

Is There A Place For Dreaming?: Restorative Justice and International State Conflict

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The first part of the title is of a [wonderful song](#) by singer/songwriter, **Ken Medema**, from his album, “*In the Dragon’s Jaws*” (no date), that I played at the end of the presentation.

I had the joy of spending 5 spring/summer months in 2007 at *Saint Paul University*, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada (I believe the first university in North America, with the largest theological library in North America) as the first “Scholar in Residence” of the *Conflict Studies Department* of which [Vern Redekop](#) is head.

I had a small office just down from the library, professor borrowing privileges at the library, and a thoroughly wonderful time! Part of the deal was a public lecture at the end of my time there. The paper below is that lecture. Well, much longer than it – but my presentation was based on what you may click on. Acknowledged: it is quite rambling, with lots thrown at it...

Introduction: On Seeing

I have a thought experiment

Can you imagine yourself into a time of belief that the earth was actually the centre of the known universe? Imagine living through a time of transition to a different belief about the known universe: that in fact the earth revolved around the sun?

Wouldn’t such a sea change of perception about the universe somewhat *blow you away*?

That would be a *scientific* moment of overwhelming transformational magnitude in your life; what Thomas Kuhn called a “scientific revolution”.

I could run this again concerning all kinds of changes of perception: headhunting one’s enemies for instance to a time of seeing it as wrong; or the horrific treatment of Black slaves in the *antebellum* U.S. to viewing them as equals: *anthropological* and *cultural* upheavals of overwhelming transformational magnitude in each case.

Can you get a little sense at least of how something can seem *so* right, *scientifically*, *anthropologically*, *culturally*, and so on, because of lifetime and often multi-generational societal formation and reinforcement, which afterwards seems so *utterly* wrong, seen in a different light?

I hope that can become Western society’s experience about resort to state violence.

The Central Anthropological Task: Self-Transcendence

The central anthropological task for humanity is, I suggest, to “*Follow me!*” in Biblical and Girardian¹ language of imitation of The Way of Christ; or in more general language: *to become a “saint”* in a bid for *self-transcendence*. Like June Callwood, who died this year and often called a “secular saint”, or Mother Teresa who died a decade ago, and is being officially sainted by the Catholic Church. You all know other examples. *Living ethically presupposes knowing ethically*; having an *ethical epistemology*. “*On what basis ethics?*”, is a valid question to pose, or as it is sometimes asked: “*Can we be good without God?*”²

Self-Transcendence and Character Ethics

Two recent writers explain what they call *character ethics*:

Character ethics criticizes a rationalistic ethics that is grounded in allegedly philosophical premises and that accordingly neglects theological beliefs.

Holistic character ethics is grounded in the larger drama or narrative of life that is crucial for character (Stassen & Guthrie, 2005, p. 60).

Many point out that there is no universally accessible rationality, no universally known ethical “categorical imperative”. There are no “self-evident truths”, “rationally discernible givens”. The two writers again:

No human being is an autonomous mind, coming to moral conclusions through the purely dispassionate application of reasoning. The autonomous mind was an Enlightenment myth, launched by Descartes and now thoroughly discredited (Stassen & Gushee, *ibid*, p. 63.)

I once was in a debate about Canada’s participation in the Balkans War under NATO. My discussion partner was a Political Science professor who was befuddled at my attempts at epistemological grounding in a Judeo-Christian worldview. It was not that he was a secularist and therefore did not subscribe to that faith commitment. He, a secularist indeed, self-consciously had no similar narrative to appeal to, and frankly was annoyed that one might have even been thought important or necessary.

The sixth chapter of *The Genealogy of Violence* (2001) bears the provocative title, “Are Secular Perspectives on Violence Sufficient?” Bellinger faults René Girard for “wanting to have it both ways (p. 88).” Girard’s third “great discovery”, by his own account (see *The Girard Reader*, Williams, 1996) was the absolutely unique explanatory power of the biblical revelation, and supremely the Jesus narrative.

Bellinger asserts:

In my opinion, Girard ought to drop the pretense of adhering to the methodological atheism of social science, which has decreed that religious postulates are unacceptable foundations for understanding human behaviour... [that is] the forced agnosticism of the Enlightenment paradigm (p. 88).

A little later, Bellinger refers to this perspective as a “flattened secular landscape that characterizes mainstream social science (p. 93).” What he calls for on the contrary are “guides whose minds are open to the pull of creation (p. 93).”

¹ René Girard’s profoundly heuristic mimetic theory will only be alluded to in this talk.

² Books have been written from both sides in answer to that question! A corollary however *can be* confidently stated: People *do* great evil in the name of God and religion! Noted Christian apologist Blaise Pascal wrote:
Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.

At chapter's end he states baldly:

I suggest that the closure to transcendence inherent in methodological atheism prevents its theorists from fully understanding the phenomenon they are seeking to grasp. Concerning the religious vision of the relationship between humanity and its Creator, they presuppose that 'we have no need of that hypothesis.' (p. 96).

Secular theorists, by accepting "the lid placed on thought by the methodological atheism of social science", by refusing to permit "the horizon [to be] truly opened up to comprehend the divine source of life" (p. 96) are unable to achieve satisfactory explanation of evil because:

The most basic root of violence is the alienation of human beings from their Creator; thus, non-theological 'explanations' of violence are actually caught up in and expressive of the same atmosphere of human alienation from God out of which violence arises. [A footnote adds that secular social philosophy "is complicit with an 'ontology of violence,' a reading of the world which assumes the priority of force and tells how this force is best managed and confined by counter-force."] As such, they are unable to master their subject: the 'explanations' are themselves trapped in the tragedy of human history (p. 96, italics in original).

I believe that no *individual separated from a conscious community of dialogue, in turn uninformed by an underlying or overarching narrative, is equal to the task of confronting evil, especially the ubiquitous addiction of violence.*

A central Christian ethical legacy is: *NO MORE VICTIMS*, predicated on the story and teachings of Jesus.

Biblical scholar James Williams writes in this vein:

It is an irony of history that the very source [the Bible] that first disclosed the viewpoint and plight of the victim is pilloried in the name of various forms of criticism... However, it is in the Western world that the affirmation of 'otherness,' especially as known through the victim, has emerged. And its roots sink deeply into the Bible as transmitted in the Jewish and Christian traditions... the standpoint of the victim is [the West's] unique and chief biblical inheritance. It can be appropriated creatively and ethically only if the *inner dynamic* of the biblical texts and traditions is understood and appreciated. The Bible is the first and main source for women's rights, racial justice, and any kind of moral transformation. The Bible is also the only creative basis for interrogating the tradition and the biblical texts (Williams, 2000, pp. 195 & 196. italics in original).

It is the present author's repeated observation that many Western secular ethicists draw liberally on this prodigal biblical capital, while simultaneously rejecting the true nature of the bank account – including "Who" deposited it! This is of course cutting off the nose to spite the face or severing the limb one is sitting on – to the consequent despite of any rational consistency let alone self-awareness of ethical epistemological reasoning. I have intelligent, well-educated, socially engaged in-laws who model this all the time! My quick and dirty explanation for this amazing lack of cultural *and* self-awareness?: hurt, even rage, at a religion (God and Bible) and religious culture (church and Christians/Christendom) that have so profoundly betrayed and disappointed. Who can blame them?

This author affirms that the Bible is its best critic, "the only creative basis for interrogating the tradition and the biblical texts," as Williams puts it above, and *over against* an annual crop of "new discoveries" about the Bible from flights of fictional fancy as wildly divergent as John Allegro's *The Magic Mushroom and the Cross*; Bishop Jonathan Spong's repeated inverse, but no less

fundamentalist/intolerant, invectives; prodigious output of plentiful pseudo-scholarship by many, not all, adherents of *The Jesus Seminar*; Dan Brown's imaginary *The DaVinci Code* – to name only a few representative instances.

A character from my novel comments:

“If I just had majority church history to go on, I'd be a raving atheist, too. There has been arguably *no more bloody institution in Western history than the Church since the fourth century!* If this is what Paul meant by ‘Christ, the power of God,’ then ‘the revolt of atheism is pure religion by contrast.’ (I heard an American theologian named Walter Wink say that once at Wheaton.)

“Ironically, however, that very revolt is instigated in the first place by biblical revelation. Jesus first elicited the Western atheistic philosophical tradition with his cry from the cross, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ Jürgen Moltmann observes that this is either the end of all religion, and, therefore, the atheists and anarchists are right, or the beginning of a whole new way of understanding ‘the executed God.’ (Northey, *ibid*, p. 360).”

Western atheism is in part rooted in Jesus' cry of abandonment on the cross, “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*”, and the wrenching railings and lamentations against God by the psalmists and the prophets.

As with organized crime, crimes of passion, and all other forms of killing in between, in the end it is all the same: victims are immolated; the good earth is desecrated; and “civilization” for the victor, mirror image of the vanquished victim of course, is “advanced” – though its antonym in fact applies: “destroyed”.³

Jared Diamond wrote in *The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal* (1992) – and substantiated his conclusion with long lists of evidence – *that the only consistent signature of the human species is genocide*. David Livingstone Smith in *The Most Dangerous Animal: Human Nature and the Origins of War* (2007) presents humans as biologically “*wired to fight*”, and *murderous to the core*: Western civilization *in no way exempt!* Canada's current strident militarization and the murderous U.S. War on Terror are contemporary cases in point.

Original Child Bomb and Allied Genocide

After the bombing of Hiroshima, Catholic Trappist monk Thomas Merton wrote a long prose poem entitled: *Original Child Bomb: Points for meditation to be scratched on the walls of a cave*.

Here is some of Thomas Merton's long prose poem⁴:

I In the year 1945 an Original Child was born. The name Original Child was given to

³ Blind singer/songwriter Ken Medema sings of all warfare: “Let's call a spade a spade. It's murder in the first degree!” A Nuremberg Trial Nazi defendant said: “You have defeated us Nazis, but the spirit of Nazism rises like a Phoenix amongst you.” Gil Bailie wrote:

If we humans become too morally troubled by the brutality [of capital punishment and war] to revel in the glories of the civilization made possible by it, we will simply have to reinvent culture. This is what Nietzsche saw through a glass darkly. This is what Paul sensed when he declared the old order to be a dying one (I Cor. 7:31). This is the central anthropological issue of our age (Bailie, 1995, p. 79).

⁴ Do you recall Hannah Arendt's expression: “The banality of evil”?

it by the Japanese people, who recognized that it was the first of its kind.

2 ...

About one hour after Mr. Truman became President, his aides told him about a new bomb which was being developed by atomic scientists. They called it the "atomic bomb." They said scientists had been working on it for six years and that it had so far cost two billion dollars. They added that its power was equal to that of twenty thousand tons of TNT. A single bomb could destroy a city. One of those present added, in a reverent tone, that the new explosive might eventually destroy the whole world...

3... there were others who believed that if the bomb were used just once or twice, on one or two Japanese cities, there would be no more war. They believed the new bomb would produce eternal peace.

14 *At 5:30 A.M. on July 16th, 1945, a plutonium bomb was successfully exploded in the desert at Alamogordo, New Mexico...*

15 *Many who saw the experiment expressed their satisfaction in religious terms. A semi-official report even quoted a religious book – The New Testament, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." There was an atmosphere of devotion. It was a great act of faith. They believed the explosion was exceptionally powerful.*

20 *On July 26th the Potsdam declaration was issued. An ultimatum was given to Japan: "Surrender unconditionally or be destroyed." ...*

22 *On August 1st the bomb was assembled in an air-conditioned hut... Those who handled the bomb referred to it as "Little Boy." Their care for the Original Child was devoted and tender.*

23 *On August 2nd President Truman was the guest of His Majesty King George VI on board the H.M.S. Renown in Plymouth Harbor. The atomic bomb was praised. Admiral Leahy, who was present, declared that the bomb would not work. His Majesty George VI offered a small wager to the contrary.*

24 *On August 2nd a special message from the Japanese Foreign Minister was sent to the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow. "It is requested that further efforts be exerted... Since the loss of one day may result in a thousand years of regret, it is requested that you immediately have a talk with [Russian Foreign Minister] Molotov." But Molotov did not return from Potsdam until the day the bomb fell.*

26 *On Sunday afternoon "Little Boy" was brought out in procession and devoutly tucked away in the womb of Enola Gay. That evening few were able to sleep. They were as excited as little boys on Christmas Eve.*

31 *At 8:09 they reached Hiroshima and started the bomb run. The city was full of sun. The fliers could see the green grass in the gardens. No fighters rose up to meet them. There was no flack. No one in the city bothered to take cover.*

32 *The bomb exploded within 100 feet of the aiming point. The fireball was*

18,000 feet across. The temperature at the center of the fireball was 100,000,000 degrees. The people who were near the center became nothing. The whole city was blown to bits and the ruins all caught fire instantly everywhere, burning briskly. 70,000 people were killed right away or died within a few hours. Those who did not die at once suffered great pain. Few of them were soldiers.

33 The men in the plane perceived that the raid had been successful, but they thought of the people in the city and they were not perfectly happy. Some felt they had done wrong. But in any case they had obeyed orders. "It was war." [This was like the Nazis kept saying in their defense at the Nuremberg Trials. It didn't work for them, and many went to their executions still making the claim that "they were only following orders".]

36 Then the military governor of the Prefecture of Hiroshima issued a proclamation full of martial spirit. To all the people without hands, without feet, with their faces falling off, with their intestines hanging out, with their whole bodies full of radiation, he declared: "We must not rest a single day in our war effort ... We must bear in mind that the annihilation of the stubborn enemy is our road to revenge." He was a professional soldier. [Professional soldiers are trained to scoff at death: that of others and their own.]

37 On August 8th [Russian Foreign Minister] Molotov finally summoned the Japanese Ambassador. At last neutral Russia would give an answer to the Emperor's inquiry. Molotov said coldly that the Soviet Union was declaring war on Japan.

38 On August 9th another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, though Hiroshima was still burning. On August 11th the Emperor overruled his high command and accepted the peace terms dictated at Potsdam. Yet for three days discussion continued, until on August 14th the surrender was made public and final.

40 As to the Original Child that was now born, President Truman summed up the philosophy of the situation in a few words. "We found the bomb" he said "and we used it."

41 Since that summer many other bombs have been "found." What is going to happen? At the time of writing, after a season of brisk speculation, men seem to be fatigued by the whole question (Merton, 1980, pp. 3 – 11).

Another conqueror who helped establish then worldwide *Pax Romana*, Julius Caesar, summed up his brutal campaign against Gaul as tersely as Truman with: *Veni vidi vici*: "I came, I saw, I conquered."

It is not too harsh to observe that, with reference to international state conflict and warfare, *civilization since the Roman Empire has not advanced morally one iota*. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, when asked by Sir Winston Churchill during World War II what he thought of Western civilization, the response was: "I think it would be a good idea." *It still remains only a good idea*.

Babylonian Creation Myth at the Heart of Western Civilization: Violence, Humanity's Ultimate Addiction

Theologian Walter Wink traced Western history's central ethos of violence to the Babylonian creation myth in existence well over a thousand years before Christ. Creation is seen in Babylonian polytheistic religion as an act of violence, and hence *violence is the underlying reality of all there is*: the ultimate *Realpolitik*.

In this myth, creation is a violent victory over an enemy older than creation. Evil is prior to good. Violence is in the godhead itself. Humanity is created out of bloody violence, and hence humans are seen to be violent to the very core.

With rare exceptions, this myth permeates like no other belief, ideology or religion of contemporary culture the world over. The three words, *MIGHT MAKES RIGHT*, is this fundamental Western civilization's *ultimate dogma* – one that totally underwrites President Truman's declaration, "*We found the bomb and we used it.*"; Julius Caesar's "*Veni, vidi, vici*"; Adolf Hitler's Ultimate Solution for the Jews; President Bush's perpetual War on Terror, and every act of Western state violence known to history.

The problem is, claims theologian Lee Griffith,

[W]hen we have finally won the victory in our war on terrorism, when we have finally managed to exterminate all the thugs and Hitlers and terrorists, we will have expressed nothing so much as our total confidence in the death of God... (Griffith, 2002, p. 263)

This utterly anti-God/anti-Christ/anti-human "religion" is *at the heart of Western culture*, no less of North American society.

Violence: Humanity's Ultimate "Process" Addiction

Walter Wink began the last of his trilogy of ground-breaking studies about the language of "Powers" in the Bible, with these words: "*Violence is the ethos of our times* (Wink, 1992, p. 13)." He could have written as easily: "***Violence is humanity's ultimate addiction.***" It is ubiquitous throughout all cultures and times, and it is *no less addictive for being the sole prerogative of the state*.

State violence is like methadone to heroin. It may be preferable to heroin, but *it is no less addictive*. And the state is now ever increasingly massively destructive, exponentially beyond the capacity of any individual citizen.

I juxtapose an accused individual mass murderer with current arsenals of state weapons of mass destruction in the following poem:

It's All Fun and War Games at the Air Show!

They've found body parts at a Coquitlam pig farm in BC⁵
Disgusting, revolting, rightly wrenching.
How can a person be so perverse? Humanity reversed.
But not us! Oh, no! Of course!
But not us! Of course! Oh, no!

⁵ Reference to a horrific case of multiple murders – I'll mention no names.

It's all fun and games at the Air Show!

Just sex trade workers after all, titillation and obfuscation for many years.
But even sex trade workers get their (posthumous) day in court so it seems....
*But not the victims of our bombs. Whose body parts to far-flung corners are strewn
around.*

Take Scatmines for starters, let's call them "Gators":
One bomb spreads 564 mines out over a 200 by 650 metre area.
Shrapnel-loaded, they "produce a kill"
When the landmine is triggered by a trip wire.
Only a few millions around worldwide (failure to self-destruct)
A nasty little trip-up blessed by John Doe (taxpayer no?)
The US would not ban them – they might be needed in a fight...
Imagination from hell... a nice democratic university lab somewhere.
But not us! Oh, no! Of course?
But not us! Of course! Oh, no!
It's all fun and games at the Air Show!

Or the BLU-82 – a friendly 15,000 pound giant. (The kids would love its flash!)
Second biggest conventional money can buy! The Vietnamese loved it (NOT!).
One explosion kinda unmakes their ("*them*" not "*us*") day
Though the kids below would never know... They call it "Daisy Cutter"
I call it "Widow, Widower, Fatherless, Motherless, Sibling-less Childless Maker"
Doesn't matter really what it's named – leaves all around not just maimed...
Since it vapourizes up to 264,000 square metres. Everything/one.
(Makes the Oklahoma City Bomber, *that Devil Incarnate!*, look like an amateur,
His detonation almost an innocuous love-in. Executed justly for his *misdemeanour!*)
Not to worry though: only a few dozens ever used, and certainly NIMBY!
Instant helicopter landing pad! Likely a promotion for the inventors...
Why unlike Edison like its victims do we never know their names?
Are they ashamed to hold heads up high beside such diabolical engines of death – I
wonder why?"
Then the MOAB, biggest conventional money can buy. (Soon for sale – don't be shy!)

Though you can't buy used... "Daisy-Cutter" replaced by cruise...
*"The idea behind an 'air burst' weapon, as opposed to a weapon that explodes on
impact with the ground, is to increase its destructive range. A bomb that penetrates
the ground and then bursts tends to send all of its energy either down into the ground
or straight up into the air. An air burst weapon sends a great deal of its energy out to
the side." Read "maximized death and destruction everywhere."*

Where do they hatch these mini-fiends? Hitler clones. Timothy McVeigh genes.
In America's democracy, it's hard to believe I know. "All men are created equal"
Notwithstanding. Unless you live "over there" where our bombs are landing.
Then you are not human but guinea pig:
Democracy imploded, up the jig!
The MOAB – features 40% greater bang for the buck
(Not a thing below its life does not suck)
Than the measly BLU-82. New and just barely tested (you can see great videos!)
(The US military calls it "Mother Of All Bombs" to parody Hussein.)

Everything incinerated below – only dead little children the videos don't show.
Chemically ignited, though chemical weapon of course not (NOT?!)
Only *they* have WMD's and *US?*: "Praise God and pass the bombs!"
So of course WMD-less, but not god-less no!

They have Billy Graham and myriad lesser lights to ever bless their show.
Terror just the same; US ultimate "rogue state" not. (NOT?!)
Such weapons from hell blow to same.
For Americans though, just part of the game.
It's all so surgically legal – like those Nazis in their white coats.
Six millions dead just the same – Holocaust deniers be damned!
But all victims of US and NATO bombs are well-deserved deaths –
Please, stop your wimpish bitching and complaining!
Besides, how dare they live over there with bombs and missiles raining?
Don't they know it's much safer here –
In the eye of the storm no fear?

How can we help if those little kids, their mothers the elderly, innocent others ...
Incinerate beneath our fire? Wrong place, wrong time – don't they know?
"It's a tough job, killing the innocents, but somebody's gotta do it!"
Those brave young pilots at the Air Show! God bless 'em! Our henchmen!
God bless America! For democracy you know!

Herod's thugs in war planes stand tall, but "holocaust deniers" – not at all!
No we're the "good" guys. Never in the way.
We're not the victims of our bombs. (Or are we?)
There are none, really, just "military targets and collateral damage..."
But not us! Of course! Oh, no!
Not holocaust deniers no!
It's all fun and games at the Air Show!

Now the CBU-87 cluster bomb is a US favourite, like those poster girls I guess.
"Soft targets" its aim, soft porn, though flesh gives way to "hard-on's" too.
With 202 bomblets in each thousand-pound pin-up
It's into flesh big time! Pentagon Phallus engorged!
The steel casing of each bomblet breaks into about 300 fragments
A total of 60,600 sharp pieces of steel, flesh-eating, flesh-shredding
Fly in all directions covering a 200 by 600 square metre area
Accompanied by woundrous, deadly, fireworks.

Not a nice day for a picnic I don't think when one of these comes a-calling.
Nice friendly Americans who served that one up for our freedom and democracy.
Nice friendly pilots bringing us the sounds of freedom at the Air Show.
(They don't hear the kids shrieking – barely time anyway before their croaking.)
I'm glad the US never signed their ban. Hussein, we're much more humane than!
But not us! Of course! Oh, no!
Not holocaust deniers no!
It's all fun and games at the Air Show!

We never had picnics in Iraq or Yugoslavia or Afghanistan (Uncle Sam said No)
At least before régime change.

Except, goshdarnit!, up to 30% don't do instantly their nasty kill
Like taking a delayed nice little pill.
Rather of hide-and-peek fame
(Children's favourite game)
Once found, even after years of seeking eyes,
They deliver a nice kids' surprise.
Damn little children! How dare they interfere on picnics with our war games
Dead just the same,
Or perhaps only (unmercifully) maimed...
Now let's see, that'll be about two to three million for Iraq
(Those children all little "Saddams", goddam!)
And, let's say another two hundred thousand or so for Yugoslavia
(Mini-Milosevics, those little sons of bitches!)
And Afghanistan,
How many guaranteed short life span?...
*But not us! We're the good guys, never deserve
To be the victims of our bombs. (Or are we?)
But not us! Of course! Oh, no!
Not holocaust deniers no!
It's all fun and games for our children at the Air Show!*

Then there's Agent Orange (comes in other flavours too: blue, purple or white)
The US, ever helpful, sprayed over six million acres for the needy people.
"Only We Can Prevent Forests.", the bombers said.
And they did! In Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos (about 14% of Vietnam gone!)
Only, they forgot to mention the children, the beautiful children
Some 500,000 and rising since born with birth defects (to "rid the world of
communism"!)
They'll surely understand, but if not, "over there" it's different
(They even cry and die different)
And the two to three million Vietnamese war-dead and injured? (For their good!)
Their names not at the Washington War Memorial –
Non-combatants must be immortal...
Oh, I forgot: just "military targets or collateral damage"...
How discerning the US military seems! Not real people with futures and dreams...
Or the cancers, diabetes, metabolic and neuro-psychiatric disorders?
The world is now safer without Commies... though awash with the West's WMD's.
Except where there is still communism, of course!
Not safe to live "there" or bike.
Or anywhere else US or NATO wrath might strike.
*But not us! Oh, no! Of course!
They'll never strike us!
But not us! Of course! Oh, no!
Not holocaust deniers no!
It's all fun and games at the Air Show!*

In this safe world, still-born by our courageous freedom fighters
Who fly our friendly skies – "It's the sounds of freedom!" – at the Air Show!
Veritable *Supermen*, each pilot; all for justice, truth – (and, glory be!) -
The American Way and Apple Pie! The world made safe for democracy.
Nietzsche would approve...

The G8 masters assure us with 98% of the world's 31,000 nuclear weapons
600 billions (ever climbing) spent annually on the military (small price of freedom)
87% of the world's 400 billion dollar annual arms-trade – WMD's all "over there" so
become, because of course, on US soil are none!
(Would you really want to buy "*Made in godless (goddamned!) China?*")
100 millions a day on nuclear weapons upkeep.
No price ever too steep...

The world safe for democracy! Eisenhower not invoked you see:
*Every gun that is fired, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the
final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are
not clothed. The world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat
of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children.*" – April, 1953
Such naïve sentiments from a former Presidential mouse...
Thank God we have a compassionate realist now in the White House!
There would be no mouths to feed, no starvation in children to stop
Were the US and NATO not ever supplying a new crop!
The G8 further assures the maintenance of the world's supply of starving children.
They should thank us, would no doubt, if they only knew, ungrateful unshaven...
But not ours! Oh, no! Of course!
But not us! Of course! Oh, no!
Not holocaust deniers no!
It's all fun and games at the Air Show!
And pass the cotton candy. My isn't the Air Show dandy?!

And what of deadly DU (depleted uranium) half-life 4.5 billion years
(Cosmos infinite or nearly, so no big deal! Please on this no tears.)
*"Health effects include increases in infectious diseases caused by severe
immunodeficiencies, renal and hepatic dysfunctions, leukemia, elaptic anemia,
malignant neoplasms and congenital deformities. NOT SAFE FOR CHILDREN!"*
The labels say. (Except the US labels. And one ought *always* to read the US labels!)
Hundreds of tons fired in Iraq (375 in Gulf War I), Afghanistan and Yugoslavia
(Remember: life's no picnic *there*, not even half life.

Uncle Sam says, but we're safe with democracy and may live lives to the full you
agree?!
*"The American use of depleted uranium munitions in both Persian Gulf wars has
unleashed a toxic disaster that will eclipse the Agent Orange tragedy of the Vietnam
War... The technology of war is out of control. We don't have the ability to clean it up
(or) treat it. I'm a warrior, but my conclusion is that war is obsolete. A U.S.
Department of Veterans Affairs report says over 221,000 of our sons and daughters
are on permanent disability and over 10,000 dead - one-third of our Gulf War I force.
And they're coming back sick right now."* – Former Maj. Douglas Rokke, who was
director of the Army's depleted uranium project:
"The sole purpose of war is to kill and destroy. There are no winners." *"It's like
playing darts,"* he said, *"except you're playing with 10 pounds of solid uranium and it
catches fire immediately. You lose nearly 40 percent of the round in uranium dust. It
contaminates air, water and soil for all eternity."*

Or Fuel/Air explosives (FAE Syndrome)
One cloud of 60 feet diameter, 8 feet thick, lights –

No survivors (the terror especially).
Or napalm, *Harvard be praised!* (Universities such upright Western institutions
Where else hatch an atomic bomb? But institutional churches be damned!)
Napalm burns at 5,000 degrees: sticks to skin, penetrates to bone
Takes out whole villages, cities, breathable air
Seven million gallons dropped on Korea
(*No civilians though, of course!* - Blessed Geneva convention!
Just (my, those smart bombs!) “military targets and collateral damage”.)
Four hundred thousand tons in Vietnam....
Nice friendly pilots at the Air Show.
But not us! Oh, no! Of course!
But not us! Of course! Oh, no!
Not holocaust deniers no!
It's all fun and games at the Air Show!

And nuclear devices...
Now that gives one pause...
Evildoers the world over want to imitate US (imagine!)
And add to the 30,500 the G8 owns (and not for sale!)...
At least to evildoers. (*Unless you pay in cash or oil!*)

I learned from alcohol and drug counsellor, and radical feminist Anne Wilson Schaef, to give this pervasive addiction to violence a name – *process addiction*:

[P]rocess addiction... is more lethal than physical addictions. This is the real drug problem – greater than alcohol, tobacco, valium, and crack – from which the war on drugs [and the war on crime generally] aims to divert our attention (Pepinsky and Quinney, 1991, p. 325)."

The modern Western state – Canada, the U.S., all members of NATO – is a *process addict*, consequence of which is indescribable mass murder, crime, and environmental devastation. Yet we clutch the “process bottle” of this addiction immediately to the chest the moment there is even a hint of taking away the substance responsible for the addiction; the moment there is breathed a hint of the only cure for violence: *total abstinence*.

I wrote this Op. Ed. Piece on this very topic (then see A.J. Coates' comments subsequently):
Dear Editor:

“War is Peace”, Freedom is Slavery”, and “Ignorance is Strength.” George Orwell’s “doublespeak” is not some futuristic “1984”, it is present in Canadian and Western culture. It is also *not* to be discussed in polite, civilized society, as the following illustrates.

On May 22, 2007, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean was sent this letter:

I am writing about a concerning discrepancy, in the spirit of your Installation Speech where you welcomed dialogue as “the founding principle of this country.”

In your patronage of PREVNet (Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network), you are quoted on the official website thus: “Finding ways of predicting and preventing the development of these relationship problems is a necessity. Bullying is not only about threats and intimidation, it is foremost about contempt and injustice.” The same website explains the purpose of the organization: “PREVNet is a

national network committed to stop bullying. Bullying is wrong and hurtful. Every child and youth has the right to be safe and free from involvement in bullying. It affects children and youth who are bullied, those who bully others, and those who know it is going on.”

You are also Commander-in-Chief of Canada’s Armed Forces. I know of one of your *élite* military personnel, who, at the end of a tour of duty in Afghanistan with our Canadian Forces, told his dad that he should watch the movie *Jarhead* to grasp the kind of military training he had received. The 2005 movie is based upon the training and participation in the U.S. military of Anthony Swofford, recounted in the book *Jarhead: A Marine’s Chronicle of the Gulf War and Other Battles* (2003). It is about object dehumanizing of not only the “enemy”!

Retired U.S. Lt. Colonel David Grossman, founder of the science of *Killology*, indicates that no institution pays more attention to dehumanization of its recruits than the military: “This brutalization is designed to break down your existing mores and norms and to accept a new set of values that embrace destruction, violence, and death as a way of life. In the end, you are desensitized to violence and accept it as a normal and essential survival skill in your brutal new world.”

Hence the use of the word, “discrepancy”, and why I am asking for dialogue. On the one hand you support the elimination of bullying and violence in Canada; on the other, you command training of our youth in ultimate bullying and violence tactics by Canada’s Armed Forces. Attitudes and actions of “threats, intimidation, contempt and injustice” towards others are routinely inculcated. Our Canadian youth are taught in fact supreme bullying tactics. You are one of “those who know it is going on.”

Jarhead begins and ends with this statement:

A man fires a rifle for many years, and he goes to war. And afterward he turns the rifle in at the armory, and he believes he’s finished with the rifle. But no matter what else he might do with his hands, love a woman, build a house, change his son’s diaper; his hands remember the rifle.

Renowned anthropologist René Girard claims that bullying, as all violence, is imitated, learned behaviour. How can we expect Canada’s youth to *not* continue imitating bullying when you the Governor General endorse it and Canada’s military models it? “You can’t get to a good place in a bad way – EVER.” (Molly Baldwin)

My request for dialogue is a response to this question: *How do you expect Canadians to unlearn bullying through initiatives like PREVNet, when you, PREVNet’s patron, support its very indoctrination and utilization in a major Canadian government institution under your titular command?*

Sincerely...

In response, Yonatan Lew, who wrote on the Governor General’s behalf (June 26, 2007), predictably deftly and cynically dodged the request in the spirit of no dialogue:

While the Governor General appreciates the points you have raised, she feels that your concerns regarding Canadian Forces training would be best addressed by the Department of National Defence. You may wish to contact the minister of this department at the following address...

I know nonetheless the answer to the final question posed: in two words, *ethical realism*. It asserts the “tragic but necessary” Jekyll and Hyde symbiosis of Western civilization: peace-loving Dr. Jekyll (respectful behaviour towards others as learned in kindergarten); monstrous Mr. Hyde (brutal suppression of others through police and military as needed in “the real world” outside kindergarten).

According to online *Wikipedia*, the word “fuck” or derivatives appears 335 times in *Jarhead*, placing it amongst the top five films for such use. One presumes Ms. Jean and other “civilized” Canadians/Westerners would not approve... One knows there is not a simple remedy of washing soldiers’ and their trainers’ mouths out with soap... It goes a tad deeper as in:

The former apartheid cabinet member Leon Wessels was closer to the mark when he said that they had not wanted to know, for there were those who tried to alert them. (Desmond Tutu about the brutalities of apartheid’s police and military in *No Future Without Forgiveness*, p. 269.)

Jared Diamond in *The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal* writes that *the only consistent signature of our species is genocide*. David Livingstone Smith in *The Most Dangerous Animal: Human Nature and the Origins of War* presents humans as biologically **“wired to fight” and murderous to the core**: Western civilization not exempt, Canada’s current strident militarization and the U.S. War on Terror cases in point.

A friend, award-winner for work on violence, said it was useless to urge public discourse on Canada’s and the West’s commitment to police and military lethal violence, since it’s the air we breathe and we’re not about to reinvent human culture in our lifetime! An *ethical consistent realist* asserts nonetheless:

Unless Canada’s and the West’s commitment to institutional violence is addressed, all other public non-violence initiatives are at best *symptom-only treatment*, at worst *hypocrisy*, and “Western civilization would be a good idea” as Mahatma Gandhi once said to Winston Churchill. While this is logically true, discussion of it is ultimate establishment taboo.

I have a doublespeak for Ms. Jean and other ethical inconsistent realists who invariably want their “noble Western civilization/peace-loving Canadian culture” cake and eat it too: ***Pretence is Truth***.

A. J. Coates writes:

St. Augustine, a major contributor to the just war tradition, argued that, despite the horror of war and the pain and suffering that soldiers inflict on one another, war can be fought without violating the law of charity: to fight without hatred and with compassion is a basic moral imperative. According to realism, however, the imperatives of combat are altogether different. In the first place, military training, or the preparation for combat, is designed to generate in the soldier feelings, dispositions, states of mind that undermine any moral capacity or inclination to fight ‘justly’ or compassionately, let alone ‘lovingly’. The military trainee is to be divested of his civilian and pacific responses and turned into an efficient ‘killing machine’. Not only is he to be taught how to kill, but the ardent desire to kill is to be implanted in him. In this way behaviour and attitudes that in peacetime would be regarded as beyond the pale become in war the moral or professional norm. As Field Marshall Montgomery advised: ‘The troops must be brought to a state of wild enthusiasm before the operation begins... They must enter the fight with the light of battle in their eyes and

definitely wanting to kill the enemy' (Montgomery, [B. L. (1958), *Memoirs*, Collins, London], pp. 88 – 9) (Coates, 1997, p. 29)

On September 1, 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent an appeal to Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany and Poland that read:

THE ruthless bombing from the air of civilians in unfortified centres of population during the course of the hostilities which have raged in various quarters of the earth in the past few years, which have resulted in the maiming and death of thousands of defenseless women and children, has profoundly shocked the conscience of humanity.

If resort is had to this sort of *inhuman barbarism* during the period of tragic conflagration with which the world is now confronted, hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings, who have no responsibility for, and who are not even remotely participating in, the hostilities which have broken out, now will lose their lives.

I am therefore addressing this urgent appeal to every Government, which may be engaged in hostilities, publicly to affirm its determination that its armed forces shall in no event and under no circumstances undertake bombardment from the air of civilian populations or unfortified cities, upon the understanding that the same rules of warfare will be scrupulously observed by all their opponents.

I request an immediate reply (Roosevelt, 1939, italics added).

The French and British in response jointly announced that they would spare civilian populations and government property. The Germans claimed to affirm Roosevelt's call, but soon contradicted that in their attacks on Rotterdam and Warsaw. By 1945, both Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, and all other Allied leadership, had rejected this 1939 appeal *utterly*. All Western Allies returned to the "process bottle": they *recommitted to massive deployment of state violence through unleashing fully the most advanced and devastating weapons of mass destruction in their arsenals*.

"War is hell", observed Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman. Just war theory claims rather, "War is peace". Sherman's expanded comment goes:

"If the people raise a howl against my barbarity and cruelty, I will answer war is war... War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it... War is hell."

Errol Morris produced the award-winning documentary film, *The Fog of War*, featuring a series of interviews with former Secretary of State Robert S. McNamara, architect of the Vietnam War.

Morris poses a question in the film:

EM: The choice of incendiary bombs [during World War II], where did that come from?

McNamara: I think the issue is not so much incendiary bombs. I think the issue is: in order to win a war should you kill 100,000 people in one night [of attacking Tokyo, March 9 & 10, 1945], by firebombing or any other way? [General Curtis] LeMay's answer would be clearly "Yes."

...

Proportionality should be a guideline in war. Killing 50% to 90% of the people of 67 Japanese cities and then bombing them with two nuclear bombs is not proportional, in the minds of some people, to the objectives we were trying to achieve.

I don't fault Truman for dropping the nuclear bomb. The U.S.-Japanese War was one of the most brutal wars in all of human history. Kamikaze pilots, suicide, unbelievable. *What one can criticize is that the human race prior to that time, and today, has not really grappled with what are, I'll call it, "the rules of war."* Was there a rule then that said you shouldn't bomb, shouldn't kill, shouldn't burn to death 100,000 civilians in one night?

LeMay said, *"If we'd lost the war, we'd all have been prosecuted as war criminals."* And I think he's right. He, and I'd say I, were behaving as war criminals. LeMay recognized that what he was doing would be thought immoral if his side had lost. But what makes it immoral if you lose and not immoral if you win? (Morris, 2003, italics added)

That's called, Mr. McNamara, MIGHT MAKES RIGHT! – *and it is the most pervasive ethical creed known to humanity.* It also underscores the Western state's abject process addiction to violence – the Nazis, the "Japs", and the *Good Guys!*

Tami Davis Biddle is Chair of Military Studies at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. She published a very insightful article about the Dresden bombing (2005), in which at least 25,000 civilians were slaughtered, mostly refugees fleeing the advancing Red army from the East. The most troubling question she poses is very seldom asked:

Did wartime conditions allow military leaders to look away as they violated their own principles?

Biddle also wrote that when aerial warfare was still only imagined in the 19th century, it meant English-speaking peoples raining incendiary bombs over the enemy *to impose the customs of civilization* (Biddle, 2002, italics added; page number lacking).⁶

Rudyard Kipling wrote similarly at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, after Teddy Roosevelt's brutal invasion of the Philippines, in a poem entitled "The White Man's Burden", of the white man's needing to wage *"savage wars of peace"*.

Winston Churchill wrote to the Chiefs of Staff Committee in a memo March 28, 1945 – with specific reference to the bombing of Dresden:

It seems to me that the moment has come when the question of bombing of German cities *simply for the sake of increasing the terror*, though under other pretexts, should be reviewed...

After stating that 'the destruction of Dresden remains a serious query against the conduct of Allied bombing,' he insisted there was a need for 'more precise concentration on military objectives, such as oil and communications behind the immediate battle zone, *rather than on mere acts of terror and wanton destruction*, however impressive (quoted in Biddle, 2005, p. 7, italics added).'

⁶ In the Bible, Luke 9:55, Jesus' disciples wanted to rain fire down upon a Samaritan village, and Jesus "rebuked them". So ever is the Way of Jesus. Willard Swartley comments:

Rather than eradicating the enemy, as was the goal of Joshua's conquest narrative in the earlier story – in a similar location [Samaria] – *the new strategy eradicates the enmity...* Instead of killing people to get rid of idolatry, the attack through the gospel is upon Satan directly (Luke 10). Instead of razing high places, Satan is toppled from his throne! [Note 48 reads: Hence the root of idolatry is plucked from its source... (Swartley, 2006, p. 144, italics added)]

That sounds rather like Churchillian true confession to Allied *mass murder* and Allied *terrorism*... with apologies to the upset Canadian war veterans in Ottawa who have complained bitterly and loudly about one small notice of this on one panel in the Canadian War Museum.⁷ Is this not Churchill's McNamaresque confession that had they lost the war, they would have been tried at the Nuremberg Trials *as war criminals? This is violence as process addiction holding absolute sway over Allied leaders' imaginations*. The Allies, by War's end, arguably throughout, were on a "massive process drunk" induced by absolutely out-of-control *binge bombing*. And no one was calling them on it! On the contrary! Not only was General Curtis LeMay *not* tried as a war criminal post-War, his *repeated public "drunken behaviour" a worldwide spectacle of mass slaughter*; he became instead the most decorated military personality *ever* in U.S. history until then!

Chris Hedges in 2003 published *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*. Here is but a tiny taste of what he says in the Introduction:

I learned early on that war forms its own culture. The rush of battle is a potent and often lethal addiction, for war is a drug, one I ingested for many years. It is peddled by mythmakers – historians, war correspondents, filmmakers, novelists, and the state – all of whom endow it with qualities it often does possess: excitement, exoticism, power, chances to rise above our small stations in life, and a bizarre and fantastic universe that has a grotesque and dark beauty...

The enduring attraction of war is this: Even with its destruction and carnage it can give us what we long for in life. It can give us purpose, meaning, a reason for living.

...

But war is a god, as the ancient Greeks and Romans knew, and its worship demands human sacrifice.

...

Look just at the 1990s: 2 million dead in Afghanistan; 1.5 million dead in the Sudan; some 800,000 butchered in ninety days in Rwanda; a half-million dead in Angola; a quarter of a million dead in Bosnia; 200,000 dead in Guatemala; 150,000 dead in Liberia; a quarter of a million dead in Burundi; 75,000 dead in Algeria; and untold tens of thousands lost in the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the fighting in Columbia, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Chechnya, Sri Lanka, southeastern Turkey, Sierra Leone, Northern Ireland, Kosovo, and the Persian Gulf War (where perhaps as many as 35,000 Iraqi citizens were killed). In the wars of the twentieth century not less than 60 million civilians have perished, nearly 20 million more than the 43 million military personnel killed.

Civil war, brutality, ideological intolerance, conspiracy, and murderous repression are part of the human condition – indeed almost the daily fare for many but a privileged minority (Hedges, 2003, *passim*, pp. 5 – 16).

Dr. Richard Land of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in the U.S. authored "A Letter from Conservative Christians to President Bush" October 3, 2002, in which *carte-blanche* support of the War on Terror was given. It was signed by other leading white American Evangelicals such as Chuck Colson and Bill Bright. The letter begins:

In this decisive hour of our nation's history we are writing to express our deep appreciation for your bold, courageous, and visionary leadership. Americans

⁷ See Gesell (2007). In bowing to mythology rather than the rigours of historiography, the Canadian government removed the panel.

everywhere have been inspired by your eloquent and clear articulation of our nation's highest ideals of freedom and of our resolve to defend that freedom both here and across the globe (Land, 2002).

As an outside observer to this kind of self-serving Eusebian⁸ obsequy, the level of sheer (willful) self-deceit in this letter strikes as simply amazing!

In light of subsequent discrediting as abject lies of every justification by the Bush administration for attacking Iraq; of the horrors of routine torture of prisoners authorized by the Bush administration⁹; of the violation of all the Geneva conventions about respectful treatment of POW's; of in excess of 600,000 civilian victims in Iraq¹⁰, the majority at the hands of the U.S. and British military since the beginning of the War; of routine "renderings" of terrorist suspects to other countries for torture and execution; of secret CIA interrogation and torture compounds around the world; of repeated violation of the United Nations International Declaration on Human Rights; of massive repealing of American human rights; of overwhelming retaliatory violence perpetrated against Afghanistan and Iraq; of astronomical billions – now in the trillions – spent to perpetrate the War rather than address the health care and hunger needs of humanity; etc., etc.; etc., Dr. Land's language in the open letter, approvingly quoting President Bush that "We must stand up ... for the permanent rights and hopes of mankind.", is not only tragically ironic and ludicrous five years later, it is beyond despicably dishonest.¹¹

Charles Marsh is professor of religion and director of the Project on Lived Theology at the University of Virginia. He published *Wayward Christian Soldiers* (2007), excerpts of which were printed in *The Boston*

⁸ Eusebius was the "court theologian" whose writings praised Constantine for his "godly" Christian leadership of the Roman Empire, when Constantine's embrace of the church was likely much more calculated and self-serving. Wrote one church historian,

But there is one conquest made by Constantine, the effect of which still continues to the present day, his most surprising yet least acknowledged... He conquered the Christian church. The conquest was complete, extending over doctrine, liturgy, art and architecture, comity, ethos and ethics... But this achievement, unheralded then, unrecognized now, represents Constantine's greatest conquest, the one which has persisted largely unchallenged through the centuries in Europe and wherever European Christianity has spread... (Kee, 1982, p. 154.)

The conquest was not "complete" as any sustained readings of the Church Fathers will demonstrate. But it definitely held sway politically in Christendom.

⁹ This appeared in an article in the *Globe and Mail* about recent films critiquing the U.S. War on Terror: "Americans are now one of the leading torturers in the world," Maher said.

And the government is run almost exclusively by 'people of faith.' It's amazing to me how many evangelical Christians are okay with torture, considering how their boy got tortured so bad. But their Christianity isn't about morals or ethics, it's about saving their ass. They pray to Christ so that they can do whatever they want in this world, and he'll forgive and protect them in the next. That's ass-backward (Schneller, 2007).

¹⁰ "Only" a (fairly static) number of 30,000 civilian victims – ten times those killed September 11, 2001 – is generally allowed by corporate media and the U.S. *Only!* See for yourself: Tavernise and McNeil, 2006.

¹¹ This is no slight disagreement about a minor point of Biblical doctrine. It is about ultimate issues of life and death, about fundamental biblical teaching concerning *love of God, love of neighbour, and love of enemy*. When I wrote Dr. Land about the open letter to President Bush, I drew attention to the fact that his Evangelical peers were in the minority over against worldwide Evangelical opinion on a matter of ultimate life and death, and that this should perhaps give him at least some pause. Is it possible, I suggested, that nepotistic American *ideology* and not *Christ and the Bible* informed his conclusions about the justice of the war on terror? I likewise wrote to Jean Bethke Elshtain about her, in my view, reprehensible book *Just War Against Terror* (2003). My long review of her book may be found online at: http://clarionjournal.typepad.com/clarion_journal_of_spirit/wayne_northey/index.html. Neither responded.

Globe, July 2007. He wrote in part:

EARLY ONE SUNDAY morning in the spring of 2003, in the quiet hours before services would begin at the evangelical church where I worship in Charlottesville, Virginia, I opened files compiled by my research assistant and read the statements drafted by Christians around the world in opposition to the American invasion of Iraq.

The experience was profoundly moving and shaming: From Pentecostals in Brazil to the Christian Councils of Ghana, from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East to the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, from Pope John Paul II to the The Waldensian Reformed Church of Italy and the Christian Conference of Asia, the voices of our brothers and sisters in the global ecumenical church spoke in unison.

Why did American evangelicals not pause for a moment in the rush to war to consider the near-unanimous disapproval of the global Christian community? The worldwide Christian opposition seems to me the most neglected story related to the religious debate about Iraq: Despite approval for the president's decision to go to war by 87 percent of white evangelicals in April 2003, according to a Pew Charitable Trusts poll, almost every Christian leader in the world (and almost every nonevangelical leader in the United States) voiced opposition to the war (Marsh, 2007, p. 2).

A theologian writes, after his conclusion that the univocal New Testament ethic is nonviolence equally for church and state:

One reason that the world finds the New Testament's message of peacemaking and love of enemies incredible is that the church is so massively faithless. On the question of violence, the church is deeply compromised and committed to nationalism, violence, and idolatry (Hays, 1996, p. 343).

In commentary on the capacity for *practising* Christians to have supported Hitler in destroying the Jews (to which Dr. Land and his fellow Evangelicals allude in the open letter of support to their *Führer*), two authors write:

Other Christians did consider such sources, like Scripture and prayer, but mangled them due to captivity to the power of anti-Semitism, nationalism and other "powers and authorities." For example, Scripture was interpreted by some to mean that God was punishing the Jews for "killing Christ" and should be aided in doing so. This act of *interpretive mayhem* was not unique, nor is similar *interpretive mayhem* today... (Gushee & Stassen, *op. cit.*, p. 83, italics added)

Dr. Land and his fellow Evangelical authors of the letter to the President are, by majority Christian world opinion outside the United States, guilty of "interpretive mayhem"¹² and¹³ sanctimonious subscription to "*Christian mission without the Gospel!*" This is beyond tragic not only for the hundreds of thousands of victims immolated from *The Warmongering on Terror* promulgated currently by the United States and its massive majority white Evangelical supporters; it is abject sacrilege and heresy against the name of God in Christ that contrary to declaring the Good News of God's love for the world in Jesus Christ, it demonstrates one branch of Christianity to be utterly hateful and massively unfaithful to the very Name that branch most vociferously and self-servingly proclaims! *The contradiction is staggering, beyond*

¹² It is instructive that nowhere in their letter do they cite Scripture, even selectively, rather Just War tradition, by their own admission invented by "Christian theologians in the late fourth and early fifth centuries A.D." For People of the Book, their letter represents not only "interpretive mayhem", but also Christian treason, blatantly sold out to another god named *Pax Americana* – American Empire.

¹³ One could wish to say "unprecedented" – but the precedent has been well established for centuries throughout the Western church.

reprehensible, into a twilight zone of unadulterated religious and nationalistic nepotism!

I was raised, and am still in, the Evangelical tradition. I feel “comfortable” critiquing as an “insider” this tradition – rather than any other. A reader of an earlier draft of this paper, Father Emmanuel Charles McCarthy (who is a priest of the Eastern Rite of the Catholic Church, and has devoted a lifetime to the nonviolent Way of Jesus.¹⁴), in a personal e-mail (September 11, 2007) commented on this part of my paper.):

However I don't think it appropriate to give a pass to the Catholic hierarchy of the U.S. only one of whom, out of over 200 bishops who lead dioceses, condemned this war as unjust and intrinsically evil from its inception and told his flock to stay away from it. As of this date no bishop or group of Catholic bishops or the Catholic bishops as a group has said that this war is unjust and therefore the killing in it is unjust killing, murder, and hence don't go into it.

Catholics, not right wing Evangelicals, represent the largest group of Christians over there. The Catholic bishop who is head of the Catholic military diocese of the U.S. and an in-your-face justifier of this war as well as of the Vietnam war to this day, was just named to be Archbishop of the Diocese of Baltimore which is a Cardinal's Chair. The Catholic Churches policy in the face of the evil of murderous war is as worthy of condemnation as anything the Evangelical right has done to put the aura of Christianity over this war. It is the tried and tested and time-honored policy of institutional survival called “preaching planned moral ambiguity.” It is what was done in Hitler's Germany and it is what is being done in the U.S. today in relationship to this moral abomination in Iraq. It is as morally despicable as anything the Evangelical right is doing. It is no less a barbarized interpretation of the Gospel and of reality as Franklin Graham, Jerry Falwell, Charles Stanley, et al., are about. “Be silent and if required to speak, be calculatingly morally ambiguous regardless of how blatant the government's evil-doings become.”

This is pretty much the survival *modus operandi* of all the mainline Churches but none seems to be able to carry it off so well with this war as the Catholic bishops. Part two of this approach is that after time passes after the war, what is not forgotten about how the Church acted during the war is revised in Church and possibly secular history, unless some group like the Jews with an acute sense of the power of history prevent revision. But this is rare. Chris Hedges also gives the Catholic leadership a near total pass. Ecumenical etiquette has its place but if one is going to name names in one group one is outside of, then why not the others?

I critique Evangelicals however because I was raised in that “Tradition”, and know it well.

Marsh is likewise harsh in the rest of his article:

The gospel has been humiliated because too many American Christians have decided

¹⁴ He was formerly a lawyer, university educator and founder and original director of The Program for the Study and Practice of Nonviolent Conflict Resolution at the University of Notre Dame. He is also a co-founder of Pax Christi-USA. For over forty years he has directed educational programs and conducted spiritual retreats throughout the world on the issue of the relationship of faith and violence. He was the keynote speaker for the 25th anniversary memorial of the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for his life's work on behalf of peace within people and among people. . Please see more about Father McCarthy's outstanding work at <http://centerforchristiannonviolence.org/index.php>.

that there are more important things to talk about. We would rather talk about our country, our values, our troops, and our way of life; and although we might think we are paying tribute to God when we speak of these other things, we are only flattering ourselves.

...

To a nation filled with intense religious fervor, the Hebrew prophet Amos said: You are not the holy people you imagine yourselves to be. Though the land is filled with festivals and assemblies, with songs and melodies, and with so much pious talk, these are not sounds and sights that are pleasing to the Lord.

“Take away from me the noise of your congregations,” Amos says, “you who have turned justice into poison.”

He concludes his piece thus:

Franklin Graham, the evangelist (and son of Billy Graham), boasted that the American invasion of Iraq opens up exciting new opportunities for missions to non-Christian Arabs. This is not what the Hebrew or Christian prophets meant by righteousness and discipleship. In fact, the grotesque notion that preemptive war and the destruction of innocent life pave the way for the preaching of the Christian message strikes me as a mockery and a betrayal.

But if Franklin Graham speaks truthfully of the Christian faith and its mission in the world -- as many evangelicals seem to believe -- then we should have none of it. Rather, we should join the ranks of righteous unbelievers and big-hearted humanists who rage against cruelty and oppression with the intensity of people who live fully in this world. I am certain that it would be better for Christians to stand in solidarity with compassionate atheists and agnostics, firmly resolved against injustice and cruelty, than to sing “Amazing Grace” with the heroic masses who cannot tell the difference between the cross and the flag (Marsh, 2007, p. 2).

What can possibly account for this travesty, other than *massive state process addiction to violence*?

War as Addiction to Violence and Twelve Steps of Recovery From Addiction

If violence is the most profound addiction of humanity, and Western state process violence exponentially worse, ever in the name of some vaunted self-deceitful goal of “civilization” for “freedom and democracy”, “glory and honour”, “God and Flag” – *whatever!* – then *to be alive is to be addicted to violence, and to be alive and addicted to violence, is to stand in need of liberation*. This obtains at the personal human level to be sure, but overwhelmingly at the state human level too!

Chris Hedges wrote:

When we ingest the anodyne of war we feel what those we strive to destroy feel, including the Islamic fundamentalists who are painted as alien, barbaric, and uncivilized. It is the same narcotic (Hedges, 2003, p. 5).

A Twelve Step Recovery Program from addiction to violence in fact is laid out in Chapter Eight of Glen Stassen’s *Just Peacemaking* (1992) that I unfortunately have no time to develop in this talk.

A Guiding Principle Of Restorative Justice in Application to International State Conflict: Peacemaking Versus Warmaking

There is one overarching guiding principle of Restorative Justice. *Restorative Justice is supremely a peacemaking rather than a warmaking response to conflict.*

This first most came home to me through publication of the book *Criminology As Peacemaking* (Pepinsky and Quinney, 1991) early in the emerging literature on Restorative Justice.

One of the two editors, Harold Pepinsky, wrote the concluding chapter, “Peacemaking in Criminology and Criminal Justice”. He discerns three longstanding traditions of thought that have led to *criminology as peacemaking*: “religious traditions, feminist or women’s traditions, and critical traditions (*ibid*, p. 299).”¹⁵

He asks, then responds:

What is the obvious connection between crime and war? Crime is violence.
So is punishment, and so is war. People who go to war believe that violence works. So do criminals and people who want criminals punished...

But to recognize that the kind of criminologist one is fundamentally a matter of religious preference is to see that reason cannot dictate whether a criminologist chooses to learn within a paradigm of war or a paradigm of peacemaking (*ibid*, p. 301).

Restorative Justice early on adopted the language of peacemaking, reintegration, *shalom*, reconciliation, forgiveness, relational justice, satisfying justice, transformative justice, peacemaking circles, family conferencing, informal justice, etc. (Many of these are lifted from book titles in my office.) These terms stand in consistent contradiction of all language of war, warfare and warmaking. *For the only enduring peace of all such is the eternal peace – to be sure (remember Merton’s poem)! – of the graveyard.*

Anatol Rapoport in *Peace: An Idea Whose Time Has Come* (1992)¹⁶ suggests that war and its entire military paraphernalia devoted to the preparation for war, massively vast beyond imagination, is an institution whose time has come, like slavery, like capital punishment, for its utter and complete abolition by all civilized nations: *the “good idea” of total abstention from the state process addiction to violence* Gandhi suggested to warmongering Winston Churchill.

There is a response to Robert McNamara’s statement, cited above: *What one can criticize is that the human race prior to that time, and today, has not really grappled with what are, I’ll call it, “the rules of war.” Was there a rule then that said you shouldn’t bomb, shouldn’t kill, and shouldn’t burn to death 100,000 civilians in one night?*

¹⁵ He goes on to say:

I discovered that by far the strongest contingent [of criminology peacemakers] are workers and activists with religious affiliations, notably the peace churches and ecumenical peace groups.

Religiously self-identified people cross all eight intellectual traditions [of criminology as peacemaking] which have emerged: academicians and theorists, activists and reformers, feminists, lawmakers, mediators, native traditionalists, peoples of color, and prisoners (*ibid*, p. 300).

¹⁶ See Bacher (1993) and Matthew (1993) for two opposite reviews of the book.

Well yes, Mr. McNamara, there is indeed such a rule, and it's been around for some time: *The Golden Rule*, found pretty much universally in all human cultures. Problem is, that Rule says you “*shouldn't bomb, shouldn't kill, shouldn't burn to death*” even *one civilian! Even one person!!! Not “just this once: - like any addict going back to the substance for the “last time”!* Problem is, that Rule brings in fact *humanity's oldest addiction to a complete and crashing halt – and demands total abstinence!*

Transforming Initiatives

Glen Stassen is currently Professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary in California. He was once a nuclear physicist but left that profession because of moral misgivings about nuclear arms. He is now a peace theologian and activist, and has published extensively in the field. Dr. Stassen coined the term “transforming initiatives” based upon his careful reading of arguably one of the greatest peace texts in the history of humanity: *The Sermon on the Mount*.¹⁷

The Sermon on the Mount in centuries of interpretation has been seen to contain “hard sayings” incapable of being lived out by “normal” Christians, for they are impossible “counsels of perfection”. The antithetical nature of a teaching such as “fight or flight”, makes the *Sermon* seem impossible of application in the real world where one simply *must choose* to fight sometimes – and not to just “turn the other cheek”. So a secular state ethic of *fight* is opted for by majority opinion in the Western church, the other option not even considered. *Attitudes*, not actions, *repentance* not obedience, *future time* not present are all preferenced to render *The Sermon on the Mount* simply beside the point.

But what if, the authors ask,

The pattern of the Sermon is not twofold antitheses but *threefold transforming initiatives*[?] Therefore the emphasis in interpretation is to be placed not on an alleged idealistic prohibition but on the realistic way of deliverance through the transforming initiatives (*ibid*, p. 133).”

The authors marshal convincing evidence that this in fact is what is going on in *The Sermon on the Mount* material. The fourteen “calls” in this material are not impossible counsels of perfection that cannot be lived out by any normal citizen, so we must revert to the guidance of the state.¹⁸

They say:

Each of these [transforming] initiatives [in the Sermon on the Mount] is like Martin Luther King's nonviolent direct action: it is nonviolent, and it is activist. Each resists evil by taking an action to oppose injustice, to stand up for human dignity and to invite to reconciliation. Turning the other cheek has been misunderstood in Western culture that thought there were only two alternatives – violence or passivity (*ibid*, p. 138).”

Another book project edited by Professor Stassen appeared a few years ago: *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War* (1998).

The entire book, a collaboration of twenty-three scholars and activists that arrived by consensus at ten practices for eliminating war, is a sustained application of the principle of *peacemaking not warmaking* in response to international conflict through the application of *transforming initiatives*. The Introduction

¹⁷ Although I will mainly spend time with this text, the outstanding recent publication, *Covenant of Peace* (Swartley, 2006) demonstrates definitively that peace is the central organizing theme of the entire New Testament canon.

¹⁸ [H]e does not bear the sword for nothing” (Rom. 13:4) is *not* remotely license for the state to do lethal violence. Far from it! Their discussion of this specific issue begins on p. 206

indicates that “The ten peacemaking practices in our consensus model are not merely a wish list. They are empirical practices in our present history that are, in fact, spreading peace (Stassen, 1998, p. 2).” A little later, they add:

We are saying that these ten practices have in fact abolished wars in specific places and that they need our support to spread (*ibid*, p. 20).¹⁹ They explain:
Peace, like war, must be waged. It must be waged courageously, persistently, creatively, with imagination, heart, and wisdom. Peacemaking is rooted in the heart of the biblical understanding of God’s grace, which does not merely refrain from punishing but takes dramatic initiatives in coming to us... New emphasis on the initiatives of God’s grace is transforming our understanding of peacemaking in our time (*ibid*, p. 9).”

The first four of the ten practices for abolishing war, that they call “Peacemaking Initiatives”, in fact are *transforming initiatives*. They are a specific application of the Restorative Justice principle of *peacemaking not warmaking* to international conflict. I shall describe only one for the sake of time, number three in their ordering.

Transforming Initiative Three: Use Cooperative Conflict Resolution

The use of Cooperative Conflict Resolution (CCR) is designed to bring all parties to the table to discover mutually acceptable ways forward:

The goal is to transform one’s view of possible solutions to any given conflict from inevitable deadlock to multiple possibilities and to transform one’s views of the other party from adversary to partner. Theologian Jürgen Moltmann states the aim well when he calls for a provisional peace in which fighting enemies can become ‘quarrelling partners’ and deadly conflict can become ‘non-lethal controversy (Moltmann, 1975, p. 175)’ (Stassen, *op. cit*, 1998, p. 53).”

The historical antecedents for this are in all human cultures, reflecting a communitarian understanding of justice and life that is oriented towards peaceful coexistence. Such transformative peacemaking initiatives pick up and promote neglected aspects of conflict such as historical incidents, spiritual factors, as well as cultural, emotional, individual and social elements, etc. There are ten criteria or principles of CCR that are paramount:

1. There must be constant attempt made to understand perspectives and needs of adversaries, even where there is disagreement. One mediator technique is to role play opponents speaking from their adversary’s point of view! There are layers of underlying needs illustrated by their own histories, stories and emotions that are hidden behind surface positions and strategic interests.
2. Judgments are withheld by participants in CCR while clear articulation of one’s own principles,

¹⁹ The ten practices are each separate chapters in the book:

- 1 – Support Nonviolent Direct Action
- 2 – Take Independent Initiatives to Reduce Threat
- 3 – Use Cooperative Conflict Resolution
- 4 – Acknowledge Responsibility for Conflict and Injustice and Seek Repentance and Forgiveness
- 5 – Advance Democracy, Human Rights, and Religious Liberty
- 6 – Foster Just and Sustainable Economic Development
- 7 – Work with Emerging Cooperative Forces in the International System
- 8 – Strengthen the United Nations and International Efforts for Cooperation and Human Rights
- 9 – Reduce Offensive Weapons and Weapons Trade
- 10 – Encourage Grassroots Peacemaking Groups and Voluntary Associations

- positions, and stances is given.
3. Judgments are allowed to be stated about behaviours and actions, but no permission is given to demonize or dehumanize the “other”.
 4. All acknowledge their own involvement in the creation and/or escalation of the conflict, confess it, repent, and seek forgiveness. Criminologist John Haley refers to this kind of process in the Japanese justice system as “Confession, Repentance, and Absolution” (Haley, 1989), with Restoration or Restorative/Transformative Justice the outcome.
 5. CCR is utterly transparent in all aspects; strategies are democratic.
 6. A partnership approach is affirmed to problem-solving; using power *with* rather than *over*–cooperation rather than domination.
 7. Where/if force is necessary, it is used to separate, restrain, and create space for alternatives to violence and injustice to emerge through reflection, negotiation, and healing.
 8. Risks are taken willingly by those helping to resolve conflict, showing vulnerability, to help all parties feel safe.
 9. Long-term solutions are sought in CCR that include finding prevention strategies, as conflict is resolved and healed through peacemaking interventions.
 10. Peace and justice are equal core components; peace without justice is mere *appeasement*; justice without peace is a *crusade*.

Both Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. built their movements on these ten principles. Also, across much of the Western world, many movements towards transforming peacemaking initiatives began to take root in the 1970’s and 1980’s. As if the world were finally turning ripe for these kinds of alternative solutions. Examples were:

- Neighbourhood Justice Associations that sought out resolution of conflict beyond any kind of judgment or punishment;
- Rising community peer mediation programs in schools;
- The dramatic increase of nongovernmental organizations employing and encouraging CCR, such as MAP, a US-based agency; MCC, a North American “Mennonite Central Committee” that developed mediation techniques through “Victim Offender Reconciliation Programs (VORP’s)”, some of the earliest programmatic manifestations of Restorative Justice in the criminal justice system (see below); and citizen-diplomat actors such as the amazing role Jimmy Carter has played repeatedly since his one term as president – that ended in a fiasco due in part to the Iran hostage crisis, and his ill-fated judgment that “old history” conflict was irrelevant to then present Iranian grievances.

In that dozens of violent conflicts around the world are not between recognized nations or even legal entities, non-government agencies and citizen diplomats are crucial in taking transforming initiatives that steer parties out of vicious cycles of violence towards peace. Again, both Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. embraced and practised such.

No war has ended war itself; there is no “war to end all wars”. Likewise, no CCR intervention definitively will end all conflict. Conflict is the very stuff of being human. But the strategies and techniques employed in CCR, the more they are embraced and practised, the more mimetic “structures of blessing” will begin to emerge that will be imitated and replicated in turn.²⁰ We read:

An examination of any conflict situation must consider three factors that have complex interpersonal, cultural, historical, and political dimensions. First, we need to understand the relationships among the people involved in the conflict. Second, we need to understand the sources and dynamics of the particular dispute at hand. Third,

²⁰ This is terminology developed by Vern Redekop in his book *From Violence to Blessing*, to which I shall turn presently.

we need to understand the social structures – how they continue the conflict and how they offer openings for resolution (Stassen, 1998, p. 58).

In a companion volume to *Criminology as Peacemaking*, Harold Pepinsky wrote *The Geometry of Violence and Democracy* (1991) in which he posits “democracy” as the opposite to violence.

Richard Quinney, who wrote the Foreword, alludes to profound taproots of this sort of democracy in his use of the expression, “principles of the universe” that need to be drawn on.²¹

In Ellis’ and Murphy’s book already mentioned (Ellis and Murphy, 1996), an inquiry into ‘the moral nature of the universe’, they argue that a particular moral vision – a ‘kenotic’ ethic – is supported ‘from below’ by the social sciences and ‘from above’ by theology.

Contemporary cosmology, they argue, “points ultimately to an ethic that centers on self-sacrifice and nonviolence (back cover).

This is consonant argues Stanley Hauerwas in “The 2001 Gifford Lectures”, borrowing an expression from John Howard Yoder, “with the grain of the universe” (Hauerwas, 2001). The “universe” is best interpreted as the Judeo-Christian concept of *eschaton* (last things), presented highly imaginatively in Alison (1996) as “recovery of the eschatological imagination”, whose work as well interprets theologically that of René Girard, the foremost living theorist on the origins of human violence. (See Bellinger, 2001). It is given ‘systematically’ in McClendon, Jr. (1986) as the true starting point of systematic theology. To the theme of living out the NOW in light of a future THEN, I shall briefly return.

While violence is seen as the antithesis of a “socialist democracy” by Harold Pepinsky, Vern Redekop explains how he discovered another word that means the antithesis of violence:

... Land [in the Book of Deuteronomy is seen] as blessing [and] is the context of living life to the fullest – of a sustainable, creative existence to continue through the generations. I have asked many people for a word that would carry the same meaning and until now I have not found a better word for the concepts I want to convey than “blessing.” (Redekop, 2002, p. 255) So for Vern, the opposite of violence is *blessing*. And the opposite of *mimetic structures of violence* – which he develops earlier in the book, are *mimetic structures of blessing*.

He explains:

Within mimetic structures of blessing, a dynamic of mutual desire for the well-being of the Other develops, in which both model and imitator become more fully functioning Subjects in the process (*ibid*, p. 258).”

Whenever we humans as “Subjects” with unlimited worth and potential are turned into objects that can be limited and controlled, violence is done to the Subject, and the opposite of structures of blessing sets in.

Vern asked another Girardian scholar, Rebecca Adams, to explain how she came to develop further the

²¹ Two books from the world of Christian theology on this very theme shall only be alluded to: one by cosmologist George F. R. Ellis, also Templeton Prize Winner (2004), and former physicist and theologian Nancy Murphy, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe: Theology, Cosmology, and Ethics* (1996). The other is by Stanley Hauerwas, considered by his peers to be America’s best theologian, this book being the substance of the prestigious Gifford Lectures, St. Andrews University, 2001, and entitled: *With the Grain of the Universe: The Church’s Witness and Natural Theology* (2001).

whole idea of “Subjects” for whom we can learn as humans to only desire the very best! She writes:

This simple paradigm implied a much bigger, cosmic story about desire, human meaning and history, of the kind usually associated with religious traditions and philosophical systems. The paradigm could be described using two different languages: a theological language which I valued and with which I was comfortable, but also a philosophical language which could be understood entirely on its own terms, logically and symbolically, without dependence on explicitly theological concepts and language. Theologically, I saw that mimetic desire could now be understood as the desire of God for the Subjectivity of everything, and this desire was creative and contagious, it meant that Love was the engine at the heart of the universe [the “grain of the universe” in Hauerwas’ book title]. Not love as powerless, passive or sentimental, but as creative, dangerous and new; not as tame, but as wild and even frightening. This model put God’s love back together with God’s beauty, creativity, justice and power. I finally understood what it meant to say not just that God loves, but that “God is love.” (*ibid*, pp. 268 & 269).”

If we are taken hold by this kind of Love, then mimetic or imitative structures of blessing alone flow out of this, and mimetic, imitative structures of violence retreat and recede. And there is no place in the universe for violence to be done against another Subject. The addiction of violence by the individual and the State is utterly, definitively *over!*

Rebecca Adams adds:

Philosophically, I saw that when I combined what I had learned with the work of others, I could now describe love and human relations in a way which was both logically and emotionally powerful. And this paradigm of Love had real power: It could confront and overcome political and social injustice informed by projection and scapegoating, because it could not only describe and unmask the mechanisms of violence, but show what their alternative looked like. It was imaginatively stronger than the soul murder of internalized oppression. For me, and for many others who come from religious traditions, this ultimate creative reality which liberates, underlies and sustains everything is what we would call God (*ibid*, p. 269).

Do you feel something pulsating here that is wildly life-giving?! That threatens – forgive the metaphor – to blow the lid off all personal and state resort to violence in favour of a Love wildly liberating and life-giving for everyone! – NO EXCEPTIONS!!!

Adams concludes:

As a Christian, I would say that I believe Christ is the unique revelation of this divine Love. But for practical purposes, it isn’t essential that others use this particular religious language to describe this Reality. What is important is that they can participate in it. The new model simply says that human beings can enter into this ongoing, unfolding creation of a loving universe by desiring the subjectivity of others, and ultimately, of everything that is, because someone else has first desired that for us (*ibid*, p. 269).

Vern goes on to describe mimetic structures of blessing with relation to theories of deep-rooted conflict.

A. Human Needs Theory

First, mimetic structures of blessing for the Other means “that person has appropriate satisfiers for the human identify needs of meaning, connectedness, action, security, recognition, and the like, and that these are all well-integrated around a high level of Selfness (*ibid*, p. 271).”

Second, needs satisfiers can induce violence, such as gaining recognition for killing or terrorizing others. Even when it is a positive needs satisfier, such as two parties desiring use of the one and only orange in the fridge, the question of how to satisfy one's personal needs can be reframed into "How can my other and I use our passionate desire for the same thing in order to understand our identities at a deeper level? (*ibid*, p. 272)" In this classic example by Fisher and Ury (1997), the needs of both can in fact be satisfied when that question is asked: the one wanted the orange rind for use in a recipe, the other wanted to eat the orange!

Third, needs satisfiers must be maximized for all. Under Russian communism for instance, Vern points out, during the seventy years it held sway, only a small communist *élite* benefited. What must be asked and sought for tirelessly are needs satisfiers that "help people find meaning, connectedness, security, and recognition, and enable them to take meaningful action...(*ibid*, p. 272)." Etc.

Vern also turns his attention towards unpacking mimetic structures of blessing in opening up new creative possibilities for all – in at least seven different possibilities. In each case, given over three decades of involvement I have been privileged to have working with prisoners who have been deeply wounded through life circumstances long before they ever hurt others, I can think of some very specific persons who fit the progressive profile here of "Limited Subject":

- If a positive Model desires the well-being of a Limited Subject, that person in turn begins imitating the Model's desire for her well-being, and gains in turn self-respect, self-esteem, self-confidence and a sense of dignity.
- The Limited Subject might imitate the Model's desire for her own well-being, and there could be mutual valuation and increase of well-being;
- The first Limited Subject could become a Model for another Limited Subject, thereby passing on the blessing;
- The original Model meanwhile will extend his care to yet other Limited Subjects;
- Others begin to imitate their observation of the care for the well-being of other Limited Subjects;
- Something begins to take shape within whole groups of people in collective care expressed towards individuals or whole groups who are Limited Subjects;
- Formal institutional structures and educational curricula develop that reinforce these practices of desiring the well-being of others, of creating mimetic structures of blessing. Some characteristics of mimetic structures of blessing are:
 - They are open and expanding, not closed and restrictive;
 - They are life-oriented;
 - They involve full creativity.
 - They include an attitude of generosity;
 - They occur within a values framework where mutual well-being displaces "survival of the fittest"
 - They involve a profound commitment to all positive connotations of justice for all.

Vern continues to draw attention to several dynamics of mimetic structures of blessing through use of more technical conflict theory terminology, which I shall briefly describe.

A. Enframing

One can picture the Baptist Sunday Church crowd dressed in their finest engaged in mimetic structure of blessing towards each other during a Sunday School picnic on a perfect summer day. Meanwhile, a Black is being lynched which spectacle and experience for the black community is the entire antithesis of experiencing mimetic structures of blessing. As Vern explains:

Within mimetic structures of violence, enframing in everyone's mind becomes

increasingly fixed; boundaries are strictly maintained and those not qualifying for membership are excluded. Mimetic structures of blessing tend to open the door to one's Others – to those not belonging...

... one key feature of mimetic structures of blessing is that the enframing becomes open (*ibid*, p. 279).

B. Emplotting

This has to do with duration of mimetic structures of blessing. Random acts of kindness are short-lived, though no less valid for that. Enframing all persons, blacks, aboriginals, women – fully within a democratic system can take years – and represents emplotting.

C. Structures Within Structures

For mimetic structures of blessing to thrive, all substructures of society must have equal access to all privileges enjoyed by others. This was denied for seventy years all persons outside the Communist Party *élite* in the former U.S.S.R. This can be denied in any democracy or bureaucratic structure through many “circles within circles” often dubbed “old boys’ network” because at minimum, generally women (at least!) are excluded. Patriarchal structures of violence are amongst the most virulently (pun!) entrenched of all mimetic structures of violence.

The recent announcement by the Canadian government that they will begin to offer public funds to some private schools could be increasing mimetic structures of blessing. But if on principle some religious groups’ schools are excluded who otherwise meet the requisite educational criteria, then mimetic structures of violence emerge after all.

D. Transformation of Structures

Some of the discussion above about “independent initiatives” can now be understood through the lens of mimetic structures of blessing theory. The major Nuclear Test Ban Treaties were secured in part through this kind of mimetic dynamism. Likewise, nuclear arms built up so quickly because of mimetic structures of violence. The ultimate such structure is of course the nation-state choosing to go to war.

Remember: *one can never get to mimetic structures of blessing through mimetic structures of violence! Ever!* – as activist Molly Baldwin quoted above would add.

A classic independent initiative that produced ongoing ripples of mimetic structures of blessing was the trip of President Anwar Sadat to Israel when the two countries were formally at war! That action set in motion the ultimate peace treaty that still holds between those countries.

Vern writes:

Transcendence is about opening oneself to new, previously unimagined, realities – about opening one's Self to the Other. It is an openness to new meaning systems, relationships, and actions. It means letting go of control over the means of security (*ibid*, p. 282).

It's about dreaming new dreams.

Conclusion

In the Judeo-Christian concept of Time, an event referenced by all Western calendars as Year Zero, the Birth of Christ, is seen ever after in *chronological time* to pre-determine the *Now* of human existence in terms of the *Then* of what we're living towards: *Kingdom Come, already begun, not yet consummated*. In other words, *the future is now* is not just empty sloganeering: it is profound reality – ultimate *Realpolitik* if you like – to be lived out right now.

This is a key Judeo-Christian concept with enormous ethical implications. For instance: short-term sexual gratification in “cheating” on one’s partner may seem, in the “heat” of the moment alright,²² but it has long-term devastating consequences, for it is violation of this very Judeo-Christian principle – quite apart from being a violation of the marriage vow.²³

Arguably, all the best social changes known to humanity began with an imagination of a future *that is now!* That’s how the Montgomery Bus Boycott started with Rosa Parks.

She sat down and refused to move in a bid to live out the *future* begun right *now!* That’s how Gandhi fought for Indian independence. That’s how Martin Luther King, Jr. changed the face of civil rights in the Deep South. The examples could be multiplied.

For several centuries in the West, the institutions of slavery and the slave-trade were part of the state apparatus and unquestioned in their legitimacy by most. Capital punishment was also once an unquestioned institution in most Western nations. Today, most Western countries have abolished these institutions for the *inhuman barbarisms* (Roosevelt) they are.

It is time to abolish likewise the institution of war.

Canada has enjoyed an international peacemaking reputation that is slowly eroding under the current (*Conservative* Harper) government’s systematic militarization. This is tragic and a move to imitate the massive process addiction of the out-of-control drunken bully to our south. Canada could opt instead for total abstinence, and become a world leader in a movement to abolish the state process addiction and institution of war. Or could we?

I have another imagination game.

Imagine something like this United Nations Declaration to Abolish War:

Whereas it is universally acknowledged that the preparation, practice, and promulgation of war is a blight upon the human family that has marred humankind since the beginning, we, the member parties of the United Nations, do commit to forthwith begin steps to abolish all vestiges of war within our member nation-states.

This shall include:

- Commitment to cease immediately in the engagement of all wars anywhere on Planet Earth;
- Commitment to begin dismantling and destroying all weapons of mass destruction with specific target dates of by when to be agreed upon in a soon convened meeting of

²² Remember that Oscar-winning movie, *Shakespeare in [Heat] Love* with Gwyneth Paltrow?

²³ If Presidents Kennedy and Clinton demonstrated repeatedly that their marriage vows were lies, where does the lying leave off and statesmanship begin? See discussion of this below.

- representatives from all member states;
- Commitment to dismantle and/or convert to peaceful usage (what some Holy Scriptures of the human family call “*beating swords into ploughshares*), all aspects of the current arms industry;
- Commitment to deployment of human, financial, scientific, technological and the best in “human ingenuity” resources within our member nation-states to develop non-lethal defence systems to protect from outside enemies; that aim not only *not* to destroy our enemies, but to destroy the enmity instead by making our enemies our friends, through deployment and application of all collective peacemaking wisdom and techniques to date, and through the encouragement of research into the inexhaustible and creative imagination of our collective humanity for finding ever better peacemaking ways and solutions in the future.
- The immediate establishment of an international monitoring body, along the lines of international arms inspections – for all member countries!

However, Rev. McCarthy, in the same e-mail noted above (September 11, 2007), commented thus:

Such an imagination exercise regarding the UN, in my feel for the matter, trivializes your efforts. Not all that is impossible is a good practical or theological dream. This ending seems to me to be shoehorning a most serious set of reflections regarding issues and principles of resolution for conflict into a ready-made box. Said another way by someone with whom I am on speaking terms, it seem to be an attempt to put new wine into old UN wine skins.

“... (A)nd the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together,” is absolutely the correct hope and goal and, therefore, ending. But via the power elites that are the UN? An imagination exercise to set up structures to resolve conflicts among Herod, Caiaphas and Pilate may be a step toward revealing the glory of God for all to see together, but it feels to me to generate only more of the atmosphere of the ephemerality, a passing hope that is, like the tasty attracting foam running down Sartre’s glass of beer, transcendently hopeless. So, I’d probably leave out or replace that final imagination exercise. But that is my only reservation that I think might be pertinent to the deliverance of this paper Thursday.

Years ago my wife and I were playing, with her parents, a paper version of a board game called “Battleship”. (I know: so many of the games we play, as the children’s stories and cartoons we allow, are violent!) The game involved making guesses about the whereabouts of others’ battleships: destroyers, carriers, a submarine, etc. As you got a hit, it was noted on the grid, and you kept guessing so as to eliminate your opponent’s fleet of ships and win the game. This particular game went on and on! Finally, every single square but one on everyone’s grid had been filled in with an “x”. The reason no one had guessed the only square not filled in was: *everyone had a battleship, or portion of one, in that square! To have selected that would have been to self-destruct, and lose the game.*

This experience has served as metaphor for me in many ways. Let me try one tonight. French sociologist Jacques Ellul wrote:

I have shown in detail that every state is founded on violence and cannot maintain itself save by and through violence (Ellul, 1969, p. 84).

My dilemma is: how can I appeal to any government, the current Canadian government, to eliminate the process addiction of interstate violence, if, by definition, to stay in the game called “Statesmanship” (and it always comes down to the game called real life “Battleship” and all other forms of war), that is, to continue to exist as a state, *the one thing the state can never eliminate is resort to violence?* For to do so

would be, by Ellul's assessment, to self-destruct as a state.

My dilemma only gets worse. An addict, by definition, is a liar and hides the addiction through habitual lies. Former Eaton Professor of the Science of Government at Harvard University, Carl J. Friedrich wrote in *The Pathology of Politics*: "Our analysis has, I hope, shown that politics needs all these dubious practices; it cannot be managed without violence, betrayal, corruption, secrecy, and propaganda (Friedrich, 1972, no page number)."

A. J. Coates in *The Ethics of War* wrote similarly:

The moral prohibition of lying, for example, makes good sense in the context of personal relations, but no sense at all in affairs of state. Telling the truth is a moral luxury that politicians and diplomats can rarely afford. More than that, the fulfillment of their public duty will require them not only to conceal the truth but to suppress it and twist it constantly (Coates, 1997, p. 36).

Now Professor Coates is highly erudite throughout his book in his discussion of the ethics of war. But the analogy leaps out: *If I were an alcoholic, deeply committed to that substance abuse, I would do all in my power to legitimize my lies so that the addiction could continue! Just like the Emperor and the lords of the bedchamber who went on with the procession (or process addiction) at all costs.*²⁴

So this brilliant ethicist, without evident commitment to an overarching narrative to challenge him, adds in step with the best of scholastic casuistry:

This is not so much the violation of a single morality as the application of another and different morality, according to which the moral permissibility of any act is determined in the light of its foreseeable consequences rather than of its intrinsic quality. In this way what is morally impermissible in one sphere may become morally obligatory in the other (*ibid*, p. 36).

This truly is the logic of all addiction, no less of all state process addiction. Translated, it means two things:

- *The end justifies the means;*
- *Might makes right.*

A. J. Coates goes into greater detail about one form of realism Christians since St. Augustine have often adopted:

Another form of realism, while still resisting the moral determination of politics (at least from time to time or in extreme circumstances), is far indifferent to moral considerations.

What it propounds is a moral paradox, whereby the achievement of political objectives necessitates the use of *immoral* means. What distinguishes this form of realism is its overt moral concern and the sense of moral unease or of moral tragedy with which it accepts the need for actions that other realists regard with equanimity. This form of realism recognizes the claims both of morality and politics, while affirming their potential irreconcilability and, at times, unavoidable conflict. Even normal politics are seen to be clothed in moral ambiguity, and in extreme emergencies no act, however wicked or immoral, can be excluded 'realistically'. Tragically (and, as it seems to critics, incoherently), the ruler may have a duty to act immorally, with

²⁴ See Andersen, 2001.

all the moral anguish that entails.

Niebuhr's Christian and Protestant realism takes this form. The political order is seen as naturally resistant to morality, and the structure of power in which it consists as intrinsically flawed. Unlike the more purely moral domain of private life, 'the realm of politics is a twilight zone where ethical and technical issues meet'. It is impossible to act within that realm without incurring sin. Nevertheless, rulers have a duty so to act, while repenting of their actions and falling back ultimately on the mercy and redemptive power of God. This understanding of politics appears in a more secular guise in the thought of Hans Morgenthau, who argues that 'there is no escape from the evil of power' and that 'to know with despair that the political act is inevitably evil, and to act nonetheless, is moral courage' (Morgenthau 1946, [*Scientific Man vs Power Politics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago], p. 203).

On this view the politician – and the soldier – are faced with hard choices or cruel necessities that, in the terms of one analysis, require that they 'stoically immolate their personal morality on the altar of the public good' (Evans and Ward 1956 [*The Social and Political Philosophy of Jacques Maritain*, Geoffrey Bles, London], p. 320). (*ibid*, pp. 33 & 34).

I have known personally two alcoholics, highly intelligent and functioning, who knowingly and resolutely continued their addiction. The first, a former neighbour, drank himself to death, and left a wife and family to deal with the devastating loss. The other, a brilliant inventor and businessman, is now estranged from his wife and family, with likely only a matter of time before his liver gives out too.

Father Emmanuel Charles McCarthy also wrote:

Gandhi entitled his autobiography *An Experiment in Truth*. Truth passes from concept to concrete enfolded reality available to all only via the path of experimentation. If Einstein's $E=mc^2$ remained only in his mind as a thought we would not be able to watch reruns of the Beverly Hillbillies or send a man to the moon, etc. But, trillions of dollars and billions of hours of mental and physical human labor have been put into figuring out experimentally how to move this truth from conceptualization to practical individual and societal incarnation. Now, imagine, if proportionately, the same amount of time, mind and money had gone into figuring out experimentally how to effectively incarnate Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, where would we be as a human race and as Church be today? But, such an allocation of resources has not taken place. So it is folly to expect answers on how a truth would work in an empirical situation, when almost nothing has been done in 1700 years to even consider the question, let alone with experimenting with possible ways of individually or socially empiricizing it (September 13, 2007).

For this lecture, there I leave it: a wonderful, impossible challenge!

But I will now offer something a little more concrete. In 1975, a small program emerged in Kitchener-Waterloo, Canada, that proved to be the "proverbial shot that echoed around the world"²⁵: the Victim Offender Reconciliation Project (VORP) was created as a joint partnership between Ontario Provincial Corrections and the Mennonite Central Committee Ontario.²⁶ One of the two key players in establishing

²⁵ Two other Canadian "firsts", also echoing around the world, in this field were "Sentencing or Peacemaking Circles" (see Pranis, Stuart and Wedge, 2003); and Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA – see Petrunik, 2007).

²⁶ The full story is told in Nyp, 2004.

VORP was Dave Worth, who had lived on Koinonia Farms, Americus Georgia, and had known first-hand some of the stories and sermons of Clarence Jordan, one of the founders. Clarence Jordan had two earned doctorates: one in New Testament, and the other in agriculture. He helped form a creative Christian farm community in 1942 that was integrated – and consequently persecuted – from the outset.²⁷

If a farmer wanted to encourage others to try out new seed, Jordan constantly said, he'd not go out and rent a lecture hall to get them in, he'd plant a "demonstration plot" right in the main crossroads and let everyone see for themselves how well the seed produced!

VORP in 1975 was like that "demonstration plot" that soon was being replicated and creatively developed into all kinds of other "demonstration plots" of Restorative Justice the world over.

Now imagine with me this formal resolution adopted by the United Nations:

Whereas it is universally acknowledged that we shall never wage enough war to win through to peace, an empirical fact of unquestioned finality from the entire sweep of recorded human history; whereas whenever we wage peace, in the very process we already have achieved our goal; whereas it is acknowledged that there is no way to peace, but peace is the way; whereas when a farmer wants to attract the attention of her fellows about a superior new line of seed developed, she goes out and plants a "demonstration plot" right at the major crossroads of the entire community for all to see and believe; we the member parties of the United Nations, do commit to:

- forthwith establish a new International Cooperative Conflict Resolution agency (ICCR) as "demonstration plot" that shall be granted similar status and authority as the International Court of Justice,²⁸ and the International Criminal Court,²⁹ to

²⁷ See their website at: <http://www.koinoniapartners.org/>, one part that reads:

Home of the Cotton Patch Gospel, birthplace of Habitat for Humanity, Jubilee Partners, Prison Jail Project, Fuller Center for Housing and other ministries. Still growing pecans and peanuts, welcoming visitors, and living the "demonstration plot for the Kingdom of God."

²⁸ See: <http://www.icj-cij.org/homepage/index.php?lang=en>:

The Court

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN). It was established in June 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations and began work in April 1946.

The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands). Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York (United States of America).

The Court's role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies. The Court is composed of 15 judges, who are elected for terms of office of nine years by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. It is assisted by a Registry, its administrative organ. Its official languages are English and French.

²⁹ See: <http://www.icc-cpi.int/home.html&l=en>:

About the Court

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is an independent, permanent court that tries persons accused of the most serious crimes of international concern, namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The ICC is based on a treaty, joined by [104 countries](#).

The ICC is a court of last resort. It will not act if a case is investigated or prosecuted by a national judicial system unless the national proceedings are not genuine, for example if formal proceedings were undertaken solely to shield a person from criminal responsibility. In addition, the ICC only tries those accused of the gravest crimes.

In all of its activities, the ICC observes the highest standards of fairness and due process.

The jurisdiction and functioning of the ICC are governed by the Rome Statute. Download the [Rome Statute of the](#)

- begin mediation of all international disputes brought to it by signatory member nations. Further, it is resolved that former US President Jimmy Carter be appointed the new ICCR United Nations Commissioner, and that he in turn be authorized to set up office immediately in Geneva, Switzerland through,
- the further hiring of previous Nobel Peace Prize winners as consultants, and proceed with full infrastructure implementation to be ready for business by January 1, 2008 – so urgent is the need!

Impossible dream? It's time for such an international demonstration plot to replace war against international enemies, as the VORP demonstration plot replaced the war against domestic enemies.

Desmond Tutu published *God Has a Dream: a Vision of Hope For Our Time* (2004). He drew on the language of arguably one of the most famous speeches of all in recent times by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "I Have a Dream", delivered August 28, 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington DC. Part of the speech went like this:

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with (King, Jr., 1963).

Amen!

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