

Chapter 3

On the Way towards Just Peace – The Scope of the Churches' Engagement

79. God is never glorified by our violence. Nor is our humanity ever honoured through it.

80. *“For he is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility...that he might create in himself one new person in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. (Eph 2:14-17)*

81. Jesus in the power of the Spirit created new community among enemies. It was the reconciliation of a Samaritan woman and a Jew, a Roman soldier and a Palestinian peasant, the leprous and the clean, the stranger and the resident, Jew and Greek, tax collector and exploited farmer, male and female, bond and free. In the Spirit they broke bread together, they shared the kiss of peace together with their goods and their lives, and they resisted the empire's powers of division. First called the People of the Way, they lived a way that transformed their relationships with one another and purged the violence within as well as the violence without, the violence of their hearts and souls as well as the violence of their hands and feet. They learned to treat the Earth gently. They learned an ethic for enemies.

82. More precisely, they learned an ethic for the *end* of enmities. Jesus and his community were realists. They knew we are often enemy to one another and to ourselves, trapped by dividing walls of hostility we create and malignant “principalities and powers” we perpetuate. They knew that no soul is immune from harm and no life free of violation.

83. They also knew that there is more grace in God than sin in us. We can, by God's grace, live together as wounded healers.

84. And they knew that this life together is by way of a community in which enemies suffer each other's pains and joys to become a single humanity sharing a common world (*oikos*). Those afar and those near become one body through the cross.

85. This reconciliation of enemies who dismantle walls of separation and purge the violence within and without displays the scope of just peace. Just peace requires making just peacemakers. Just peace also requires building just institutions and ways of life.

86. The disciplines of soul-craft create and sustain just peacemakers. (This was discussed above as peace education). Soul-craft, the slow formation and transformation of character and conscience in a thousand ways, many barely noticed in the routine of growing people up. Soul-craft is the ancient practice of shaping an authentic self; it is one prayer at a time, one offer of hospitality at a time, one planting and watering at a time, with one child at a time. Soul-craft is the moulding of convictions and morality and greatness of heart befitting peacemakers as the blessed children of God.

87. If we do not make peacemakers, peace itself will not be made. Soul-craft is as vital to peacemaking as statecraft.

Christian Peace Traditions

88. Before we turn from soul-craft to building just institutions and ways of life, we need to track recent developments in Christian peace thinking and peace practices. Only then can we appreciate the enhanced scope of the tasks before us.

89. ***Different traditions, a common pathway.*** From the differing traditions of Christian peacemaking, just peacemaking has created a common pathway appropriate for our time. The older traditions of Christian pacifism and just war theory no longer control peace thinking.

90. To see why, we need to know what these traditions shared and where they parted ways. Just as “pacifism” - one family of traditions - is wrongly taken by some to mean “passive non-resistance,” so “just war” - another family of traditions - is misleading. “Just war” is not about justifying war; it is about limiting its occurrence and limiting the ways in which it is carried out. “Justified use” or “just use” is the better term, since the effort is to determine whether there are *ever* morally *exceptional* uses of deadly means, wherever they may occur - in self-defence, as the responsibility to protect innocent populations, in police actions, in circumstances when rebellion or revolution may be justified, or in tragic cases at the beginning and end of life (whether euthanasia, assisted suicide, or medical abortion). “Justified use” is about the *exceptional* and highly occasional use of lethal means *as the last resort*. After all, both pacifism and just use traditions, including just war, share the same Christian norm for the use of force - nonviolence. Both share a same common task - the reduction of violence. And both dedicate themselves to the same goal - overcoming violence.

91. Just as important, both agree on fundamental tenets of Christian faith: The way of Jesus rejects arms as the manner of God’s reign and instead gathers enemies into covenantal intimacy by forgiving and reconciling them. The shared calling of all Christians is the ministry of reconciliation. And desired and true reality is a peaceable kingdom in which the well-being of each creature is bound to the security of all.

92. Both families of Christian peace traditions also acknowledge that force is sometimes necessary to peace and justice in a world of stiff-necked peoples who bypass few chances to organize their own lives at the expense of their neighbours. And both contend that there should be guards against unchecked power: Any use of force should be held to the lowest required levels, should be accountable for the consequences, and should respect the humanity of those on the receiving end. Not least, both agree that the welfare of others, the enemy included, is to be placed within the same moral framework as one’s own and guided by the same standards. This is the meaning of Jesus’ command that we should love our neighbours as ourselves.

93. Where Christian peacemaking traditions have parted ways, despite their shared distrust of all violence, is over the question of the exceptional use of one kind of force - killing violence. Just use advocates say there are morally permissible uses of exceptional, deadly violence in stringently limited ways. Just use theory has elaborated a set of criteria for measuring that.¹ The Peace Churches and other pacifists argue the non-exceptional rejection of killing violence and do so, on both prudential and theological grounds. The prudential argument is that lethal violence is self-defeating for society in the long run and usually the short run as well. It breeds relationships that generate estrangement, harbour hostility, work from grudges, promote revenge, dehumanize the parties involved, and issue in further violence, which then tends to spiral and escalate. The theological argument is that Christians are called to a community whose way of life should not include killing anyone whom God regards as unqualifiedly precious and for whom God suffers in patient love; and there is no one for whom this is not the case, including those sitting in prison on Death Row, awaiting execution for capital crimes. One killing is always one too many. Violence, even when it is used as a last resort to stop other violence, never achieves genuine justice or lasting security.

94. **Working allies.** In recent decades pacifists and just use advocates have found themselves to be working allies time and again. All weapons of mass destruction violate both just use and pacifist criteria, so these Christian peacemakers have stood side-by-side in opposition to nuclear arms and worked together for nuclear disarmament. They joined in anti-apartheid campaigns in Southern Africa and anti-regime campaigns in Eastern Europe. They sought truth and reconciliation processes in several countries, as well as other ways to help heal memories of past violation and remember its victims in public ways (through memorials, museums, school curricula, and interfaith worship, for example). For the so-called “war on terror,” they have rejected the crusade tradition whereby any just cause justifies all means necessary to achieve it. And they have sought to shift the thinking from a military focus to policing.

¹ The criteria are legitimate or competent authority, just cause, right intention, announcement of intention, reasonable hope of success, proportionality, and just conduct.

95. On this last item - the “war on terror” and other cases of overt, deadly violence - the Catholic-Mennonite dialogue, fed by both just use and pacifist streams, draws the important difference between an army and a police force, including an international police force operating through institutions backed by international law. Police are embedded in a community whose members assume that the police force is working on their behalf. While police know how to use arms they, unlike soldiers, are not trained primarily for armed combat and use arms only as a last resort. Many police officers pride themselves on how infrequently they have to draw a gun and how often their work overlaps with and allies with the work of people in other helping professions. Their specialty is saving life, not destroying it. They do not kill their way to victory. If killing is involved, it is not to achieve “victory”; it is to prevent further harm to the innocent.

96. A nonpartisan study of how terrorist groups come to an end reinforces the Catholic-Mennonite position. 648 terrorist groups operating over the period 1968 – 2006 were studied. Military force was not the best instrument to bring such groups to an end. The battlefield solution was less effective than law enforcement and intelligence agencies cooperating for international policing. Yet even policing was not the most effective means of all. Most effective was the dissolution of terrorist groups when their members were absorbed into the political process.¹ Diplomacy rather than war, and police rather than soldiers - these means far surpassed military solutions.²

97. It is important to understand why this is the case, since the common rationale for employing military force is that it serve as a defence force and a peacekeeping force. What kind of thinking is war-thinking, even war-thinking that is directed to peacekeeping, and how does it compare with peace-thinking directed to peace-building?

98. When peace is conceived with a military focus, it is an activity tied essentially to one thing - armed violence, its threat and use. Consequently, as long as this paradigm is used all peacekeeping efforts must adhere to physical, mental, and organizational conformities of all kinds, for the sake of the mission itself. This implies that only a few of the gifts of the total citizenry are used, and those in tightly controlled ways - the skills of the soldier, the politician, the weapons scientist, and the diplomat. When peacekeeping is a subset of war-thinking most of the gifts of peacemaking, and the vast majority of peacemakers, are simply irrelevant. Hence parents, children, teachers, students, farmers, business people, scientists, artists, clergy, doctors and nurses, the young and the old, the physically able and the infirm - all these potential peacemakers are largely left out when war-thinking reigns, rather than peace-thinking for peace building.

99. **Enhanced scope.** Yet the larger point is that just peace and the working alliance of pacifist and just use traditions now has achieved a much broader scope, a scope that reflects attention to violence on many more fronts than that of overt, armed, inter-group conflict. It includes a focus on violence in the home and on child abuse, on human rights violations, on anti-racism work, on gender violence, on gang conflict, on promoting processes of truth and reconciliation in transition societies, on healing the memories of past violations, and on developing the means of conflict resolution for home, school, church, community, and workplace. These efforts supplement the previous and almost exclusive focus on war and civil conflict.

100. When we add to this the formation of peacemakers (soul-craft), the scope of just peace - building effectively encompasses the whole of earthly life. Christian peacemaking is far more than a firewall for containing conflict; it consists in practices that constitute a whole way of life for the People of the Way. It is, in a word, discipleship.

101. There is more. “The whole of earthly life” carries a broader meaning now than the one we have usually given it. More than ever, we realize that planetary creation is a vast, seamless, vulnerable, and threatened web. Our small *oikos* - all of it, both biosphere and atmosphere - can be

¹ “Strategy Against Al-Qaeda Faulted: Report Says Effort Is Not a ‘War’”, by Joby Warrick, *Washington Post*, Wednesday, July 30, 2008: A04.

² See the commentary by Nicholas D. Kristof in “Make Diplomacy, Not War”, the *New York Times*, August 10, 2008: WK12. The Study was conducted by the Rand Corporation.

altered, scarred, torn, injured and impaired by us, as well as revived and restored through its own powers and with our cooperation. Therefore, the scope of justice is not only human flourishing. It is the flourishing of planetary creation as a whole. Moreover, while the rest of nature might flourish apart from human flourishing, human flourishing is not possible on a despoiled planet. This also applies to peace. Earth might know a peace without us, but we cannot have peace if land, sea and sky are stripped of life.

102. This we know. Earth can industrialize but once in the manner and on the scale it has. The present throbbing world cannot replicate itself multiple times and be extended indefinitely. For one thing, the costs cannot be met. Maintaining what we already have is driving communities into poverty, even destitution. Nor are natural resources present in the abundance or availability they once were. Even allowing for human creativity and material substitutes, a single factor such as the end of the petroleum era, the lack of further fertile lands, unrealizable demand for freshwater or altered climate will yield huge problems and much suffering. Then there is population, a world of now seven, then eight, then nine or ten billion people. Whatever else that means it is a multiplier of all other problems, from poverty, unemployment and refugee agonies to overconsumption, resource depletion, and destruction of habitat. Not least, psychic energy is largely spent among many people. The bright side of the agricultural, industrial, and information revolutions was their lure and drive. Now, facing their destructive downside, a global fatigue wears away at millions. Renewable moral-spiritual energy, together with the renewable energy of hope, is needed.

103. Furthermore, all this happens at the very time that the expectations of billions of people for a life of sufficiency and enough have not yet been met. The bottom two billion cannot be told that their hopes are not realizable. Least of all can their hopes be dashed by affluent societies smugly protecting their privilege.

104. Just peace-building thus confronts a double challenge that most Christian peace traditions have neglected: the challenge of securing, on a healthy planet, the goods of the community of *all beings* God has created; and, at the same time, the challenge of addressing the obscenity of superfluous wealth and the offense of needless poverty with a view to the dignity and well-being of all God's children.

Just Institutions in a Just Order

105. The enhanced scope and reconceptualising of peace across the whole of earthly life returns us to the subject of just institutions and ways of life. Our historical moment, some arenas of concern, and the task before us are being discussed here. Further matters of importance are hoped to come from the contributions and suggestions of readers in the WCC Member Churches and beyond.

106. No one can be whole in a broken world. For that reason, we turn to peace-building and just institutions in a just order. Institutions, policies, systems, and the ways in which our lives are organized, shape who we are, how we experience the world and see it and what we are able to do in it. Every part of our being, from imagination to habits of the heart to ordinary and extraordinary action, is affected by the worlds that we inhabit and that inhabit us. If we are to be whole, so, too, must they be. Thus peace-building at the levels of just institutions in a just order is the indispensable partner of soul-craft.

107. The economic order has always altered and shaped the planet and its peoples. It has done so with great force and effect since the Industrial Revolution and the globalization of recent decades, affecting not only the biosphere's community of life but the atmosphere and climate itself. In the face of this, the AGAPE process of the WCC (Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth) asks for a vision of the oikoumene that would energize the ecumenical movement to help overcome unconscionable levels of inequity within the human community and between humans and the rest of the community of life. AGAPE rightly understands that both economic and ecological peace and justice must be addressed together, with sustained participation at all levels. Only then might a genuine "economy of life" be realized.

108. The AGAPE process joins a worldwide awareness that we face a dangerous historical moment and a long, hard transition period. It might be described as follows.

109. The big, orienting ideas driving the imagination and activity of so many peoples after World War II were human rights, economic growth, and the advance of freedom and security in the form of democracy. While these sometimes worked against one another and worsened conditions for vast numbers of peoples, these were also treasures that benefited millions, even billions. Human rights found their way into constitutions in many societies and advocates in every society, a vibrant middle class emerged where there had been none, there was no World War III or nuclear holocaust, and the Berlin Wall and borders fell. For both better and worse, these big, orienting forces formed and shaped the world of the last sixty years and brought us to this *kairos* moment. It is a time of decision because these forces, with some of their roots deep in the Industrial Revolution, have also given us global warming and unprecedented human numbers on what has now become an overheated and overcrowded planet. These ideas and forces were strangely blind to the needs of the life systems upon which all this tumultuous activity utterly depended.

110. Now everything has flipped. No peace and security, no sustainable economic growth, no enjoyment of human rights and no righting of remaining wrongs is now possible apart from new attention to the primal elements of earth (soil), air, fire (energy), and water. A just peace cannot be achieved apart from developing clean energy, mitigating the effects of accelerated and extreme climate change as best we can while adapting to what we cannot change, bringing to a halt the crime of extinction and the loss of indispensable biodiversity, and creating political, economic and social structures that treat Earth as that standing miracle which gives births to us and sustains us. These elements have not been considered essential to past peace and justice traditions. They are now.

111. In like manner the powerful forces of modern science and technology need to find a way out of their captivity to forces that have been, on balance, destructive. While the benefits have been momentous - in fighting disease, extending lives, increasing yields -, science and technology have largely been in the service of dirty energy (fossil-fuels), deadly weaponry, and economic and political forces that overwhelm Earth's carrying capacity. Their misdirection stems from the fact that modern science and technology have largely joined forces that view nature as a "collection of objects rather than a communion of subjects" (Thomas Berry).

112. In sum, our historical moment and context necessitates peace-building as economic, social and political reconstruction. At the same time it necessitates the tending and keeping of the garden commanded of humans in Genesis, as well as redirection of the major investment and uses of science and technology. The widely-cited norms of **justice**, **peace**, and **integrity of creation** can be used to guide and measure this redirection and reconstruction. A similar set of norms is found in the Earth Charter Guide to "Religion and Climate Change":

- **Solidarity** with other people and creatures,
- **Sustainability** in development, technology and production,
- **Sufficiency** as a standard of equitable consumption and organized resource-sharing,
- Socially just **participation** in decisions about how to obtain sustenance and to manage community for the good of all.

113. All this is obviously a task for generations. It requires a peace-building spirituality that spans generations as well. It is helpful to remember that the Christian faith was born in a clash of the ages at a turning time. "Glory to God and Peace on Earth" came as the Christmas evangel at just such a time. The way of Jesus for a People of the Way had all future generations in mind, until the end of time. Its spirituality knew it would face the inevitable corruptions and defeats that plague the life of sinful human beings. Yet it never doubted the triumph of life lived by the grace of God.

Conclusion

114. In summary we might say: We are born to belonging. Earth is our home. We are star seed and microcosms of the macrocosm in the stunning creation of God. "Peace on Earth" is the message of heaven for Earth and us as earthlings.

115. We are also born to longing. Our home is not what it might and will be. While life in God's hands is irrepressible, peace does not yet reign. The principalities and powers, though not sovereign,

still enjoy their victories, and we will be restless and broken until peace prevails. Thus our peace-building will of necessity criticize, denounce, advocate, and resist as well as proclaim, empower, console, reconcile, and heal. Peacemakers will speak against and speak for, tear down and build up, lament and celebrate, grieve and rejoice. Until our longing joins our belonging in the consummation of all things in God, peace work will continue as the flickering of sure grace.

116. In short, both the world within – peace-building as soul-craft - and the world without – peace-building in and with just institutions - cry for peacemakers. Earth cries for Christians who will join others to make peace within creation in the same moment they make peace with creation.

117. *“For the palace will be forsaken, the populace city deserted;
the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, the joy of wild asses, a pasture for flocks;
until a spirit from on high is poured out on us, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.
Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.
The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.
My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places”.* (Isa 32:14-20)

Questions and requests:

How do these approaches to “Just Peace” correspond to traditions and thought forms in your Church? Which elements do you wish to add?

Please share relevant stories and concrete recommendations with the Office of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation! Be certain to include both peace-building as soul-craft and as crafting just institutions and a just order.

Please direct all correspondence, requests and suggestions to the following address:

Nan Braunschweiger, Coordinator
International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC)
World Council of Churches
150, route de Ferney
CH-1211 Geneva 2
email: nan@wcc-coe.org
Copy to: res@wcc-coe.org