

From Eliizbeth Tapia  
October 9, 2006

Dear Howard, You are most welcome. I had a very good experience in our Theology of Peace conference. Many thanks for your (and your wife's) hard work and excellent networking. Yes, I hope to keep in touch. Overall it was a very good conference and I am privileged to meet all the interesting resource persons and participants.

Please disregard my former plan and send the check to me, payable to me, at this address: 28 Grenville Road, Watertown, MA 02472. Since Perla B needed to be reimbursed soon, I paid her the said amount right after coming back.

I'd appreciate your help.

Pls keep me in your mailing list.

Elizabeth

"Howard W. Hallman" <[hhallman@mupwj.org](mailto:hhallman@mupwj.org)> wrote:

Hello Elizabeth,

Thank you for participating in our conference on the theology of peace. You made major contributions in panel discussion, worship, and informal conversations. I hope that we can stay in touch.

Should the check for \$213.50 as our share of your airfare be made out to Perla Baker and sent to her at the San Clemente address? Or should it be payable to you?

Shalom,  
Howard

# **PEACEMAKING AS A MISSIONAL PRIORITY**

**A Proposal for the United Methodist Church**

**Second Draft with Addendum (October 2006)**

by Howard W. Hallman, Chair

Methodists United for Peace with Justice

God's earth is aching for peace. Domestic strife, civil conflict, ethnic and racial clashes, religious schism and interfaith rivalry, terrorist attacks, wars between nations, and threatened use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons – all of these prevent us from achieving God's shalom. In response to this challenge we propose that the United Methodist Church should adopt peacemaking as a missional priority for the 2008-12 quadrennium. This would encompass prevention of injurious and deadly conflict, dispute resolution, reconciliation, and community building. Quest for justice should be an integral part of this initiative. This can be a manifestation of how disciples of Jesus Christ seek to transform the world.

## **Biblical Foundation**

Jesus' training manual for disciples, the Sermon on the Mount, provides the foundation for peacemaking. Jesus declared, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" (Mt.5:9). He instructed his disciples, "Don't react violently against the one who is evil" (Mt 5:39, *Scholars Version*). Instead: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5:44). In the early church Paul echoed this teaching and instructed Christians in Rome, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

For Jesus justice was also an important concern. In his inaugural sermon in his home synagogue he applied Isaiah's prophesy to himself as one who brings good news to the poor and release to the captives, who lets the oppressed go free and proclaims the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:18-19). In Jesus' story of the last judgment it is nations (not merely individuals) that are judged on the basis of doing good deeds "to the least of these" (Mt 25:31-46). He spoke in the tradition of the Hebrew prophets who challenged the affluent for their neglect and exploitation of the poor. Indeed the Bible contains several thousand verses revealing God's concern for the poor and downtrodden. Jeremiah warned against saying " 'Peace, peace' when there is no peace" because of the lack of justice (Jer. 8:11).

As the Christian Church developed, reconciliation took on new meaning. Paul wrote, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18).

## **Spiritual Basis**

Jesus' life and teachings were rooted in a close relationship with God. He carried out the ancient Jewish commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:5) He connected this with a second great commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18), expanded to encompass enemy (Mt 5:44). Faith and works were combined. Personal and social holiness were integrally connected.

Prayer was an essential part of Jesus' life. Before beginning his public ministry he spent forty days praying in the wilderness. He frequently retreated for solitary prayer (for example, Mt 14:23). On the cusp of his arrest and persecution that would challenge his commitment to love and nonviolence, Jesus prayed intensely in the Garden of Gethsemane and accepted God's will (Mt 26:36-44). His prayer life continued on Golgotha where he asked God to forgive his executioners (Lk 23:34) and committed his spirit unto God (Lk 23:46).

As the United Methodist Council of Bishops said in *In Defense of Creation* (1986), "Peacemaking is ultimately a spiritual issue." Thus, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we who would be peacemakers and seekers of justice must ground our activities in a full spiritual life and unwavering trust in God.

## I. DISCIPLES AS PEACEMAKERS

Peacemaking as a missional priority of the United Methodist Church for the next quadrennium would become a task for all: members, pastors, and local congregations; bishops and annual conferences in the United States, Africa, Europe, and the Philippines; seminaries and other institutions of higher learning; general councils, boards, and commissions.

In a hymn we sing, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me." Each of us as disciples of Jesus Christ can become peacemakers. Christian pacifists, opposing all wars, heed this call. Peacemaking should also have high priority as the first resort of those who believe that in certain circumstances war may be necessary as a last resort.

Local churches – the strength of Methodism – can be instruments for peacemaking. In doing so congregations and their members should expect support and assistance from annual conferences, general boards and commissions, seminaries and other training institutions.

### **Christian Education**

Peacemaking as an expression of discipleship should be integrated into Christian education at all age levels. This should encompass teaching a theology of peace and providing a thorough-going biblical foundation. There should be instruction on practical applications of peacemaking in many settings: family, school, community, church, work, broader society, between nations. Children and youth can learn how to be peacemakers at school as they deal with personal strife, encounter bullies, become friends with children who are rejected by others, and help resolve intergroup conflict. Adults can study issues of ethnic and racial conflict, civil strife, international relations and how peacemaking can occur in these situations. They can learn how they themselves can become peacemakers. Children, youth, and adults can learn how justice is the foundation for peace.

**Resources.** A primary resource for Christian education within the United Methodist Church is the General Board of Discipleship with its curriculum guides, magazines, books, and devotional material and the training workshop it conducts. For example, *Conflict and Communion* (2006) deals with reconciliation and restorative justice at Christ's table. The United Methodist Publishing House produces books on peace and justice issues. United Methodist seminaries are a resource for the theology of peace. Useful material on peace and justice issues is available from other general boards and commissions: Church and Society (including the Peace with Justice Program), Global Ministries and its Women's Division, Higher

Education and Ministry, Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns, Religion and Race, Status and Role of Women, United Methodist Men. The General Commission on Communication tells the church's story within United Methodist Church and to the broader public; its web pages on Faith in Action teach about forgiveness, reconciliation, restorative justice, and other topics related to peacemaking. Racial and ethnic caucuses can contribute material on justice issues. Within annual conferences peace with justice coordinators have useful information. Printed and video material should be translated into French and Portuguese for use in Africa.

## **Peacemaking Practitioners**

There are many opportunities for laity, clergy, and local churches to engage in active of peacemaking in conflict situation. This can be a normal part of Christian living as we love one another and seek to love even our enemies, as Jesus taught. Beyond that pastors and trained laity can be mediators where there is communal conflict, such as with youth gangs, racial and ethnic discord. Local churches can be safe places in conflict zones. Congregations themselves are not immune to conflict and can benefit from outside assistance in resolving internal disputes.

At the national and international level bishops and other churches leaders can take initiatives to resolve conflict and promote reconciliation between warring factions and rival nations. Indeed central conference leaders in Africa, the Philippines, and Europe provide a solid body of positive experience in life and death situations. Some persons may be called to join voluntary organizations that engage in peacemaking on a global basis, such as Christian Peacemaker Teams (<http://www.cpt.org>), Nonviolent Peaceforce (<http://nvpr.org>), and International Peace Brigades (<http://www.peacebrigades.org>).

**Resources.** Since 2000 JUSTPEACE: Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation has conducted a ministry of reconciliation for United Methodist congregations and conferences. Its approach of conflict transformation is applicable in community settings as well as in churches. The General Board of Global Ministries' work in shalom zones and for restorative justice has developed a solid body of experience in dealing with community conflict, including youth gangs. General Commissions on Religion and Race, Status and Role of Women, and Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns can share their insights. At Africa University the Institute for Peace, Leadership and Governance provides training in conflict resolution and mediation. In the United States several universities, such as Eastern Mennonite University (<http://www.emu.edu/ctp/>), and a number of independent centers provide such training. It would be useful for United Methodist seminaries, encouraged by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, to develop courses on peacemaking and conflict resolution for their regular curriculum and for short-term training of clergy and laity.

## **Nonviolent Action**

Peacemaking is not a passive occupation, standing aside in face of injustice and aggression. The road to genuine peace will sometimes be marked by conflict as social inequity is overturned and captives of unjust systems are freed. Dominating powers must be confronted. For this purpose a broad array of nonviolent techniques are available as expression of love in action. They are useful for countering the culture of violence, achieving liberation of oppressed people, and defending against military aggression.

Therefore, one part of peacemaking as a missional priority for the United States should be study and teaching about nonviolent practices in achieving justice and peace. This can start with the New Testament: Jesus' life and teachings; Acts of the Apostles (who were pacifists and practitioners of civil disobedience); and gems in the Epistles ("When reviled we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly", as Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 4:12-13). It can encompass study of techniques developed by Mahatma Gandhi who, though a Hindu, was inspired and guided by the Sermon on the Mount. So was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his leadership of the U.S. civil rights movement, another good source of practical knowledge.

The last 25 years have seen successful application of nonviolence in achieving freedom for people in Eastern Europe, South Africa, Latin America, and the Philippines (see [http://www.forusa.org/nonviolence/0900\\_73deats.html](http://www.forusa.org/nonviolence/0900_73deats.html)). In contrast, armed invasion and military coup from within rarely lead to a flourishing democracy. Although nonviolence has setbacks and losses of life, nothing on the level of killing and devastation caused by war. While violence begets violence (observe the Middle East today), love in action through nonviolence has an opportunity to bring about change in ways that achieve reconciliation and set the stage for restoration and peace building.

United Methodists of all ages need to know about the practicality of the Sermon on the Mount. For those called to become active practitioners of nonviolence, training opportunities should be available. Those who choose to engage in nonviolent action to oppose injustice and militarization of society should have support of their church.

**Resources.** The General Board of Church and Society should take the lead in developing study material and training on the theory and practice of nonviolence. Other boards, such as Global Ministries, Discipleship, Race and Religion, can assist. Persons from central conferences should share their experience. Seminary professors with applicable knowledge can contribute. Annual conferences in Africa, the Philippines, Europe, and the United States should have roles in study and training for nonviolence. As appropriate, training can be provided through contracts with such organizations as Nonviolence International (<http://www.nonviolenceinternational.net/>), Albert Einstein Institution (<http://www.aeinsteinst.org/>), Fellowship of Reconciliation (<http://www.forusa.org/>), and Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service (<http://paceebene.org/pace/>).

## **Public Policy Advocacy**

Governments around the world make decisions to build military arsenals, threaten the use of force, go to war, enter into peace agreements. Therefore, it is appropriate for Christians to be engaged in public policy advocacy on these issues. In democratic societies this is a task for individuals through voting and contact with local officials. There is strength through working in groups that share a common commitment. Although the principle of separation of church and state in the United States places limits on direct church involvement in electoral activities, there are numerous other ways that Christians can influence governmental decision-making. In societies with restraints on freedom citizens can gain influence by withholding their consent to unjust laws, assembling peaceably to protest official wrongdoing, and using available channels to confer with public officials.

**Resources.** According to *The Book of Discipline*, the General Board of Church and Society shall "encourage Christian lines of action that assist humankind to move toward a world where peace and justice are achieved." As part of this assignment, the Board assists individual

United Methodists, local congregations, and annual conferences in public policy advocacy. The Board's website and weekly e-mail, *Faith in Action*, are valuable sources of information for this purpose. Knowledge about particular issues is available from General Boards of Global Ministries, Religion and Race, and Status and Role of Women. The General Board of Church and Society is charged with facilitating legislative advocacy activities with the U.S. Congress. In other nations central conferences can take on this task.

## Spiritual Life

As previously indicated, disciples of Jesus Christ engaged in peacemaking need an active spiritual life to connect with God's love for humankind and to gain strength and endurance in the long struggle for peace. Accordingly, devotional material for peacemakers should be available along with the biblical studies that are part of Christian Education. Spiritual retreats and mutual support groups are important. So is pray before and during direct action for peace and justice.

**Resources.** In *The Book of Discipline* the General Board of Discipleship is instructed to "manage and produce *The Upper Room* daily devotional guide and wide range of other resources to help people grow in the relationship with God." This can encompass the spiritual foundation for peacemaking. Other general boards, such as Church and Society, Global Ministries and its Women's Division, also produce prayers, worship guides, and other devotional material that are useful for peacemakers.

## II. WORLD PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Beyond what individual disciples and local churches can do as peacemakers, the United Methodist Church as a global institution has opportunity and responsibility to take peacemaking initiatives and provide societal leadership toward a just and peaceful world. There is solid experience along these lines.

In 1942, less than a year after U.S. entry into World War II, the Council of Bishops of the Methodist Church began developing ideas on the kind of postwar world they wanted. They formulated a Crusade for a New World Order that involved all Methodist agencies, local church study groups, home visits, and radio broadcasts in support of what became the United Nations. (See Herman Will, *A Will for Peace*, pp. 81-88). This was an important influence for getting the United States to take a major leadership role in establishment of the United Nations and other international institutions created in that period, such as the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

The 1944 General Conference endorsed the Crusade for a New World Order and incorporated it into a broader Crusade for Christ that had four other goals: spiritual renaissance within the church; a challenge for more serious stewardship; increased attention to church school; and raising \$25 million for war recovery work abroad (\$27 million was raised, \$280 million in today's dollar) Although cause and effect aren't easy to prove, this combination of personal and social holiness seems to have been a significant factor in membership growth of 16.3% for the Methodist Church from 1940 to 1950 compared to 14.4% for the U.S. population (source: <http://www.gcah.org/membership.htm>.).

Sixty years later new challenges have arisen in the quest for global peace and justice. While the risk of war between two superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union – has

dissipated, different kinds of armed conflict and terrorist threats confront us. It is time, therefore, for the United Methodist Church to offer a new vision of what God's shalom can be and how to attain it.

Aspects of this vision were presented twenty years ago in *In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace*, a document developed by the Council of Bishops, studied by numerous local congregations, and affirmed by the 1988 General Conference. More recently the Council of Bishops has offered a study guide, *In Search of Security*. The Council, as instructed by the 2004 General Conference, is now developing "a new document and study guide similar to *In Defense of Creation*." The Social Principles form a basis for a vision of what the world can become. *The Book of Resolutions, 2004* offers greater specificity, including resolutions on global economic justice (pp.525-553) and on war and peace (pp.814-855).

The challenge is to pull these elements together and add others as necessary to offer a broad vision of a just and peaceful world for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This would draw upon practical experience of the last 25 years in the spread of freedom through nonviolent action and the emergence of new structures and techniques for prevention of deadly conflict, conflict resolution to bring wars to an end, peacekeeping, and reconciliation to overcome enmity in post-conflict situations. Disarmament should be part of the agenda through elimination of nuclear weapons and control of small arms and other conventional weapons. Diplomacy and international cooperation for peacemaking should replace reliance on military force.

Not only do weapons cost the lives of thousands of people annually, they also deplete the world's resources. As President Eisenhower said, "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in a final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed." (Remember Jesus' words in Matthew 25.) Thus, peacemaking with a strong concern for justice must speak out on the immorality of vast military expenditures, especially in the United States, that draw money away from programs and services directed toward the elimination of poverty.

**Implementation.** We should look to the Council of Bishops for leadership in guiding us in what we as disciples of Jesus Christ should do to transform the world through peacemaking and the quest for justice. Among the program agencies the General Board of Church and Society has "prime responsibility...to seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns." This should include advocating significant changes in national foreign and military policies to achieve peace and justice and supporting international approaches to peacemaking. This should be done in cooperation with other United Methodist agencies, such as the General Board of Global Ministries and its Women's Division. Church and Society and other boards should publish and post on websites study guides on the new vision for world peace and conduct training. Conference peace with justice and coordinators and boards of church and society should participate. Local congregations should join this effort through study and public policy advocacy.

**Funding.** Peacemaking as a missional priority would incorporate the work of general boards and commissions through their customary activities (such as curriculum development, publishing devotional material, public advocacy, program services). In addition, there should be new funding authorized to supplement present sources. [This section to be further developed.]

*To offer comments, contact Howard Hallman at [hallman@mupwj.org](mailto:hallman@mupwj.org) or 301 (896-0013).*

## Addendum

From: Rev. Lloyd Nyarota, Area Projects and Communications Coordinator, Zimbabwe UMC

Greetings to you in the Lord's name. How are you? I hope this letter finds you well. I have received a letter from my Bishop so that I would work and be in conduct with you from Zimbabwe concerning Peacemaking as a missional priority. Let me first introduce myself. I am an ordained minister in the UMC Zimbabwe Area. I am assigned to work as the Zimbabwe UMC projects and communications coordinator. I am a graduate from Africa University's Institute of Peace Leadership and Governance with a Masters in Peace and Governance. My major is African leadership and development.

Now to the project on Peacemaking. I have gone through the comprehensive proposal. It is a well thought document, with valuable information and suggestions. I hope the General Conference will be able to adopt it and prepare a program of implementation. I have one suggestion if it is fine with you. Most of the conflicts are a result of deprivation and underdevelopment, mainly in Africa or the developing third world. My suggestion therefore is if we can have a section on Peacebuilding. I am not saying it is not addressed in the document but if a paragraph can be developed to that aspect.

Peacebuilding is a relatively new label put on an old idea. It refers to the long-term project of building peaceful, stable communities and societies. Peacebuilding and development are therefore very closely linked. Both have the same goal, which is to help rebuild or repair societies that are hurting, physically, economically and socially. The difference that peacebuilding brings is an emphasis on relationships and the process of interaction that occurs between NGO workers and their Partners as they develop and implement Peacebuilding, development and reconciliation programs. Peacebuilding emphasizes a focus on relationships with partners and program recipients as an integral part of establishing lasting Peace in violence-prone areas. Understanding Peacebuilding in this way allows us to take a new lens to development projects and programming.

Putting relationships at the centre of relief, development, conflict prevention, reconstruction and reconciliation work is critical in order to achieve lasting social change. By focusing on people and healthy relationships, or what you have referred in the document as "right relationships" we engage in a process that respects the abilities and talents each person brings, builds trust among staff and partners, and helps fortify and sustain the agents of social change and justice-people.

Both Peacebuilding and training for Peacebuilding need to be a participatory process. Frequently People think of Peace and worry that Justice will be forgotten. People worry that because peace often involves compromise, those who have the fewest resources and least political power will have to compromise the most. For Peace to last, issues of injustice must be addressed.

However this is a long letter but I hope it makes sense. I will be happy to work with you on this project. I also hope this project will be able to address African issues as it develops. Thank you.

May God bless you in all you do.

Your brother in the ministry.

Rev. Lloyd Nyarota

August 29, 2006

# PEACEMAKING AS A MISSIONAL PRIORITY

## A Proposal by the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society

God's earth is aching for peace. War, civil, conflict, and a world awash with weapons prevent the achievement of God's shalom. Therefore, we propose that the United Methodist Church should adopt peacemaking as a missional priority for the 2008-12 quadrennium. This can be a manifestation of how disciples of Jesus Christ seek to transform the world.

The **biblical foundation** is the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus taught, "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Mt.5:9), "Don't react violently against the one who is evil" (Mt 5:39, *Scholars Version*), "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5:44). Paul echoed this teaching in his Letter to the Romans (12:14-21) and told the Corinthians that through Christ we have a ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:17-18). Furthermore, Jesus and Hebrew prophets before him had a strong concern for justice, which prepares the groundwork for peace (Jeremiah 8:11; Micah 6:8; Luke 4:18-19; Mt. 25:31-46).

The **spiritual basis** comes from the two great commandments that combine love of God through prayer and devotion with love of neighbor that encompasses enemy. As John Wesley taught, personal and social holiness are integrally connected.

### I. Disciples as Peacemakers

Peacemaking as a missional priority would become a task for all United Methodists: members, pastors, local congregations, bishops, annual conferences, seminaries, general councils, boards, and commissions. It would be expressed through

- **Christian education** at all levels.
- **Peacemaking practitioners** who would be trained and dispatched to engage in peacemaking in conflict situations within local churches and communities and between warring factions and nations.
- **Nonviolent action** for achieving justice and peace, opposing oppressors, and defending against military aggression.
- **Peacebuilding** through truth and reconciliation and developing just and functional societies.
- **Public policy advocacy** to influence governments in decisions on military expenditures, whether to go to war, peacemaking initiatives, and assisting underdeveloped nations.

### II. World Peace and International Relations

Beyond what individual disciples, local churches, and church agencies can do as peacemakers, the United Methodist Church as a global institution has opportunity and responsibility to take peacemaking initiatives and provide societal leadership toward a just and peaceful world. The Methodist Church did this during and after World War II in promoting international organizations for the post-war world. The United Methodist bishops did this in the 1980s with *In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace*. It is timely for the United Methodist Church to offer a new vision of God's shalom for the 21<sup>st</sup> century based upon peacemaking and elimination of war, global economic and social justice, and the integrity of creation by addressing global warming and other environmental concerns.

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**A Proposal for the United Methodist Church**  
by Howard W. Hallman, Chair, Methodists United for Peace with Justice

**Executive Summary**

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For further information, contact Howard Hallman at 301 896-0013 or [hhallman@mupwj.org](mailto:hhallman@mupwj.org).