

# **Teaching Peace After 9/11 and the War on Iraq**

## **"The Most Weighty Task" for Christian Leaders & Educators (1)**

### **By James McGinnis**

Since 9/11 and especially in the midst of the war on Iraq, two critical issues have made it much more difficult for Christian educators to teach the Gospel call to be peacemakers. The first issue is the deep need for security in the face of the fear of terrorism. The second is a heightened sense of patriotism as unwavering allegiance to the policies of one's government and as total support of its military personnel during war. Because these are so deeply rooted in US citizens, it becomes even more crucial to find effective ways of presenting Jesus' message of peace. In 2002-2003, I developed two manuals for teachers to do just this, one for K-8 and the other for high schools and youth groups, entitled THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE, in which the principles and examples offered in this article are spelled out in much greater detail.

#### **A. Start With Jesus' Vision and Mission of Peace**

For Christians, the only possible allegiance that could overcome the power of patriotism would be their allegiance to God and God's revelation in the person of Jesus, if these were shown to be contrary to particular policies of one's government. So Christian educators have to start with Jesus.

In Luke 19:41-44, Jesus proclaims most poignantly his and God's commitment to peace: "As he drew near to Jerusalem, he wept over it and said: 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if only today you knew the things that make for peace. But now they are hidden from your eyes. The time will come when your enemies will build walls around you and attack you from every side. They will smash you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another within you because you failed to recognize that God had come to save you.'"

These words of Jesus were not meant only for his Jewish contemporaries. In fact, a statue of Jesus weeping (\*) is located across the street from the bombsite in Oklahoma City, where 168 people were killed by US terrorists on April 19, 1995. The words of Jesus in this setting are challenging: "America, America, if only today you knew the things that make for peace. But now they are hidden from your eyes..."

To know what Jesus means by "the things that make for peace," we go primarily to Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew's Gospel (Chapter 5) and his "Sermon on the Plain" in Luke's Gospel (6: 20-42). In these foundation texts, Jesus identifies the basic ways of Christian peacemaking: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute you, for God makes the sun rise on the bad and the good. Don't judge others; forgive those who have hurt you. Don't resist evil with evil, but with good. Turn the other cheek, walk the extra mile. Be perfect/merciful as your God is perfect/merciful. In short, it is sacrificial love that is at the heart of peacemaking, as Jesus' own suffering and death revealed.

## **B. Share These in a Mutual Search for the Truth**

These are compelling words, seemingly impossible imperatives, so we can't "club our students over the head" with them. Also, instead of starting an examination of these words with our own understanding of them, it is better pedagogically to speak these words dramatically and then ask our students what they think Jesus means by them and what they mean for our present situation as Christians in a nation that professes to be Christian. But my experience in many schools since 9/11 and especially right before and during the war on Iraq led me to sense that many teachers were afraid to discuss these texts and their application.

As Christian educators, we have a prophetic responsibility to share Jesus' message of peace and sacrificial love. But **how** we share it is as important as **that** we share it. The process should be as honest, humble, and mutual as possible. Gandhi's understanding of truth and nonviolence is critical here. Each person, he believed, has a portion of the truth and we develop our understanding of truth in dialogue with others who also have portions of the truth. From the dialogue comes a greater understanding of the fuller truth we are all searching for. Four examples have been helpful for older students. The three others speak to middle grade students as well.

### **11 Responding to 9/11 with Sacrificial Love**

As a way of re-examining the events of 9/11, the photo (\*) of a church cross in the foreground of the exploding World Trade Center offers a unique opportunity to reflect together on a Christian response to terrorism, with no single interpretation of the photo as the correct one. What is the message of Jesus' cross? Love to the point of offering one's own life for others. OK, then what does this mean in the face of terrorist killings? How was sacrificial love/Jesus manifested at that moment? Answers have always included: the rescue workers, those in the burning buildings who helped others out, those who gave blood, chaplains who risked their lives to minister to the rescue workers, those who escaped, and the loved ones of those who were killed or missing, those who reached out to others who were fearful (e.g., Muslim neighbors not sure of what might happen to them). As our preacher put it the Sunday after 9/11, "Hate hit, but love responded." And love kept on responding, at least until October 7 when our government stopped the process of grieving and searching for answers (e.g., "why do they hate us so?") and began the bombing of Afghanistan.

A discussion with older students about how to respond to terrorism with sacrificial love could open up many possibilities, some of which were pursued, while others weren't; e.g., a massive infusion of technical assistance and aid for impoverished nations and a cancellation of enormous debts that keep them in poverty, which is the breeding ground for terrorists. If the message of the death and resurrection of Jesus is that love will ultimately prevail over death, then a discussion of how love might prevail over the death-dealing actions of terrorists could be a meaningful example of searching mutually with one's students beyond the limited visions of most political leaders.

## **2. Dr. King's Willingness to Name & Confront Injustice with Sacrificial Love**

Dr. King, a teacher as well as prophet, provides a second example of this pedagogical principle of searching mutually for the truth. In his most prophetic speech - "When Silence Is Betrayal" (April 4, 1967, exactly one year before his assassination), Dr. King came out against the Vietnam War and poverty in the US and overseas as part of his expanded mission to confront the "giant triplets of racism, militarism, and materialism. But he did so as humbly as he did boldly:

"A time comes when silence is betrayal. Even when pressed by the demands of inner truth, men [and women] do not easily assume the task of opposing their government's policy, especially in time of war. Nor does the human spirit move without great difficulty against all the apathy of conformist thought within one's own bosom and in the surrounding world. Moreover, when the issues at hand seem as perplexing as they often do in the case of dreadful conflict, we are always on the verge of being mesmerized by uncertainty. But we must move on.

"Some of us who have already begun to break the silence of the night have found that the calling to speak is often a vocation of agony, but we must speak. We must speak with all the humility that is appropriate to our limited vision, but we must speak. For we are deeply in need of a new way beyond the darkness that seems so close around us.

"We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for the victims of our nation, for those it calls "enemy," for no document from human hands can make these humans any less our brothers..."

Because of Dr. King's willingness to proclaim these words publicly and intensify nation-wide campaigns to implement his "revolution of values," particularly by his forceful opposition to the war and his "Poor Peoples' Campaign" that was scheduled to invade Washington, DC, in the spring of 1968, he had to be eliminated. His final public words to a Memphis church gathering the night before April 4, 1968, hinted that his life was soon to be taken, and it was.

## **3. Presenting Catholic Social Teaching (2)**

In light of this prophet's appeal to speak humbly, we humbly offer our own understanding of Jesus' message, acknowledging our own uncertainties and questions. And this same pedagogical principle applies to the teaching of our Holy Father and our bishops. Before and during the war on Iraq, Pope John Paul II's condemnation of the war as "illegal and immoral" was unambiguous (3), but his words weren't shared in most Catholic schools, parishes, and diocesan newspapers. They were too contrary to prevailing sentiment and threatening to individual Christian leaders, although our US bishops as a conference, through the letters of Bishop Wilton Gregory, President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, did challenge President Bush's assertion of the right of pre-emptive attack on Iraq, especially without UN sanction. Again, if we apply the same pedagogical strategy with papal and bishop statements as we did with the words of Jesus, it would be better to ask junior and senior high students why they think the Pope and the bishops judged this war the way they did. What evidence or reasons do they think these Christian leaders used in arriving at their conclusions? Even if we grant students the right

to their own opinions and affirm the "primacy of conscience," we have to challenge them to understand the teaching of their Church and make judgments and act on the basis of an "informed conscience." Especially helpful in this process is the "point-counterpoint" presentation of the different perspectives on President Bush's foreign policy vision in his "National Security Strategy Memorandum" in the high school version of THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE.

#### **4. Francis of Assisi and the Crusades**

In those school assemblies where I had only upper grade students, I sometimes added the story of Francis of Assisi, especially because I have done assemblies in these schools as "Francis the Clown." Francis as a youth dreamed of fighting in the Crusades. And he got the chance a few years later, only to be confronted in a dream by Jesus telling him to serve Jesus as Lord and forget about being called "Lord Francis." Francis returned to Assisi and became the laughingstock of the town, especially when he became a beggar and began to live with people with leprosy. Years later he came to understand that the cross of Christ was a call to love, while the cross of the Crusaders was a call to conquer. How could God be honored by killing others, and how could the Pope and the Crusaders see the Crusade as a "holy war," he wondered. So Francis decided that he had to try to stop the Crusade. First he went to the Pope, hoping to persuade him to call it off. When the Pope refused to meet with him, Francis traveled to Egypt to try to meet with the Sultan, the head of the Muslim army, and win him over with love. The Sultan was amazed at the love and courage of Francis and his respect for the Islamic faith, but he wouldn't take the chance of putting down his sword because he knew the Crusaders didn't live their Christian faith the way Francis did. Francis was deeply saddened as he headed back for Assisi, but he was more determined than ever to preach and live the sacrificial love of Jesus. So he prayed more deeply than ever for his heart to become as loving as the heart of Jesus and to bear in his own body the extent of Jesus' love for all on the cross. And the cross became a special sign on the body of Francis.

Was sacrificial love "successful" for Francis? He wasn't able to stop the Crusade, so did love lose? Did love win or lose with Jesus? Jesus died without being able to stop all the violence in his beloved city of Jerusalem. These are difficult questions. Maybe it takes a long time for love to win. Maybe love wins only when people are willing to give their lives. That happened to many peacemakers in our own time - people like Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Anwar Sadat (the President of Egypt who tried to make peace with Israel), Yitzhak Rabin (Prime Minister of Israel who tried to make peace with the Palestinians), and Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador.

#### **5. "Pay It Forward"**

For younger students especially, but older ones as well, two youthful models of peacemaking as sacrificial love proved effective for me in the 22 K-8 school assemblies I did right before and during the war on Iraq. The first is a fictional story of sacrificial love. Many teachers and students of all ages have seen the movie PAY IT FORWARD, which came out in 1999. Asking students to recall the details provides a cooperative exploration of the meaning of the boy's "Pay

It Forward" scheme. In response to the assignment of his 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies teacher to create a project that would change the world, the hero decided to do three sacrificial things for others that they couldn't do for themselves. Instead of paying him back, these three recipients would "pay it forward" by doing helpful deeds to three others, and so on. While students may not recall all three of the hero's sacrificial deeds, they will remember the last one, when he stood up for a boy who was being picked on by others, because the hero was stabbed to death in the process. Asking students what his witness tells us about the message of Jesus and how to apply it to their own lives and to the issue of responding to the violence of terrorism and war can lead to a creative discussion. For instance, US/Coalition military personnel risked their lives in freeing millions of Iraqis from decades of repression. Nonviolent peacemakers from Christian Peacemaker Teams and Voices in the Wilderness also risked their lives by staying with Iraqi civilians in Baghdad before, during, and after the war.

## 6. "Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes" (4)

Another appealing example for children of respectful searching for truth and how to put sacrificial love into practice is found in the story of Sadako Sasaki and the thousand paper cranes. It was this story that proved most effective for me in helping children respond sacrificially to the violence of the war on Iraq. I entered each assembly with my face painted white. I pointed to the tear coming down from each eye and said I was very sad because our country was at war and lots of people were being killed. But then I added: "It's OK to be sad, but I don't want sadness to win." I pointed to the two red hearts painted on my face and asked what they are a sign of. "Love," the students consistently replied. "Right," I said, "and I want LOVE, not sadness, to win. Let me tell you a sad story, but a story full of love."

Sadako Sasaki was two years old when the atomic bomb was dropped on her city of Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945. She wasn't killed, but more than 100,000 others were. By the time Sadako was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, she was the fastest child in her class. One day after a race, she collapsed; and she collapsed again at school a few weeks later. When her parents took her to the hospital, they discovered that Sadako had contracted leukemia from the radiation from the atomic bomb. Her friend Chizuco told her about the Japanese legend of the thousand paper cranes, how your best wish will come true if you make 1000. Sadako made her wish (to get well so she could run again) and started making the cranes. After several hundred, she started to improve, but by the time she had made 600, she was clearly getting worse. After making crane #643, Sadako realized that she was dying. Lying weakly in her hospital bed, she started to cry, knowing that she would never run again. But then she remembered that she didn't want sadness to win. She wanted love to win. So she sat up, asked for another piece of paper and made one more crane. As she finished the crane, she made a second wish and wrote that wish on the wings of her crane - "PEACE" - and prayed that her crane would fly over the whole world and proclaim: "This is our cry, this is our prayer: peace for the world."

When I asked students whether her wish came true, they all said "No." So I probed the story a little deeper. Sadako gave the world her love (in the form of a crane) as fully as she could in that final moment of her life. Her classmates were so moved by her love and courage

that they finished the 1000 cranes and then began writing letters to people all over Japan, asking for donations so they could build a memorial to Sadako. And they did - a 30-foot arch in the Hiroshima Peace Park, with a statue of Sadako on the top holding a crane over her head. As children around the world heard of Sadako's story, they began making cranes and sending strands of 1000 cranes to hang from the arch. From Sadako's final crane has come many millions of cranes from all over the world. So when I rephrased the question and asked whether sadness or love won at Sadako's death, students chose love. To the question "did her wish (for peace) come true?" the answers varied from "no" to "not yet" and "it's starting to."

Then I focused my questions on the present moment. In this time of war, how can we be like Sadako? How can we help her wish come true? How can God use us to work a miracle of love? I told the students of my plans to visit Iraqi children during Holy Week - originally in Baghdad before the war began; then in a Jordanian refugee camp. When I suggested that the older students make paper cranes with "PEACE" and "SALAAM" (the Arabic word for "peace") on their wings and younger students cut out red hearts and write messages of love and hope on them, the students and their teachers responded generously. More than 30 large envelopes of cranes and hearts are awaiting their trip to the Middle East when the mission becomes possible. Some students hung their cranes in their classrooms as a reminder to pray for Americans, Iraqis and all others endangered by the war. I asked schools with bulletin boards displaying "stars" for each US service person related to their students to add an additional star for Iraqi children. A few students sent their cranes to political leaders imploring them to find peaceful ways of dealing with conflict.

I also encouraged the students and faculty to raise money for a special new fund for medicines for Iraqi children. ALL OUR CHILDREN is a campaign of the National Council of Churches that has already raised close to \$1 million (5)

I concluded these assemblies with the observation that war is a time for profound sadness. But it is also a time for profound love. As I realized moments after the first Persian Gulf War broke out in January 1991, "in the face of escalating violence, escalate love." In the midst of every crisis of violence, those who believe in a God of Love and in Jesus as the revelation of what it means to love ("to lay down our lives for others"), we are called to escalate love and work so that love, not sadness or violence, is the ultimate winner.

## **7. My Own Experience of Prophetic Witness during the War**

My own experience as a prophetic witness to the truth as I understood it led me to a week-long silent vigil across from the White House during Holy Week. I was in "white face" with two tears drawn under my eyes and a cross on my forehead. I wore a "sandwich board" poster which proclaimed in front: "Act, Pray and Do Penance for Iraqi Children Killed by Sanctions & War and for US Children Denied Health Care Here Because of the War and Tax Cuts for the Rich." Pictures of Iraqi children enriched the poster visually. For three days, hundreds of passersby would stare at me and many would make remarks, most of them negative. I heard them all, but one I caused me to think for a long time. "What about those Iraqi children that were freed

from prison? Don't they count?" Sure they do, I thought. I'm not defending Saddam Hussein's repressive policies. So that night I made a new poster which proclaimed: "Give Thanks for Those Freed and Spared; Mourn for Those Killed or Maimed." This time I had pictures of both Iraqi victims of the war and two US servicemen and their grieving mothers. In the words of a critic, I found a truth broader than my original one.

### **C. Find Common Ground**

An important principle I realized in the course of doing these presentations, as well as reflecting on the hesitation and opposition I experienced from both teachers and students during the war is finding common ground whenever possible. Most of my presentations focused much more on humanitarian, rather than political, responses to the war, with which everyone seemed to be comfortable. And when I changed my poster at the White House to read "Give thanks for those freed or spared; mourn for those killed and maimed," negative comments decreased significantly. One man commented: "Now that's a good sign."

### **D. Offer a Range of Action Options for Promoting Peace/Love**

A key principle for dealing with students and adults around social issues is to provide or generate together a range of action options, so that they don't feel overwhelmed or pressured into doing my particular actions. Educators do children a disservice by making them aware of social issues if they don't at the same time provide opportunities for them to respond. In my presentations, I offered a range of actions that included: prayer; direct service and donations (the works of mercy) and political actions (works of justice). For older students and adults, the handout I created after the war (see pp 15-16) can be used as an example of the wide variety of actions that can be considered, at least from my own perspective. Some teachers might want to supplement it with suggestions from other perspectives.

For those schools where the School/Youth Pledge of Nonviolence (see pp 17-18) was already a part of the curriculum (see p. 14 for resources), I encouraged the faculty and students to re-double their efforts to put the Pledge into practice as a way of "escalating love." The beauty of the Pledge of Nonviolence is its holistic understanding of peacemaking as a way of living 24/7/365 . It begins with interpersonal peacemaking, with an emphasis on respecting ourselves and others, sharing our feelings honestly and finding safe ways to express our anger, finding peaceful ways of problem-solving and dealing with bullying, listening carefully, forgiving and apologizing more readily, playing more cooperatively and finding nonviolent forms of entertainment. The Pledge also focuses on how we relate to the whole of God's creation, encouraging us to become more appreciative and caring for the earth. Finally, the Pledge invites us to challenge all forms of violence wherever and whenever we encounter it and to stand with others who are treated unfairly.

In a time of war, several aspects of the Pledge are especially important. Respecting diversity of opinions as well as diversity of race and religion can be challenging and requires a commitment to more careful listening to one another. Dealing with anger in constructive ways -

especially by encouraging "I statements" - can help students reflect on the difficulties nations sometimes have in dealing with one another. Forgiveness rather than retaliation is perhaps the greatest challenge to emerge from 9/11. Stories and models of forgiveness become even more important as a way of showing that forgiveness is possible. Students of all ages have found *THE STORY OF RUBY BRIDGES* inspirational (6). So too is the witness of Bud Welch whose 23 year old daughter Julie, along with 167 others, was killed by Timothy McVeigh at the federal building in Oklahoma City in April 1995. As Bud tells his story, he was consumed with rage and revenge for nine months before he got to the point where his negativity was eating him alive. He found the grace to visit Timothy's father and then discovered their common grief and pain. This led him to visit Timothy on death row at the federal penitentiary in Terre Haute, IN. Whether or not Timothy expressed remorse for what he had done, Bud Welch did not make his forgiveness conditional upon this remorse. Representing this kind of heroic or sacrificial love was a memorial cross on the chain-link fence surrounding the bombsite when I visited it in 1997. On the large cross were written the words: "168 reasons to love one another" (\*).

As a concluding image for the Pledge of Nonviolence, I use the pebble as a symbol of each of the tiny deeds of love/peace we can commit each day as we put the Pledge into practice. In the face of the boulders of violence - war, terrorism, racism, sexism, poverty, domestic abuse, media violence, etc - we can go on an offensive of love and pile up pebbles to offset the impact of these boulders on our lives and communities. Living the Pledge creatively and generously each day can become our own "pay it forward" scheme to help change our world by changing the moral climate around us.

## **E. Two Obstacles: Security/Fear and Patriotism**

### **1. Security/Fear**

As compelling as these stories may be, at least for some, the issues of security/fear and patriotism still remain and make it difficult for American children and youth to challenge their government's policies and/or take a chance on sacrificial love in the face of threat. First, in terms of security, I felt the need to reassure the children, as their teachers had also done, that they personally would be safe, especially in the short-term. I also asked how many had relatives in the Middle East and acknowledged their dedication and the children's concerns for their safety. But especially with older students, I also felt that I needed to be honest in my conviction that retaliation/war may not be a source of long-term security. Killing terrorists, those who supposedly harbor terrorists, and those who might arm terrorists may have the opposite result of creating even more terrorists to replace those they felt had died at the hands of a "bully" who loves to flaunt its military and economic power to keep others poor and subservient. Rightly or wrongly, this is a dominant perception of US actions and intentions. True long-term security requires addressing those sources of humiliation, poverty, and exploitation that breed terrorism; as well as creating more effective global mechanisms for addressing these issues and pursuing and punishing terrorists. For students, even if they don't agree with the characterization of the US as a bully, this notion of the "bully" may be a good way of reflecting on this international issue from experiences students have had in dealing with bullies.

## 2. Christian Patriotism (7)

But it's the issue of patriotism that is most important, because Christian teaching on patriotism is quite different from the "love it or leave it" notion that brands critics of American policies as unpatriotic and harmful. Most Christian Churches are quite clear that this sort of patriotism is not compatible with our faith. Our ultimate allegiance is to God. As the Catholic bishops put it in their 1983 Pastoral Letter: "The virtue of patriotism means that as citizens we respect and honor our country, but our very love and loyalty make us examine carefully and regularly its role in world affairs, asking that it live up to its full potential as an agent of peace with justice for all people" (8). True patriots are those who are dedicated to the ideals of their country. They love their country so much that, when they judge it necessary, they will work sacrificially to make the policies and practices of their country consistent with these ideals.

With teachers in mind, the US Catholic bishops added: "To teach the ways of peace is not to weaken the nation's will but to be concerned for the nation's soul..." (9). Dr. King had come to the same troubling sense about the soul of our nation, which he expressed in his "When Silence Is Betrayal" speech: "A true revolution of values will lay hand on the world order and say of war, 'This way of settling differences is not just.' A nation that continues year and year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

Returning to his vision of America at its best, Dr. King called Christian patriots to join him in this task: "America, the richest and most powerful nation in the world, can well lead the way in this revolution of values. There is nothing except a tragic death wish to prevent us from reordering our priorities over the pursuit of war." Then he concluded: "Now let us rededicate ourselves in the long and bitter, but beautiful struggle for a new world. If we will but make the right choice, we will be able to speed up the day, all over America and all over the world, when justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. May our country, on the brink of war, take to heart the final refrain of "America, the Beautiful": 'America! America! God mend thine ev'ry flaw. Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law.'"

Whether or not we use Dr. King's reflections on patriotism and war, it is important to reflect with students on the various ways of serving one's country. Those who are willing to risk their lives in military service are indeed patriots. Christian teaching on the Just-War theory clearly permits Christians to choose military service as their way of serving their country. But Christian teaching also affirms pacifists who choose to serve their country differently. Of all the models and activities described in the unit on "Christian Patriotism" in THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE, the letter from Amber Amundson to President Bush after her husband was killed by the terrorist attack on the Pentagon best illustrates and validates for both perspectives. (10)

Dear President Bush,

My name is Amber Amundson. I am a 28-year-old single mother of two small children. The reason I am a single mother is because my husband was murdered on September 11, while working under your direction. My husband, Craig Amundson, was an active duty multimedia illustrator for your Deputy Chief of Staff of Personnel Command, who was also killed.

I am not doing well. I am hurt that the U.S. is moving forward in such a violent manner. I do not hold you responsible for my husband's death, but I do believe you have a responsibility to listen to me and please hear my pain. I do not like unnecessary death. I do not want anyone to use my husband's death to perpetuate violence. So, Mr. President, when you say that vengeance is needed so that the victims of 9/11 do not die in vain, could you please exclude Craig Amundson from your list of victims used to justify further attacks? I do not want my children to grow up thinking that the reason so many people died following the Sept. 11 attack was because of their father's death. I want to show them a world where we love and not hate, where we forgive and not seek out vengeance.

Please Mr. Bush, help me honor my husband. He drove to the Pentagon with a Visualize World Peace bumper sticker on his car every morning. He raised our children to understand humanity and not fight to get what you want. When we buried my husband, an American flag was laid over his casket. My children believe the American flag represents their dad. Please let that representation be one of love, peace and forgiveness. I am begging you, for the sake of humanity and my children, to stop killing. Please find a nonviolent way to bring justice to the world.

Sincerely,

Amber Amundson

The American flag laid over Craig's casket offers another way to raise the issue of patriotism for us as citizens of three different communities - our nation, our global human family, and the whole of creation. So in addition to the American flag and Pledge of Allegiance, there are two other flags and pledges for religious educators and school and faith communities to consider including in the learning environment. Dr. Elise Boulding, an eminent US peace educator of the past 50 years and author/lecturer on a culture of peace, provides a challenging reflection for older students and adults on the type of patriotism needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (11). The discussion of whether and how to honor all three levels of community and citizenship in our lives would serve as a wonderful opportunity to model the basic pedagogical principles highlighted in this essay. It would also provide an opportunity to reflect more deeply on what God wants of us as God's instruments of peace and pray with Francis of Assisi: "Lord, make me a means of Your peace. Where there is hatred grown, let me sow Your love. Where there is injury, Lord, let forgiveness be my sword. Lord, make me a means of our peace."

**Three Levels of Patriotism or Citizenship for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

"The new century with its hoped-for Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence seems to be crumbling around us. But this is not a time for despair. It is a time for new learnings about the complexity of peace-building in a world alive with diversity. We have not understood the structural, cultural and spiritual difficulties of our task. Particularly, we have not understood the emerging three-fold citizenship required of us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: (1) faithfulness to our country, (2) faithfulness to the new requirements of citizenship in the United Nations for all six billion of us, and (3) faithfulness to another kind of citizenship entirely - in the kingdom of heaven, which we share with all creation. Each of our three citizenships is intertwined with the other two. What shall our practice be?"  
-- by Dr. Elise Boulding,

For the world to survive in this time of unprecedented global peril, we must cultivate three senses of patriotism, which are represented below by the three flags we should be flying and pledges we should be saying with our hearts and hands as well as our voices (\*).

**As a citizen of the United States:**

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands - one nation, UNDER GOD, indivisible, with LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL."

**As a citizen of the earth:**

"I pledge allegiance to the earth,  
to cherish every living thing,  
to care for earth and sea and air,  
with peace and justice everywhere" (12)

**As a citizen of the global community:**

"We the Peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war... and to reaffirm faith in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small... and to live together in peace with one another as good neighbors... have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims."  
(from the UN Charter, 1945)

## Footnotes

\* Photos of the statue of Jesus weeping, of the church cross at the World Trade Center, and the memorial cross with "168 Reasons for Love" from the Oklahoma City bombsite are available on the Institute for Peace & Justice website ([www.ipj-ppj.org](http://www.ipj-ppj.org)), in another printed version of this essay, and in both volumes of THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE. The three flags on p. 12 are also available in these last two resources (not on the website).

1 Following the Second Vatican Council, the US Catholic Bishops issued their pastoral letter HUMAN LIFE IN OUR DAY, in which they addressed Christian educators: "Those who are dedicated to the work of education, particularly the young, or who mold public opinion, should regard as their most weighty task the effort to instruct all in fresh sentiments of peace" (# 132).

2 Because I was speaking in Catholic schools and to Catholic educators, I used statements from Catholic Church leaders; but THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE includes statements on the war from other Christian Churches as well.

3 For the various statements of Pope John Paul II on the war on Iraq, see

4 In order to reinforce my dichotomy between love and sadness, I have added a part to this story that probably isn't accurate (how Sadako decided not to let sadness win). For the full story, see Eleanor Coerr, SADAKO AND THE THOUSAND PAPERS CRANES (Fellowship of Reconciliation, P.O. Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960).

5 Donations can be sent directly to AOC at P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46516. For more information, contact [www.allourchildren.org](http://www.allourchildren.org).

6 See Robert Coles, THE STORY OF RUBY BRIDGES (Scholastic Inc, 1995).

7 The unit on "Christian Patriotism" in THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE is fully ecumenical, with a variety of activities and essays, including one by James McGinnis entitled "Be the Best That We Can Be," reflecting the understanding of patriotism presented here.

8 & 9 THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE, 1983, #327 and #304.

10 Amber Amundson is a member of September 11<sup>th</sup> Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, advocating nonviolent ways of dealing with the threat of terrorism and war (see their website ([www.peacefultomorrow.org](http://www.peacefultomorrow.org)) for specific actions they are involved in).

11 See Elise Boulding, CULTURES OF PEACE: THE HIDDEN SIDE OF HISTORY.

12 Lillian Genser is the author of the World Pledge. She has a beautifully illustrated poster of the Pledge and a Study Guide for using it in the classroom. Contact her at 14431 Balfour, Oak Park, MI 48237.

**Resources (ORDER ON LINE at [www.ipj-ppj.org](http://www.ipj-ppj.org) or Call 1-800-833-0245)**

### **For Christian High Schools and Youth Groups**

#### **THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE -- \$19.95**

This unique 125-page resource on "peacemaking in post-9/11 America" provides reflection and activities for youth on the peacemaking vision of Jesus, Gandhi, and other faith traditions; on Christian teaching on war, peace and patriotism; on the US War on Terrorism & Iraq; on a variety of prophetic peacemakers, other actions for peace, and the UN Decade for Peace & Nonviolence; plus prayer cards from Pax Christi USA, and the special post-9/11 issue of YES Magazine on CAN LOVE SAVE THE WORLD?

#### **The Christian High School & Youth Group Planning Guide & Teachers Manual -- \$39.95**

In addition to the units from THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE, this 500-page binder is a planning guide for administrators, plus 400 pages of activities, readings, and action suggestions for youth and their teachers/ministers on implementing all seven components of the Youth Pledge of Nonviolence.

**For the TAP Program**, where high school youth are trained to teach the Pledge of Nonviolence to elementary school aged children, there is also:

#### **Youth Instructor Workbook -- \$35 each, 1-9 copies; \$30 ea for 10+ copies**

Readings, reflection questions, and action suggestions for youth in putting the Pledge of Nonviolence into practice, plus suggestions for teaching the Pledge to younger students.

#### **TAP Adult Training Manual -- \$35**

with guidelines for adult advisors on recruiting, training, and helping TAP youth instructors learn, live, and teach the Pledge; plus descriptions of various program models.

### **For K-8 Christian Schools and Religious Education Programs**

#### **THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE. -- \$19.95**

This unique 125-page resource on "peacemaking in post-9/11 America" provides reflection and activities for children on most of the themes in the high school version, plus dealing with children's fears, the human consequences of war, how violence works, cultural carriers of violence, positive images of peacemaking, and living as members of the global family.

#### **The Complete K-8 Christian Education & School Kit -- \$99.95**

Includes a PROGRAM PLANNING GUIDE for creating a school-wide program around the School/Classroom Pledge of Nonviolence, with detailed models from 8 schools and religious education programs; a 450-page TEACHER RESOURCE BOOK with lesson plans for Grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8 for the 7 Pledge components, including the units from THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE; plus the KIDS CREATING CIRCLES OF PEACE Student Workbook, A CALL TO PEACE: 52 MEDITATIONS ON THE PLEDGE, the CELEBRATING RACIAL DIVERSITY teachers manual, the TEACHING PEACE CD and Song Book, a vacation Bible school curriculum around the Pledge; plus sample worship services and parent handouts.

# Peacemaking Action Options in the Aftermath of the War on Iraq

## Some Political/Public Responses

**Support effective humanitarian aid** by urging President Bush and Congress to increase humanitarian aid to Iraq and to channel it through UN and US humanitarian agencies, not through the Pentagon. **Sign and promote the "Citizens' Humanitarian Pledge"** toward this goal (contact [www.epic-usa.org](http://www.epic-usa.org)).

**Support the UN** by challenging any other unilateral assertions of US military, political, and economic power, first in determining the interim government of Iraq and then in any future "Iraqs;" and by urging the US government to reconsider its rejection of the Kyoto Agreement on the environment, the International Criminal Court, and Bush administration decisions to withdraw from the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and add smaller more usable nuclear weapons to the US arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. Contact Voices in the Wilderness ([www.vitw.org](http://www.vitw.org)) and MoveOn ([www.moveon.org](http://www.moveon.org)) for updated accounts and specific action suggestions.

**Support Middle East peace** by challenging the Bush administration to move seriously, immediately, evenhandedly and multilaterally in pressing for a just settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Contact the Shalom Center ([www.shalomctr.org](http://www.shalomctr.org)) and the Palestine-Israel Journal ([www.pij.org](http://www.pij.org)) for analysis and specific action suggestions.

**Promote debt cancellation and a massive infusion of aid for poor nations**, a new "Marshall Plan," to address widespread poverty that serves as the breeding ground for terrorists. Contact Jubilee2000 ([www.jubilee2000uk.org](http://www.jubilee2000uk.org)) for updated action suggestions.

**Support political candidates** who have a more cooperative and less arrogant vision of the role of the US in today's global society.

**Continue to speak, teach, and preach prophetically**, using Dr. King's "When Silence Is Betrayal" speech as a source of inspiration and analysis; and encourage religious and community leaders to speak out against militarism, racism, and poverty/materialism.

**Note to K-8 and high school teachers:** □ use our new resources on responding to terrorism and war, THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE.

## Some Humanitarian/Economic Responses

**Donate generously** to programs working with the victims of the war, including the National Council of Church's new ALL OUR CHILDREN campaign (P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46516; [www.allourchildren.org](http://www.allourchildren.org)) to purchase medicines for Iraqi children; donate also to programs working with poor children in our own nation.

**Redirect some of our tax dollars and/or investments** to meeting human needs, not supporting war or the worst of corporate America.

### **Some Personal/Spiritual Responses**

**Pray daily** for the victims of war and injustice, political leaders, and peacemakers; and pray in the words of other faith traditions and reach out to people from these traditions, especially Muslims. Use pictures of those people for whom you want to pray regularly. Use Francis of Assisi's "Peace Prayer." Contact Pax Christi USA ([www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org)), as well as the various denominational peacemaking offices, for a variety of prayers and worship services; also the Muslim Peace Fellowship ([www.mpfweb.org](http://www.mpfweb.org)).

**Do penance** for our personal and our national abuse of the world's resources, as well as for the evil of war and other forms of domination. Consider a variety of ways of fasting - from some foods and liquor, from oil, from privatized [bottled] water, from speaking (if we tend to dominate with our words), from any other resources or privileges for which our government justifies its need for dominance.

**Escalate love** (random acts of kindness and beauty) throughout our daily routine, to the point of genuinely sacrificial love. Be good to one another and to the earth and all her creatures. If you are using our IPJ' "Pledge of Nonviolence" or Pax Christi's "Vow of Nonviolence", do so more faithfully.

For more information, contact James McGinnis, Institute for Peace & Justice, 4144 Lindell Blvd., #408, St. Louis, MO 63108; 314-533-4445; [jimppjn@aol.com](mailto:jimppjn@aol.com); website: [www.ipj-ppj.org](http://www.ipj-ppj.org).