

Just Peacemaking in an Age of Terrorism

BY GLEN H. STASSEN

We need a positive theology of peace that spells out the proactive practices for individuals and nations that work to prevent war. The new ethic of just peacemaking tells us what actions will dry up the sources for terrorist anger and recruitment.

Peachmaking is proactive. It provides transforming initiatives that deliver us from war, including terrorism. The prophets of Israel warn us against making war, but even more they call us to make peace. If we want to avoid the destruction of war and exile, they say, we must repent and do justice. The injustice that we do causes resentment and division among us, and brings the destruction of war. We must cease putting our trust in idols, warhorses, and war chariots instead of God. We must repent and return to living the way that fits those who trust in the Lord.

Jesus teaches us not to get stuck in vicious cycles of revenge and hatred toward enemies. (Jews called the Roman occupiers “pigs,” and their hatred of occupation boiled over into an irrational rebellion in 66 A.D., to which the Romans responded by destroying Jerusalem and the temple, as Jesus had prophesied, and exiling Israel for nineteen centuries). But much more he instructs us to do the things that make for peace. He teaches the peacemaking practices of going to make peace with the brother where there is anger, going the second mile to make peace with the Roman soldier, loving our enemy and praying for our persecutors, practicing the justice of investing our money in God’s justice and righteousness rather than hoarding it all for ourselves, and acknowledging the log in our own eye rather than putting all the blame on the other. Jesus weeps over Jerusalem because the city does not recognize “the things that make for peace” (Luke 19:41-42a).

When a child is stuck in a self-defeating habit, the effective treatment is not just to punish the child and yell “No, no, no!” The effective treatment is to instill in the child a proactive alternative habit of response to temptation. If a teenager immediately turns on the television after dinner, gets stuck on watching it, and then is too tired to get her homework done, effective parenting is not to yell and shame her for having bad habits, but to discuss respectfully how another life-pattern would be more effective, like starting homework immediately and finishing it before turning on the television.

My father and many others returning from the devastation of World War II came back saying that we must not have World War III, or a nuclear war. So they got to work creating a United Nations, and developing practices of peacemaking that we point to in just peacemaking theory.

THE CALL FOR JUST PEACEMAKING

When church leaders saw that nations were involved in an idolatrous and self-destructive arms race that threatened to kill us all, with great wisdom they wrote book-length calls to the practice of peacemaking: the Catholic *Challenge to Peace* (1983), the Presbyterian *Peacemaking the Believers’ Calling* (1983), the Methodist *In Defense of Creation* (1986), and the United Church of Christ *The Just Peace Church* (1985). They called for a new ethic of just peacemaking, a positive theology of peace. Efforts to restrain war by teaching just war theory and pacifism are needed, but they are not adequate. Instead we need to develop a positive theology of peacemaking that spells out the proactive practices of peacemaking that work to prevent war.” Much of the history of Catholic theology on war and peace has focused on limiting the resort to force in human affairs [just war theory and nonviolence]; this task is still necessary,...but it is not a sufficient response,” wrote the U. S. Catholic bishops. “A fresh reappraisal which includes a developed theology of peace will require contributions from several sectors of the Church’s life: biblical studies, systematic and moral theology, ecclesiology, and the experience and insights of members of the church who have struggled in various ways to make and keep the peace in this often violent age” (*The Challenge of Peace*, sections 23, 24).

In response, twenty-three scholars gathered to develop a consensus new ethic of just peacemaking, which we describe in *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1998, 2004). The group included Christian ethicists who helped draft the church statements or had written books arguing that we need a just peacemaking theory, as well as some noted scholars in international relations, and a few activists and practitioners. The twenty-three who developed the new ethic come from Catholic and Protestant traditions; most are just war theorists, but some are pacifists. Remarkably, we reached consensus on ten practices of just peacemaking.

The book opens with a specifically Christian theological argument for

the ten practices of just peacemaking, but then lays out the practices in a public language accessible to all who sense the obligation to make peace and avoid the destruction of war. In this way the new theory is appealing to people in various faiths. Each practice works efficaciously to prevent some wars, based on empirical political science research and the history of war prevention. The book is realistic; it points to what works in reality. It

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doesn't say "wouldn't it be nice if," but "it is established that" these practices prevent wars.

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; and (10) encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations.

The ten practices of just peacemaking are: (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)

Realistically wars will still happen, so we still need pacifism and just war theory to guide our response to the violence of war; but much more we need an ethic that tells us what actions will dry up the sources for terrorist anger and recruitment. Just peacemaking theory is that ethic.¹

DELIVERANCE FROM TERRORISM

Failed states in which something like anarchy reigns—such as Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Congo, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Iraq—create havens for terrorist training, drug trading, and money-gathering.² The *Washington Quarterly* reader on terrorism, *The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, points out that military action is not sufficient; these states need rehabilitation and democracy-building. A bipartisan consensus in Congress supports efforts at building democracies (p. 235), which is a practice of just peacemaking.

"I would be very careful about using our troops as nation builders. I believe the role of the military is to fight and win war and, therefore, pre-

vent war from happening in the first place," President Bush said during his campaign for the presidency. "Morale in today's military is too low.... I believe we're over-extended in too many places" (pp. 175-176). Yet he placed rebuilding Iraq in the hands of the Pentagon, after having dissolved the office of nation-building in the Pentagon and rebuffing major allies by going to war without them, so that rebuilding responsibility falls largely on the U.S. military with little preparation and international help. This has not worked well, and morale is indeed low. Rebuilding should be led by civilians trained in rehabilitation of civic society, not only military security, and managed by the United Nations, with strong American support. The U.N. is not accused of empire-building and colonialism as the U.S. military is. Democracy-building requires strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights, developing genuine political processes, fostering the development of civic society, promoting accountable public institutions, and developing governmental capacity to deliver basic public goods (pp. 201, 242). Karin von Hippel, in her especially insightful study of Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor, writes what just peacemaking theory affirms: "The promotion of democracy is based on the assumption that democracies rarely go to war with each other, and therefore an increase in the number of democratic states would imply...a more peaceful and secure world" (p. 109). Democracies produce far fewer terrorists because disgruntled citizens have other means for seeking change (p. 362ff.).

This bipartisan consensus affirms the just peacemaking practices of *advancing democracy and human rights* and *fostering just and sustainable economic development*. The problem is that present policy emphasizes military action too much and community development and civil-society development too little. Therefore, much of the anti-terrorism money and attention goes to strengthening the armed forces in countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Israel, where the military forces have been the enemy of human rights and democracy. Thus the United States is seen by many as the supporter of autocracy and the enemy of citizen movements (pp. 103-104, et passim). When the United States declared its war against terrorism, Indonesia canceled peace talks with the rebels in Aceh and instead made war against them, Israel increased its military assassinations of Palestinian leaders, and Russia pursued its destructive war against Chechnya, for they knew the U.S. would not criticize their militaristic approaches.

DELIVERANCE FROM BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Many fear that terrorists could attack the United States with biological weapons.² Were terrorists to introduce a fatal virus into an airplane flying from London or Paris to New York (it would not be detected by the x-ray machines), passengers could transmit the infection to their different cities for a week before their symptoms appeared, and the disease might spread further as doctors take another week to diagnose it.

Fortunately, a Biological Weapons Treaty that makes these weapons illegal has been signed by almost every nation. Though its verification procedures are not yet in place, the negotiations to develop them since 1995 have produced widespread international agreement. Two just peacemaking practices, *work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system*, and *strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights*,

Two just peacemaking practices, “work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system,” and “strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights,” urge support for a Biological Weapons Treaty.

human rights, urge support and implementation of such treaties. The practice to *reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade* also applies to biological weapons. “The United States has a profound interest in preventing other countries from testing nuclear arms and stopping rogue regimes and terrorists from acquiring biological weapons.” The Comprehensive

Test Ban Treaty and Biological Weapons Convention “would advance these important goals. If the United States rejects the restraints these agreements impose or declines to negotiate improvements, how can it ask others to embrace them?”⁴

Yet “in the summer of 2001, the United States shocked its peers when it rejected” the agreement establishing verification procedures for biological weapons, an action that reflects the George W. Bush administration’s unilateralist course in international policy.⁵ Verification of the Biological Weapons Treaty would include annual declarations by nations describing their programs and factories that could be used to produce biological weapons, random visits to declared facilities, and short-notice inspections of suspected facilities. Clearly this would be useful in preventing many likely sources of bioweapons for terrorists.

By mid-2001 a consensus text was emerging, and on July 23, 2001, the twenty-fourth negotiating session convened. Delegates expected their efforts would soon result in a final text. During the first three days, more than 50 nations spoke in favor of promptly completing the negotiations. Then U.S. Ambassador Donald Mahley brought the entire process to an end: “The United States has concluded that the current approach to a protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention...is not, in our view, capable of...strengthening confidence in compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention.... We will therefore be unable to support the current text, even with changes.”

Later in 2001, “the United States tried at the last minute to terminate protocol negotiations completely, throwing the meeting into disorder and leaving no option but to suspend the conference until November 2002.” The U.S. earned disappointment, criticism, and anger from the world community for blocking enforceable inspections of sites where terrorists might develop, purchase, or steal biological weapons for their own use.

When the attack on September 11, 2001, demonstrated the urgent threat of terrorism, the U.S. representative did not try to block the continuation of annual study meetings or the proposal that they might try again for adoption of the treaty in 2006. We do not know whether the United States will support a revised treaty, but just peacemaking urges reducing bioweapons and working with cooperative forces in the international community.

DELIVERANCE FOR ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

Israel’s occupation of Palestine and assassinations of terrorist leaders, with U.S. support, may be the greatest source of anger and prod to terrorist recruitment among Arabs and Muslims in the Middle East. The just peacemaking ethic calls on all nations involved to practice and support *cooperative conflict resolution*.

Three processes of conflict resolution in the Middle East have occurred: the Oslo Declaration of Principles (1993) signed by the Israeli and Palestinian governments, the offer of the twelve surrounding Arab states to support peace and security for Israel if it agrees to the two-state solution; and the Geneva Accord (2003) negotiated by former governmental leaders of Israel and Palestine. All three reached basically the same solution: there should be two states, Israel and Palestine, with their 1967 borders adjusted to permit some Israeli settlements in the West Bank and compensate Palestine with land in present-day Israel. Yet Israel keeps extending settlements in the West Bank and occupying Palestinian territory militarily; Ariel Sharon calls this “occupation” and admits that it causes great hostility among Palestinians. And Hamas and Islamic Jihad keep fomenting suicide killings of Israeli civilians, violating the just war rule against targeting noncombatants and Muslim teachings against suicide and wrongful killing. Clearly the solution is to support the result of the conflict resolution processes: to return Palestinian homeland to Palestinian rule. Occupation of homeland by foreign forces is what causes suicide terrorism: of the sixteen suicide terrorist campaigns worldwide, from Lebanon to Sri Lanka, Palestine, Turkey, Chechnya, Saudi Arabia, and Kashmir, all have focused on liberating a homeland from foreign occupation.⁶

The prophets of Israel cautioned that if the nation did not keep covenant with God, do justice, and stop trusting in military weapons rather than in the ways of God, it would experience the destruction of war and be sent into exile. Jesus warned five times of the destruction of the temple if

Israel did not do the things that make for peace.⁷ Ideologues and Zionists who say today that Israel can practice injustice, put its trust in military weapons, and violate God's ways, yet at the same time maintain security in the land, are doing Israel no favor. They are misleading the people, and betraying the word of the prophets and of Jesus.

Israel is traumatized by the Holocaust, the hostility of surrounding Arab nations, and the violent terrorism of the Palestinians. Palestine is traumatized by the occupation, the expanding settlements, and the violence and assassinations by Israel. They both need help if peace is to be made.

When the Bush administration in its first days disengaged from conflict resolution efforts in the Middle East, a weak and divided Palestine faced a powerful Sharon-led government, Palestinians faced injustice and lost hope, and there was a huge increase in terrorism. "By any measure 2002 was an astonishing year for Israel in terms of suicide bombings. An average of five attacks a month were made, nearly double the number during the first fifteen months of the second intifada—and that number was itself more than ten times the monthly average since 1993."⁸

President Bush embraced the "Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East" in 2002, which illustrates the just peacemaking practice of *independent initiatives* in which each side takes actions: Palestine named a Prime Minister other than Arafat, and suspended terrorism for three months; Israel pulled back temporarily from occupation of northern Gaza and Bethlehem, and released several prisoners. But then Israel assassinated terrorist leaders, Palestine re-initiated terrorism, and Israel re-occupied. Peace in the Middle East requires continued firm U.S. support for the two-state solution that was the objective of the Roadmap for Peace, and was the conflict resolution agreement in the Geneva Accords.

GETTING INVOLVED IN PEACEMAKING

Terrorism has become an international problem, sponsored by networks in a hundred countries. Preventing terrorism is much more than the United States, or any single nation, can handle unilaterally, regardless of its great military power. If the United States aligns its power with the cooperative forces in the international system, together they can do a great deal for peaceful change.

A key practice of just peacemaking is to *support grassroots peacemaking groups*. Individuals and congregations can become involved in local community peacemaking groups, or national organizations like Peace Action (www.peace-action.org) and church groups such as Baptist Peace Fellowship (www.bpfna.org) and Every Church a Peace Church (www.ecapc.org).

NOTES

1 Glen H. Stassen, ed., *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War* (Pilgrim Press: 1998 and 2004) is a good place to start reading about just peacemaking theory. Then see

the seven articles and extensive bibliography in Christine E. Gudorf and Paul Lauritzen, eds., *The Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23:1 (Spring 2003). Other articles and books are listed at www.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/stassen. The long-range strategy of Peace Action, the largest grassroots peace organization, incorporates many elements of just peacemaking theory (www.peace-action.org).

2 See the *Washington Quarterly* reader on terrorism, Alexander T. J. Lennon, ed., *The Battle for Hearts and Minds* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 73, 79, 91, 153, etc. (further page citations will be in the text).

3 *Battle for Hearts and Minds*, 69, 286; and Arnold Howitt and Robyn Pangi, eds., *Countering Terrorism: Dimensions of Preparedness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), chapter 5.

4 Anthony J. Blinken, "Winning the War of Ideas," in *The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, 285.

5 Mark Wheelis, Malcolm Dando, and Catherine Auer, "Back to Bioweapons?" *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 59:1 (January/February, 2003), 40-47 (further quotations in the text are from this article). The George W. Bush administration rejected not only verification of biological weapons, but also the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Antiballistic Missile Treaty, the Kyoto anti-global-warming treaty, the International Criminal Court, international restraints on unilaterally making preemptive war, and the treaty banning land mines, and it disengaged from international efforts for peacemaking between Israel and Palestine, and peacemaking with North Korea. Just peacemaking says counterterrorism requires the cooperation of many nations, but to persuade them to cooperate, the United States itself needs a cooperative foreign policy.

6 Robert Pape, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *The American Political Science Review* 97:3 (August 2003), 348-9.

7 Leslie Allen and Glen Stassen, "How Christian is Zionism?" *Sojourners* (July/August, 2003); available online at www.sajo.net.

8 Bruce Hoffman, "The Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *Atlantic Monthly* 291:5 (June 2003), 44.



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