colombia, Canada, United States of America, Hawaii, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Fiji, Namibia, Liberia and more recently in South Africa. These engagements have been rich in sharing the pain and dreams of communities who have been more often than not marginalised in the countries of their birth for over centuries.

We are referencing Indigenous peoples as defined in international or national legislation as people "having a set of specific rights based on their historical ties to a particular territory, and their cultural or historical distinctiveness from other populations that are often politically dominant".

During the course of the work of the Institute for Healing of Memories many stories were shared of the:

- Disempowerment, exclusion and access to decision making processes that affect the lives of indigenous people.
- Depressing feelings of not having any say or control of what happens in your life and that of your community.
- Lack of respect and recognition of traditional authorities.
- Painful process of separation from land and living in separate places.
- Anger at the loss of rights to natural resources and living in poverty resulting in various social ills.
- Erosion of culture, identity and purpose
- Feelings of mixed identities and ambiguity of cultural influences on generations to come.

Participants

The conference aim to bring together 60 – 80 people from the countries in which the Institute has worked with indigenous communities. The participants would be reflective of the diversity of people the Institute has engaged including Healing of Memories facilitators, community leaders, young people, professionals, academics, artists, and musicians, traditional and religious leaders.

The goals of the conference

- To bring together these diverse and very similar voices from across continents and cultures to address the key issues that face their communities and the generations to come in their individual and collective journeys towards healing.
- Share ancient, old and recent experiences of pain and ways to bring healing to their communities
- Build solidarity between indigenous people across the continents to renew hope and commitment to participate in society and build and contributing to a new world

For more information contact

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