

The World in WAIMH

In June of 2013, the editors of the *Perspectives in Infant Mental Health* announced the birth of an occasional column, *The World in WAIMH*, intended to generate reflection and dialogue on the roles of context, culture, and community in infant mental health around the world. Our shared hope is that this will offer a space for questioning, challenge, dialogue and interdisciplinary discussion. We are calling for:

- commentary,
- field reports,
- case studies,
- concept or theory building papers,

- research articles,

- book reviews,

- literature reviews,

- and (when proper permission can be obtained) adaptations of previously published articles

In our globalized world, every infant and family is affected by forces far beyond their reach, forces that may strengthen, hinder, or undo the work of infant mental health professionals. To be a truly global organization, WAIMH will increasingly need to understand and develop strategies to address these forces. To foster healthy early development around the world, WAIMH will need to extend its reach, and to learn from contexts, cultures and communities that are not or only minimally represented in its current membership. Among the many questions to answer are:

- What processes can contribute to a more inclusive and expansive knowledge base?

- What kinds of partnerships – with members of cultures not yet represented within WAIMH, with other organizations, with other disciplines such as cultural anthropology or community psychology – are needed to truly put the world in WAIMH?

We look forward to your reflections and hope that vigorous dialogue in this reflective space will ensue. Joshua Sparrow, Director of Planning, Strategy and Program Development at the Brazelton Touchpoints Center (Boston Children's Hospital/Harvard Medical School), conceived of this column and coordinates it.

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What follows is a piece from the 2014 Summer issue of *Perspectives*, "What to do about the Babies? Ten Questions for Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King."



What to do about the babies? Ten Questions for Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King (reprint)

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This piece was first published in *Perspectives in Infant Mental Health* Vol. 22 No. 2-3 (Summer 2014) at the time of the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Since then more violence: more innocent African American boys and young men have been murdered, more terrorist attacks - in Paris, Orlando, Nice, San Bernardino, Berlin and elsewhere. Fear and hatred are on the rise, trumping reason, and the unacceptable is at risk of becoming the new normal. We turn again to Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela to reaffirm what is good and right, and to ask what we all can do for babies and their families.

Q. 1. What is going on?

A. I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Acceptance Speech on the occasion of the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, December 10, 1964

Q. 2. Where does it start?

A. No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate,

they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

Nelson Mandela, *The Long Walk to Freedom*, 1994

Q. 3. Can reflection help lead to healing and peace?

A. We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go From Here?* 1967



Q. 4. When a nation fails to deploy every possible resource to protect its children, it has lost its moral compass. When a nation harms its children, it has lost its way. How do we find ours?

A. We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Speech in St. Louis, Missouri, March 22, 1965

Q. 5. The survival and wellbeing of the world's children is the shared responsibility of all humanity. Can babies help bind us together?

A. There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.

Nelson Mandela from the launch of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, Mahlamba Ndlopfu, Pretoria, South Africa, 8 May 1995

Q. 6. One of the most destructive results of relentless terror is that it can inure us to its effects. Fear and hopelessness so readily lead to paralysis and silence. Can our voices help restore hope?

A. Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

Martin Luther King Jr., in *I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches That Changed the World*, James M. Washington (Editor), 1986

Q. 7. What can we do when our most fundamental beliefs and values are trampled? What can we say when we speak out?

A. We pledge ourselves to liberate all our people from the continuing bondage of poverty, deprivation, suffering, gender and other discrimination.

Nelson Mandela, Inaugural speech, Pretoria, May 11, 1994

(It seems reasonable to think that Mandela may have been speaking here for all people about all people.)



Q. 8. How do we take action when the challenge seems insurmountable?

A. Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*, Harper & Brothers, 1958

Q. 9. What can we do?

A. Courageous people do not fear forgiving, for the sake of peace.

Nelson Mandela in an interview with Anthony Sampson, published in "The Observer" (Sunday, May 1, 1994).

A. If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.

Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 1995

A. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

Martin Luther King Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches*, James M. Washington (Editor), 1986

Q. 10. Will we succeed?

A. It always seems impossible until it's done.

Nelson Mandela, speech at Harvard University, 1998

Brazeltontouchpoints.org

Childrensdefense.org

Savethechildren.org

Unicef.org

WAIMH.org