

December 3, 1995

Dear Friends,

It seems like a lifetime, though it has been only one year now since I formally left my post at Wesleyan and took up a permanent position here at UNESCO. I am sending this from Paris where it is my turn this year to be the member of the Culture of Peace Team who remains on duty through the holiday season.

The Culture of Peace Program (CPP) has grown rapidly and is now connected to a remarkable movement striving to replace the culture of war which has dominated civilization since the beginning of history. Each day, I have the chance to know and work with people from every sector of society and every part of the world who share a dedication to a common vision and a common struggle.

As I write this, for example, sitting in the Hong Kong International Airport, I have just purchased a new biography of Aung San Sim Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize winner, recent released from house arrest in Burma - and I open the book to a speech made on her behalf by Corazon Aquino of the Philippines - entitled Empowerment for a Culture of Peace and Development.

Lindsay and I are on our way back from the Philippines where, along with Leslie Atherley (Barbados), the Director of CPP and other program staff, we took part in the Second International Forum for the Culture of Peace. The Forum was opened by President Fidel Ramos and Corazon Aquino, who is past-President. The Office of the Presidential Peace Process presented the methodology and results achieved so far in trying to transform into nonviolent change the violent conflicts (with communist and Muslim revolutionary groups and with former breakaway military) that have torn the country apart. Then for four days, a remarkable gathering of nonviolence activists and specialists and governmental representatives from over 20 countries, as well as UN agencies, discussed and made recommendations to push forward the culture of peace - both its theory and its practice. At the end, UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor came from Paris to address the meeting, underlining the priority that he attaches to the culture of peace.

This is only the latest of many inspiring experiences, including work with national culture of peace programs supported by UNESCO in El Salvador, Mozambique and Burundi, that have made this such an exciting year. In October, the field staff of these programs gathered in Paris for our first full consultation and exchange among all of them, and we drew basic lessons to guide future national programs.

We presented the Culture of Peace Program to the 184-nation General Conference of UNESCO last month and received support for its substantial expansion in the next few years into a "transdisciplinary project" that will engage all of the various sectors of the Organization and will greatly increase its partnerships with other UN agencies, mayors, parliaments, non-governmental organizations, etc, expanding from a few national programs to a project of global scope. For example, we are working with the World Scout Movement for a culture of peace initiative among youth and initiating a series of pilot projects around the world for a culture of peace in schools that are located in communities plagued by violence.

One of my tasks has been the writing of a book entitled UNESCO and the Culture of Peace: Promoting a Global Movement, which was published and distributed for the General Conference. The book begins by considering the basic concept and principles of a culture of peace: to replace violence and domination by nonviolence and a caring society which respects and protects the rights of everyone; to replace the creation of enemies and enemy images with understanding, tolerance and solidarity with all peoples and cultures; to replace secrecy and use of information for power with the free flow and full sharing of information; and to replace hierarchical, male-dominated

authority with full empowerment of women. The book describes the many initiatives being undertaken, from UNESCO and the culture of peace program, through national programmes and initiatives, to relevant initiatives of the United Nations and other inter-governmental organizations, to those of non-governmental organizations, including those of women, youth, and professionals, religious organizations, etc.

In all of this work I make full use of the principles and methods that I learned in working with students and colleagues during the years at Wesleyan. For example, working late the other night with the team of the Philippines Peace Process in order to finalize the recommendations of the Forum, I found that they too are greatly influenced by Pedagogy of the Oppressed, which Chino Ayala introduced into the curriculum of Psychology for Peace Activists when he was a student teacher in the course at Wesleyan over a decade ago. And I am often called upon to explain how the work in brain research teaches us how the brain is organized to make possible inter-personal aggression, including anger and righteous indignation, but that it does not determine behaviors on the level of social institutions such as war and structural violence.

I hope that this letter finds all of you well and productive in your lives. I always enjoy hearing from you. My address is UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris. Although my life at this point is often too hectic to answer letters quickly, it is quite easy for me to correspond by e-mail, and you can reach me at D.ADAMS@UNESCO.ORG.

Peace, David Adams