



Archdeacon and Deacon Director's Conference Spring 2013 Open Space Notes

"GUN VIOLENCE" TOPIC
AED 25 YEARS PLUS TWO

OPEN SPACE GROUP
Mar. 14 – 17, 2013

Attending: John Cumming, Tina Campbell, Lauren Welch, Gen Grewell, Elaine Bellis, Dennis Taylor, pam Nesbitt, Dick Naumann

Voices (paraphrase/quotes/concepts shared):

I am tired of the meetings and talking – it's time to act. People need to come to the streets to force some kind of moratorium...its insanity when a baby is shot and dies do more than talk need to act
You don't know what it's like until it happens to you.

What's the culture of this, what's driving it?

Cease Fire program is effective with gangs [Sacramento]. Sac funded it and got a 70% drop [in violence?]. When funds were cut back it declined in effectiveness. In the fall election we were successful in getting a ½ cent sales tax for public safety. Now the money is rolling in and the city council is spending the money to fund police, fire department, and a swimming pool. Now we are going back to community organizing activities to get[some of] the money put into Cease Fire.

Deacons need to become a catalyst in their church to act...letters, marches, fund raising, after school programs, etc. [To give young people the support they need and alternatives to the gang culture.]

Author a letter for all of the clergy to sign and go to critical legislative body.

[Youth have a] Lack of all sorts of things [that support development. Access to guns,

Culture of violence throughout our entertainment, media, culture, etc. is central to this issue.

What can I do as an individual? We need to organize and build relationships.

Have the conversations within our churches.

The bottom is here. Thou shall not be afraid.

[Recent events at legislature in Maryland] Listening to both sides. The fear was apparent from those who were defending their gun rights. People were just talking over one another.

Perfect love casts out fear.

Education about nonviolent conflict resolution such as Peace circles...the models are out there.

Redemptive violence is not part of Christianity.

We can use the AED web to publish whatever comes out of the Summit Conference planning next month.

Have a forum within the church to learn and become more knowledgeable as how a church can respond.

Part of our job is to build relationships with organizations that know how to do this without just being [perceived] as rabble on the street. Find those places in the community and partner with them.

[The church is called to provide] Godly leadership [as opposed to being just another secular voice in the noise of the marketplace].

My lasting impressions/Summary Comments:

As deacons we are drawn to respond within our local context...and we should.

This issue is complex. It will not ever(?) be resolved and significant improvement will require sustained, prayerful engagement over relatively long time period.

We need to establish and maintain a strong diaconal voice within the path that the larger church embarks upon. We want the emerging leadership for this issue to see deacons as important resources for change at the parish, local, state, and national level.

Our engagement must include intense listening and empathy for the voices of pain and anxiety on all sides of the issue.

I will be watching for how AED can exercise leadership among us as the church moves more deeply into a course of action to reduce gun violence in our society.

Thank you all for your attention to and support of this effort.

Dick Naumann
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