

Peace Talk

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Educating our World's Children

“Their notion of neighborhood school is too narrow. Wake County is our neighborhood. Not just a few houses in your immediate area. The fact is, all of our financial capital and human capital benefits the entire county and no one block or one set of children means more than any other block or set of children.”

Rev. William Barber II, President NC NAACP, Our Keynoter

When the current Wake County School Board voted to abandon diversity, the halls were packed with our children. These children have experienced the benefits of including all races and all incomes. The school board cannot escape history; and it will be those children who judge them.

Busing was a sacrifice that two generations of students and parents have made. Is it working? Are we becoming a more inclusive society with greater cultural and economic opportunities for all? The outpouring of concern would indicate that yes, it is making a difference. We who have made the sacrifice and the commitment have thereby undergone a metamorphosis, founded on the understanding that diversity promotes social health.

The hope was that the success of diversity in our schools would eventually bring about diversity racially and by income in neighborhood housing. Only then would a neighborhood school policy provide equal educational opportunities for all our children.

History foretells that a fractured future awaits as public schools re-segregate and private schools feed upon the ensuing social fear. Ron Margiotta, the Chair of the School Board, is on the board of a private school, whose owner, Bob Ludy, plans an expansion of 25 to 50 schools. Are our public schools in the crosshair of the wrecking crew in a privatization scam? Ludy financed the takeover.

So what does this have to do with peace? It's called building a Culture of Peace and it's about working now to undermine the causes of violence in the future. At our annual Peacemaker Dinner on May 20th we honor three peace educators, who helped make our renaissance of diversity and continue to speak out to protect it.

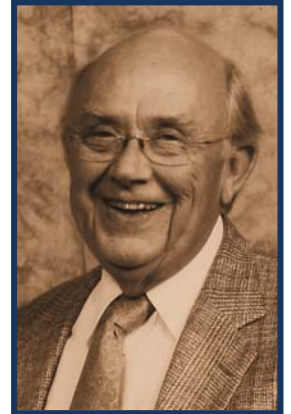
Bill Towe

In the early 1960's integration was just beginning. Bill Towe was a high school history teacher in Baltimore and later in Virginia. One of the Afro-American girls in his class was the daughter of a professor at the local college. His mission was to “let her shine”. And she certainly did; earning the respect of her classmates for academics.

But respect is also about courage and character, about artistic expression and sports performance. Integration has taken us from an abstract notion of tolerance to a feeling of appreciation for our shared humanity. It breaks down the separation that fosters disregard and the exclusivity that breeds arrogance.

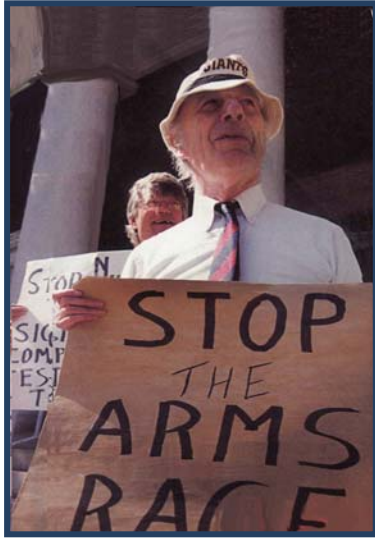
Not content to just teach history, Bill and his wife Betsy Jean helped make it. Bill helped organize the Virginia Students Civil Rights Committee. He was giving speeches at some of the northern universities to raise funds, when he met a man who wanted to record Bill for his dissertation on the student movement. After the speaking tour, Bill returned home to Southside VA and soon after the Klu Klux Klan burned a cross in his front yard. He later learned that the man taping him was from the FBI and that he shared the tape with the Klan.

Bill went on to work for the NC Voter Education Project where he wrote “Barriers to Black Participation” which the NC ACLU used to overthrow discriminatory election laws, resulting in more Afro-Americans and women elected to the General Assembly. Later Bill became the Research Director at the NC Economic Opportunity Office and wrote “Changing Faces of Poverty” that documented the economic impact of policies against women. He traveled the state presenting his findings for which Governor Martin fired him. Does this sound like what the Wake School Board tried to do to Superintendent Burns? Speaking your conscience to power builds a Culture of Peace and Bill Towe is a peacemaker.



Slater Newman

After working for the Air Force, Dr. Slater Newman longed for freedom to do his own research and sought it by joining the NC State College Psychology faculty. Slater became very active in the NCSU chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) to protect academic freedom. And to protect human rights more broadly, Slater helped found both the North Carolina affiliate and the Wake County chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), as well as the Human Rights Coalition of North Carolina, and he continues to be active in each.



Almost ten years after “separate but equal” was ruled a violation of the 14th Amendment, much of the South was still segregated. Slater, along with some of his colleagues, joined in the Raleigh marches to desegregate. The march route passed by a hotel frequented by legislators, and faculty members were recognized. So a law was passed to stop them. This [Speaker Ban Law](#) was crafted to prevent Communists from speaking at public universities. As a way to undermine the integration movement, Communists were blamed for stirring unrest among the Afro-Americans. When some senators rose to oppose the bill, Clarence Stone, who was presiding, removed his glasses and said he didn’t see any more Senators who wanting to speak.

I see a parallel with our School Board’s limiting participation by requiring tickets to the “open” board meeting.

In 1966, the students at UNC Chapel Hill decided to challenge the law by inviting two real Communist speakers. Both were prevented from speaking. The students sued the university and the State. And the AAUP and the ACLU filed friend of the court briefs supporting the students. The ban lasted 5 years before the U.S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals struck it down after 10 minutes of deliberation.

I first met Slater Newman at a meeting of the Wake County chapter of the United Nations Association. Each year at the banquet, Slater leads us all in the singing of “Ode to Joy”. Slater also makes sure that everyone who wants one can have a free copy of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). Some people carry the Constitution with them; Slater carries the Declaration in

his wallet; he cherishes it. After reading it, I too came to recognize that these articles provide our best social guidelines for peace. The longest article concerns the right to an education. To quote the part about the purpose of education:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, it shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

The School Board’s abandoning diversity from our education mission does not promote understanding, tolerance, or friendship among racial groups. To support diversity is to promote a Culture of Peace and Slater Newman by protecting our human rights is a peacemaker.

Ajamu Dillahunt

Ajamu Dillahunt is a community and labor educator. He believes that the key to peace comes from understanding others point of view. He has helped immigrant workers through the [Black Workers for Justice](#), which he helped found, and the NC Justice Center where he is currently an Outreach Coordinator.



To fully appreciate the immigrant circumstance, Ajamu traveled to Oaxaca, Mexico with Witness for Peace to explore the [roots of migration](#), the other side of immigration. To personally witness why people would leave their homes, risk that dangerous journey north to go to a country where many are not even treated as human beings. Ajamu heard time and again the heart break of villagers having to leave their families to support their families, the “painful relief”. North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) caused a loss of 15% of Mexican jobs, reduced the daily wage to \$4, and caused more than half a million Mexicans to migrate to the US. Lately the US backed Merida Initiative has been increasing the violence in Mexico, providing another reason to migrate to a safer haven north. Ajamu is convinced by the experience that the US needs to replace NAFTA with an economic model that supports small farmers and micro loans for small businesses. The people he visited in

Oaxaca are missing family members who had to migrate to North Carolina. We do need a just immigration policy.

In a way, the Wake County School Board has some migration plans of its own. In one way our children will be migrating back to their neighborhoods. But in a deeper sense, they will be migrating away from diversity. I can't help thinking how political spin is made to mislead. Who would oppose "Free Trade" or "neighborhood schools"? But underneath both, we find those who exploit advantages by further impoverishing the already impoverished.

Ajamu sees "neighborhood schools" as a right wing deception for turning back the clock on integration. After all the struggle, physical harm, social ostracism, busing, and a lot of sacrifices it is disconcerting that instead of continuing and improving educational opportunities for all children, the school board wants to divert that progress. Ajamu has had his children and now his grandchildren benefit from Wake's diversity policy. By and large he is pleased with our schools and their achievements. "There was still a way to go but we were headed in the right direction." Ajamu is especially enthusiastic about [Wiley International Studies Magnet Elementary School](#) where his grandchildren attended. Their curriculum helps "people become fuller, more whole human beings. Students have an opportunity to relate to people of other cultures and ethnicities. With this intentional examination of cultures around the world, our children come to understand and appreciate the richness of cultures, their languages, and contributions. They come to know a country's culture and start thinking and engaging with people all around the world. They will become vigorous advocates for peace and benefit the peace movement."

By working beyond borders for those in need and advocating a global awareness and appreciation, Ajamu is a peacemaker. *Wally Myers, Chair NC Peace Action*



NC Peace Action marching at the Historic Thousands on Jones St. organized by the NC NAACP and the NC Justice Center

Letter from the Executive Director

As NCPA's new director I want to up-date you on the issues that are at the heart of our work for peace. But first, I want to acknowledge John Heuer, our former director, who has taken on the care for his ailing father in Michigan. He continues as our vice-chair.

NCPA started 2010 with some financial challenges, a common theme in these times. Support from so many of you in our peace family in North Carolina is helping keep the vision alive. We are determined to maintain an active and vibrant peace movement in the state, adding our voice and special focus to that of our allies working for social justice and an end to war and the threat of war.

Besides opposing the Iraq and Afghanistan occupations, we also stand with allies such as the [Coalition for Peace with Justice](#) protesting the occupation of Palestine, [Stop Torture Now](#) working to end extraordinary rendition, and [Witness for Peace](#) and [AFSC](#) working for immigration reform.

You've heard that the START treaty with Russia has been signed. This is indeed good news. Now, we need to make sure the Senate ratifies it. We also need to keep up the pressure on President Obama to stay true to his pledge to bring an end to nuclear weapons "in our lifetimes".

YOU can help in a concrete way. Sign the enclosed petition and get four friends to do the same by April 26. If each person receiving this newsletter gets just five signatures we will have 3,250 signatures to contribute to this worldwide campaign. (Japan has gathered more than 5 million.) I'll be taking them to New York where they'll be presented to President Obama at the U.N. nuclear non-proliferation treaty review.

To help make a difference on all of these issues, please vote in the May 4 primary. See our endorsement of Senate candidate Elaine Marshall in this newsletter.

This year NCPA will contribute to a Culture of Peace with two statewide speaking tours. Terrance Rynne, author of [Gandhi and Jesus, The Saving Power of Nonviolence](#), will be touring the first week of June. Lawrence Wittner, historian and author of [Confronting the Bomb](#), will be here in the September.

Finally, I want to invite you all to our Annual Peacemaker Awards Dinner in Raleigh on May 20. We will be celebrating the work of Slater Newman and Ajamu Dillahunt and for our faithful leader and retired NCPA Coordinator, Bill Towe, a special award for lifetime service to Peace Action. The keynote speaker will be the charismatic leader of the NC NAACP, Rev. William Barber. Please join us for this special event.

Betsy Crites, Executive Director NC Peace Action

NC Peace Action

P.O. Box 10384, Raleigh, NC 27605



Building a Culture of Peace

www.ncpeaceaction.org email: director@ncpeaceaction.org

From our Keynote Speaker, [Rev. Barber](#)

The whole world is becoming more diverse. We need to embrace even more diversity.

Racial resegregation and high poverty-concentration in our schools not only separates our children, it separates our budgets, our buildings, our basic needs for developing an educational environment conducive to every child's development.

So for those who thought in an off-year election they could win a few seats and swing back the pendulum of history with the backwards anti-diversity, segregated policies of the past, let me be clear. Instead of killing our spirits you have sparked a new beginning. You have caused us to sound a new rallying cry. Forced us - black, white, and brown who believe in freedom, justice and equality to get fired up and ready to go all over again.

Rev. Dr. William Barber II, President NC NAACP

Be a Peace Voter

Primary Candidates for the Senate

The primaries are May 4th. If you are a registered Democrat, this is the best chance to influence who will face Richard Burr, who has a peace score of 11%. If you can attend a candidates' forum or presentation, let them know their support for the abolishment of nuclear weapons and the withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan are important to win your vote.

The four top Democratic primary candidates, Cal Cunningham, Ken Lewis, Elaine Marshall, and Marcus Williams, have all stated support for President Obama's initiatives to negotiate arms reductions with Russia. However, only Elaine Marshall opposes the surge in Afghanistan because it is "diverting our attention and reducing the resources we need to solve our own problems here at home, ... props up a corrupt government that has shown no real effort to reform itself, .. (and has) too little to do with keeping us safe at home."

***** [Elaine Marshall](#) is our peace candidate *****

Peace Speaker Tours

Terrence Rynne

Author: [Gandhi and Jesus: The Saving Power of Nonviolence](#)
"Imagine the impact on secular society if the entire body of Christians rejected the exclusive identification of justice with retribution, turned to a concept of restorative justice, and embraced, modeled, and lived the way of nonviolence."

Coming to North Carolina the first week of June

Lawrence Wittner

Author: "[Replacing International Oppression with International Aid](#)"

"suppose that the wealthy nations pumped billions of dollars a year into programs for the world's hungry, sick, and illiterate. Perhaps, as Eleanor Roosevelt once urged, it's time to begin substituting food, health care, and education for warfare and other oppressive programs".

Coming to North Carolina in September

To schedule these speakers in your area call

Betsy Crites (919)381-5969 or email: director@ncpeaceaction.org

Calendar

[YWCA Stand Against Racism](#), April 30 noon-1 pm
Moore square, Raleigh Contact YWCA Greater Triangle Racial Justice Co-Director, Bridgette Burge at 919-828-3205 for more information.

[International Conference for a Nuclear Free, Peaceful, Just and Sustainable World](#), April 30 – May 2, New York City. Join with thousands of people from around the world on the eve of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference at the United Nations.

Peacemaker Award Dinner, May 20, 6 pm Social, 6:45 Dinner. N.C. State University Club, 4200 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh. Keynote speaker *Rev. William Barber II*. Honoring the long-term commitment of this year's recipients: *Slater Newman, Ajamu Dillahunt, and Bill Towe* to the cause of peace and justice. (See the enclosed invitation for details.)

["Peace for the World's Children"](#) at the **Lake Junaluska Peace Conference**, Sep. 18-21, 2010. Peace Celebration for Youth and Children an Advocacy for the World's Children. Over twenty workshops are planned, and participants can take part in three to become more effective advocates for children. The Center is located west of Asheville at 91 N. Lakeshore Dr., Lake Junaluska, NC 2874, Contact Pam Naplen, (828) 454-6656.