



## Superintendent's HOPE Note - January 2021

### HOPE FOR OUR NATION: A LESSON REVISITED

Richard Gregg was an American social philosopher who studied at Harvard University before traveling to India to meet and learn from Mahatma Gandhi. His work, which considered the strength of non-violence, would later influence the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. As we prepare to celebrate Dr. King's legacy and in light of recent events in our nation's capital, I felt it befitting to share excerpts from the preface of Gregg's book, *The Power of Non-Violence* originally published in 1934. Most noteworthy in the following excerpt is the final sentence. Somehow, I imagine that the events of January 6, 2021 would prompt yet another revision.

I hope this excerpt inspires each of you, as members of our district and our community, to seek peace, to nurture our shared values as human beings, and strive to make our district, our community and our nation whole.

*At first mention, the term "nonviolent resistance" seems self-contradictory. How can any resistance be effective in this modern world unless it has in it and backing it up, great strength, power and, if need be, weapons? At least a threat of violence seems an essential of resistance. Nevertheless, there have been instances in history where great courage, deep conviction and a fine cause have prevailed, without violence, against armed might. Gandhi's struggle for the freedom of India was one instance. In this book we shall examine the nature of the force used in such instances and see whether it can be applied to other conflict situations.*

*The unity of the human species is not only a biological and physiological fact; it is, when wisely and fully asserted and acted upon, a great power. Human unity is actual in man's universal capacity to think, feel, will, understand and act, and to apprehend spiritual truths. Human unity is a power that can overcome all differences of race, nationality, ideology or culture. Military leaders have aroused partial unity by means of fear, pride, anger, hate and lies. But unity can also be aroused, more fruitfully and enduringly, by love and the desire for justice. This book is a partial examination of how and why human unity can help solve human conflicts.*

*If we want a better world, we must be prepared to do some careful thinking. It is time we stopped being sketchy on a matter that touches us all so closely. For in reality this matter of handling conflict constructively is of immediate concern to everyone who has ever been angry or afraid, resentful, revengeful or bitter; who has ever taken part in a fight, mob violence or war; or who has been the object of anger, hatred, exploitation or oppression. It touches all those who are troubled lest the vast economic, political and social questions that are pressing upon all nations will issue in still more appalling violence and increased insecurity for everyone, or even destruction of the human race. It is also important to those who hope that some-how the ideals of mankind can be made practical and harmonized with its conduct.*

*The first edition of this book was published in 1934. It was revised in 1944 and now events since then call for another revision.*

Richard B. Gregg  
Chester, NY  
November 1958

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## Superintendent's HOPE Note - December 2020



### **Piece of the Puzzle**

**Please let us know who deserves recognition next month! We look forward to your recommendations.**

Pink, D. H. (2009). *Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us*. New York, NY: Riverhead Books.