

building bridges of trust or deepening the distrust?

During these crisis moments, understanding the enemy can be helped by inviting special speakers to make presentations. During the Gulf War a number of churches contacted Muslim and Jewish leaders in their communities to talk and develop joint programs to build more understanding. Though the war was going on halfway across the globe, our neighbors could help us remove our ignorance and prejudice, upon which much of our hatred of the enemy depends. Christians have a history of animosity and misrepresentation of Muslim cultures and faith, which has been an issue in the conflicts in the Middle East that continually enter our news. Through guest speakers or classes about different faiths and cultures, people who are different can become less alien and more understandable.³

Praying specifically and positively for our enemies is important not just for our enemies but for the spiritual survival of our own hearts in the midst of surrounding bitterness and hatred. The natural human tendency in times of war is to pray the condemnations of the Psalms: "O that you would kill the wicked, O God!" (Psalm 139:19). Jesus' prayer from the cross provides a different model: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Prayers for enemies can include petitions that their needs will be met and their fears assuaged and that they might participate in finding the path to a just peace. But the most important fruit of such prayer may be the change in our own hearts. Jim Wallis has said, "Fervent prayer for our enemies is a great obstacle to war and the feelings that lead to it."⁴ My own perspective is changed as prayer draws me into God's perspective. The apostle Paul reflects our transformed understanding of others as he explores the impact of the reconciliation ministry of Christ that is passed on to Christians: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view" (2 Corinthians 5:16). A church praying for a nation's

³Two books on the Middle East and Islam for church use are Charles Kimball, *Striving Together: A Way Forward in Christian-Muslim Relations* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1991) and Charles Kimball, *Angle of Vision: Christian and the Middle East* (New York: Friendship Press, 1992).

⁴Jim Wallis, "The Work of Prayer," *Waging Peace: A Handbook for the Struggle to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*, ed. Jim Wallis (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 196.

enemies is likely to resist the hysteria of hatred stirred up by political leaders and the media.

Support in a Time of Need

War is a high-stress experience for those involved both directly or indirectly, sometimes leading to lifelong physical or psychological scars. Profound changes can take place in people, shaping new values and commitments. Pastoral care and support from a loving church family are vital for Christ's healing power to be mediated to those hurting from their experiences with war.

For a peacemaking church, providing support for members or children of members in the military can be a complicated issue. There may be strong opposition to the war, and yet those in the military are probably committed to doing their jobs well, which translates into efficient killing and devastation. It is important for a peacemaking church not to let its political and moral criticism of the war blind it to the humanity and needs of those engaged in it or of their family members. Honest disagreement can be stated within an affirmation of love and personal support. Keep channels of communication open, and let people know you care.

The church can list the names of military personnel in the bulletin and pray for them as members of the church family with special needs. Letters can be sent. During the Gulf War, a peace group in one church sent letters to members in the military stationed in Saudi Arabia, expressing their concern and prayers even though they opposed U.S. policy in the region. Following their return from war, the church can provide small group settings for the veterans to share and process their experiences, either among themselves or with some other supportive group.

Young people who sign up with the military are seldom set in their convictions and values. The experiences of life can cause dramatic reassessments of what they believe. The sudden challenge of a war situation can force serious soul-searching, which in some cases may lead to someone in the military becoming a conscientious objector or to a belief that the current war is unjust. There is little support for such individuals but often a lot of hostility, from the military and even society in general. Pastoral support to think through the issues and make a choice based on one's conscience

can be a welcome and appreciated ministry. A pastor can let church members know he or she is available to work through questions of conscience with openness and understanding.

Moral reevaluation of one's commitments doesn't happen just to the young. People who have seen much of life and who have grappled with deep questions of faith and conscience can come to life-changing decisions as part of their own spiritual growth or encounter with new experiences. Chaplain César Maurás was an army reserve chaplain who volunteered to go to Saudi Arabia as part of Operation Desert Shield. When he heard more about the roots of the conflict, learned about the repressive governments of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and saw U.S. military preparations for offensive action, he knew he was at a personal moral crossroads.

I was not a pacifist, at least not then—I'm not sure what I am now. But it didn't take me too long to realize what a mistake this was. I knew that if I stayed, I would have to renounce my ministry. It would be impossible for me to ever again preach about God's love after participating in this war.

Sometimes I still can't explain my actions, like when someone asks me, "What good was it that you chose to come home?" I can't immediately say what good it was . . . what good it accomplished. But I know I am happy with my decision.

—César Maurás, Caguas, Puerto Rico

Eventually he sacrificed his commission, an upcoming promotion, and lucrative retirement benefits to follow his conscience. He received support from his denomination and a few close friends from his home church, but most of his experience was characterized by loneliness due to his isolation in Saudi Arabia and the hostility of many of his commanding officers, including chaplains, to his refusal to support the move from defensive to offensive warfare.

Families of military personnel go through the anxiety of knowing their loved ones are in a danger zone and being too far away to help or expresses their caring directly. In the Gulf War many families of reservists and national guard members faced the additional traumas of financial dislocation because of the call-up. These high-stress experiences can be aided by extra pastoral care, special support groups, specific prayer, and sometimes by congregational financial assistance.

In some cases, the more radical peace activists might engage in civil disobedience, which can lead to time in jail with attendant family stress. Fines or lost job time might create financial hardship for the activists and their families. These church members, too, need to be embraced by the congregation with support and care.

Prophetic Voices

During war many voices are raised in support of mobilization. Voices that raise questions or protest during the deliberation stage are expected by the majority in power to join in supporting the effort once the troops are in harm's way. But prophetic voices are always needed to speak truth to the people of God and to society at large. The story in 1 Kings 22 about Ahab and Jehoshaphat going to war illustrates both the need for and the lonely calling of the prophet. Four hundred prophets raised their voices in support of the kings' war program. Only one, Micaiah, spoke in dissent, proclaiming that the war would lead to disaster. He also paid a price for his dissent, as Ahab ordered him imprisoned until his return. Prophetic voices who speak hard words are not appreciated.

Where will a voice of moral authority come from if not from the church? Harry Emerson Fosdick's great hymn prays, "Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days . . . Save us from weak resignation To the evils we deplore . . ." ⁵ During a war local congregations need courage and wisdom to be prophetic. If they fail to stand on ethical grounds when the cost is high, then the church is morally and religiously compromised.

One way a prophetic voice can be raised is to encourage advocacy by the church members. Following a service or a special event dealing with the war, tables can be set up with materials and instructions for writing Congress and the president. (See chapter 11 for details.) Often denominations will make a resolution about the crisis. A congregation can quote the resolution in a letter to government officials if the church board or membership votes to take a united stand. Local use of denominational resolutions gives special strength to statements that can all too often be passed off otherwise. When a church says that the statement expresses its position, then this voice from the grassroots adds dramatically to what an elected

⁵Harry Emerson Fosdick, "God of Grace and God of Glory," 1930.

politician will hear. A letter can be made an open letter and sent to publications and newspapers as well as to the individual directly addressed. That allows the prophetic word to be heard by a larger audience, making the matter a public affair.

Members of the Central Baptist Church in Wayne, Pennsylvania, felt that the peace movement and churches were being too passive or slow in their response to the developments in the Persian Gulf in late 1990 and into January 1991. When the war erupted, they promoted a "Deadline for Peace," reflecting the earlier deadline set by President Bush for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. When the cease-fire came earlier than the deadline due to the rapid coalition victory, the church changed the "Deadline for Peace" to an "Agenda for Peace." Their eight-point call for action included matters such as an international peace conference on the Middle East, mediation on the Israeli-Palestinian and Iraqi-Kuwaiti issues, and the removal of all foreign troops, to be replaced by United Nations' forces if necessary. The church used the deadline and agenda as an advocacy project, contacting political officials. They also lobbied religious and peace organizations to embrace the project and take it to a larger constituency. The church members were not content to just watch the news; they entered into the public discussion to try to help shape the issues.

During the Gulf War some churches, including Riverside Church in New York City and University Baptist in Seattle, declared themselves sanctuary churches for conscientious objectors. These public declarations were more prophetic than pragmatic, for they highlighted both the moral issues and the harassment of people making decisions of conscience against the prevailing policy.

Postscript

A Word of Encouragement

At the end of the 1980s a newsmagazine had a cover headline, "Is Peace Breaking Out?" My colleagues joked that my job as director of the Peace Program might become anachronistic. Not long after that, the Persian Gulf crisis erupted, then Somalia, then former Yugoslavia, then Rwanda, then . . .

The peacemaking ministry of the local church will never become unnecessary. Jesus said, "You will hear of wars and rumors of wars" (Matthew 24:6). He didn't say this to relieve the disciples of their responsibility to be peacemakers. The peacemakers will still be called children of God, but they also need to be realistically aware that humanity will always know conflict in this age.

How sweet are those moments of breakthrough when enemies embrace with tears of old sorrow and new hope! Whether we are reconciled to a spouse, a child, a parent, a faction in the church, an ethnic group in the community, or a nation with which we were at war, we feel exhilaration, relief, and hope. The valley of tears somehow seems bearable when we break out on the crest of the ridge to see clearly the landscape around us.

But then we seem forced back into the valley again. Another war erupts from a place we can't find on the map. Another racial killing occurs in our community. Another church fight breaks out over something that seems so petty. We put out one fire in our lives only

to have another ignite just beyond our reach.

Sometimes we just get tired of pressing on, of dealing with *that* issue yet again, of trying to stand against the tide of our world's greed and power lust. The apostle Paul had a word of encouragement for times like these: "So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest-time, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9).

When the bones and the heart ache, we need to draw strength from our faith to persevere. God's harvesttime, the future of *shalom*, will dawn. Christ has risen from the dead as the first fruit of the grand harvest of history or, to use a more contemporary metaphor, as the sneak preview of God's future. So we don't give up. We admit we can't do everything, but we also know we can do something. So we do the tasks God sets before us as best we can. However, as we labor for justice and peace in the name of Christ, it is not all struggle. We so often are surprised by the delightful breakthroughs of the Spirit's joy and of resurrection power. Peace is not just our dream, but in ways that confound the world it can be our inner resting place. Peace is the gift we find in a community of others who share our journey of faith and ministry.

War's last word is death, but war does not have the last word. That last word belongs to the living God, who says, "See, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:5). Even death will be overcome in God's triumphant newness. The faithful peacemaking church lives—and is a signpost for that future.

Appendix A

Peace Hymns in Hymnbooks

Hymns with peace themes are found in a number of frequently used hymnals. Below is a list of hymn titles that includes the hymnals in which they are found and their hymn numbers.

Abbreviation Code

- CW—*Hymnbook for Christian Worship* (Judson Press/Bethany Press, 1970)
FG—*Hymns for the Family of God* (Paragon Associates, 1976)
LC—*Hymns for the Living Church* (Hope Publishing, 1970)
NB—*The New National Baptist Hymnal* (National Baptist Publishing Board, 1977)
PH—*Pilgrim Hymnal* (Pilgrim Press, 1958)
SS—*Hymns, Psalms and Spiritual Songs* (Westminster/John Knox, 1990)
UM—*United Methodist Hymnal* (United Methodist Publishing House, 1989)
WC—*The Worshiping Church* (Hope Publishing, 1990)
WM—*Worship His Majesty* (Gaither Music Co., 1987)

A Song of Peace (FG-682)
All Glory Be to God on High (CW-58; SS-133; PH-2)
All Who Love and Serve Your City (SS-413; UM-433; WC-430)
Arise, O Youth of God (NB-446)
Behold a Broken World (UM-426)
Canto de Esperanza (Song of Hope) (SS-432)
Christ for the World (NB-37)
Christ for the World We Sing (FG-686; UM-568; WM-669)
Christ Is the World's Light (UM-188)
Christ Is the World's True Light (PH-198)
Comfort, Comfort You My People (SS-3; WC-132)
Creating God, Your Fingers Trace (SS-134; UM-109)
Creator of Earth and Skies (UM-450)
Crown Him with Many Crowns (SS-151; UM-327)
Cuando el Pobre (When a Poor One) (SS-407; UM-434)
Dona Nobis Pacem (UM-376)
Father Eternal, Ruler of Creation (CW-265; LC-516; PH-445)
For the Beauty of the Earth (CW-7; FG-1; PH-66; SS-473; UM-92;
WM-76)
For the Healing of the Nations (UM-428)
God of Grace and God of Glory (CW-245; PH-366; SS-420; UM-
577)
God in His Love for Us (WC-385)
God the Omnipotent! (CW-33; LC-527; PH-446; WC-427)
Heralds of Christ (LC-488; UM-567)
He's My Everything (NB-36)
Hope of the World (CW-236; LC-515; PH-398; SS-360; UM-178;
WC-434)
I Bind My Heart This Tide (CW-219)
In Christ There Is No East or West (CW-269; FG-685; LC-513;
NB-360; PH-414,415; SS-439,440; UM-548; WC-695,697;
WM-671)

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (CW-119; LC-104; NB-60; PH-129; SS-38; UM-218; WM-134)

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee (CW-1; FG-377; LC-25; NB-6; PH-8; SS-464; UM-89; WC-20; WM-36)

Lead On, O King Eternal (CW-246; FG-595; LC-457; NB-397; PH-375; SS-447,448; UM-580; WC-747; WM-599)

Let There Be Light (UM-440)

Let There Be Light, Lord God of Hosts (CW-331; PH-449)

Let There Be Peace on Earth (FG-681; UM-431)

Lift Every Voice and Sing (NB-477; UM-519)

Lord Christ, When First Thou Cam'st (PH-325)

Lord Christ, When First You Came to Earth (SS-7)

Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace (SS-374)

Lord, Whose Love through Humble Service (CW-145; LC-512; SS-427; UM-581; WC-426)

New Songs of Celebration Render (SS-218)

O Brother Man, Fold to Thy Heart (CW-264; PH-410)

O Day of God, Draw Nigh (CW-266; PH-444; SS-452; UM-730)

O Day of Peace (SS-450; UM-729)

O For a World (SS-386)

O God of Every Nation (SS-289; UM-435; WC-422)

O God of Love, O God of Peace (SS-295)

O God, Our Help in Ages Past (CW-23; FG-370; LC-48; NB-19; UM-117; WC-78; WM-335)

O How Blest Are the Poor in Spirit (WC-603)

Peace in Our Time, O Lord (LC-519)

Reach Out and Touch (NB-418)

Ring Out the Old, Ring in the New (NB-482)

Send Down Thy Truth, O God (PH-237)

The Savior's Wondrous Love (CW-267)

This Is My Song (UM-437)

Thou God of All, Whose Spirit Moves (PH-419)

Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples (SS-434)

We Shall Overcome (NB-372; UM-533)

We Utter Our Cry (UM-439)

Weary of All Trumpeting (UM-442)

We've a Story to Tell to the Nations (FG-659; LC-483; NB-409;

UM-569; WC-733; WM-673)

When Will People Cease Their Fighting (SS-401)

Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life (CW-268; FG-665; LC-
514; SS-408; UM-427; WC-433)

Wonderful Peace (NB-296)

Appendix B

Peace Organizations

The following organizations are either denominational peace offices, peace fellowships, or religious peace groups. Where it is not clear from the title what the group is, an additional descriptive comment is included. Most of these groups have newsletters or magazines about their work.

American Baptist Peace Program
National Ministries
P.O. Box 851
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851
610-768-2451

American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry St.
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-241-7000

Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America
499 S. Patterson
Memphis, TN 38111
901-324-7675

Bread for the World
1100 Wayne Ave., Suite 1000
Silver Spring, MD 20910

301-608-2400

(A hunger advocacy network which often deals with peace concerns related to hunger)

Christian Peacemaker Teams

P.O. Box 6508

Chicago, IL 60608

312-455-1199

(A nonviolent action and intervention ministry of Mennonites and Brethren)

Church of the Brethren General Board

Office of Denominational Peace Witness

1451 Dundee Ave.

Elgin, IL 60120

1-800-323-8039

Churches for Middle East Peace

110 Maryland Ave., NE, Suite 108

Washington, DC 20002

202-546-8425

Clergy and Laity Concerned

340 Mead Rd.

Decatur, GA 30030

404-377-1983

Evangelicals for Social Action

10 Lancaster Ave.

Wynnewood, PA 19096

215-645-9390

The Fellowship of Reconciliation

P.O. Box 271

Nyack, NY 10960

914-358-4601

(An interfaith pacifist organization)

Institute for Peace and Justice

4144 Lindell Blvd., #124

St. Louis, MO 63108

314-533-4445

(An interfaith network that includes Parenting for Peace and Justice)

Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization

402 W. 145th St.

New York, NY 10031

212-926-5757

(Church and community agency for justice projects, including Pastors for Peace—see below)

Lutheran Peace Fellowship

1710 11th Ave.

Seattle, WA 98122

Mennonite Central Committee

21 S. 12th St., Box M

Akron, PA 17501

717-859-1151

New Call to Peacemaking

P.O. Box 500

Akron, PA 17501

717-859-1958

(Grassroots peace fellowship for the historic peace churches)

Pastors for Peace

331 17th Ave., SE

Minneapolis, MN 55414

612-378-0062

(Project of IFCO—see above—to take aid caravans to Central America and the Caribbean)

Peace with Justice ProgramGeneral Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist
Church

100 Maryland Ave., NE

Washington, DC 20002

202-488-5600

Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

100 Witherspoon St.
Louisville, KY 40202-1396
502-569-5784

Sojourners

2401 15th St., NW
Washington, DC 20078
202-328-8757

(Christian community with various peace ministries, including publishing *Sojourners* magazine)

U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East

Greene & Westview, 3rd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19119
215-438-4142

Witness for Peace

2201 P St., NW, Rm. 109
Washington, DC 20037
202-797-1160

(Interfaith nonviolent intervention and witness project in Central America)

Appendix C

Advocacy Addresses

The following addresses and salutations are for use in letters of advocacy related to political issues:

President

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500
Dear Mr. President:

Senators

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Dear Senator _____:

Representatives

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

Judiciary

The Honorable _____
Associate Justice (or Chief Justice, as appropriate)
United States Supreme Court

Washington, DC 20543

My dear Justice (or Chief Justice) _____:

Members of the Cabinet

The Honorable _____

Department of _____

Washington, DC (ZIP)

Dear Secretary _____:

Zip Codes:

Agriculture—20250

Attorney General—20530

Commerce—20230

Defense—20301

Education—20202

Energy—20585

Health and Human Services—20201

Housing and Urban Development—20410

Interior—20240

Labor—20210

State—20520

Transportation—20590

Treasury—20220

Veterans Affairs—20420

United Nations Ambassador

Ambassador _____

United States Mission to the United Nations

799 United Nations Plaza

New York, NY 10017

Dear Ambassador _____:

Phone Numbers in Washington:

Capitol (Call this number for all House and Senate offices):

202-224-3121

White House:

202-456-1414 (Switchboard)

202-456-1111 (Comment Line)

Supreme Court:

202-479-3000 (General Information)

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Appendix E

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