

Tools for Peace?



The Role of Religion in Conflicts

Report from an International
Inter-Religious Peace Conference
21–24 November 2004,
Söderköping, Sweden



Tools for Peace? The Role of Religion in Conflicts

Report from an International Inter-Religious Peace Conference
21–24 November 2004, Söderköping, Sweden

Organisers:

Christian Council of Sweden
Swedish Muslim Council
Life & Peace Institute, Sweden
Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation

Financial contributions:

Amica AB (a Fazer Group company), Sweden
Christian Council of Sweden
Church of Sweden
DanChurch Aid, Denmark
Folke Bernadotte Foundation, Sweden
Interchurch organisation for development co-operation (ICCO), Netherlands
Life & Peace Institute, Sweden
Lunds Missionssällskap, Sweden
Nathan Söderblom Memorial Fund, Sweden
The Olof Palme Memorial Fund for International Understanding
and Common Security, Sweden
Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation
Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Swedish Muslim Council
Uppsala Kyrkliga Samfällighet, Sweden
World Council of Churches, Switzerland

TOOLS FOR PEACE? THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN CONFLICTS

Printed by Uppsala universitets reprocentral, Uppsala, Sweden, 2005

Narrative report: Catherine Barnes

Editorial work: Marijana Cuvalo, Tore Samuelsson and Jenny Svensson

Conference photos: Carl-Johan Friman, Tore Samuelsson

Layout: Immix AB

***Report from the Inter-Religious Peace Conference:
Tools for Peace? The Role of Religion in Conflicts***

Contents

Foreword	4
Introduction: Religion, peace and conflict – insights, dilemmas and learning points	5
Background	7
Religion: At the nexus of identity and meaning	8
Globalisation: The influence of systemic context	9
Text in context: Religion and the challenge of interpretation	11
Values and action	12
Religion, peace and preventing deadly violence	17
Education: Importance of knowledge and construction of worldviews	18
Role of youth	19
From motivation to action: Religion and peacebuilding	20
Ideas for action: Tools for peace?	22
<i>Appendices</i>	
APPENDIX 1 Opening keynote address by Dr. Mustafa Ceric, Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina	27
APPENDIX 2 Tools for Peace? The role of religion in conflict by Dr. Debbie Weissman, Hebrew University, Israel	31
APPENDIX 3 Values, religion and peacebuilding – a possible combination by Dr. Andrea Bartoli, Colombia University/Community of Sant'Egidio	34
APPENDIX 4 Participants	38
APPENDIX 5 Note about the conference programme	39
APPENDIX 6 Tools for Peace? A consultation in Uppsala 2003	40

Foreword

Many contemporary armed conflicts have religious ingredients. This implies that religious bodies are challenged to guide their members, as well as the public, into an understanding of what religions can do to obtain and guard peace. The challenge goes even further and calls upon religious bodies to meet across traditional religious, social and cultural borders. In such encounters religious communities can find ways both to prevent conflicts and to minimise violence when conflicts appear.

Christians, Muslims and Jews in Sweden, the initiators of the conference, are not directly involved in armed conflicts. However, as representatives of world religions we are challenged by the role religions sometime play in wars, and we are provoked by the generalized perception we often face in media indicating that religions are the most common cause of conflicts.

Out of such considerations we started planning for a conference on the role of religion in conflict and we named it “Tools for Peace?”. We wanted believers from many religious traditions to meet with persons that are involved in work with peace and conflict resolutions. We were concerned with the double role we can perceive when religion is used sometimes to raise or stir up conflicts and at other times to prevent or stop violent actions.

Our expectations were that the participants should meditate upon and discuss the role of religion in conflicts. We need to be self-critical, but even more it is our task to turn to our religious heritages searching for the specific tools that can be used in creating a culture of peace.

We are happy to present the result of our work with “Tools for Peace?”. We hope that all the creativity and wisdom that enriched the planning of the conference as well the conference itself will inspire many others to take similar initiatives.

The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in particular the two Ambassadors Hans Lundborg and Ragnar Ängeby, supported the planning of the conference from an early stage.

A number of people have contributed to the success of the “Tools for Peace?” project. We are grateful to the steering committee members under the leadership of initially Peter Weiderud, later on Gustaf Ödquist and Stig Lundberg. The program committee, chaired by Eva Christina Nilsson, played a very vital role in the planning of the conference, keeping in mind that this should be a meeting place and a process rather than great statements. Our special thanks go to the conference facilitator Catherine Barnes, who also contributed the draft narrative for this report, conference managers Joakim Wohlfeil and Kristina Herngren, project secretary Joanna Lilja, special advisor Hans Ucko, and extra resource persons Maria Nordström, Marijana Cuvalo, and Carl-Johan Friman.

Lennart Molin
Christian Council of Sweden

Moustafa Kharraki
Swedish Muslim Council

Tore Samuelsson
Life & Peace Institute

Anna Åkerlund
Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation

Introduction: Religion, peace and conflict – insights, dilemmas and learning points

Tools for Peace? – where did it take us?

Almost three years have passed since the first idea to have a conference on the role of religion in conflict came up. Now the conference is completed and it happened in Söderköping November 2004. There was a great deal of support for the conference from the very beginning but there were also obstacles to come by. Three years of planning has taught us that it is not an easy task to get three religions to work together on an equal level. It is a common experience that efforts to conquer conflicts open the door to new conflicts.

Many times we were exhausted and therefore ever so happy in Söderköping when we found that we had succeeded in getting together an efficiently working conference with people from many very divergent backgrounds. We missed the representatives of the Jewish Council of Sweden, who decided to leave the planning of the conference five months before the conference opposing to a Christian campaign against “Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the building of the wall”. However, we were pleased to have a significant and apparent Jewish participation in Söderköping. Their contribution to the conference was as important as of any other religious group. By and large we saw a good balance in religious background, gender and age.

* * *

Behind the original proposal to have a conference on the role of religion was a general understanding that conflicts today so often are independent of national borders but following the lines between cultures, ethnicity and religions. Therefore the hosts of the conference found that we have to recognize how religions can work in two ways in conflicts, either they can cause and fan them, or they can prevent, check and solve them. So the conference idea was to have religious leaders to come together to discuss how religions can be “tools for peace”. That became the theme of the conference.

All who came seemed prepared to be open and honest as well as listening and respectful to others. Dialogues were created in a constructive and positive atmosphere. The conference had a process-oriented method, which was well facilitated and moderated in an excellent way by Catherine Barnes from London.

* * *

Three keynote speakers were invited, the former Grand Mufti of Bosnia Mustafa Ceric, Dr Debbie Weissman from Jerusalem and Dr Andrea Bartoli from Columbia University in New York. Their inputs were then taken into groups, in workshops and in special reflection groups. Each afternoon there were panels further elaborating the theme of the day. After having listened to the panel everybody was invited to speak in plenary. The discussions were open and frank. Such honesty was permitted and nurtured in a warm and respectful atmosphere.

As is already mentioned the main theme of the conference was Tools for Peace? (Note the question mark) Three sub-themes covered the three days of the conference. First there were the *roots*. What are the different religious traditions bringing into dialogues on i.e. conflicts and peace prevention? What has caused religions to add fuel to conflicts and cause violent solutions in situations of antagonism? Where are the stories of religions having played a role in bringing solutions to violent conflicts? What has actually happened when religious leaders have initiated or promoted activities to prevent or stop armed violent conflicts?

In workshops people discussed “religious nationalism” and different kinds of extremism, but also religiously motivated nonviolence and the need of women’s participation in peacemaking. One challenging and also moving example was a dialogue between an evangelical pastor and a Muslim imam from Nigeria. They had in their own lives walked from clashing to more harmonious co-existence.

The sub-theme of the second day was *values*. Dr Bartoli from Italy and USA explored a possible combination of values, religion and peace building. He reminded us that we exchange values when we practice them and such an exchange of values happens in the processes of mutual recognition. Prevention is to communicate, to connect and to celebrate the positive. “Peace is always possible”, he comforted us, “and can be experienced in the most daring circumstances”.

In workshops the conference looked into the situation of Northern Ireland as a paradigm for religio-political conflicts. The polarization of different values in connection to the recent presidential election in USA was paid attention to. The very basic question on whether there are common values was under discussion. In another room the provocative question was if we dare to see the inter-religious dialogue as a celebration of differences.

The final sub-theme was *tools*. A panel with contributions from Liberia had to be cancelled due to the conflict in the nearby Ivory Coast. Many other initiatives, programmes and projects were presented like faith-based meditation, methods of self-criticism, challenges of ethno-religious extremism, education for peace and a Swedish multi-faith project called "God has 99 names".

There was an expectation before the conference that it should create a kit of tools for peace and to give it some content. With that in mind the conference at the end turned into a brain storming activity in order to come up with some practical proposals for what to do from now on.

* * *

Three intense days of work resulted in a number of constructive suggestions to follow up the Söderköping conference. It was summed up in eleven points:

- Education and research initiatives
- Dialogue processes
- Training in reconciliation and peace building
- Working with media
- Learning exchanges and links between people in different conflict zones
- The role of women according to SC Res. 1325
- Network for Middle East and North Africa
- Methods to respond to religious fundamentalism
- Exploring the relation between identity, communality and common values
- Rapid reaction network
- How to support the youth collective

Already early in the conference the younger participants met and decided to established a Young Adult Initiatives. We all look forward to hear more of that.

* * *

There was never an intention to let the conference adopt a final statement. The most important messages from the conference are the stories told by the participants. The knowledge and inspiration they gathered during the conference make a better result than ever can be taken into a final statement.

The conference in Söderköping should be considered as one part in a chain of meetings around the world on the role of religion in conflict. The World Conference of Religion and Peace, the World Council of Churches, different Muslim peace organisations as well as many institutions for peace studies and research were represented in Söderköping. They have both the efficiency and competence to bring the issues of this specific conference far beyond what the conference in itself reached.

We look forward to an interesting future of further dialogues and studies on the role of religion in conflict. May we dare to have the vision that all these efforts sometimes in the future will delete the question mark we this time put around the theme of the conference "Tools for Peace?"

Lennart Molin,
Associate General Secretary
Christian Council of Sweden

Background

For the faithful, membership in a religious community can provide the principle source of ultimate meaning by explaining the cosmos and one's place within it. Religion thus shapes worldviews and influences the believer's sense of identity in community with the faithful. Religion also provides a framework for morally correct attitudes and behaviour and, typically, a social structure complete with a leadership to guide both the spiritual and everyday life of the faithful. Thus religion can be the nexus of powerful motivational and organisational forces that shape human action of all kinds, with important implications for conflict and peace.

Conflict scholars have observed that deeply rooted, social conflicts emerge and are entrenched when people perceive that fulfilment of their basic human needs for identity, for survival and/or for security are threatened by another group. For the conflict to be resolved, these needs must be secured. Such needs cannot be traded away but it is possible to negotiate how these needs will be satisfied, thus leading to the resolution of conflict. (See, for example: John Burton, *Conflict: resolution and prevention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) and Ed Azar, *The management of protracted social conflict: theory and cases* (Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1990). As a powerful component of identity, religion intersects with conflict causes, dynamics and resolution in complex ways. History provides countless examples of how people will risk tremendous losses – including their own lives and those of loved ones – in order to defend their most cherished identity and beliefs. When the faithful feel their religious community and identity are threatened or are otherwise insecure (even if this is mostly due to political or socio-economic factors), the likelihood of conflict increases greatly. Thus conflicts with a religious dimension can escalate into seemingly intractable wars that often take much more than a political compromise to transform into lasting peaceful co-existence.

Religious leaders have a special role to play in both perpetrating and preventing violent conflict. This is because the religious beliefs, values, and practices held by the mainstream in a society are an expression of their basic worldview, a manifestation of assumptions about what exists outside the narrow confines of everyday experience. In most societies, religious leaders provide guidance on interpreting these beliefs and traditions and articulate the appropriate values and correct moral behaviour for living in alignment with these beliefs. If religious leaders legitimate policies that lead to mass violence or the dehumanizing ideology that justifies it, they directly contribute to creating an environment in which the faithful accept mass murder and may even justify it with a sense of self-sacrificing duty to a higher cause. By extension, religious leaders can also be a powerful force for preventing violence. Because religious leaders are generally accorded moral authority, if they dissent publicly from the conflict leaders and/or their ideology, they can severely undermine the legitimacy of the cause. They can also organise their followers to take actions ('barring witness') and engage in initiatives intended to stop the violence and promote alternatives.

Participants in the *Tools for Peace?* conference explored the relationship between religion, conflict, violence and peace. They discussed some of the many ways in which religiously inspired values, beliefs, and structures shape political action and are, in turn, influenced by the wider political, economic and socio-cultural context. They surveyed the range of roles of religious actors in contemporary conflict,

CONFERENCE THEMES

During each of the three days of the conference, participants were invited to explore a distinct set of questions related to the key conference themes. Although this report is organised in a different manner, it can be helpful to be aware of the focal questions. See also highlights from the workshops in textboxes throughout the report.

- **ROOTS:** exploring the interface between religion and conflict. With an empirical focus, the goal is to draw on what experience tells us about the interconnection between religious beliefs, faith-based organisations and the emergence and conduct of conflict, violence and peace.
- **VALUES:** what are the norms that guide us? Through deeper examination of the core values implicit in different religious traditions, can we identify ways of responding to militancy within our own faith communities? Are there core values that are shared between faith communities that can help to foster a common ground for peaceful co-existence and interaction?
- **TOOLS:** methods, strategies and actions. What does our experience tell us about ways that we can proactively promote more peaceful and just societies through faith-based action? What can we learn from our efforts at building peace in the midst of violence? What methodologies can help us to address militant extremism? Can we suggest general principles and identify 'tools' that can inspire others who are facing these challenges?

from the religious legitimization of violence to religiously based peacebuilding efforts, such as mediation by religious groups and efforts to promote inter-religious and intra-religious dialogue. Their discussion was channelled through three intertwined themes.

The conference provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences of how common challenges have been addressed in different contexts. It also provided a space in which people coming from different faith traditions could engage in dialogue about conflicts between their communities as well as within their communities. The conference concluded with participants identifying priorities they felt needed further attention to increase capacities for peace.

Religion: At the nexus of identity and meaning

Religion and cultural heritage and traditions provide the context within which identity is formed. This has important implications for the potential resources and methods available for peacebuilding. During the conference, some argued that people's own peacebuilding efforts will be more effective the more it is grounded in their own traditions and texts.

In her keynote speech, Deborah Weissman stressed the importance of 'particularism' in contrast to 'universalism'. Distinctive religious identities provide the cultural anchoring of moral imperatives. Religions are linked with traditional cultures that are the repository of the accumulated human wisdom of generations of people who may have faced dilemmas similar to our own. For example, stories of suffering amongst your own people can enable you to identify with the suffering of others and upholding the honour of your own people can be a motivation for decent behaviour. An exclusively universalistic approach can allow people to shirk responsibility; particularism, in contrast, enables the assumption of moral responsibility for an identifiable community through acting within the particular context of a particular people.

In Weissman's view, particularism is not synonymous with chauvinism or xenophobia and should not obscure the universal nature of God. This understanding is not always shared amongst co-religionists. She argued that the most significant 'clash' in today's world occurs within religious traditions: between the forces of fundamentalism or extremism and those of moderation and tolerance – what she calls 'religious humanism'. Nevertheless the challenge of ridding particular traditions of their elements of chauvinism is best done by the members of the groups themselves. The process of doing this within the presence of people of other faiths, however, is especially challenging and meaningful.

Participants also recognised that religion is not the only basis for identity or for deriving meaning.

GLOBALISATION AND THE DYNAMICS OF 'RELIGIOUS' CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

As a testament to the influence of globalisation and the attempt to frame a clash between 'religious civilisations', the conflict dynamics in Israel/Palestine have been a powerful catalyst for religious-political violence in Nigeria, with Muslims identifying with Palestinians and Christians identifying with Jewish Israelis. Violent strikes by Israelis against Palestinian targets are the spark for retaliatory strikes by Nigerian Muslims against Nigerian Christians and vice versa. One of the peacebuilding strategies has been to increase their knowledge of the actual situation. It has been an eye-opening experience for Nigerians to meet with Palestinians and Israelis to learn that they see their conflict as mainly about *political* (rather than religious) issues. Nigerian Christians have found it disorienting to learn that there are, in fact, Palestinian Christians and that the conflict is far more complex than the bi-polar image often portrayed in their media. The cognitive dissonance generated by increased knowledge can be a catalyst question and re-examine the roots of conflict located closer to home and thus create an opportunity for starting on the path to peace.

There are the complex web of affinities that comprise the unique complex of individual identity, as well as the crosscutting dimensions of communal identity. As a Christian Palestinian Israeli woman, Fakhira Halloun reminded the conference of the dilemmas of living in a divided society, in which her ethnonational identity as Palestinian – rather than her religious identity or her gender or other attributes – becomes more prominent in public because it is the basis on which she experiences the most extreme form of discrimination.

Halloun also described the tension that exists in the interface between her particularist individual self and her communal identity. On the one hand, she responds as an individual human being, who can relate to and engage with other individual human beings from across the conflict divide. On the other hand, the dynamics of collective identity are predominant: just as she is perceived and treated by others principally as a Palestinian, she in turn

perceives and treats Jewish Israelis principally as members of the 'other' group rather than as individuals. Thus the image of the 'enemy-other' is constructed and maintained. While the prism of individual identity can enable greater openness that can allow opportunities for transformation, it is not realistic to ignore the dimension of communally defined perspectives. This tension is not easily resolved, yet these dynamics are often a predominant feature in the encounter between communities in conflict and thus need to be addressed.

Globalisation: The influence of systemic context

In today's world, the causes and dynamics of any specific conflict must be understood within the wider context of globalisation. Globalisation refers to a set of interconnected processes linked to communication patterns, economies, governance, and socio-cultural interactions that increase interdependencies around the world. While there is no single globalisation theory, the growing awareness of the influence of globalisation has sparked important debates and insights into patterns of warfare and conflict.

One facet of globalisation is increasing interdependence, whereby events occurring in any part of the world affect other parts of the global system – either directly or indirectly. For some, the growing awareness of global interdependence has provided a motive to increase cooperation and to strengthen the international system – with its complex web of laws, norms, institutions and processes. Many have observed that economic globalisation simultaneously brings economic growth in some places while weakening economies and whole states in others. This process is coupled with growing social polarization within most societies and regions between the 'haves and the have-nots.' This has greatly increased social stress and generated fractures along which conflict has emerged.

Religious actors have not been silent in the face of these developments. As many religious groups cross national borders and may have a global presence, they can have a significant voice influencing the directions of change. Some religious actors have been at the forefront of peaceful movements to promote economic justice globally, while others have engaged with trans-national solidarity movements in support of social justice and conflict transformation in a specific situation. In the view of many participants, these initiatives manifest the true qualities of religious teachings. As Sulak Sivaraksa pointed out, 'justice' should not be misconstrued as 'just us'.

Religious people have also been at the forefront of armed movements – some of them with a religiously based ideology – to promote their aspirations, while other religious people have contributed their efforts to activities that uphold the established power structure and global system. There are also numerous cases in which the dynamics of particular conflicts with essentially local causes between people of different religions have been re-shaped by their perceptions of conflict involving co-religionists elsewhere in the world or of perceptions of pan-religious solidarity.

Structural violence and positive peace

Some conference participants argued that increasing religious militancy must be understood in the context of globalisation and the injustice it has exacerbated. Rienzie Perera stressed that in order to engage with these questions, we must further define our understanding of the structural dimension of peace and violence so as to address them in a holistic way.

In the tradition of Johan Galtung, Perera reminded the group of the distinction between *negative peace* (the absence of war) and *positive peace* (based on just relationships, where basic needs are fulfilled). For positive peace to be realised, there is a need to address both direct violence – those

THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL IN RELIGION, CONFLICT AND PEACEMAKING

Debbie Weissman argued that to counteract the negative effects of globalisation we need to stimulate a global awareness in local culture. We need to be able to identify what is 'good' in our cultures and take out what is 'bad'. Globalisation provides us with the opportunity to build across cultural bridges which promote understanding. 'In the mirror image of your cultural heritage I am able to understand my own cultural heritage better'.

Not all people are able to benefit from the more positive aspects of globalisation such as extensive travel and having the advantage of living in different countries and in this way getting to know other cultures than ones own intimately. How do we make this kind of insight available to those people? Desperate situations like that in the former Yugoslavia make people desperate. Raging inflation, for example, can make people willing to be exploited. We need to understand what the mechanisms and the endemic reasons are which create this type of situation as well as other similar situations. Why do we allow them to happen?

direct assaults upon bodily integrity through killing, wounding, rape, explicit denial of physical resources needed for survival – as well as underlying *structural violence*. These are the conditions that both jeopardise bodily integrity – such as poverty, repression and other forms of exploitation – as well as denial of other basic human needs for identity and security. It can also be linked to cultural violence, those aspects of our meaning systems – especially those gathered in religion, political ideologies, science, art, and media more generally – that legitimises direct and structural violence and perpetuates militarism. For many marginalised communities, globalisation has increased their experience of structural violence and this sense of injustice can feed militancy in response to changing their situation.

Joy Kwaje observed that we live today in a strange world which has been racked by all kinds of human-made calamities such as, social, economic, cultural and political injustices; racial, religious, ethnic and gender discrimination and violence related to civil strife. This is an indication of a dichotomy in our world where hatred, division and discrimination according to class, race, ethnicity, and religion constitute the norm of the day and conflicts, wars, hunger, diseases and abject poverty form part of our lives. There are the more developed and the underdeveloped; the rich and the poor; the strong, the weak or the vulnerable; the oppressors and the oppressed. The fact that we are discussing here the ‘oppressed’ means that there is an ‘oppressor’ somewhere behind the physical, structural, institutional complexity of society. Oppression refers to the act of suppressing, crushing, burdening or being weighed down in body and mind, by people, structures, legislatures and systems through the exercise of unjust or excessive authority and power. Therefore in this case, the ‘oppressed’ and the ‘helpless’ are those people who find themselves in the very unfortunate situation of being unreasonably overburdened by injustice and the abuse of power and authority by the institutions, structures and people exercising them.

Globalisation, cultural identity and religious values

The second half of the twentieth century was characterised by rapid social change for most of the peoples of the world. This has resulted in a dislocation for many from traditional social structures, weakened traditional sources of moral and spiritual authority, and shifted the foundations of identity.

Many expressed their concern with the transformation of cultures and values shaped through these processes. Sulak Sivaraksa voiced the distress of many in his observation of the growing influence of multinational corporate marketing values that stimulate cultural homogenisation based on a twist of Descartes dictum: “I consume, therefore I am.” From his Buddhist tradition, he observed a much more elemental universal value of “we breathe, therefore we are” – a philosophical foundation likely to lead to awareness of a spiritually integral life that nevertheless enables diversity.

The possibility of global interdependence pointed many toward the need for promoting certain universal ideals. At the same time, there is a need to promote cultural distinctiveness and be respectful of

valued traditions. Participants pointed to the risk often encountered when uniting people in common projects, when those involved lose sight of the specific and particular. The logic of globalisation tends to disregard what is singular and thus grounded in specific contexts, lives and traditions and thereby cultivating homogenization. This tendency could be counteracted by stimulating a global awareness within local cultures. Globalisation provides the opportunity to build cross-cultural bridges to promote understanding: “In the mirror image of your cultural heritage I am able to understand my own cultural heritage better.”

ARE THERE COMMON VALUES?

William F. Vendley facilitated a workshop on common values. The scale of values should be tested along the human person and not along religious lines. What we see today is, for example, Christians killing Christians and Muslims killing Muslims and killings across religions. If a religion shared values they would not kill one another. People have used violence to protect their values. Do we understand what we value even in the different religions? Maybe not.

- Can we begin to see the human person beyond religion? Religions divide us, and can/has been used to destroy humanity. The human person is the universal identity and not religion or colour or race or ethnicity.
- Is co-existence of values possible so that we can live with our differences without undermining life? Religious values have divided Sudanese people, for example, the Christians and Muslims do not agree on certain values because they do not share them.
- It was noted that there are dehumanizing elements in our preaching regardless of which religion we belong to.

Text in context:

Religion and the challenge of interpretation

Participants explored some of the complex issues surrounding the ways in which religious leaders and movements interpret sacred scriptures and traditional norms into practical principles that shape decisions and behaviours and thereby shape the prospects for conflict, violence and peace.

Within many religious communities, one of the most contested issues today is who has the legitimate authority to undertake scriptural interpretation. There is an inevitable ambiguity when seeking the meaning of sacred scripture written within a very different historical period. Most holy books include language that can be interpreted to justify oppression and violent retribution, as well as language that promotes justice and peace. This raises a fundamentally theological challenge: of these ambivalent scriptural teachings, which should be given the most prominence in today's context? Religious people committed to peacebuilding may choose to emphasise religious texts that highlight alternatives to violence and affirm the values of reconciliation and harmonious interdependence. Yet those who have a different orientation but are just as committed to their faith may challenge them.

Andrew Hoeksema distinguished between the frames of theological discourse and public policy discourse. Theology forms the first order language of core religious beliefs. Although a variety of dialects (theological variations) exist, the basic tenets and framework are shared and thus conversation is possible. Public policy discourse is a second order language, in which there is a conversation of values between politically differing people of the same faith tradition. For this conversation to be constructive, it may be necessary to begin in the first language where common ground is shared and there is space for dissent. Then the realm of the second language may be broached and forward movement can be made in that area.

Nationalism, religion and the politics of interpretation

The dilemmas of interpretation become particularly thorny when interlinked with debates over how to respond to a specific set of political conditions. Participants discussed situations throughout the world where there is a merging of nationalism and religion or where religion provides the ideological framework for a political movement. While this convergence may be somewhat inevitable, the merging religious belief and action to achieve political goals tends to generate the dynamics of inclusion (those who share our goals and our righteousness) and exclusion (those who oppose us). This tendency becomes especially pronounced when religion is used as an instrument of politics.

While religion can provide a universal foundation, nationalism is about the interests and aspirations of a specific people. Religious nationalism tends to generate internal tensions within the community as well as tensions with those who are construed as the 'Other'. The classic liberal response to this dilemma has been to promote secularism as the guiding principle for both the state and the political life of the community. Yet this is not necessarily always the most effective strategy or the most satisfactory response for the faithful – especially as secularist approaches are not necessarily any more tolerant of religious belief and practice than are more religiously based approaches.

For example, President Bush has consistently spoken of the so-called "war on terror" in terms of 'good' and 'evil' and an American mission "to rid the world of evil." Andrew Hoeksema pointed out that Bush has used language from the prophets of the Hebrew Scripture as well as familiar religious hymns to speak of the USA's role in the world as a divinely ordained nation. Those willing to speak out against this language see it as a confusion of nationalist ideology with true faithful political or Christian action. Yet a purely secularist response is not necessarily adequate to engage with the religiously framed worldview that Bush and others espouse. Hoeksema quoted Jim Wallace, saying: *"But the answer to bad theology is not secularism; it is, rather, good theology. It is not always wrong to invoke the name of God and the claims of religion in*

NATION, RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

This workshop dealt with the connection between religion and nationalism and tried to identify the circumstances under which religions are co-opted by nationalism.

One example that was brought up in the discussion was the case of former Yugoslavia where religious, social and cultural differences were oppressed. The attempt at oppressive fairness in the country worked until economic and cultural inequality led to war, and religion ultimately became attached to the conflict and created yet another separate identity from the 'other'.

the public life of a nation, as some secularists say. Where would we be without the prophetic moral leadership of Martin Luther King Jr., Desmond Tutu, and Oscar Romero?"

Culture and tradition: the lenses of interpretation

It was observed that people often confuse traditions rooted in local culture with religious requirements. Contemporary practices in many societies, such as norms guiding acceptable roles for men and for women, stem from a blend of religious and culturally shaped customary ways. Yet these practices – even if they profoundly violate international human rights norms – may be condoned by religious leaders and justified as religious.

Religious texts are therefore often interpreted by religious authorities through the lenses of their cultural tradition. Those who want to engage with the tenets of their faith tradition through the knowledge of universalist values can sometimes be in conflict with more conservative traditionalist religious authorities. Furthermore, in many societies and religious traditions, whole sections of the community have been excluded from the process of officially recognised leadership roles in interpreting religious texts.

A number of participants stressed that women should have a more prominent voice in the interpretation text so as to equalise interpretation. In many contexts, this would challenge deeply rooted cultural traditions; yet many feel that the conflict that this would surface within the religious community would ultimately be a healthy force for addressing injustice.

Values and action

A significant focus of discussion was on exploring the interconnection between the values, conflict, violence and peace. Participants noted that the core values of most religious traditions – the sacredness of life, the oneness of god and oneness of humanity, love and respect – are highly conducive to peace and harmonious co-existence. Yet the espousal of values is insufficient to prevent war and violence. In many respects, the challenge is about living our values: to move from declaration to realisation.

People can mean very different things when using the same words to refer to their values. The challenge often emerges from the interpretation – by individuals and by groups – of the application of values in a specific context. The meaning of the values then becomes filtered through the perspective of more

12

PANEL DISCUSSION, MONDAY NOVEMBER 22, 2004

Challenging religious militancy

On panel: Sulak Sivaraksa, Thailand; Fakhira Halloun, Israel/Palestine and Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera, Sri Lanka.

Rienzie Perera started the panel discussion by asking why violence is carried out in the world in the name of religion. The answer – in religion it is easy to mobilize people. Religion mobilizes people. We must acknowledge this. **Sulak Sivaraska** continued with the discussion by focusing on a new religion – consumerism. As individuals, many throughout the world are not aware of how violent some corporations are and how much of a threat they pose in spreading militancy.



From left: Rienzie Perera, Sulak Sivaraksa, Fakhira Halloun and facilitator Catherine Barnes.

Throughout the course of the panel discussion, **Halloun**, **Perera**, and **Sivaraska** engaged in dialogue that addressed how to challenge religious militancy in their own communities. **Sivaraska** stated that as a Buddhist, the approach must be peaceful. For **Halloun**, within the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the key task is the need to recognise the 'other' as a human being. For **Perera**, the establishment and continued development of inter-religious friendships can open the door to challenging religious militancy. It is a process that may take years to build, and **Perera** believes that religions can bring harmony.

During the second part of the discussion, participants were invited to contribute to the discussion and give their input on how to address the challenge of militancy. Comments included:

- Inter-religious dialogue: the paradigm to invite to dialogue has to be shifted. There must be greater participation, there cannot be effective dialogue with strangers, and relationships must be established in order to work towards achieving a common goal.
- We need to have the courage to confront our political leaders when they step outside the value system of the society.

particularistic identities, as well as the needs and interests of the actor. Furthermore, when there is an apparent contradiction between two or more religious values, how does the individual judge which ones are primary in a particular situation. Often these choices are influenced by the social order. For example, when military service is mandatory, values such as obedience to authority may be given more weight than respect for the integrity of life. Similarly, the dominant political project of the day may serve as the filter for interpreting values – as often happens when religion and nationalism are merged.

According to Andrea Bartoli, religion is a value-making reality of life. While values are experienced in a specific cultural context, they all contribute to a shared universal understanding. Each religion continuously generates values in itself and in relation to others. The *generative* form emerges when actors revisit their own religious traditions, texts, practices and invent new ways to live the same call. Many moments of reform are generative in nature – and many moments of transition are in need of generative responses. The *sustaining* form emerges when actors connect to their own religious traditions, texts, practices in order both to support and be supported by them. Many moments of celebration are sustaining in nature – and many moments of uncertainty are in need of sustaining responses. Each individual believer has a role to play in this generative and sustaining process. It is important to recognize and support those who already are practicing conflict prevention as religious persons; this is a step towards the recognition and empowerment of all who are committed to prevention from all paths of life.

Bartoli points out that values can be hotly debated and create controversy. Values are subject to different interpretations. They are manifest both as intentional and explicit references and as implicit and unintentional attitudes and behaviours. Values contribute to peacemaking if and when they are harmonized in actuality by people able to model them in real life and if and when contradictions are resolved through an integrative process that allows for solutions to emerge over time.

PANEL DISCUSSION, TUESDAY NOVEMBER 23, 2004

Ambiguous values in religions

On panel: Sara Maitland, UK; Pushpa Iyer, India; Dr Brian Palmer, USA and Charanjit AjitSingh, UK.



From left: Brian Palmer, Charanjit AjitSingh, facilitator Catherine Barnes, Sara Maitland and Pushpa Iyer.

The discussion centred on the reflection of how our individual value systems are formed through experiences, faith and traditions and in effect, how those same values guide our actions.

In this panel discussion, the panellists took a more personal approach to the discussion and there was greater involvement from the participants. **Pushpa Iyer** stated that her value system evolved in large part due to her upbringing in a Hindu traditional household, where she was taught to evaluate her actions at each and every stage. **Sara Maitland** shared with the participants the fact that she believes in stories rather than theology and that for her; there are three values beyond ethics: Otherness, kindness and joy. She also shared with the participants that she valued complexity, creativity, imagination and hope, all necessary for peacebuilding.

In the second part of the discussion, participants were asked to reflect on what were their values and how were their actions influenced by their values. A number of profound comments were made including:

- My values call me to walk the second mile with my fellow neighbour in order to understand his mental state and values. The more different we are, the more we learn.
- My values direct me to a more just, humane and peaceful way.
- The difference in the other as the other, this is an important value. What do I do with those who do not share my values? If the other is to be respected, how do I do that?

An insight developed by one group is the need to concentrate on developing and making explicit the *praxis* of living our values. It is possible to animate values through an inductive approach of exploring a specific problem and then exploring how religious values inspire appropriate responses. While religious teachings have provided parables to reveal their meaning, it is also important to link them to contemporary forms of action. In the Christian tradition, Jesus is understood as living a life of nonviolence. This inspiration can be connected to recent historical figures, such as Gandhi, who stressed that ‘peace is the way’ – both the method and the goal – and acted dramatically and effectively on this philosophy.

One group shared personal stories of peacebuilding encounters with people of different faiths. They realised that a common thread throughout all the stories was the theme of hospitality and generosity. While seemingly simple, these values are directed explicitly towards outwardly manifest action and are one of the core elements that can enable peaceful co-existence.

An important observation from another group is that the interpretation of values can be, in itself, a source of disagreement and division both within and between religious communities. These differences are likely to be endemic – and may, in fact, foster dynamic engagement in moral and spiritual inquiry as well as be a source for tension and conflict. Yet the importance of peace should be something that transcends these differences. Peace should not be dependent on agreement or on sameness; it principally requires a commitment to respect for others.

Some participants argued that acting on values is influenced by gender and culture, in addition to religious faith. Women, it was argued, tend to focus on the quality of life for everyone involved when making their moral decisions. Women act in the world by dealing with relations instead of abstract moral values. Others pointed out that gender is not the only factor. Cultural background also influences values. Westerners, for example, tend to give primacy to rational decision-making and tend to devalue those oriented toward more expressive relational values.

14

Universalism and particularism: values in tension?

Participants explored the relationship between what many referred to as ‘universal’ values and more specifically ‘religious’ values. Some argued that values do not only stem from religion; they can be inherent in the community. Historic globalisation has enabled the development of a common framework of norms and values. This framework has been inspired by the ethical teachings of world religions. Yet it exists outside of any specific religious tradition and has its fullest expression in international law.

A few religious leaders (predominantly Christian and from the US) were a vital force behind the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This became the foundation for developing the international architecture of human rights. The universal values enshrined in these standards have been dismissed by some as a Western construct that is not applicable in their religious and cultural tradition. Yet these standards and the values they protect are cherished by others from society as a powerful force for justice.

This observation led to a discussion about the tension between ‘universal’ values in contrast with more ‘particularist’ values and also about the variable interpretations of universal values. Some argued that, based on these universal values, it is important to identify and keep what is ‘good’ in our cultures and change what is ‘bad’. An example discussed by one group was the widespread prac-

NATION, RELIGION AND POLITICAL POWER IN GUJARAT, INDIA

Communal violence has wracked Gujarat periodically for decades and reached an apex in 2002 with anti-Muslim riots in which thousands were killed and hundreds of mosques were destroyed, with allegations of the state’s complicity in organising and failing to protect this minority from the planned violence. The violence has been seen as linked to the larger political project of ending India’s official secularism to establish a Hindu nation-state. Fr. Cedric Prakash explained the ideological roots of Hindutva as based on religion, race, and an idealised set of Brahminical norms. It draws its momentum from the fear, predominantly of upper-caste Hindus, that Muslims will gain dominance. Making alliances with lower-caste Hindus on the basis of common religious heritage, they swell the ranks of those who will engage in the struggle against the Muslim ‘intruders’. There are no centralised religious leadership structures within Hinduism and multiple priests can make their claim to authority. Some of these have been leading figures in the Hindutva and the incitement to violence.

Women have played a complex role in this situation. In the deeply patriarchal nature of Gujarati society, violence is gendered. It is difficult for women to act outside the roles expected of them by their community. Hindu women have not, for the most part, stood up against the violence against Muslim women. Nevertheless, there are small numbers of courageous women who have been crossing conflict divides to talk with each other and to develop strategies for joint action to address the violence.

tice of female genital mutilation, which is sometimes justified as a religiously mandated practice. The process of challenging such deeply entrenched practices – and the beliefs and values that sustain them – indicates the potential intensity of inter-faith and intra-faith conflict over how values are understood and manifested in contemporary life.

Religion and war

World history has been shaped by wars conducted in the quest to convert others and thereby expand the religion. Wars of this kind have become uncommon. Wars characterised as having a religious dimension today are most typically political conflicts between religiously defined communal groups, often with a long history of strife. Yet few would say they are predominantly about religion *per se*. For example, many pointed out that conflicts in situations as diverse as Northern Ireland or Israel and Palestine are not principally about religion, even if some of the main protagonists have a strongly defined religious identity. There are, however, a growing range of violent conflicts involving groups with an explicitly religious ideology and seemingly religiously defined aspirations – from Hindu nationalists, to various Islamicist movements, to right-wing Christian survivalists.

The experience of conflict between Christians and Muslims in northern Nigeria provides insight into the local and global forces driving seemingly ‘religious’ conflict. Although the root causes are principally political and economic, they interface with ethnic identity and cultural traditions and are refracted through the lens of religion. Behind the scenes political manipulation – in a contemporary rendition of the divide-and-rule system originating in British colonisation – usually precedes the outbreak of communal violence. Yet most of those involved are fervent believers and feel themselves motivated to defend their religion, amidst an atmosphere in which inter-religious animosity has been reproduced and legitimised by religious leaders. Disentangling religious doctrine from political and socio-economically rooted causes is extremely challenging.

Participants explored both the internal roots of conflict – including the psychological and emotional qualities of greed, fear and hatred and dehumanisation – as well as the external roots of conflict, from injustice to political ambition. Some observed that a key problem arises when the convergence between essentially religious authority is too closely merged with political power. In these conditions, it becomes possible for those seeking political power to manipulate religious belief to promote their own interests.

Religion and violence: an unholy alliance?

Debbie Weissman observed that religion has, in many cases, fanned the flames of extremism. On one hand, many people of faith seem to have absolute faith, which allows no questioning of authority and makes no room for other truths. When present-day reality is interpreted through ancient scriptures, the faithful may lose touch with others and their human needs. The expectation of rewards for actions in the world-to-come, may enable violence to others in the world-that-is. Yet at the same time, this phenomenon needs to be contextualised as marginal in most cases. It may appear more prevalent because the extremist, violent forms of religions are given a great deal more exposure than the beliefs and behaviours of the average believer. “Harmony among groups doesn’t sell newspapers.”

Nevertheless, there is a long history throughout the world of religious institutions being a significant voice in legitimising violence and warfare. There are also cases where religious groups have been directly involved in conducting this warfare, even in its most brutal and oppressive forms. The pattern of actual behaviour reveals a profound ambivalence within most religious traditions, especially in cases where they are intimately connected with political power.

RELIGIOUSLY MOTIVATED NONVIOLENCE

Sulak Sivaraksa from Thailand began the workshop on Religiously Motivated Nonviolence by introducing nonviolence from a Buddhist perspective. Buddhist practices such as meditation and breathing exercises help one look within and transform anger into love and compassion for your opponent. Several participants in the workshop thanked Sulak for his remarks but expressed how difficult it can be to find the peace within and to refrain from using violence when witnessing family and friends being subjected to violence.

Sulak commented that hatred comes from one’s own fears, and by confronting those fears; one can learn to feel compassion for one’s opponent. To forgive means to have no fear. In response, a participant pointed out that we should try to turn enemies into ‘opponents’, stating that when dealing with an opponent, you can learn something about yourself.

In a debate over religiously sanctioned use of violence that was sparked over the motives of *Al'Quaida*, participants questioned whether religiously inspired values ever allow the use of injustice against others to achieve justice for one's own group. While most reacted strongly to the suggestion that *Al'Quaida* might be a legitimate movement, some raised the difficult question of who determines the legitimacy of responses to challenge perceived injustice – especially if the struggle is as asymmetrical as the struggle against imperialism? It was argued that it could never be justified to deliberately target ordinary people (non-combatants) as the central strategy in the quest for justice. Some did, however, observe the troubling problem of how the use of spectacular violence is often the most direct way to raise the stakes so as to get the perpetrator's cause taken seriously.

Religiously motivated nonviolence: internal and external disarmament

Participants identified a number of profound ethical dilemmas related to the use of violence. This has been a perennial debate within liberation theology, as well as the older 'just war' debates. While many espoused nonviolence as preferable – and some are deeply committed to the active practice of nonviolence amidst violent conflict – others questioned its universality. Many are especially troubled by situations encountered by groups who feel themselves to be extremely oppressed and with few other options for addressing their condition; when their situation is ignored by the world, they are seemingly left to fend for themselves against an oppressor with far greater coercive power. In these cases, it can seem that violence is the only tactic that works to draw attention to their situation and to change the balance of power. Too often, those who use exclusively peaceful means are ignored by others and/or crushed by their oppressors.

An alternative is the struggle for social justice through active nonviolence. If active nonviolence is to be effective as a strategic choice – as well as a moral choice – it needs active support. There is a need for more strategic thinking about methods as well as support for its effectiveness in the globalised world.

Sulak Sivaraksa also pointed to the spiritual challenge of nonviolence. It requires learning to disarm yourself internally – as well as to work on the external disarmament of physical weapons. This means developing peace within and transforming images of others as enemies into full recognition of their humanity.

One of the strong themes of the conference was the need for people of faith to actively speak out against injustice and work for peace. It is not possible to embody the fullest expression of religious values while remaining silent on profound violations of those values. It is important for religious leaders to challenge others within their own faith community and political leaders who might advocate extremist militancy rather than to pretend it does not exist. Those of faith can be 'role models', reaching across conflict divides to engage others in the search for peace and justice – even if they are those who espouse very different perspectives. Not to do so is to allow the forces of injustice and war to act unimpeded by voices for peace.

Gender, violence and religion

In communal and ethnic wars, women become strategic targets; rape, sexual slavery and assault also become deliberate instruments of war. In many places, sexual violence is an act of humiliation against a woman and her relatives. This has implications for the process of reconciliation and

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACE

Joy Kwaje and Safaa Elagib from the Sudan were the animators in this workshop.

Safaa (from Darfur): Religion is a very strong instrument to oppress, especially regarding women. We need to use religions and gender perspectives as tools for peace.

Joy (from Khartoum): There is hope for the oppressed and the marginalized even in the Sudan, and hope is a tool for peace! The structures are patriarchal structures. Women in the Sudan have to find their own space and ways. Since 1997 women in the Sudan have networked for peace.

From the discussion:

- How can we work together, learn and inspire each other. How to go forward? It is important that we trust each other.
- There is something in the 'female culture' where dialogue and participation should be seen as tools. While men are usually more focused on strength, dialogue is the main instrument for change. The female capacity for peace must be used in a more focused way.
- Women have a different attitude to leadership. Men tend to go for competition. 'Men wants a good job, and women wants to do their job well.' The role of women as leaders!
- Talk about 'Human Skills', not only men and women skills. Make men more human!
- UN Resolution 1325 is a tool for building a network all over the world. The resolution is binding.
- Take up the gender perspective by engendering the religious leadership. Identify the place of women in the religious leadership.
- 25 November is the international day 'Violence against women'. Make the violence known all over the world.

healing. Murder is a trauma owned by the society and can be shared by others. In many contexts, however, the crime of rape is treated very differently than other forms of violence. Many times rape is a silent issue. The woman may not report it because of the 'shame' it may bring to her family and herself. Wider knowledge of the rape might also affect her future prospects. She may also fear that a decision to report it will be met with revenge, which can also have further negative consequences. Therefore the trauma of rape is often a burden carried by the woman on her own.

Participants noted that religious leaders are often complicit in sustaining this situation. They may either actively condone it or passively ignore it. Only rarely have religious leaders taken an active stance on speaking out on violence against women. Yet for peace to be addressed seriously, this violence and other forms of gender oppression must be actively challenged. Some participants are using feminist approaches to engage with their own faith traditions so as to create the foundations for gender justice in their religious community.

Religion, peace and preventing deadly violence

According to Andrea Bartoli, the use of violence is always a choice, often one that has been in the making for a long time. Violence is relational. Violence is always interactive and systemic, so prevention must be equally interactive and systemic. Prevention is a product of the individual person and of sustained relationships; it is both a personal choice and a collective effort. Therefore, to prevent is to participate in an interactive system of human relations in which decisions will – more frequently than not, more commonly than not, more effectively than not – reduce the level of violence, the risk of its use and/or minimize its consequences. Prevention necessitates communication, connection, and a willingness to correct the negative and to celebrate the positive, respectfully, persistently and openly.

Bartoli explained that religious prevention of conflict cannot rest on implementing already made values or enforcing a strict and exclusivist interpretation of them. Rather it is a process of mutually respectful engagement, in which each party accepts the responsibility of empathy and self-restrained response. Minimizing pain and suffering is a step towards peace. Maximizing the chances for creative solutions is another step. Many are already coping with oppression, injustice, and violence through religious resources that allow them not to retaliate, escalate or seek revenge. Many others are investing in prevention strategies by connecting, frequenting, knowing the 'other'. Often they do not 'name' these actions as conflict prevention but rather practicing them as reasonable, obvious, natural.

Bartoli pointed out that religious prevention of conflict already exists in many contexts. Religious actors of all denominations and traditions have invested tremendously in prevention of conflicts and peace, even if these efforts are not always successful. Religious prevention will not abolish violence and war but it can make these responses less com-

TAKE BACK OUR FAITH CAMPAIGN – 2004 USA ELECTIONS

In the USA, there has been a growing convergence between the 'Religious Right' (drawn from predominantly Christian but also Jewish and Muslim traditions) and the Republican Party. The 'Take Back our Faith Campaign' was launched by progressive American Christians led by the faith-based NGO Sojourners. By developing a petition and a media strategy, they aimed at spreading the message at a grassroots level. They wanted to make explicit their belief that religion and politics are not a closed conversation and to emphasise that "God is Not a Republican or a Democrat". They admonished political parties and candidates to avoid the exploitation of religion or congregations for partisan political purposes. They identified seven issues they believe to be religious concerns, and five of them can be seen below:

- WE BELIEVE THAT POVERTY – CARING FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE – IS A RELIGIOUS ISSUE. Do the candidates' budget and tax policies reward the rich or show compassion for poor families? Do their foreign policies include fair trade and debt cancellation for the poorest countries? (*Matthew 25:35–40, Isaiah 10:1-2*)
- WE BELIEVE THAT WAR – AND OUR CALL TO BE PEACEMAKERS – IS A RELIGIOUS ISSUE. Do the candidates' policies pursue "wars of choice" or respect international law and cooperation in responding to real global threats? (*Matthew 5:9*)
- WE BELIEVE THAT TRUTH TELLING IS A RELIGIOUS ISSUE. Do the candidates tell the truth in justifying war and in other foreign and domestic policies? (*John 8:32*)
- WE BELIEVE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS – RESPECTING THE IMAGE OF GOD IN EVERY PERSON – IS A RELIGIOUS ISSUE. How do the candidates propose to change the attitudes and policies that led to the abuse and torture of Iraqi prisoners? (*Genesis 1:27*)
- WE BELIEVE THAT OUR RESPONSE TO TERRORISM IS A RELIGIOUS ISSUE. Do the candidates adopt the dangerous language of righteous empire in the war on terrorism and confuse the roles of God, church, and nation? Do the candidates see evil only in our enemies but never in our own policies? (*Matthew 6:33, Proverbs 8:12–13*)

mon, less accepted, less deadly, less destructive. Many religious communities, of very different faiths, have chosen to live peacefully. His impression is that these voices are stronger than before.

In addition to being a potential force for preventing deadly conflict, religious faith can also provide powerful resources for sustaining a population through the trauma of war and providing energy to begin the process of regeneration and reconciliation.

Dealing with difference: processes for dialogue and engagement

According to Weissman, we must strive to emphasize within each of our cultures those elements that promote a more open and compassionate attitude towards other human beings. The goal should not be the eradication of group identities but their empowerment through ensuring the safety and security of the different groups. Weissman argued that the peaceful, more humanistic texts must be given greater weight than the violent, exclusivist or anti-humanistic ones. In order to be aggressive or racist, one doesn't need divine revelation. The innovation, revelation was needed for the more positive vision of humanity and peace.

Participants pointed to the difference between tolerance and acceptance: if I accept you as you are, I acknowledge that you are different and have different views but share the same rights in society. Participants stressed the need to strive for balance: to learn how to work together and, at the same time, to include the specific and particular. Yet the challenge of inclusiveness can be difficult. There is a need to find ways to relate to people of other communities.

Many participants are struggling to find ways to respond to or to engage with those from their own religious tradition that interpret values in very different ways. They are also exploring ways to engage with people from other faiths. Direct engagement through dialogue is one of the most important methodologies for stimulating greater understanding and fostering relationships. Through listening and seeking to understand both the common ground and points of difference, more respectful and informed engagement can emerge.

Participants gave examples of dialogue on religious values within the medium of small group processes. There were also examples of large scale public political dialogue, such as the 'Take Back Our Faith' campaign in the USA that utilised large-scale public communications in an effort to engage religious people in thinking about their politics and voting preferences from a different perspective than commonly evident in the media and many religious bodies.

18

Education: Importance of knowledge and construction of worldviews

GOD HAS 99 NAMES: ARTS FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SWEDEN

Sweden is one of the most secular countries in the world. Yet there are more than one million people living in the country for whom faith and religion play an important role in everyday life. How are we to learn to live together? How can we create a sustainable dialogue? How can religious plurality be a source of spiritual and social renewal for human communities in the struggle for justice, peace and a sustainable environment? Maybe this is one of the major challenges of the new millennium.

God has 99 Names is an interactive innovative exhibition-project that seeks to create meeting places for a serious dialogue about living amidst diversity, about faith and life, and how to increase our sympathy for different ways of being, believing and living together. There are specially trained guides at the exhibition from various world religions. By 2004, more than 200 young guides have been trained in Sweden and are now connected in a national network called The Swedish Multi-Faith Guides. They will continue to serve as a resource for inter-religious understanding and promoting tolerance in their society.

Education is one of the most powerful mediums for shaping understanding and attitudes toward others, as well as to develop knowledge of one's own tradition. Participants explored the ways in which education can be a force both for promoting peaceful coexistence as well as for conflict. They examined formal education through school systems, religious education in the home and faith community, and other methods of civic education. They were aware, however, that much formal education is countered by the messages and ideas within popular culture. This learning takes place outside the classroom, with significant inputs from TV and videogames, and often has ambiguous messages about values and religion.

Modalities for education in and about religion

Several observed that it is precisely because the faithful are not always well-educated about the contents of the guiding principles and key scriptures of their

religion that they become susceptible to 'fringe' interpretations that can be linked to violent and extremist militant religious ideologies.

Many stressed the need for the faithful to have education in their own religious tradition, as well as education in the history of one's own and other religions. A way to counteract erroneous images of the 'other' through religion is to encourage study of the history of religion. These historical accounts of religion need to be written by professors of history, not religious leaders.

There is a need to teach young people that though our religious traditions are different we do share similar values. One group recommended the need for inter-religious education which encourages respect for other faiths and prepares students to cast aside barriers of prejudice and intolerance and to recognize the 'other' as an equal and not as an opponent. Promote the study of the sacred texts in search of shared values that students could adopt in everyday life. One group of participants recommended that comparative education of the history of religion should be taught at school whereas more theological education could be the responsibility of the family and of faith communities. Nevertheless, religious teaching in the home is less controlled and may result in distorted knowledge of the core principles of the faith.

Teaching of otherness; teaching of tolerance

Religious differences that can generate divides are passed from generation to generation and written into history textbooks, perpetuated in discussions between teachers and their students and between parents and their children. These differences of belief have contributed to violence, armed conflicts and wars throughout the centuries. Yet the potential for change exists. By developing educational curricula that encourages young pupils to respect differences and to appreciate common values we can help them to overcome prejudices and generate cultures of peace. Despite the fact that we have different faiths, we share common values and a common goal for peace.

An important place to start is in revising the official textbooks, as they are a key foundation for teaching. We can strive for improvement of the international education system by fostering the cultivation of knowledge, critical thinking and global awareness among young students. Textbooks should be revised to remove the established stereotypes and preconceived ideas that reflect a negative view of the 'other'. Yet the role of teachers is also significant. They feed the minds of the students and often put personal experiences into the often rather dull texts. They can be agents of peace, helping their students to interpret texts in ways that support tolerance and peace-promoting attitudes and behaviours, even when the textbooks include distorting images and ideas.

Participants observed that there are not many resources currently available for understanding the interface between religion, conflict and peace. Further applied research is needed for developing greater insight into how to address these challenges.

Role of youth

During the conference, a group of younger participants decided to organise a working group to explore these issues from a youth perspective. They identified guiding principles and areas for future

TEACHING 'OTHERNESS' IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD

Fawzia Al Ashmawi conducted a study of history textbooks in Mediterranean countries for UNESCO. The research indicated a consistent pattern of difference between the predominantly Christian and the predominantly Muslim countries in their comparative depictions of world history. The European textbooks tend to depict Europe as the epicentre of important historical events and are generally silent on the events regarded as landmarks in the history of the Arabs and Islamic nations. Most do not acknowledge the contributions made by Arab-Muslim philosophers and scientists to the European Renaissance and European culture more widely.

While European authors tend to use omission and neglect in ways that mask historical developments, Muslim authors tend to make use of an emphatic terminology and overvalue historical facts in order to stress the Muslim's past glory. Yet they also tend to leave out information about 'others' and highlight information reflecting their own concerns. These methods of omission and emphatic presentation of facts tend to, on one hand, distort young Christians' image of Muslims while, on the other hand, encourage the young Muslims' religious and patriotic feelings to make them proud of their glorious past and stimulate hope that they will some day recover former glory.

Since 11 September 2001, there is increasing emphasis in European secondary schools on contemporary Islam. Yet there is distortion of basic tenets. For example, the term Jihad is commonly translated as 'holy war' rather than the spiritual or nonviolent physical struggle against evil; the term 'martyrdom' is associated with terrorism and suicide bombers. Both concepts are used to imply Islamic rejection of European modernity with an associated commentary on 'fundamentalism, fanaticism and the danger of intolerance'. Al Ashmawi worries that this will further fuel misunderstandings and entrench negative images of Muslim people as the 'other'.

cooperation. They highlighted the unique ability of young people to honestly critique past systems and patterns, interpret current situations with fresh lenses, as well as to work and dream for a peaceful future with vibrant energy and idealism. Yet the role, perspective and voice of young adults (and youth in general) is too often overlooked and sometimes ignored in both the arena of religious leadership and community as well as the arena of political theorizing and organizing. The young adult age group are on the frontlines of violent conflict, both as fighters and as people adversely affected by physical and systemic violence. They therefore wanted to affirm the significance of young people as stakeholders for both the enduring consequences of conflict and the promising possibilities of peaceful coexistence and tolerance as “ours to inherit, live with, work for, and pass on to subsequent generations in our lifetimes.”

The group felt it timely, during the International Decade for Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World (2000–2010), to define their own action plan. They committed themselves to creating and continuing a network of those gathered together during the conference. The group affirmed the opportunities provided by the organisers of this conference. However they also wanted to offer detailed recommendations to increase young adult attendance to a minimum of a quarter of all participants and to increase participation and voice through featuring young adult resource persons as keynote speakers, panellists and workshop leaders. Accordingly:

“The Young Adults are grateful for the opportunity to attend and fully participate in the *Tools for Peace?* Conference and for the encouragement and the support of all attendees in the discussion and action of our group. We see a clear need for the role of young adults everywhere to increase in inter-religious dialogue and peace-building conversations and functions. We plan on continuing as a working group in the form of an ongoing network. We are excited by the potential of future conferences with greater leadership and participation on the part of young adults, and even a parallel conference with a focus on young adults and youth in religion and conflict.”

SANT’EGIDIO AND FAITH-BASED MEDIATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique is a multi-religious society of Catholics, Muslims and Animists, which was gripped by war for decades that left more than a million people dead. For years, both the government and the insurgency movement had resisted peace talks.

Founded in the late 1960s, the Rome-based Sant’Egidio community had links with Mozambique from the 1970s, in particular through friendship with a young priest Jaime Gonçalves who later became the Bishop of Beira and was a leading figure in the later peace initiatives. In 1982–83 it hosted a range of informal discussions that helped to improve relations between the Frelimo government and the Catholic Church. It was also able to establish communications with the Renamo insurgency, with whom it helped to negotiate the release of kidnapped missionaries. In 1990, Sant’Egidio offered to host peace talks and their offer was accepted. They mediated the dialogue between Frelimo and Renamo for the next 27 months in a process that led to the Rome Agreement. Many credited the success of the process to their independence, good relations with the parties and the fact they were not trying to promote their own agenda but to create opportunities for the parties themselves to find solutions.

According to Andrea Bartoli, Sant’Egidio is a religious community which, inspired by faith, was challenged to participate in peace building and mediation in this context. Their main advantage was maybe that they did not have a ‘hidden Agenda’; they merely wanted to contribute to peace and their friendships with those involved were an important resource for this role. They realised that it is not the task of outsiders to identify or create the solutions; solutions must be developed amongst the parties who are involved in the process. Sustainable peace cannot be imposed.

Sant’Egidio looked upon the mediation as a political process that, in theory, could have been done by a more secular NGO. However their relations with structures on the ground and relationship with a respected local bishop provided a unique context. The main role of faith was the fact that the people involved were driven and inspired by their own faith. They were personally involved and they cared. Furthermore, the moment was ripe. People wanted peace, and Sant’Egidio was the ‘tool’ available in the right moment.

From motivation to action: Religion and peacebuilding

Creating safe spaces for engagement across conflict divides

On the last day of the conference, a group of participants met to discuss experiences and needs for dialogue-based processes and peacebuilding training. They highlighted the importance of building trust and strengthening relationships across communities divided by conflict as an important quality for building sustainable peace. This raises the challenge of creating spaces for peace where people from across conflict divides can come together.

Peacebuilding training can address many and varying needs. Training opportunities can be times for exchange of strategies, exposure to new ideas, and personal renewal and encouragement. Sometimes people will gather to engage in dialogue directly related to their conflict.

Other forms of peacebuilding workshops do not focus directly on the conflict but on skills, and include participants from the different divided communities. Participants also pointed to examples from their own practice that used creative and practical means to gather people, such as teaching music and art in violence-ravaged areas; uniting to work on neighbourhood development issues; re-building public gardens, playgrounds for children, places for neighbourhood people to meet and environmental care through 'urban garden initiatives'; football games with people from different villages.

Participants identified some of the things they have learned from experiences of trying to bring together people from divided communities. One of the biggest challenges is to foster spaces that feel safe for engagement, especially for those who might be taking great risks to meet with others from the 'enemy' group. They recognised that:

- The ownership of the space—for example, who has organized the event, who has issued invitations, etc—is crucial. It is important for it to be recognized as neutral by all parties. It is helpful to remember that people may perceive a bias (even when intentions are good) unless care is taken to share power and decision-making among the affected communities.

- There are societal forces which exert pressure to keep people from conflict-divided communities apart. External support for spaces for people to come together is sometimes useful (when done with invitation and cooperation from affected-communities). This external support may be necessary for a greater amount of time than anticipated, for it takes time for violence-affected peoples to develop substantial trust and new patterns of relating.

Some people have had experiences of supporting reconciliation processes in situations where land disputes – specifically when displaced people's land has been claimed by others – are a prominent feature. This is a challenge in many areas of the world and for which there are no easy answers. Peace builders have sought to address this challenge in positive ways.

- It can be helpful to concentrate on process when seeking ways to address this justice issue: to provide both displaced people and new settler's opportunities (separately and possibly together) to air their views, their feelings, and to work towards solutions.

- Processes need to include space to grieve, to express anger, despair and other emotions in a situation that has irrevocably changed life from as it was during an earlier time.

- It may be valuable to support women's leadership in the process. Gender is an important valuable in how people deal with post-conflict development. There may be a tendency for women to more easily focus on practical issues to support the livelihood of families.

Large-scale calamities – both 'natural' and those caused by people – can destroy peacebuilding projects of relatively long-standing. It is difficult to generalize responses to these situations; sometimes calamities can bring people together across divided

THE PASTOR & THE IMAM: FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES TO TRANSFORM COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

Communal violence between Muslims and Christians has rocked Nigeria in recent years. Kaduna marks the ostensible border between the Muslim north and the Christian south and is home to migrants from all over the country. An estimated 2,500 people died in violence triggered when Kaduna state introduced Sharia in early 2000 and it has been the site of communal violence ever since.

Reverend James Wuye was once a self-described militant Christian youth and Imam Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa a radical Muslim activist. They freely admit not only to taking part in violence in their younger days but also to fuelling it. During clashes in 1992, Wuye lost his right hand and Ashafa saw his spiritual mentor killed. These events prompted a period of soul-searching.

Later, both began to question the cost of the violence and turned to the Bible and the Koran, where they found passages showing commonalities between Islam and Christianity and calling on believers to be peacemakers. Yet when they first met face to face in 1995, distrust lingered. At the urging of a civil-society leader, they agreed to try to work out some sort of understanding. Ashafa proposed a public debate, which evolved into a forum on the concepts of salvation in Christianity and Islam. The debate went off peacefully – helped by a decision to take only written questions from the floor and discard those deemed inflammatory – and a tentative friendship was born between the two men. Now they are working together, along with other spiritual leaders, to create space for peace and understanding.

Today Wuye and Ashafa lead the Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum and the Inter-Faith Mediation Center, organizations they founded to create better understanding between the communities and to mediate when violence occurs. They hold workshops on conflict resolution. They've produced a weekly series on local television, quoting passages of the Koran and the Bible showing common ground between Islam and Christianity. They have written a book called *The Pastor and the Imam: Responding to Conflict*. They meet with both sides in simmering disputes to try to prevent violence. If clashes do break out, they rush to the scene to try to quell tensions, at times putting themselves in danger.

The pair argues that religious differences are not at the root of Nigeria's crises, but that leaders whip up religious fervour for political gain, which is compounded by the poverty amongst large numbers of unemployed youth who are willing to use any opportunity to loot.

communities. Strategies in responding almost always need to be developed according to the specific circumstances of each given case.

Sustaining peace builders

Another important theme addressed by participants was on ways of sustaining peacebuilding practice, given the intense pressure and difficulties typically encountered in efforts to transform protracted conflict.

Some pointed at the need to focus on the long-term vision of the changes peace builders aim to foster and in turn, the type of society they want to create. This can mean that setbacks along the way can be put into perspective and be a source for learning rather than devastating debilitation.

It is also important to foster networks of people working towards shared visions. These can help to both create strategic momentum and also sustain peacemaking efforts, even when there are serious setbacks. The sense of being a part of a community of peace builders – even if this community is geographically dispersed – can provide emotional and intellectual sustenance for peace activists who are often under considerable pressure in their own contexts.

The importance of self-care was also addressed. The adage *love thy neighbour as thy self* takes on a new meaning in this context: in order to love others fully (and to act upon that love over the long-term); it is necessary to love yourself and care for your self.

Ideas for action: Tools for Peace?

On the last day of the conference, participants brainstormed ideas for taking forward the discussions from the conference into practical action. In particular, they recognized the importance of ensuring that voices and peacebuilding strategies from the global South to gain greater strength and visibility.

22

Networks of religious actors for peace

- Ensure that participants in this conference can stay in touch with each other.
- Visit senior religious leaders in your area to advocate their participation in global networks for religious peacebuilding.
- Create an advisory group that can be a referral resource in times of emerging crisis and conflict. This could be an important link in forming a ‘rapid response’ network of religious people committed to prevention and peaceful responses to violent conflict.
- Foster regional networks of well-known religious leaders and experts – including women – to interpret religious concepts for peace and hold an annual gathering or produce an annual publication to raise awareness and strengthen the network.
- Foster a network of religious women peace workers capable of providing mutual solidarity and development, as well as initiatives for joint action.
- The Middle East and North Africa is a region where a women’s network needs to be founded; this could be assisted by inviting multiple women from the region to international conferences where they can both get to know each other and reflect some of the diversity of experiences and views in the region.
- Promote exchanges between religiously based peace initiatives. Specific suggestions included participation in the Sulha reconciliation gathering in Israel/Palestine in 2005 and a delegation of Israeli and Palestinian peace builders to Nigeria.
- Develop ways to support the well-being of peace builders.

Advocacy and awareness-raising

- Identify strategies for lobbying governments.
- Use creative and compelling strategies – including the use of ‘media spectacle’ events – to get greater media attention to faith-based peacebuilding and prevention.
- Work with radio and television stations to have programs with well-known religious leaders discussing contemporary issues and peace initiatives.
- Use other forms of public communication, such as exhibitions, posters, and advertisements to reach the wider community with peace messages.

- Issue a press statement by religious leaders on the International Day of Violence against Women.
- Use humour!

Activities and training in peacebuilding, nonviolence and reconciliation

- Create 'safe spaces' that can be meeting places for those from conflict zones to meet each other to foster connections between people.
- As appropriate, support international unarmed presence (inter-faith peace teams) in war zones.
- Need to develop further ideas and methodologies for engaging with 'extremists' from one's own religious traditions ('intremism').
- Conferences like 'Tools for Peace?' offer important opportunities for learning; support and meeting others engaged in similar work and therefore make a great contribution to networks and to resourcing the work.
- Offer more training opportunities, especially those that are culturally appropriate and use local resources and knowledge.
- Ensure that women and youth have training opportunities and are involved in training processes.
- Ensure that religious groups are informed of and work to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. Put priority on protecting children, women and the elderly in conflict zones.

Knowledge resources

- Bring experiences and ideas from this conference back to one's own communities and congregations.
- Develop methods for transferring high-quality academic research in accessible forms for lay people and grassroots initiatives and ensure that researchers are informed of developments and activities practiced on the ground.
- Document and publish stories of religious peace work that is easily accessible for public education.
- Undertake research on gender, religion, violence and conflict so as to better understand the roles of women in conflict and peace as well as inter-linkages between patriarchy and the causes of violence.
- Produce a bibliography of religiously based peace work and educational materials.
- Deepening knowledge of the peace-oriented teachings of sacred texts can be a resource for peace.
- Develop resources for religious education for peace.
- Collect prayers for interfaith services and gatherings that can be widely shared.
- Create accessible materials on shared values from religious traditions and human rights norms that can be used in peacebuilding activities.

23

Tools for Peace web page

- Create a forum on the internet (such as a blog or a chatroom) to share information, connect with others, and share contact information of relevant organisations and individuals.

Funding resources

- Identify sources for funding and share information within a network of religiously based peace builders.

Research and educational needs in exploring religion, conflict and peace

On the last day of the conference, a group interested in research and education met and developed the following observations and recommendations:

- Our knowledge of actual experience is always in the making. There is a need for further research, especially empirical. In particular, there should be an effort to systematically investigate the many relevant efforts currently underway and to explore possibilities for collective learning processes.
- Grassroots experiences are under-represented in current research programmes, yet organizations working on the ground could provide more authentic and relevant research.
- It is imperative to learn from other research and studies in other places in the world and to exchange notes and practices.

- It is proposed to operate ‘globally’ – e.g., globally and locally – by exploring the possibilities of mutuality, finding the people interested in research in areas of conflict and to encourage them to study and make research available.
- In particular, it is suggested to follow the emergence of ‘creative research’ within religion to tackle various religious problems (such as the one on going in Jerusalem around the issue of the Temple Mount).
- There is a shared desire to connect practice and research based on working with grassroots organizations so as to engage with their work and enhance their learning and understanding through research. Such an approach is both necessary and difficult but could be facilitated by connecting research institutes with grassroots organizations.
- It is also important to encourage research institutes to be active in education for the public, such as by working within schools to provide religious education.
- It is proposed to create a common database, resources etc. that will be shared by different organizations and research institutes (Universities etc.) and use what is currently available on the web (in different Universities and other institutes) possibly through the LPI. One original feature of this particular proposal is to accompany the interaction through co-mentorship.

Youth involvement in inter-faith peacebuilding

Local Level:

- Extensive/Intensive Capacity building programmes for youth-based inter-faith peacebuilding should be supported.
- International organisations should offer information, capacity assistance and partnership opportunities to youth-led initiatives for inter-faith peacebuilding.
- Increased collaboration with youth groups for purpose of data gathering on causes of conflict at local levels.
- Spirituality among young people should be encouraged and supported.

National Level:

- Youth groups should be supported in the organisation of national-level colloquia in order to create space for dialogue, cooperation and peace development.
- Initiatives that promote inter-faith partnership and reconciliation for common grounds should be encouraged (i.e., action against corruption, injustice, bad governance, debt relief/economic justice).
- National level inter-faith programmes should work to mainstream and improve the visibility of youth in the Decade to Overcome Violence campaign by the World Council of Churches.
- Positive examples of inter-faith dialogue and cooperation should be emphasised and disseminated through partnership with the media and publication.

International Level:

- Youth groups with required/appreciated capacity should be involved in international activities related to inter-faith peacebuilding.
- The Young Leaders Network on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and Development (developed out of Youth/Young Adults Working Group at the Tools for Peace? Conference) should be strengthened/ defined to serve as an information dissemination and clearinghouse for youth-led groups working on faith-based peace activities.
- An international Youth Tools for Peace conference should be pursued and executed.
- North-South Partnerships and exchange between young leaders and North groups should be encouraged and supported.
- Young leaders without formal education but with rich filled based experiences in peacebuilding could be offered specific pre-arranged academic programmes.
- International organisations can continue to support youth groups through staff exchange, volunteer opportunities, internship placements, computer and Internet access support.

The role of media

General advice:

- Do not demonise media, but build relationships and develop media relations constantly and not only in times of need.
- Educate, offer training to journalists, help building capacity to act responsibly and provide relevant information.
- Be creative in contacts with media and attempts to get the message through.
- Get across positive examples.
- Be realistic regarding what can be done and what can not, work with media awareness training in you own constituency.

Action points:

- Arrange seminars to deal with the problem; some of the Swedish-based participants have decided to try to arrange a seminar during spring 2005.
- Share capacities – those with better capacity and more experience can assist the “weaker” in terms of expertise and experience e.g. in majority – minority situations in terms of religions.
- Mobilise resources for major campaigns on “The role of religion as Tools for Peace”.
- Work with media awareness raising and training; deal with fear and ignorance.
- Train media representatives and help establish institutions that watch and develop good journalism (ref. Life & Peace experience in Congo Brazzaville).
- Form networks around the issue, start by developing the work of the small network already established at the Tools for Peace? conference.

Appendix 1

Opening Keynote address by Dr Mustafa Cerić, Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina

It was God who has revealed the Torah (the Law to Moses): therein was guidance and light. By its standard have been judged the Jews, by the Prophets who bowed to God's will, by the Ribbis and the Doctors of Law: for to them was entrusted the protection of God's Book...

(Qur'an: 5:47)

Let the people of the Gospel judge by what God has revealed therein...

(Qur'an: 5: 50)

And to Thee (Muhammad) God sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it... To each among you God has prescribed a Law and an Open Way. If God had so willed, He would have made you a single People, but (His Plan is) to test you in what He has given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues, the goal of you all is to God...

(Qur'an: 5:51).



Mustafa Cerić, Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It seems that we have no dilemma about it: “the goal of us all is to God” who is by His own prescription Merciful *kataba ala nafsihī Arahmah*. Our dilemma though is about the prescribed Law (*Shariah*) and the Open Way (*Minhajj*) that should lead us to peace. Of course, I mean the peace among the people of the Torah who were “entrusted the protection of God’s Book”; the people of the Gospel who were asked to: “Judge by what God has revealed therein”; and the people of the Qur’an who were supposed to know: “If God had so willed, He, would have made you a single People, but (His Plan is) to test you in what He has given you”.

Indeed – it is the Law and the Open Way to peace that should concerned us the most; it is a perception that religion today is the heart of conflict around the world: in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Iraq, Palestine, Cyprus, Azerbaijan/Armenia and elsewhere that should bring us together in order to come back to a Law and an Open Way so that the religion be at the heart of the solution, not at the mind of conflict.

If the ultimate goal of all religions is to God, then all religions should cooperate with each other in order that each religion may achieve that ultimate goal. Otherwise, none will achieve it if the Law is broken and the Open Way to truth and justice is blacked by untruth and injustice.

Whose law here we are talking about: God’s law or human law? But is there a human law in the first place? Isn’t the religion that attempts to provide a comprehensive explanation of the entirety of life, including the way our reason operates in order to produce the human law which, in effect, flows from Eternal law as St Thomas Aquinas has said:

Human law is law only by virtue of its accordance with right reason, and by this means it is clear that it flows from Eternal law. In so far as it deviates from right reason it is called an Unjust law; and in such a case, it is no law at all, but rather an assertion of violence.¹

So, the current drama of war and peace in the name of religion is not in religion itself. This drama is in the soul of our heart and in the reason of our mind.

Our soul today is in a similar state as it was the state of the soul of Ibrahim/Abraham who saw a star and said. “This is my Lord”. But when it set, he said: “I do not like those that set.” Then he saw the moon rising in splendor and he said: “This is my Lord.” But when the moon set, he said: “Unless my Lord guides me, I shall surely be among those who go astray.” Then he saw the sun rising in splendor and he said: “This is my Lord; this is the greatest (of all).” But when the sun set, he said: “O my people! I am indeed free from your guilt of wrong belief.”

It is clear from this Abraham's story that our soul cannot be alone and cannot be out of touch of Eternity from which flows the law and to which leads the Open Way to the ultimate truth and justice.

Therefore, the blame should not be put on the faith of the religion, but on the reason of the mind, the reason which deviates from the Eternal law that is common to us all. Therefore, the way to peace does not go by religion without faith, nor by reason without Eternal law.

So, we should be honest to say today that we live the time of religion without faith and the time of reason without Eternal law.

The way people introduce religion today is not in the way of sincere faith, but in the way of military power. Also, the way people use reason today is not in the light of Eternal law, but in the way of personal pleasure.

I am trying to say that instead of asking what is the role of religion in the life of man it is more appropriate to ask what is the role of man in religious life. This somewhat adverse question should not confuse us if we accept the premise that religion is more than a religious hierarchy or bureaucracy. After all, religion is faith and morality; it is human life and dignity; religion is both personal feeling of life and collective sharing of destiny; it is supposed to be free from human monopoly.

I should not tell you that I believe in God's revelation or His intervention in history because that is obvious from my religious or faith profession. However, I should remind you that I believe in man's intervention in religion. No, I am not advocating any sort of outworn idea of historical positivism at least in matters of religion, but I do assert the notion of the give-take relationship between man and religion and vice versa.

It is somewhat strange that those who disregard the idea of supernatural intervention in history, especially in matters of religious life, now asking as to what is the role of religion in today's world as if the religion is an item which could be controlled by our man-made machine. That is not possible because religion is older than man and because in it there is a special trust between God and man, whatever it may mean.

It is, therefore, man who should make his position in terms of his religious or moral attitudes and he is the one who should meet the moral demands, which are as old as his existence and as important today as they had been before his falling from the bliss of Eden.

What is the difference between Adam and Socrates? The former had broken the law of God Almighty and, therefore, he had to leave the peaceful garden of Eden and come here to the turbulent garden of Earth and the latter had offended the name of gods of Greek mythology and, then, he decided to commit suicide.

The first sin had brought a new human life to the Earth because Adam offered his sincere repentance.

The second sin, however, caused human death because Socrates refused to accept the repentance.

These two stories are human stories that tell us both about human humbleness, which brought a new meaning to human life, and about human arrogance, which caused an old worry about reasons for human suicidal death. Where does humanity stand today: with humbleness that will lead us to the new meaning of human life after many sins it had committed or with arrogance that will lead us to the old suicidal death? Who are we today? Adam who is seeking repentance before Merciful God or Socrates who is waiting for execution before Merciless Man?

Can Adam and Eve this time avoid the seduction of the evil voice of Satan or are they ever destined to make the same mistakes? Is there any place left for Adam and Eve to run away from the garden of Earth with their sins?

Can Adam and Eve win over the fear and fulfil the desire of humanity for eternity that is beyond the end of temporal stay?

Is humanity at the end of its history that promises of a new beginning or is it at the beginning of the end of its ever hoped liberty, equality and fraternity?

The emphasis on the tools rather than on the goals for peace has two possible explanations: first, it might mean that we know the goals but lack the knowledge of the tools for peace; and second, it might mean that we know both the goals and the tools for peace but we disagree about the choice of the models by which the principles of peace should be implemented in the land we are born, in the country we dwell and in the home we live.

It seems that it is not difficult to establish the common principle of all three religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam that arrived in Europe because they all came from the East, they all found their time and space in Europe, they all have faithful followers in Europe.

Our difficulty lies in finding a model or models for the application of the common principle which says that we are all children of Adam and Adam is made of clay and so there shall be no superiority of one over another man except by good character.

It is not difficult, however, to notice that we live today under the impact of a modern myth which says that “with the advance of science one set of values will be accepted everywhere²”. But is it really so? Is it not the other way around as John Gray would ask us:

Can we not accept that human beings have divergent and conflicting values, and learn to live with this fact? It is a strange notion that humanity is destined for a single way of living, when history is so rich in conflict and contrivance.³

It is this modern myth of a single model of life that should be applied on all humanity despite the principle of its diversity that has brought the ideas of Fascism, Anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, Bolshevism, Ethnic Cleansing and Genocide. Auschwitz and Srebrenica are two black holes of modern European history because of the idea of a unified and monolithic universal civilization which was to become a result of the Enlightenment ideal.

Is it possible for Auschwitz and Srebrenica to be repeated? It is possible if Europe does not appreciate the principle of the diversity of faiths and if it does not realize that there is not one but many models for the implementation of that principle.

The faith of Islam is both a religious principle of Europe and its unique model not only in terms of a European religious and cultural diversity but also in terms of a Muslim world diversity of experience. There is nothing new in the fact that Europe has realized by now that Muslims are here to stay and so it is better for all that their presence be regulated in the manner of human equality and religious diversity. But if Europe is only politics, what is the principle of its political model? Is the European democracy of the nation-state a final political model? On that question John Gray has this to say:

There is nothing natural about the nation-state. It is distinctively modern construction. In time, other forms of political order may supersede it. But for the present the nation-state marks the upper limit of democracy – on which the legitimacy of government today depends. In effect, the European attempt to move beyond the nation-state is an attempt to move beyond democracy. Some such movement may be inevitable, but it gives the far right a dangerous appeal.⁴

We believe that Europe should appreciate the overall spirit of Islam not only because it saved Europe's own philosophical tradition but also because Islam, by its cosmopolitanism, keeps today's Muslims from the demand of their own nation-state in Europe. Contrary to a common belief that Muslims are incompatible to the European values we can see that the Muslims of different backgrounds know how to work and live in a European environment very successfully.

It is a sad fact though that the today's Muslims in Europe live in kinds of ethnic enclaves. The reason for that lies not in Islam, as many Europeans want to believe, but rather in the notion of a national and ethnic pride, which is basically a European invention.

For example, Bosnia and Herzegovina is not the nation-state of the type of the nation-states in Europe, not because the majority of Bosnian citizens do not have enough national pride to desire their own nation-state, but because the majority of the Bosnian population are Muslims who, by the fact of their Islamic tradition, have no difficulty in sharing the political power with other nations.

On the other hand, Turkey is the nation-state and by some standards is more secular in its political doctrine than the United States of America, but Turkey cannot become the member of the European Union because it is, by a historical definition, Muslim, a fact that Europe still does not like.

On the other side of the Globe, the Eastern Timor with a Catholic majority has refused to share the political life with the majority Muslim population of Indonesia. In the same way we see the religious-nation-state of Israel cannot or does not want to adapt its existence to the fact of the overwhelming majority of the nation-states of the Muslim identity in its neighbourhood.

The point I am trying to raise here is the fact that the European principles, such as freedom and human rights do not always have right models and the European models, such as democracy and plurality, do not always follow proclaimed principles. The most illustrative example of such a state of affairs of Europe regarding the “Muslim Question” in Europe is the genocidal example of Srebrenica, where Europe betrayed all its principles and failed to maintain any model of democracy and pluralism.

But despite all that, the Bosnian Muslims are supposed to trust the European soldiers who betrayed them. In addition to that, the Bosnian Muslims are suspicious of any wrongdoing by any Muslim from Afganistan to Chechnya.

The “Muslim Question” today in Europe is the question of trust. And the process of trust-building needs time and patience. I have to tell my son that the Dutch soldiers, who happened to be Christians, have failed to protect Muslims in Potoc’ari from the Serbian genocide, but also I have to tell him that al-Qaida is an irresponsible group which makes Muslim life in Europe very difficult.

Nevertheless, I will tell my son that his home and homeland is in Europe which is, despite of all difficulties, determent to live by the principle of freedom for all and by the model of the plurality of faiths after all.

Having said that, I would like you now to join me in this unique Bosnian prayer:

We pray to Thee, Almighty God
May grief become hope!
May revenge become justice!
May mother’s tears become prayer!
That Srebrenica never happen again
To no one and nowhere!

Oh God
Do not let success deceive us
Nor failure takes us to despair!
Always remind us that failure is a temptation
That precedes success!

Oh God
Teach us that tolerance
Is the highest degree of power
And the desire for revenge
The first sign of weakness!

Oh God
If you deprive us of our property,
Give us hope!
If you grant us with success,
Give us also the will to overcome defeat!
If you take from us the blessing of health,
Provide us with the blessing of faith!

Oh God
If we sin against people,
Give us the strength of apology!
And if people sin against us,
Give us the strength of forgiveness!

Oh God If we forget Thee,
Do not forget us!

Endnotes:

¹ St Thomas Aquinas (1225–74).

² John Gray, *Al Qaeda and what it means to be Modern*, p. 113.

³ *Ibid*, p. 114.

⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 16-17.

Appendix 2

Tools for Peace? The role of religion in conflict ***Dr. Debbie Weissman, Hebrew University, Israel***

I feel tremendously honored to have been asked to deliver a keynote address at this important conference.

I come from a very troubled part of the world, where I have lived for the past 32 years. I think that I was invited to come to Stockholm because of two frameworks in which I have been involved: locally, I'm a member of the Executive Committee of the Inter-religious Coordinating Council in Israel, which is also the Israeli chapter of the World Conference of Religions for Peace. Internationally, for the past three years, I have been a member of a small group of people representing five different faiths, convened by the World Council of Churches to focus on questions of Religion and Violence and Religion and the Other.

Throughout the world today, religions are involved in violent conflicts. Often, these conflicts have political, national, ethnic, social and economic aspects, as well. But the image of religion in the world today—and, I'm sorry to say, especially in the part of the world where I live, the Middle East—is an image of extremism, of xenophobia and of violence.

Now, I won't argue that this image has no truth to it. In the name of religion, atrocities have been committed. Religion has, in many cases, fanned the flames of extremism. When I marched for peace in Jerusalem several weeks ago, most of my Jewish religious colleagues were on the other side, in a counter-demonstration.

What is it about religion and religions that accounts for this unholy alliance between faith and extreme violence? Well, many people of faith seem to have absolute faith, that allows no questioning of authority and that makes no room for other truths. When we interpret present-day reality through ancient scriptures, we may lose touch with those around us and their human needs. And when we expect reward for our actions in the world-to-come, it may impel us to be violent to others in the world-that-is.

But, I don't really believe that is the case. I think it's more a question of the extremist, violent forms of our religions being given a great deal more exposure than the rest of us. After all, a bombing, an attack on worshippers, the language of incitement—these are more newsworthy than peaceful dialogue and coexistence. Harmony among groups doesn't sell newspapers.

I would maintain that our efforts to achieve peace could stand to learn a great deal from the various religious traditions. I'd like to suggest at least five areas in which this could take place:

1) RELIGIONS PROVIDE PEOPLE with a particular sense of identity, rootedness, community and ultimate meaning. Michael Lerner of *TIKKUN Magazine* has called this “the politics of meaning.” Although I will be developing this theme further in the workshop on globalization, let me say now that particularism implies assumption of historical responsibility for an identifiable community. At the same time, an exclusively universalistic approach sometimes engenders a shirking of responsibility. For example, as a child of the 1960's, I recall members of my cohort who spoke in the name of universal love; they simply hated their parents, siblings, neighbors and so on. There is ultimately something not only immature but in a certain way immoral about that position. A morally responsible human being has to act within a particular context in which he or she assumes responsibility for particular people. It is rootedness in the historical experience of a particular group that can nurture moral behavior.

As an example of this, I would like to relate the story of the French Huguenot town of Le Chambon-sur-Lyon. During the Second World War, five thousand Christians there saved approximately the same number of Jews. Pierre Sauvage, an American Jewish filmmaker hidden in the town as an infant, went back in the early 1980's to research the motivation for this impressive rescue operation. In his documentary, “*Weapons of the Spirit*,” he reached the conclusion that several factors were responsible, including the inspired leadership of the local pastor, Father Andre Trocme. The townspeople, a fierce, mountainous lot, had a long tradition of resisting the central authority in Paris. But, ultimately, the main reason for their resistance, he maintained, was the collective historical memory they shared of having themselves



*Dr. Debbie Weissman,
Hebrew University, Israel.*

been persecuted as a religious minority in the 17th century. This, to be sure, was an echo of the Biblical injunction, “And you must understand the soul of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

2) RELIGIONS GIVE US TRADITIONAL CULTURES, which are the repository of the accumulated human wisdom of generations of people who may have faced dilemmas similar to our own. Wipe out “tribal” identities and you wipe out the cultural anchoring of moral imperatives. Without the stories different peoples have of their own suffering, what identification will they develop with the suffering of others? Without a sense of tribal honor, what motivation will they develop for decent behavior? Indeed, as philosopher Michael Walzer has suggested, “...the members of all the different societies, because they are human, can acknowledge each other’s different ways, respond to each other’s cries for help, learn from each other and march (sometimes) in each other’s parades.”

3) IT IS PRECISELY OUR MONOTHEISTIC faiths that have given us the notion of a merciful and compassionate God Who expects us to emulate Him in our human behavior. We generally have, as well, stories of saintly individuals and groups from whom we can learn.

4) AT LEAST TWO OF OUR RELIGIOUS cultures are based on complex legal systems. I’m referring to *Sharia* within Islam and *Halacha* within Judaism. These systems take lofty ideals of peace and social justice and translate them into everyday, incremental actions. We, too, must learn to translate our dreams for peace into concrete steps we can take in our day-to-day lives.

5) PERHAPS THE MOST BASIC THING we can learn from religion is the notion of hope. When we believe in some transcendent power that promotes the Good, we have a way of coping with the despair that almost inevitably arises from our apparent lack of success. One of my dear friends in Jerusalem is Bishop Mounib Younan, the Palestinian Lutheran Bishop of Jerusalem. Whenever I despair—and that is most of the time—Mounib reminds me, “As long as you believe in a Living God, you must have hope.”

32

I do not, of course, wish to ignore or even minimize the intense danger posed to world peace by many people who claim to be acting in the name of their religions and ethnic or national causes. But here, I believe, there are two salient points to be made: First, we must strive to emphasize within each of our cultures those elements which promote a more open and compassionate attitude to other human beings. For Jews, this may be an emphasis on the Abrahamic heritage, the Noachide covenant and the concept of all human beings having been created in the image of God. Other faith traditions have other resources from which they can draw to nurture such an approach. In this respect, I would echo Professor Stephen P. Cohen and others, who have suggested that the true clash in today’s world is not “between civilizations” (as argued by Samuel Huntington) but within each civilization or religion—a clash between the forces of fundamentalism or extremism and those of moderation, tolerance, or what I might call “religious humanism.” Particularism ought not obscure the universal nature of God and God’s creatures. Particularism is not synonymous with chauvinism. I believe that the task of ridding our own particular traditions of their elements of chauvinism or xenophobia is best done by the members of the groups themselves, but that doing it within the presence of the Other can be especially challenging and meaningful.

Secondly, sometimes it is precisely when people feel that their own identity is under attack that they respond violently. Again, I will bring a quotation from Walzer: “When my parochialism is threatened, then I am wholly, radically parochial...and nothing else... Under conditions of security, I will acquire a more complex identity than the idea of tribalism suggests.”

Our goal, then, should not be the eradication of group identities but their empowerment through ensuring the safety and security of the different groups.

Our work for peace, I believe, will be all the more effective the more it is grounded in our traditions and texts. I personally believe that the peaceful, more humanistic texts must be given greater weight than the violent, exclusivist or anti-humanistic ones. My reasoning is that in order to be aggressive or racist, one doesn’t need divine revelation. Violence and racism unfortunately seem to have been woven into the fabric of human life for millennia. As a student of anthropology, I learned that in some tribal languages, the word for “human being” is the same as the name of the tribe. The Lord didn’t have to reveal these things to humankind. The innovation, for which we needed revelation, was the more positive vision of humanity and peace.

May I add one more point? In our part of the world, we have two peoples who both see themselves as the victims. Both sides sometimes forget that victims can also be victimizers. Victimhood gives one a sense of self-righteousness and promotes national unity. But it also obscures our responsibility for unjust behavior.

We have come together to explore ways in which our religions can be “tools for peace.” I thought about the choice of the world “tools” rather than “sources” or “resources.” Tools are used to build, and peace must indeed be built. Perhaps we can think of building bridges through dialogue. But tools are also used to fix or to repair, which makes me think of a central concept in the Jewish tradition, “*tikkun olam*,” “mending” or “repairing the world.” In doing that, say our texts, we become partners with God. Let’s go to work!

Appendix 3

Values, religion and peacebuilding. A possible combination

Andrea Bartoli, CICR, Columbia University / Community of Sant'Egidio

Notes from Power Point Presentation

Inquiry

Each religion refers to values and we must ask ourselves

- Which values contribute to peacemaking?
- How central are these values?
- What are the controversial elements?
- What is the added value of religious prevention of conflict?

and make clear our hypothesis

Hypothesis

Each religion continuously generates values

- All values contribute to peacemaking
- These values are central to both the individuals and the systems created
- All values create controversy, are subject to different interpretations and may be used positively
- Religious prevention of conflict is both operative and in the making



Andrea Bartoli, CICR,
Columbia University/
Community of Sant'Egidio.

Religious Contributions to Conflict Prevention is recognized

"...religious organizations can play a role in preventing armed conflict because of the moral authority that they carry in many communities. In some cases, religious groups and leaders possess a culturally based comparative advantage in conflict prevention, and as such are most effective when they emphasize the common humanity of all parties to a conflict while refusing to identify with any single part. In addition, religious groups could mobilize non-violent alternative ways of expressing dissent prior to the outbreak of armed conflict."

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, June 2001

Values: Identifying them

What comes to mind?

- Underlying driving forces that explain why you do what you do
- Something precious
- Aspects that influence the way people relate to the other, themselves, and to the environment
- Useful ethics, such as love, norms, dignity, respect, justice, tolerance

Values: Hypothesis

1. All values contribute to peacemaking
 - If and when they are harmonized in actuality by people able to model them in real life
 - If and when contradictions are resolved through an integrative process that allows for solutions to emerge over time
2. These values are central to both the individuals and the systems created
 - Both as intentional and explicit references and as implicit and unintentional
 - This centrality can provoke both change (to go back to the 'core') or lack of it (not to lose the 'core')
3. All values create controversy, are subject to different interpretations and may be used positively
 - Because of their centrality in referencing human lives, values can be hotly debated
 - However, communication dynamics do not determine a necessary outcome; a constructive engagement is always possible
4. Religious prevention of conflict is both operative and in the making
 - Many are already coping with oppression, injustice, and violence through religious resources that allow them not to retaliate, escalate, revenge

- Many others are investing in prevention strategies by connecting, frequenting, knowing the ‘others’ (often without ‘naming’ these actions as conflict prevention but rather practicing them as reasonable, obvious, natural)

Emerging values

B = I / E. Behavior (B) is the result of the Individual (I) response to the Environment (E)

Through these interactions we continuously see ‘emerging values’

Four questions on values

- Can a ‘value’ be purely ‘religious’?
- Can a ‘value’ be claimed as exclusive patrimony of one religion?
- Do ‘values’ exist beyond the actual experience of the agents that live them?
- Do religious actors have ‘values’ different from others?

Four preliminary responses on values

- Religion is a value-making reality of life
- Values are experienced in a specific cultural context and all contribute to a universal shared understanding
- Values exist in actuality only in the agents that live them
- Religious actors frequently share their ‘values’ with others

Five observations on values

- Values are received from others and shared with others in a process of mutual recognition
- Peace is always possible and can be experienced in the most daring circumstances; war, on the contrary, effectively ends only with the concession of the enemy
- Humans continuously act on their values; they enrich them by using them and dissipate them by neglecting them
- Prevention is a product of the individual person and of sustained relationships; it is both a personal choice and a collective effort
- Religion – as many other aspects of human life – is fundamentally ambiguous and open to interpretation; religious clarity – as for any other aspects of human life – comes from a disciplined link between words and practice

Five observations on prevention

- To value, someone or something, is a human decision that generates and sustains a relation
- To use violence is always a choice, often in the making for a long time. Violence too is relational
- As violence is always interactive and systemic, so prevention must be equally interactive and systemic
- Therefore, to prevent is to participate in an interactive system of human relations in which decisions will more frequently than not, more commonly than not, most effectively than not, reduce the level of violence, the risk of its use and minimize its consequences
- Prevention is to communicate, to connect, to correct the negative and to celebrate the positive, respectfully, persistently, openly

Five discoveries on prevention

- To prevent is to discover unexpected links
- To prevent is to act on correct understanding
- To prevent is to keep searching
- To prevent is to be able to handle contradictions, to explore paradoxes and to withhold judgment
- To prevent is to learn collectively – once again – that it depends on ‘us’ (humans, religious communities, individuals ...)

Actors

Values exist in, through and for the religious actor

- Billions of humans hold deeply cherished religious beliefs and practices
- Many relate to their religious beliefs and practices in generative form
- Many relate to their religious beliefs and practices in sustaining form

- The generative form emerges when actors revisit their own religious traditions, texts, practices and invent new ways to live the same call
- Many moments of reform are generative in nature
- Many moments of transitions are in need of generative responses
- The sustaining form emerges when actors connect to their own religious traditions, texts, practices to support and be supported by them
- Many moments of celebration are sustaining in nature
- Many moments of uncertainty are in need of sustaining responses
- Both, generative and sustaining forms were at work in the elaboration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent international human rights law
- Religious contributions were considerable at the moment of the emergence of the declaration and are needed now for a fully inclusive interpretation of it
- Human Rights are at this time the best articulation of human suffering at the hand of other humans
- This understanding has profoundly religious roots

Shared mutual learning

- “Blessed is the one who prefers the other over himself”
- “Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you”
- “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful to your own self”
- “In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self”
- “Nature only is good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self”
- “No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desire for himself”
- “Therefore, whatever you want people to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets”
- “This is the sum of duty: do not unto others that which would cause you pain if done to you”
- “What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire law: all the rest is commentary”
- Do good
- Do not harm
- Use yourself as reference because what is good for you is good for the ‘other’ what is hurtful for you is hurtful for the ‘other’
- You and the ‘other’ are one, are the same, are made equal
- We are bound in the loop of mutuality

Actors

- Religious prevention of conflict is already operative
- It may not be always successful, but it is certainly true that religious actors of all denominations and traditions have invested tremendously in prevention of conflicts and peace
- Religious prevention will not abolish violence and war, but it will make it less common, less accepted, less deadly, less destructive
- Many religious communities, of very different faiths, have chosen to live peacefully. My impression is that these voices are stronger than before
- Religious prevention of conflict is not implementing already made values or enforcing a strict and exclusivist interpretation of them
- Rather it is a process of mutually respectful engagement in which each party accept the responsibility of empathy and self-restrained response
- Minimizing pain and suffering is a step towards peace
- Maximizing the chances for creative solutions is another step

Actors’ challenges

- The practice of values:
are we able to do what we say, what our values are calling us to?
- The moral inclusion:
are we able to include all in our moral universe or are we still selecting in the way we live our values?

Four questions for us as actors

- Do we model the values we profess?
- Do we support the values that others model?
- Do we keep seeking a sharper understanding of how these values may be brought to life in actuality?
- Do we dialogue with all concerned to make sure that the political system, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally, doesn't impede but rather supports the emergence of a shared understanding of human values?

First conclusions

- Each religion continuously generates values in itself and in relation to others
- Each individual believer has a role to play in this generative and sustaining process
- Let's keep recognizing and supporting those who already are practicing conflict prevention as religious persons. This is a step towards the recognition and empowerment of all who are committed to prevention from all paths of life

A personal conclusion

- I will try to be true to the letter and the spirit, to the values and the dreams that were given to me by generations of Christians that came before me
- I will try to understand this call as a way to peace for all
- I will try to listen to the many voices that still cry or are muted because of the violence of my religious community
- I will ask forgiveness for my sins and repair the damage caused by the sins and mistakes – mine and of others
- I will try to understand more the paradox of a human experience that can turn what is valuable into irrelevance, what is holy into neglect, what is alive into death, what is welcoming into destruction and yet always gives me back the choice to live, to let live, to make live
- I will commit myself to the rule of hospitality, as a disciplined search, radically engaged in this world, seeking peace

Appendix 4

Participants

Tarekegn Adebo, Ethiopia/Sweden
Charanjit AjitSingh, U.K.
Fawzia Al Ashmawi, Switzerland/Egypt
Mahmoud Aldebe, Sweden
Nooh Al Kaddo, Ireland
Serafin Angelo Arviola Jr., Philippines
Inelle Bagwell, USA
Louise Bakala, Congo-Brazzaville
Catherine Barnes, U.K.
Andrea Bartoli, USA
Radesh Barua, Bangladesh
Peter Brune, Sweden
Görel Byström Janarv, Sweden
Mustafa Ceric, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Pat Clark, USA
Orla Clinton, Sweden
Marijana Cuvalo, Canada/Sweden
Safaa Elagib Adam, Sudan
Greg Epstein, USA
Sven-Bernhard Fast, Sweden
Biörn Fjärstedt, Sweden
Yoav Frankel, Israel
Birgitta Fredholm, Sweden
Carl-Johan Friman, Sweden
Uffe Gjerding, Denmark
Josephine Gosiewska, U.K.
Jan Gustafsson, Sweden
Fakhira Halloun, Palestine
Issaaf Hawamdeh, Jordan
Kari Hay, Norway
Karin Haglund, Sweden
Kristina Herngren, Sweden
Andrew Hoeksema, USA
Elisabeth Hui Zhou, China
Lone Hvejsel, Denmark
Annie Imbens-Fransen, Netherlands
Margareta Ingelstam, Sweden
Viktoria Isaksson, Sweden
Pushpa Iyer, USA
Bernt Jonsson, Sweden
Kati Jääskeläinen, Finland
Billy Kane, Northern Ireland U.K.
Anja-Riitta Ketokoski-Rexed, Finland
Antonios Kireopoulos, USA
Moustafa Kharraki, Sweden
Anne Kubai, Kenya
Joy Kwaje, Sudan
Joanna Lilja, Sweden
Stig Lundberg, Sweden
Peter Lööv, Sweden
Francois Mabile, France
Ibtisam Mahamied, Palestine
Sara Maitland, U.K.
Eliyahu McLean, Israel
Lisa Minnhagen, Sweden
Bridget Moix, USA
Lennart Molin, Sweden
James Movel Wuye, Nigeria
Anders Möllander, Sweden
Eva Christina Nilsson, Sweden
Maria Nordström, Sweden
Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa, Nigeria
Florence Oduor, Kenya
Excellence Eyo Ozziong Uso, Nigeria
Brian Palmer, USA/Sweden
Rienzie Perera, Sri Lanka
Cedric Prakash sj, India
Peter Raven, U.K.
Uzma Rehman, Denmark
Alexandra Rigby-Smith, Sweden
Nissa Roguiai, U.K.
Atefeh Sadeghi, Iran
Pär Axel Sahlberg, Sweden
Tore Samuelsson, Sweden
Mostafa Setkic, Sweden
Gerald Shenk, USA
Sulak Sivaraksa, Siam (Thailand)
Martin Smedjeback, Sweden
Andreas D'Souza, India
Diane D'Souza, USA
Arnold C Temple, Kenya
Yacob Tesfai, Eritrea/Kenya
Lisa Trovik, Sweden
Hans Ucko, Switzerland
Daniel Uddling, Sweden
Stig Utnem, Norway
William F Vendley, USA
Ulla Vinterhav, Sweden
Tony Waworuntu, Hong Kong
Peter Weiderud, Switzerland
Noomi Weinryb, Sweden
Lisette van der Wel, Netherlands
Deborah Weissman, Israel
Claudette Werleigh, Sweden
Anna Widepalm, Sweden
Bo Wirmark, Sweden
Joakim Wohlfeil, Sweden
Ingo Wulforth, Switzerland
Mordechai Zeller, Israel
Anna Åkerlund, Sweden
Katrin Åmell, Sweden
Ragnar Ängeby, Sweden

Appendix 5

Note about the conference programme

The format of the conference had been given special attention by the organisers and the conference facilitator Dr. Catherine Barnes, as we wanted to create an environment, which would encourage **interaction** and the **meeting** between people. A guiding assumption for the conference was that everyone has something to offer and everyone has something to learn. The participants had therefore been given a document that described the conference process and format.

Each day at the conference was dedicated to a specific theme. These themes were: Roots, Values and Tools. All sessions at the conference were designed to encourage participants to participate and contribute actively, so that the wealth of knowledge and experience of the participants would be utilised. The programme consisted of keynote speeches, panel discussions and workshops. To enable interaction, a range of methods was used in the different sessions. These include for instance dialogue-based discussions and buzz groups. The workshops did not have formal presenters. Instead we had asked a number of people to be animators. Their role as to initiate discussions by sharing thoughts and experiences related to the theme of the workshops.

The participants were also divided into reflection groups that met once a day. The idea with the reflection groups was to provide a space for continuity where the participants could feel safe and develop closer contacts. It was also a way to enable cross-pollination of ideas and information from different workshops and discussions.

The programme furthermore contained time both in the mornings and the afternoons for personal reflection, prayer, mediation, and initiative from the participants. This time was important as it offered the opportunity for participants to meet and discuss important issues, to make new contacts, to hold short presentation about their work etc.

THE PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

SUNDAY	Opening, Keynote: Dr. Mustafa Ceric
MONDAY	Theme: ROOTS Time for prayer, personal reflection, morning walk Keynote: Dr. Debbie Weissman Parallel workshops Reflection groups (composed for the whole conference) Panel discussions Personal reflection, activities and initiatives Dinner with specially invited religious leaders Social evening with Cirque Nouveau (contemporary circus)
TUESDAY	Theme: VALUES Time for prayer, personal reflection, morning walk Keynote: Dr. Andrea Bartoli Parallel workshops Reflection groups Panel discussions Personal reflection, activities and initiatives Dinner Social evening, music by jazz ensemble High Five
WEDNESDAY	Theme: TOOLS Time for prayer, personal reflection, morning walk Plenary Parallel workshops Reflections groups Thematic group discussions, planning of actions Plenary, networking, recommendations Concluding remarks by Christian Council of Sweden and Swedish Muslim Council

Appendix 6

The consultation "Tools for Peace? – Life and Peace in a Globally Changing World"

As a preparatory phase to the main conference, a consultation was held in Uppsala, Sweden, 8–12 October 2003. The consultation was arranged by the Life & Peace Institute (LPI). Its purpose was partly to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Life & Peace Institute and to evaluate its work during the past 20 years and partly to identify important themes and issues for the main conference.

The consultation gathered some 120 participants from churches, ecumenical organisations, Jewish and Muslim organisations, governments and universities in 40 countries. Among the participants were peace researchers, practitioners, ecumenical representatives, former and present LPI staff, board members and collaborators.

The programme was centred around four themes:

- *Tools for Peace?* Critical perspectives on peace theories and practices
- *Power, resources and poverty.* Challenges for ecumenical solidarity and human rights
- *Religion in conflicts.* Challenges for interfaith cooperation for peace
- *Peace and justice in a globally changing world.* Multicultural conflicts and global ethics

The keynote speakers Prof. Hizkias Assefa of Nairobi, Kenya, Executive Secretary Ms Laura Vargas of Lima, Peru, Prof. Miroslav Volf of Yale, USA, and Dr. Elisabeth Gerle of Lund, Sweden, followed by selected respondents, introduced the respective themes.

The keynote addresses were public and attracted around 50 persons in addition to the registered participants. The keynotes were followed by workshops on the same themes. The findings and recommendations from each workshop were thereafter reported in a plenary session.

Subsequent to the final plenary session, a public jubilee service with K G Hammar, the Archbishop of the Church of Sweden as a key speaker, was held in the Mission Covenant Church. The service was arranged to mark the two decades of ecumenical peace research and action, and was held under the theme "Living the peace".

Some of the consultation highlights were published in "New Routes", volume 8, number 3–4, 2003. More information about the consultation, including reports, consultation papers, and photos, can also be found at the LPI website: <http://www.life-peace.org>. The proceedings of the consultation are available from LPI.





ROOTS VALUES TOOLS

These were the three themes as participants from across the world met in the wintry town of Söderköping, Sweden, to discuss the role of religion in conflicts and peacebuilding.

The ambition of the organisers of this broad-based inter-religious conference was to face global realities, listen, discuss and suggest ways forward. A space for meeting, seeing and recognizing “the other” was created.

The output is a report that offers numerous ideas for action, rather than a joint declaration or a bold statement. By this, the participants want to demonstrate their commitment to the follow-up process, within the respective faith groups as well as together.

Organisers

Christian Council of Sweden
SE-172 99 Sundbyberg, Sweden

Swedish Muslim Council
Kapellgränd 10, SE-116 25 Stockholm, Sweden

Life & Peace Institute
P.O. Box 1520, SE-751 45 Uppsala, Sweden

Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation
SE-172 99 Sundbyberg, Sweden

www.skr.org
+46 8 453 68 00

www.sverigesmuslimskarad.se
+46 8 509 109 00

www.life-peace.org
+46 18 16 97 00

www.krf.se
+46 8 453 68 40