

# the TRANSFORMER



## Whips To Lighten the Mood:

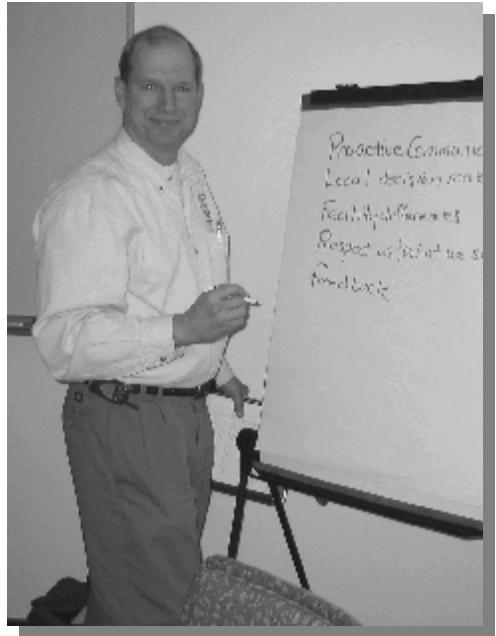
- I have the most fun when...
- I feel the most "at home" or relaxed when...
- I get along the best with others when...
- Why I chose my adjective name and what it means to me is...
- A time helped someone that I feel good about is...
- Something I've always wanted to do is...
- A quality I look for in a friend is...
- One of my favorite positive words is... because...
- A time I made someone happy was...
- A value that is important to me is...
- Something pleasant I'd like to share with this group is...
- A good quality of mine that I'd like to strengthen is...
- A way someone helped me feel good about myself is...
- Something good about me that might not be readily apparent is...
- An early happy memory of mine is...
- A way I let others know I have a positive attitude is...

# The Relationship between AVP and Restorative Justice

John A. Shufor (*Journeying John*)  
Dover, Delaware, USA

Restorative Justice [RJ] and the Alternatives to Violence Project [AVP] have been developed as responses to the horrendous effect our current criminal justice system has had on individuals, communities, society and our government. This system has disconnected and disenfranchised a significant segment of the western world, as we know it. Even today, our response to 9-11 and Saddam Hussein has been based on retribution and disconnection from the rest of the world. The criminal justice system in the US has evolved into a mechanism for "managing the under-class." All this is not healthy or promising and is certainly not promoting our evolution as a species. There are efforts to reverse this psychosocial disaster, however, and two of the most promising of these are RJ and AVP. This paper addresses the relationship between RJ and AVP and how well they are suited to collaborate or join forces.

The criminal justice system is one of the foundations of our community. As it exists today, it reinforces an "us" versus "them" mentality. So, ironically, it reinforces the very elements in society it is designed to defeat. Restorative Justice changes the community by changing the criminal justice system. AVP, on the other hand, changes the community by transforming people through the community building process. With RJ, the focus is on accountability. When the community holds someone accountable, the goal is to bring the people involved, and the community itself back into balance, and for the "offender" to act responsibly in the future. [Accountability and responsibility are related but far from the same. More on that later.]



Crime is a dysfunction within society. The degree to which it is a dysfunction is the degree to which that society is dysfunctional. All elements of that society reinforce the existence of all the other elements. To see an offender as the problem and not a symptom of a disconnection within the community, is only seeing the tip of the iceberg. To view it properly, we must look at all the systems in the community and how they promote disconnection. All of us are ultimately responsible for the conditions in the community leading to the

(See AVP & RJ on page 3, column 2)

Remember to check out the  
Transformer's very own website at  
**<http://theTransformer.us>**

**<http://AVPInternational.org>**  
for Rere Stroud's NZ International conference report and international contacts

And for what's happening here at home:  
**<http://AVPUSA.org>**

## Signing on to the AVP-L list

*Peter Hoover (Persistent Peter)  
Trumansburg, New York, USA*

AVP-L@CORNELL.EDU is a discussion list open to certified trainers of creative conflict-resolution workshops held under the auspices of the Alternatives to Violence Project, Inc., or its approved national (U.S.) or international equivalents. It is designed to facilitate communication among these individuals, with discussions to center around facilitation techniques, workshop exercises, and other useful information pertaining to the mechanics of facilitating AVP workshops. To preserve the confidentiality of workshop participants, please make comments about such individuals generic.

To subscribe, send an e-mail message indicating where and when you obtained your AVP facilitator certification, where you currently train, and any other pertinent information you care to include to the list owner, Peter Hoover, at [prh4@cornell.edu](mailto:prh4@cornell.edu).

## Signing on to the AVP-L2 list

*Richard Krouskop (Rambunctious Rick)  
Shreveport, Louisiana, USA*

Want to share your work with, or thoughts on: restorative justice, prison reform, school violence, the (.....Insert your favorite region here) conflict between (.....side A ) and (.....side B), etc.? That's what the AVP-L2 E-mail discussion group is designed for.

On AVP-L2, there are no restrictions: just "anything in which you think other AVP facilitators might be interested."

Subscription to AVP-L2 is automated and done entirely through the AVP/USA website. Be certain you are using a computer with e-mail connected to the e-mail address you wish to use for the list. You will be sending an e-mail to register and your return address must be the e-mail address to which you wish to receive list traffic.

- Go to: [www.avpusa.org](http://www.avpusa.org)
- Go to the Facilitator's page (click on the AVP/USA tab)
- Login Name: "member"
- Login Password: "texashug"

Sign up for AVP-L2 (and also AVP-L) near the bottom of that page.

*(AVP & RJ continued from page 2)*

offense, yet only one person is held accountable. Family Systems Theory describes the behavior of any one member of a family as a symptom of what is going on in the family [or community] as a whole.

RJ focuses on the offender and his/her relationship to the community. This is a limiting factor vis-à-vis changing the community, because the percentage of offenders who are likely to come into the Restorative Justice system is so small<sup>1</sup>. Even with the impact being so small, it is still significant. Unfortunately, with the focus on the offender being held accountable, it is unlikely the contributing systems in the community will be analyzed and addressed for the part they played. [An indication of the epidemic of disconnection within our communities is the incarceration rate in the US. From the beginning of our history, incarceration rates have remained relatively constant. In 1970 they began to skyrocket and have continued to do so ever since. Crime, however, has remained at about the same level without changing, even as the incarceration rate climbed.]

RJ is very powerful and an evolutionary step from our more recently evolved [historically speaking] retributive/revenge/retaliation system<sup>2</sup>. We hopefully will evolve from this current Retributive System to the Restorative System to a Transformative System and finally to a Community Justice system. Restorative Justice restores the balance<sup>3</sup> within the community where the "offender" becomes compliant with the rules. Transformative Justice, as I see it, transforms the community in relation to the violation, so that the conditions no longer promote future violations. The Community Justice system is one in which the community as a whole takes full responsibility for all actions [whether violations of law or not] contributing to disconnection, and changes itself so that connec-

*(See "AVP & RJ" continued on page 4)*

(“AVP & RJ” continued from page 3)

tion is maintained and enhanced. With Community Justice – education, commerce, defense, police, family, etc., would all be transformed to promote connection.

AVP, on the other hand, does not focus on compliance, but on responsibility. The foundation of AVP is the creation of community and teaching the skills to maintain community. AVP is all about connection and, therefore, prevention. If people are responsible, then accountability becomes secondary. Responsibility is internal and requires commitment, whereas, accountability is external and requires compliance. When people are not responsible, the system will hold them accountable. People who are responsible want to do the right thing for themselves, others and their community. People, who are held accountable, comply because of the fear of being caught. RJ focuses on changing behavior, which has an impact on attitude, while AVP transforms attitudes, which in turn, change relationships and behaviors.

One thing AVP does directly, and RJ may do indirectly, is facilitate personal growth and maturity. Adult maturity means being able to have meaningful relationships and make healthy decisions. In AVP, we talk a lot about healthy decisions, but less frequently about meaningful relationships. One of the attributes of developing

community is the experience of trust and respect. In this environment, participants can [and are encouraged to] more honestly look at themselves and the consequences of their behavior. To develop meaningful relationships requires intimacy and AVP is all about “in-to-me-see.” As we know and understand more about ourselves, we like ourselves more. This is because more of our “innate health” is revealed to us. How many times have we heard inmates say, “I didn’t know I had so much good in me.”? As we like ourselves more, we see the world in a more positive, less threatening/evil light. The natural consequence of this is that we see others more positively and become more open to connection. With connection, comes empathy and an understanding of our responsibility for our actions and a caring for others. Thus, empathy is developed and enhanced.

Part of RJ is victim sensitivity, which is part of empathy. In AVP we help participants develop empathy not only by establishing community, but also by certain exercises. I had a psychologist write me that one of the inmates in her sex offenders class had, from the beginning, denied his rape offense, stating it was consensual. After taking AVP, he acknowledged in his sex offenders group that it was in fact rape. He had taken responsibility for his actions, even though his crime of conviction was

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~ *Subscribe/Renew on page 15* ~

never discussed in the AVP workshop. In another situation, I was working with men involved in domestic violence. After the Carefronting Exercise [visualization focused on empathy], one of the men came up to me and said that he had never before realized the impact of his violence on his wife. Needless to say, this realization came from within himself, because his wife was not present. What seems to happen is that as we “in-to-me-see,” we get in touch with thoughts and feelings we have suppressed, sometimes for many years. Again, the more we see of ourselves, the more we tap into our innate health, and the more we develop empathy.

Another element of RJ is forgiveness. In the AVP Forgiveness Workshop, the relationship between anger – grudges – forgiveness – and reconciliation is explored. What we learn from this is that one forgives not so much because the other person deserves it or that the act is forgivable, but because of what happens to us when we don’t forgive. Holding onto grudges has a very damaging effect on us physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. It is like an emotional cancer. A powerful metaphor is that it is like taking poison hoping the other person will die. Forgiveness is first and foremost, a personal decision, rather than an interpersonal process. Reconciliation, on the other hand, is an interpersonal or community process that can occur only if there has been forgiveness. RJ can involve forgiveness and reconciliation, but does not address self-forgiveness. Self-forgiveness is necessary if there is to be true intrapersonal healing and growth, which is transformative. Without self-forgiveness, only behavior change can occur and possibly reconciliation, but not transformation. This means that RJ will change the community, whereas AVP will transform it from the inside out.

Because RJ and AVP are so similar in

(See “AVP & RJ” continued on page 14)

## All I Want

*Jamie Chambers (Courageous Chambers)  
Prisoner at James River Correctional Center  
State Farm, Virginia, USA*

All I want is to love you  
for the rest of my life...  
to wake up every morning  
with you by my side,  
knowing that no matter what happens,  
I'll be able to come home  
to your loving arms.

All I want is to share everything with you  
to talk to you about our ideas,  
our dreams, the little everyday things  
that make us laugh,  
and the not-so-little things  
that we can't help worrying about.

All I want is to give you my love...  
as a place you can always come  
to for acceptance,  
or the simple comfort that silence brings  
when things left unspoken  
can still be understood.

All I want is to grow old with you...  
to watch our life unfold,  
our dreams, one by one, come true.

All I want is to love you forever.

*Several writings by Jamie Chambers were submitted by facilitator Don Ayers. They will be appearing in future Transformers! Thanks, Don & Jamie!*

—Charles

# Ways to Break Down Communication Barriers

Chloe Giampaolo (Cordial Chloe)  
Bowie, Maryland, USA

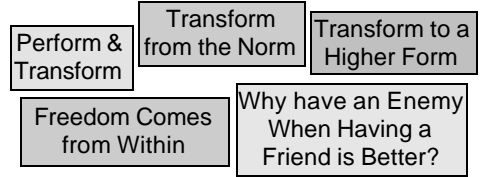
Here is some stuff the guys and I brainstormed during a recent workshop. We filled an entire chart but here are 15 items:

1. *Being preoccupied*: Ask: "Are you okay? What keeps me/you from being here right now?"
2. *Dishonesty*: Be willing to put your cards on the table.
3. *Disrespect*: Make an assertive statement using an I-message.
4. *Inattentive*: Be attentive to the other party. Ask: "What's on your mind?" Be patient.
5. *"All or nothing at all" attitude*: "Tell me what you really need. Can we try to work toward a win-win situation?"
6. *Preconceived notions*: Say: "This is what I hear you saying. Correct me if I'm wrong."
7. *Jumping to conclusions*: Listen to everything before responding. Say: "I don't want to take this the wrong way. Please clarify."
8. *Blaming-using "you" statements*: Practice using I-messages. Attack the problem—not the person.
9. *Lack of appropriate words*: Read; study; develop better vocabulary; keep a word list of feelings.
10. *Culture/race*: Don't pass judgment. Keep an open mind. Be willing to explore other cultures/races.
11. *Intimidation*: Refer to one's basic human rights. Request that those right be honored. Be willing to recognize the other person's rights.
12. *Truth/trust issues*: Be honest. Admit if you have a trust issue. Ask for help.
13. *Vanity*: Ask: "Are you mistaking my self-confidence for vanity?"
14. *Jealousy*: Investigate to see if jealousy

really exists. Then ask why. Consider the possibility that it is a reflection of the other person's own feelings of insecurity.

15. *Rudeness*: Make an effort to learn how to be polite. Remember a person's basic human right. Practice the Golden Rule!

## AVP Bumper Stickers



## AVP Acrostics

Take time to Think  
Reason before reacting  
Aware of self  
Never alone  
Sure of oneself  
Find common ground  
Only what you put into it is what you'll get out of it  
Reach a win-win solution  
Mindful of one's attitude



Teaching  
Responsible  
Actions and  
Needed  
Strategies  
For an  
Opportunity to  
Restructure  
Me.

Teaching all of us  
Respect for ourselves  
And others.  
Not  
Settling for second best or  
Failure.  
Only striving for the best.  
Realizing that the only things that can stop me is  
Me!

**AVP/USA 2004 ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION**

*Noon Friday May 28 through noon Monday May 31, 2004*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Adjective Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Adjective Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt # \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phones:  
 Home: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Work: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**PREFERENCES**

**ROOM Preference/Requirements:**

*(see details on following page)*

- ÿ HANDICAP ACCESS (choose below)
- ÿ DORMITORY: \$225 entire conference
- ÿ SINGLE: limited space, extra charge
- ÿ DOUBLE: limited space, extra charge
- ÿ COMMUTER: saves \$40, no room

**DIET Preferences for all days:**

- ÿ REGULAR
- ÿ VEGETARIAN
- ÿ DIABETIC

**PLEASE CHECK APPROPRIATE BOXES FOR OUR HEADCOUNT:**

Friday 5/28	Saturday 5/29	Sunday 5/30	Monday 5/31
	ÿ Breakfast	ÿ Breakfast	ÿ Breakfast
ÿ Lunch	ÿ Lunch	ÿ Lunch	ÿ Lunch
ÿ Dinner	ÿ Dinner	ÿ Dinner	
ÿ Room	ÿ Room	ÿ Room	

**\$\$ COSTS \$\$**

ÿ Non-refundable **Deposit Needed Now A.S.A.P. and no later than May 10,2004:** Please enclose \$50 for each participant (including sponsored ex-inmate). Please fill out separate forms for persons with different addresses.

ÿ Sponsored ex-inmate: Former inmates qualify for full registration scholarships (the \$50 deposit will be refunded after the conference). Partial assistance on travel is also available from AVP/USA. Please work through your sponsoring local or regional group if possible. Requests for travel assistance should be sent to the Registrar's office. See below next page.

ÿ Other requests for assistance on registration or travel expenses should be addressed to the Registrar (See next page).

Final deadline for Registration is May 17, 2004

ÿ **Full registration:** Friday afternoon through midday Monday includes 9 meals. Fee includes lodging and transportation between airport and conference:

ÿ \$225 dorm room ÿ \$335 single room ÿ \$295 double room ÿ \$190 commuter *all events/meals*

ÿ Partial: **Commuter** (not staying overnight): ÿ Saturday **and/or** ÿ Sunday  
ÿ \$142 two days ÿ \$71 one day

ÿ Partial: **One overnight:**  
ÿ arriving Saturday, leaving Sunday **or** ÿ arriving Sunday, leaving Monday  
ÿ \$165 dorm room ÿ \$180 single room ÿ \$172 double room

ÿ Partial: **Two overnights:**  
ÿ arriving Friday, leaving Sunday **or** ÿ arriving Saturday, leaving Monday  
ÿ \$190 dorm room ÿ \$235 single room ÿ \$215 double room

ÿ Scholarship assistance requested. Some scholarships are available with matching local support. Have local sponsors contact the Registrar, Terry Kayser [tkayser6078@msn.com] at (651) 647-6078.

(Check or Credit Card)

ÿ **Check** enclosed **or for Credit Card** Payment: ÿ Master Card ÿ VISA  
Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Valid through: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name as on the card: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

#### TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

If you are flying, or coming by bus or train and need shuttle transportation (no charge) from and to the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport, we **MUST** know your arrival & departure dates and times. If you cannot include that here, please contact Terry Kayser [tkayser6078@msn.com] at (651) 647-6078 as soon as it is available.

Airline/flight: \_\_\_\_\_  
Arrival date/time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Departure date/time: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are driving, we can send you a map with your confirmation. Farmington (Mt. Olivet) is about 32 miles (45 minutes) south of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

ÿ Please send me a map. ÿ Please send me driving instructions

**CONFERENCE SITE INFO AND PHOTOS ALSO AVAILABLE AT**  
**<http://theTransformer.us/conf>**

**TO SEND VIA U.S. POSTAL SERVICE, SEND TO:**

**Registrar AVP/USA National Conference**  
**c/o FNW**  
**1050 Selby Ave.**  
**St. Paul, MN 55104**

**Registration**  
**Deadline**  
**May 17, 2004**



# In the Belly of the Ancestor

Sandra Moon Farley (Sunflower Sandy)  
Redwood City, California, USA

Sometimes culture shock sneaks up on you. Tom and I had been in Aotearoa/New Zealand for two weeks before the International Gathering of the Alternatives to Violence Project. We were looking forward to spending five days on a Maori *marae*, [mar-eye] or community gathering place. After the Quaker conference, we'd spent time with local storytellers, hearing and reading stories of local legends. We'd visited the Auckland Museum steeping ourselves in Maori crafts and history. We felt receptive to what five days on a *marae* would bring.

*Papakura Marae* is just south of Auckland in a suburb. It consists of several buildings, including a dining hall, offices, and a caretaker's residence, along a stream with ducks and reeds. The main building, the *Whare Nui* [far-ra noo-ee] is a traditional form of architecture which is intended to represent the body of the Founder of the tribe. His head is carved at the peak of the roof and the intricately carved long beams represent his arms outstretched in welcome reaching almost to the ground.

There is a spacious porch under his head where we all remove and leave seventy pairs of boots and sandals. We are greeted with a ceremonial *powhiri* [po-fee-ree] which consists of some traditional call and response exchanges. This one omitted the warrior posturing we'd seen in another such program. We entered the "belly of the ancestor" for the welcoming speeches and songs. We were going to meet and sleep in this same large room whose decorated beams represented the ribs of the ancestor.

## Journal Entry January 31, 2004 PAPAKURA MARAE

Last night was our first on the *marae*. The afternoon went well. We'd been pretty good about observing all the protocols dur-



ing the *powhiri*. The gathering is truly international with folks from Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America, so we are coming to this place from a wide variety of experiences.

We were instructed to be very careful when using the *whare nui* as a dormitory: nothing but the head should touch the pillow. The head is *tapu*, or sacred, according to Maori culture, so you don't touch someone's head without permission, and it is exceedingly rude to sit on a pillow. Personal space is respected and you never step over anyone. The men were to sleep on the left, and the women on the right, arranged by seniority.

I was in the office getting our baggage when people started selecting sleeping spaces. When I entered the *whare nui* all the pads along the wall had been taken. Those had bench space at the head for your stuff. There were several unclaimed pads in a second row, side by side, touching. Because I don't know people's ages, I didn't

(See "Ancestor" continued on page 10)

(“Ancestor” continued from page 9)

know where I fit in. [There are a lot of women present between 50 and 70, and it might not be kind to do a survey, and I didn’t want to make anyone think she needed to move for me.]

I asked one of our hosts where I was to sleep and he said, “Oh, anywhere, it’s OK.” This was no help. I just stood there paralyzed. Putting my suitcase at the foot of one of the pads, I noticed that it made for a very narrow passage between the second row of women’s beds and the second row for the men. I saw no safe place for my straw hat and eye glasses, with mattresses touching left and right and walkways at head and foot.

I fled outside to the porch. I met Tom. He had a space along the wall between two East Africans. The men had negotiated the age thing. It seemed so easy for him. He held me and let me cry.

I was feeling bad about feeling bad. I was incapable of doing anything. It was a full blown anxiety attack. I knew that I was experiencing a need for more personal space than was being offered. I didn’t want to seem greedy or impolite. I wanted to be a “good camper,” flexible, and adaptable. After several minutes of rest, I was able to stop crying. I realized that there was no real alternative. I took some deep breaths and went back in to the “belly of the ancestor,” resolved to work something out.

I noticed that there were 3 unclaimed pads. Hoping I wasn’t violating any protocols, I stacked one pad on another to create a space beside my pad for suitcase, glasses, earrings and clock. I settled in.

The lights were still on. I reached in my suitcase and found a washcloth which I put over my eyes. I was relaxing. I focused on breathing. This is what I call “nap mode.” I heard zippers around me, people walking; I tuned them out.

Then suddenly, something fell on my face: probably a suitcase flap. A woman

apologized, “So sorry!” and patted me on the head. On the HEAD!

Under my washcloth, I cried.

I wrote this journal entry the next morning. After breakfast, during “check-in” I hesitated over sharing it. It wasn’t the upbeat message that others were giving. Yet, if I didn’t answer truthfully about how my night had gone, it would be a heavy load to carry all day. Having unburdened myself, I was able to co-facilitate an activity later that morning, with ease. As it happened, my tears and pain, my vulnerability, allowed others in the group to share more honestly about cultural adjustment during our gathering on the *Marae*.

I did some major reflecting on my need for a defined role and how that is connected to placement in a group. A conference organizer thanked me afterwards for my contribution to the development of our sense of community. Just the same, next time, I hope it’s someone else’s turn to make that contribution.

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## Facilitators Needed In Nicaragua

submitted by Michelle Kavanaugh (Mentoring Michelle)  
Miami, Florida, USA

for Lorraine Bodden (Lovely Lorraine)  
North Island, Corn Island, Nicaragua

AVP Facilitators needed on Corn Island, Nicaragua!

An afternoon sail, blue water and snorkeling, sugar beaches, a dinner party at sunset. It’s all yours as our guests for the price of an airline ticket and a commitment to facilitate two workshops: One for adolescents and another for community activists who seek to be empowered.

English is sufficient, bilingual is even better. Trilingual in English, Spanish and Mosquito is fantastic.

Contact Lorraine Bodden at Casa Movimiento, North Island, Corn Island, Nicaragua.

# Special Offer for the Luther Sanders book!

Alan Taplow (Awesome Alan)  
 AVP Distribution Center  
 Plainfield, Vermont, USA

**Just thought I'd let everyone know about the special offers for the book shown to the left, *The Road to the Kingdom*, by Luther Sanders:**

**Offer #1:** For Prison Coordinators 10 Free Copies to any Prison Coordinator—send check to AVP Distribution Service for \$3.50 made out to AVP/USA, to cover Shipping & Handling costs. No Credit Cards unless the request accompanies an order for other publications. Additional copies @ \$2.50 each. The order must have the following information:

Prison Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator's Name, Address, Phone # & E-Mail  
 Name of Regional or Local AVP group or council

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2 Year individual Subscription = \$25.00

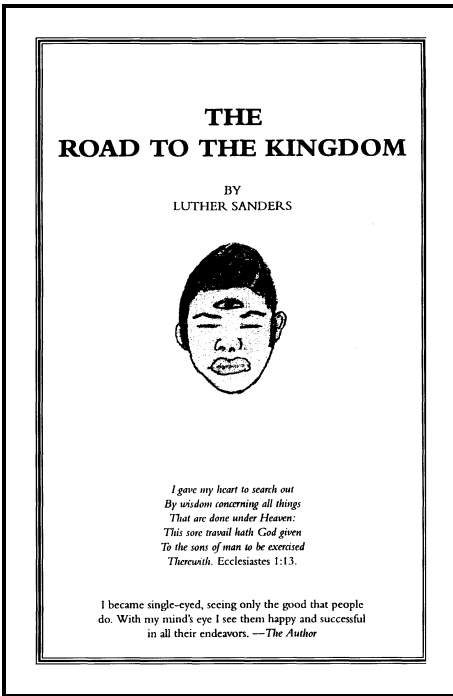
3 Year individual Subscription = \$35.00

Group Subscriptions: 5 or more paid at the same time: 2 yr = \$20.00, 3 yr = \$30.00

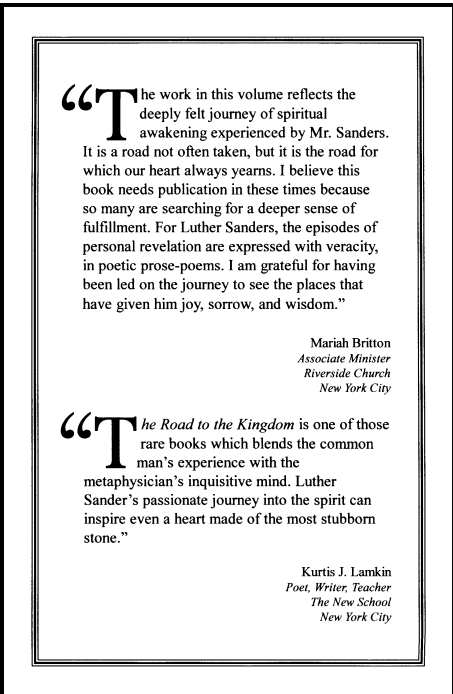
Peace, Alan

Alan Taplow - AVP Distribution Service  
 844 John Fowler Road  
 Plainfield, VT 05667  
 Phone / Fax 802-454-4675  
 manuals@avpusa.org

*The AVP Distribution Service provides facilitators with a convenient source of Manuals and other workshop materials. It is 'volunteer administered' --- 98% of it's revenue goes back to the programs and services offered by AVP/USA.*



Here are the front and back covers of *The Road to the Kingdom* by Luther Sanders.



**T**he work in this volume reflects the deeply felt journey of spiritual awakening experienced by Mr. Sanders. It is a road not often taken, but it is the road for which our heart always yearns. I believe this book needs publication in these times because so many are searching for a deeper sense of fulfillment. For Luther Sanders, the episodes of personal revelation are expressed with veracity, in poetic prose-poems. I am grateful for having been led on the journey to see the places that have given him joy, sorrow, and wisdom."

Mariah Britton  
 Associate Minister  
 Riverside Church  
 New York City

**T**he *Road to the Kingdom* is one of those rare books which blends the common man's experience with the metaphysician's inquisitive mind. Luther Sander's passionate journey into the spirit can inspire even a heart made of the most stubborn stone."

Kurtis J. Lamkin  
 Poet, Writer, Teacher  
 The New School  
 New York City

# I nternational Conference Reflections

*Chloe Giampaolo (Cordial Chloe)  
Bowie, Maryland, USA*

“Tena koutou, tena koutou! This is the Maori greeting that we were welcomed with as we arrived from the four corners of the world at Papkura Marae in Auckland, NZ.

AVP Aotearoa did a wonderful job of hosting the conference for 70+ participants. I will attempt to briefly highlight some personal observations as journaled by a first-time participant at an AVP International Conference.

Staying at the Papakura Marae was a total immersion into Maori culture. The *whareniui* (wh pronounced as *f*), the meeting house, is the social, cultural, and spiritual hearth of the people. It was here where we held most of our sessions and where we also slept at night - men on one side of the room; women on the other side - on mattresses on the floor. And yes! It *did* work!

It would take pages to describe the special ceremonies beginning with our entering the Marae to the farewell but I can assure you that they were memorable.

## Day One

The first day of the conference was spent building community. We took turns telling about ourselves. We were asked to “name our mountain, name our river, tell about our ancestors and how they arrived to where we now live.” We were asked to describe “our people” (meaning our interpretation of whom we believe we relate to), and the reason for coming to the conference.

We also worked in small groups to list needs, rights, and responsibilities so that the conference could run smoothly. We were also given housekeeping duties which rotated on a daily basis.

## Day Two

Trusting the process was the order of the

day! The morning session was spent airing concerns of participants - mainly connected with adjusting to a strange environment and culture. We spent a lot of time brainstorming ideas for various workshops to be held over the next two days. We also had time to meet in our assigned home groups and do some planning.

## Day Three and Day Four

The day was split up into morning and afternoon workshops that one could sign up for. Some of the topics were: Rejection by Prisons, The Structure of AVP International, Designing a Pre-Release Workshop Using the AVP Model, and How to Promote AVP in the Community. We also held plenary sessions to help decide the fate/future of AVP International.

## Day Five

We gathered again in the Whareniui to describe and share what had been the Transforming Power moment for each of us during this conference. Some very touching -even surprising information was shared.

Evenings were a feast of song, sharing, and laughter. Ellen Flanders, one of AVP’s founding mothers led us in “Donna Nobis Pacem” Groups from countries like Australia, England, and Africa made special presentations.

I felt honored to be in the presence of people like Ellen Flanders, Janet Lugo, and Steve Angell. The people have been the driving force - the backbone of AVP since its inception and here I was, breaking bread with them! Awesome!

The Farewell Ceremony was quite moving, and in the tradition of Maori culture, we said our goodbyes by grasping the other person’s hand and pressing noses.

It went by all too quickly! I feel blessed with all the new friends I’ve made around the world and I look forward to the next International conference to be held in South Africa. AVP is not only alive and well; it is flourishing!

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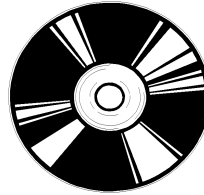
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*(“AVP & RJ” continued from page 5)*

many ways, some have proposed introducing RJ within the AVP framework. I believe it would be better to introduce AVP into the RJ system. Let me explain.

AVP strikes at the foundation of the human experience. It is stand-alone. It does not require admission of guilt [we are all “guilty” for that matter]. It is universal in applicability. It has been effectively used in schools, businesses, government, social groups, civil wars, post war development, the community at large, prisons, etc. It does not require any minimum level of psychological or social development or even a desire for personal change. It does not require admission of anything, or agreement on beliefs or reasons for attending a workshop, only that you agree to be there. I’ve had participants who were openly hostile about being required to attend. I’ve had participants who, if they knew the beliefs of other participants, would have left on the spot. AVP can be used in conjunction with many other programs. I can easily see it being used as part of an agreement within the RJ process or as preparation prior to involvement in the RJ process.

I cannot see RJ being used as part of AVP. We accept all participants as equal, without judgment. If a participant’s crime of conviction were part of the process, many things would change. For one thing, the outside volunteers would be affected. If an inmate told you how he had chopped up the neighbor with an axe, as revenge, how would that change your feelings about him? It changed mine, and I didn’t like that. The chemistry within the workshop would significantly change, and that change would carryover to relationships after the weekend was over. I don’t see this as a good thing. What if an inmate states that he/she is innocent? What if s/he doesn’t want to talk

about the crime of conviction? Finally, as discussed above, I believe AVP accomplishes many of the same goals as RJ, only from a process of inside-out transformation.

Restorative Justice and AVP have far more in common than not. They are both important parts of the effort to transform our society, and they are both different. RJ is the most important judicial concept to come along in 800 years. I believe it is that important and it should be getting far more attention and resources. AVP, on the other hand, is as old as the hills and is universally applicable, not limited to the criminal justice arena. They both are stand-alone; they both compliment each other. RJ changes the world one offender at a time; while AVP changes the world one person at a time. They should both share with and support each other. I see it as best for both if they maintain their individual uniqueness and not combine or dilute their movements.

#### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> If only 10% of crimes get reported and a percentage of those get investigated and a percentage of those get charged and a percentage of those get diverted, what percentage of those committing crimes or inappropriate behavior come to the attention of RJ? Some estimates are that 80 – 95% of Americans have committed a crime.

<sup>2</sup> Ancient Hebrew justice aimed to restore wholeness to those affected, and restitution was the norm in Middle Eastern legal codes going as far back as 2050 BC. In the Roman world most of what we call crime today was treated as a civil matter . . . a private complaint of one citizen against another. Crime demanded compensation, and the state had an interest only in seeing that a settlement was reached. Punishment was the exception and compensation was the rule . . . The focus on compensation prevailed in Europe until the twelfth century . . . The basic law was not a body of rules imposed by authority, but rather an

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*(See “AVP & RJ” on page 15)*

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(“AVP & RJ” continued from page 14)

integral part of the common consciousness of the community. The people themselves legislated and judged. Law was not an instrument to separate people from one another on the basis of a set of principles, but rather a matter of holding people together, a matter of reconciliation. In the twelfth century, King Henry I defined crime as an offense “against the king’s peace.” Crime came to be seen as something other than a wrong requiring compensation; it became “a defiance of the law itself.” The new criminal justice system’s function was to uphold the authority of the state, and it did so by instilling in the public a deep fear of the consequences of defying the law. Punishment was brutal and vicious, and it was administered publicly. Crime as Interpersonal Conflict: reconciliation Between Victim and Offender by Marc Forget, 1999.

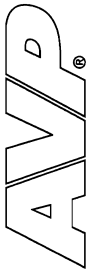
<sup>3</sup> The North American Aboriginal understanding of crime: People who offend against another are to be viewed and related to as people who are out of balance – with themselves, their families, their community, and their Creator. A return to balance can best be accomplished through a process of accountability that includes support from the community through teaching and healing. The use of judgment and punishment actually works against the healing process. An already unbalanced person is moved further out of balance. Crime as Interpersonal Conflict: reconciliation Between Victim and Offender by Marc Forget, 1999.

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