

**PRAY** POSTED ON SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

**Pray for Dan and Sharon Buttry training leaders in community transformation and helping bring peace, justice and community transformation globally.**



BOB SANTILLI

Dan and Sharon are global consultants, Dan for Peace and Justice and Sharon for Community Transformation. They serve around the world to provide consultation and training in conflict transformation and the transformation of communities, working primarily through the church as God's instrument of change. They utilize experiential education and participatory Bible study in their workshops. In the past nine years, Sharon and Dan have trained over 250 church and community leaders from 50 countries in 10-day Training of Conflict Transformation Trainers programs. Many of these leaders have made a profound impact in the peacemaking of their communities and countries.

Dan writes – The last week of July I was invited to do conflict transformation training in Jamaica. Jamaica–sandy beaches, rum, reggae music, vacations in the sun–wow, being a missionary is really tough! There’s another side to Jamaica. I was invited by Rev. Everton Jackson, Pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church in Montego Bay. (I can hear the music about Montego Bay in my ears right now, and maybe you can, too!) Montego Bay has been under a State of Emergency because of the high levels of violence. The tourist areas are all sealed off, but in the communities where ordinary people live just staying alive can be a challenge.

So in our second 2-day workshop Everton introduced us to the Violence Interrupters. These are amazing people, grassroots folks, some pastors, others community activists. Their calling is to literally do what their title says–interrupt violence, stop it from happening. They are obviously very courageous and dedicated people, and I was blessed to try to equip them further for their serious and desperately needed work.

I invited Chris Perkins to join me as co-facilitator in these Jamaica trainings. ... Chris knows our training style and the tools we use. We stayed in touch, and I kept thinking about a mission context where Chris could bring his special skills and experience. Jamaica was it, especially with the context of urban violence, something that Chris was dealing with as his peacemaking passion.

Chris and I led a 2-day training for higher level community leaders–heads of various organizations in Montego Bay as well as many church leaders. But it was the following training with the grassroots folks that really inspired our souls. These Violence Interrupters were gritty, gutsy and full of amazing energy. The first day we plunged into finding win/win solutions to the problems on the street, how to do informal mediation. The second day we were going to do more analysis of the systemic problems of violence they were facing and how to strategize to solve those problems in bite-sized pieces.

Before we started the second day, an older man who was one of the Violence Interrupters came to me. He got a chance to practice informal mediation immediately after our workshop. A domestic dispute escalated, and he was called in as a Violence Interrupter. The woman had a massive knife. Nobody was sure if she was going to kill herself or kill her husband/boyfriend. The Violence Interrupter told me about his four hour intervention in the home, using some of the skills we had practiced to finally defuse the situation. The woman gave him the knife, and they came up with a plan to address some of the problems that had nearly erupted into violence. I can’t recall anybody who used their workshop learnings in such a dramatic way so quickly! Violence was successfully interrupted. Nobody was killed that night!

Everton invited me to give a lecture to the wider community. That was the initial invitation, but I said we’d do much better and deeper work with the trainings. ... Both the academic and the activist perspectives are important, and he’ll be equipping himself with both of those as he continues to give prophetic and practical leadership to the peacemakers in Montego Bay.