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"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord'" **Isaiah 40:3; John 1:23**

SPECIAL ISSUE
The Global Relevance of Glen H. Stassen and Just Peacemaking
Essays by His Friends in Various International Settings

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VERSE

The Peace of Christ

By Patrick Anderson, editor

This collection of essays was the brainchild of Laura Rector and Carolyn Dipboye, both students of the late Glen H. Stassen. The content of the essays comes from the minds, hearts, and experiences of the authors who were also friends of Stassen. The message of the essays is that just peacemaking, a singular teaching of Jesus Christ, can be applied in diverse and seemingly irreconcilable complex situations.

Each of the authors attests to the significant influence Glen Stassen had on their lives. I am struck by the deep reverence these authors feel for Glen as a mentor, friend and teacher. The content of the teaching, based on Stassen's interpretation of the *Sermon on the Mount*, is important to be sure. When read through the enlightened eyes of these authors, the *Sermon* takes on a new vitality which gives direction and encouragement for practical peace work.

But the content of Glen's teaching is not the only significant aspect of his influence. Rather, as I see it, in these essays and in the correspondence I have had with the authors, it is Glen's tireless pursuit of living out the words of the incarnate Prince of Peace which lights a fire in them. That pursuit of peace was coupled with a deep, first-name relationship each author enjoyed with Glen. Some lived with the Stassen family while studying at Fuller Theological Seminary. Most hosted Glen in their own home environments for extended periods of time in which they struggled together to apply the lessons of just peacemaking to significant practical problems.

Often, students are attracted to theological studies in large part to learn how the teachings of the Bible and the Gospel can provide a path to solving the large problems they face. This is particularly true for students who come to America from other countries. The scholars who wrote the essays included in this volume were drawn to Glen Stassen largely because he offered a concrete, applicable understanding of the words and life of Jesus.

The problems these authors face seem huge and insurmountable to us -- distant and exotic. In America, the church is divided on issues related to gender and sexuality. In other places in the world, religious division is experienced in the context of bullets and bombs, lingering animosities, deep hatred. These essays give us on-the-ground reflection and analysis of how fellow Christians seek the peace of Christ in the midst of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, Boko Haram and Muslim-Christian enmity in Africa, hate rhetoric in Latvia, unjust employment practices in China, religious violence in Indonesia, oppression in the Middle East, and more.

These authors are worthy of our attention as they inform and inspire us. We should be encouraged to learn of their existence and faithfulness in the hard places. Their work for the peace of Christ seems more important than some of the issues which challenge the church in America. But they show us that if Jesus is to be Lord of life, then the words and examples He provides us are relevant for all of our struggles, large and small. ■

Footnotes which are noted in the text of the articles can be found in the online version at **www.christianethicstoday.com**

Glen Stassen: Friend, Scholar, Activist

By Laura Rector, co-editor

In many ways, this project started in Glen Stassen's hospital room. When I visited Glen in mid-April 2014, he was still very much trying to do the things that he seemed to love best. Even as his body was weakened by cancer and fever, his mind was still on his teaching and peacemaking. That afternoon he wanted to talk about all the things we would normally have talked about in his office or home: my dissertation, the classes he arranged for me to be teaching at Fuller Theological Seminary, and future job placements. In the course of that conversation, we talked about several of the students he mentored over the years, including Carolyn Dipboye, one of the board members of *Christian Ethics Today*, and Emily Choge, one of the scholars who contributed to this project. Glen, even as he was ill, was connecting his friends. After Glen's death on April 26, 2014, some of his international friends pondered a collection of essays in his honor, and I approached Carolyn on their behalf. Carolyn connected the scholars with Pat Anderson, yet another friend of Glen's, and the result is this special issue of *Christian Ethics Today* that focuses on many of the global aspects of Glen's career.

Glen was a scholar, activist, and teacher. All of those things were important to him. Perhaps, though, the term that sums up his role in the life of so many is the word "friend." In Latin, a Festschrift is a *liber amicorum* or "book of friends," and Glen had two such collections published to honor him during his life.[1] That is also an apt description for this memorial collection with a global emphasis on Glen Stassen's work.

Glen once told me that society had lost the idea of covenant in friendships. Glen himself never lost that idea in the way he related to others. He was constantly helping and connecting people, and he was deeply enthusiastic about his friends' projects. He had friends all around the globe, so much so that, when cancer treatments suppressed his immune system and he became ill with an infection, it was difficult to diagnose the cause of his fever, because he had travelled so many places.

Several of those friends were his former students, and those students are his legacy to the global church, as they pass on his ideas to their own students. In a career spanning 51 years, he taught at Duke University, Kentucky Southern College, Berea College, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Fuller Theological Seminary. During his time at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Glen mentored 15 PhD students, three of whom were international students from South Korea.[2] At Fuller Theological Seminary, he had 14 PhD graduates (and several others like me, who had to be transferred to other mentors at the end of his life). Eight of those graduates were international students, several of whom took up leadership at seminaries around the globe.[3] Glen also had close relationships with International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague (relocated to Amsterdam) and Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Lebanon.

At Glen's retirement celebration in March 2014, Joel Green, dean of Fuller's School of Theology, said, "Many of us think that Fuller Seminary has a vocation to serve the global church. Many of us recognize the need for indigenous theological leadership in the Majority World. And many of us are aware of the particular obstacles facing students from the Majority World who want to do graduate work at Fuller Seminary."[4]

Green continued, "But it was Glen Stassen who raised money for the Esther and Harold Stassen Jubilee Scholarship, and then instigated a restructuring of the way we award international scholarship monies in CATS so as to make it possible to put the resources we have to work in the service of international PhD students from the Majority World."

That incident was very typical of Glen's teaching career. According to Green, he generated over $1.5 million in gifts for Fuller, as he sought to help his seminary students. This stemmed out of the love he had for students—it was but one more aspect of caring for them. Glen constantly invited students into his home, connected them with his many other friends, and encouraged a spirit of collaboration, rather than competition.

Of course, his students were not his only friends, nor even his only global legacy. He formed lasting relationships with other colleagues around the world—as signified when the Baptist World Alliance recognized his decades of human rights work by honoring him with the Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award. His book, *Kingdom Ethics*, co-written with David Gushee, has been translated into nine languages and sold approximately 30,000 copies around the world.[5] He served on the boards of *Sojourners*, the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good, and *Creation Care* magazine. He also took on leadership roles in the American Academy of Religion, Society of Christian Ethics, and National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion. Each project was formed through deep connections and friendships, and with each project he formed even more relationships. Glen greatly enjoyed collaborating with others.

Perhaps the best example of that is when he joined colleagues and friends in developing just peacemaking theory. Over the years, he

published numerous books on the subject, formed the Just Peacemaking Initiative at Fuller Theological Seminary, and was working on a just peacemaking conference in his last days.[6]

Glen did all that he did out of a deep, enthusiastic love for Jesus and his people. The global scholars in this collection share Glen's love for Jesus—and they also have a deep, enthusiastic love for Glen. When these essays were taking shape, Glen's friends began connecting one another in a way that would very much please him. In particular, Parush Parushev, Emily Choge Kerama, Pat Anderson, and I recruited some of Glen's many friends to write essays with a global focus. Pat Anderson then skillfully edited the essays for publication.

Glen Harold Stassen was a friend amongst friends, even as he was a scholar amongst scholars. His work will continue to influence others, as his many friends connect others with his ideas, even as we wish we could connect with him in person. Thanks be to God for Glen, his life, and the ongoing legacy he leaves. ■

Glen Stassen: Incarnational Disciple of Jesus

By Jiyong Lee and Laura Rector

Who was Glen Stassen? When Glen died after battling cancer on April 26, 2014, his colleague and friend David Gushee broke the news of his death to the world. Amongst other things, in an article for Associated Baptist Press, Gushee wrote, "Glen will be remembered as the paradigm of how one serves as a teacher-mentor."[1] In an interview on MSNBC, Jim Wallis talked about the legacy of his friend "who always talked about Jesus."[2] The *New York Times* described him as "a Southern Baptist theologian who helped define the social-justice wing of the evangelical movement in the 1980s."[3] The *Los Angeles Times*' obituary reported that he was "a Christian ethicist who left a budding career in nuclear physics to study theology and who went on to develop a biblically based framework for peace activism."[4] No one description of Glen Stassen seems adequate, but perhaps the best description is the one that Stassen would have used to describe himself: incarnational disciple of Jesus.[5]

Family Stassen came into this world as a leap day baby, born in Minnesota to Harold and Esther Stassen on February 29, 1936.[6] His father was the youngest governor of Minnesota and served in Eisenhower's administration. Harold Stassen helped charter the United Nations, was prominent voice in the Republican Party, and ran nine times for United States President,[7] but it was just as important to Glen to tell students and other faculty that his grandfather was an immigrant tomato farmer with a deep commitment to integrity.[8] His mother was an artist and instrumental in her husband's political career. Glen's parents were married for 70 years, and they also had a daughter, psychologist Kathleen Stassen Berger.[9]

Harold Stassen was away for part of Glen's childhood while fighting in World War II. This and his father's active pursuit of human rights profoundly affected Glen. He would spend his adulthood advocating passionately for non-violence, justice, and human rights.[10] As one of Glen's PhD graduates Michael Westmoreland-White points out, Stassen spent his life "seeking justice for those marginalized by racism and economic injustice and striving for peace and human rights in a world constantly on the brink of war. His family would ensure that he was in the midst of these issues."[11] Glen originally planned a career in nuclear physics, earning a degree in the subject from the University of Virginia in 1957. He left physics to pursue theology in studying at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary before transferring to Union Theological Seminary, where he earned a BD in 1963. He earned his doctorate from Duke University in 1967.[12]

Glen married Dorothy (Dot) Lively Stassen in 1957. They had three sons: Michael, William (Bill), and David.[13] At Glen's Pasadena memorial service, Bill pointed out that his father's love was not finite. He poured all the love and enthusiasm into his family that he poured into his teaching.[14]

Teaching And Glen certainly poured love and enthusiasm into this teaching. His PhD students produced two other *Festschriften* in his honor during his lifetime.[15] This memorial collection by his international students and friends makes the third outpouring of such gratitude for this scholar. In the academy, it is usually considered a great honor to be the recipient of even one such collection. The majority of Glen's PhD students stayed in constant touch with him, even after their graduations, and counted him as friend and father figure. Glen was extremely proud of his students, wanting students, not faculty members to speak at his retirement luncheon.[16] He taught at Duke University, Kentucky Southern College, Berea College, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Fuller Theological Seminary in a career that spanned 51 years.[17] That career only ended with his final hospitalization.

Scholarship However, Glen was more than just a loving family man and caring teacher. Glen Stassen was a scholar whose life reflected his scholarly interests and whose scholarly interests reflected his life. The key word that helps us understand his life and his scholarly work is incarnation. When Stassen taught his students, unlike many other instructors, he did not just deliver his knowledge to his students while maintaining separation from them, but he truly valued his students' thoughts and interacted with them. He never considered himself above them or in a different sphere from them. This way of life was reflected in his scholarly work. He worked to overcome separation and dualism, and he pursued understanding and cooperation with others in an egalitarian manner.[18]

He believed that the language of Christian ethics and the language of public ethics had become estranged, and so he argued that Christian ethics must be bilingual and that Christian language and public language can understand each other through incarnational living. He shows how these two languages work together in his books, *Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives for Justice and Peace* and *Authentic Transformation: A New Vision of Christ and Culture*. Jesus is the Lord over public life as well as over private life. Christians should not shrink into their private realm or retreat into the church. We have a "shared understanding" in our public

life because of the sovereignty of God who rules over all life.[19] In class, Glen told his students that "Christian ethics is not only for the church, but for the world as well."[20]

Glen showed that theological ethics can be incarnated into our lives and that the Bible is still highly relevant to us. His renowned book, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context* and his last book, *A Thicker Jesus: Incarnational Discipleship in a Secular Age*, both illustrate, even in their titles, how he values connecting Jesus to the concrete situations and how serious he was about both the teaching of Jesus and challenges of the current age. He was careful not to neglect either Jesus or culture, and he showed that Jesus' incarnation was not just a one-time event happening in the past in a certain region, but that it is reiterated in the present as concrete and real for those who follow him.[21]

One major aspect of his work involved reinterpreting the Sermon on the Mount to prove that following Jesus today in concrete situations is not just a slogan, but the deep, thick application of the Bible. He called his understanding of ethics "incarnational discipleship."[22] Through his groundbreaking understanding of the Sermon on the Mount as "fourteen triads," Stassen revealed that the traditional antithetical interpretation did not properly deliver Jesus' intention. Instead, he argued that the antithetical interpretation caused evasion and dualism without producing transforming initiatives that could be realistically applied. This caused Christians to marginalize Jesus to the realm of high ideals, and it made following the way of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount impossible. In contrast, he showed that the narratives and words of Jesus in the Bible were not idealistic at all, but were practical and deeply relevant to our concrete lives.[23]

Finally, one cannot speak of Glen Stassen without speaking of just peacemaking theory. This, too, shows well that his scholarly works are incarnational. His just peacemaking theory proposes concrete and realistic ways to prevent war and promote peace beyond the traditional frameworks of just war theory and pacifism.[24]

Activism From the early stage of his scholarly works, Stassen developed just peacemaking theory, and yet Stassen, who valued justice highly, never studied just peacemaking as merely a "theory." He was not only a scholar, but also an activist pursuing peace and justice. He applied his theory to the real world and was willing to adapt, change, and verify it.[25] His just peacemaking theory proved its value through Stassen's concrete application of it in his activism. Through this work, he concretely and directly shows that how we as Christians can speak a public language and live as Christians in cooperation with society.

Glen was very active in the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Christian Ethics, but he was also on the boards of organizations such as Sojourners and the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good.[26] He was part of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and of the Strategy Committee of Peace Action.[27] He also worked to improve state and federal laws to support the education of children with disabilities.[28] He was active in the American civil rights movement and part of the 1963 March on Washington, D.C. for Jobs and Freedom.[29] He told his students that he once shook the hand of Rosa Parks and then joked with them, "Do you want to shake the hand that shook the hand of Rosa Parks?"[30] Stassen was present in Germany when the Berlin Wall came down,[31] and he once represented Baptists in a panel with the President of Iran.[32] The list of his activities could go on for many more pages.

Conclusion Glen Stassen achieved many things in his 78 short years of life. He loved Jesus and he loved people—in a way that he revealed through his interpretation of Scripture and then lived in his family, scholarship, and activism. We grieve the loss of this great man, but we celebrate his ongoing legacy through the people he changed through such love. ■

About the Authors

Sunday Bobai Agang lives and works in Nigeria. Agang is Associate Professor of Christian Ethics, Theology and Public Policy. Agang is a onetime Academic Dean of one of Africa's premier theological seminaries, ECWA Theological Seminary Jos (JETS) and currently the President/Provost of ECWA Theological Seminary Kagoro (ETSK) in Nigeria. Agang holds a BA in Pastoral Theology (JETS), MDiv (Palmer Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), and PhD in Christian Ethics and Theology of Public Policy (Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California) under the mentorship of Professors Glen Harold Stassen and Colin Brown. He has published several articles on various theological issues and is a regular contributor to *Christianity Today*. An ordained minister with the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) as well as a member of the Institute of Global Engagements, he is the founder and chair of the International Foundation for Entrepreneurship Education (IFEE), and cofounder and vice president of Gantys Aids to Widows, Orphans, and the Needy (GAWON). Agang is a just peacemaking advocate. His areas of research are the impact of religious violence, the history of Christian peacemaking in Nigeria from Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther to date, and the impact of public policy on church and society.

Agnes Chiu is a PhD student at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, originally under the mentorship of Glen Stassen. As she studied in the masters program at Fuller, Stassen inspired her and invited her to apply for the PhD program to study Christian Ethics. As a practicing employment law attorney and a native of Hong Kong, her dissertation topic is on employment ethics comparing Abraham Kuyper and Pope Leo XIII in the formation of a paradigm applicable to the Chinese migrant workers' employment issues. Since the death of Dr. Stassen, she has been mentored by Richard Mouw at Fuller Theological Seminary

Elie Haddad is the President of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) in Beirut, Lebanon. Born and raised in Lebanon, Elie immigrated to Canada where he lived for 15 years and worked in Information Systems and Management Consulting. During his work, Elie felt called to ministry and enrolled in the Masters of Theological Studies program at Tyndale Seminary. Elie returned with his wife to Lebanon in 2005 as Global Field Staff with Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM) and has been serving at ABTS ever since. He is currently completing his PhD in Missional Ecclesiology at the International Baptist Theological Study Centre at the Free University in Amsterdam.

Emily J. Choge Kerama is a senior lecturer at Moi University in Eldoret, Kenya. She obtained her PhD in Christian Ethics from Fuller Theological Seminary in 2004, where she studied under Glen H. Stassen. The Stassens' home was her first home in the United States when she arrived in 1998. The members of the Stassen family, Dot and David, have shared their home with her several times—including while she was writing this article. She co-authored with Glen Stassen the entry "Social Ethics" in *The Global Dictionary of Theology*. She wrote "Hospitality in Africa" in the Africa Bible Commentary and "Refugees, Reconciliation and Hospitality" in the *Dictionary of Missions Theology: Evangelical Foundations*.

She chairs Uasin Gishu Children's FORUM, an organization that brings together all the organizations that work with vulnerable children in Eldoret, Kenya. She is also the chairperson of the Advisory Board of BethanyKids, an NGO that helps children with disabilities to access medical care. She is a founding member of African Christian Initiation Program (ACIP), a community-based program that helps young people transition from childhood to adulthood without falling into the ravages of drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, and negative peer pressure.

Jiyong Lee was one of the last PhD candidates in Christian Ethics mentored by Glen Stassen at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He earned a BA in Theology from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, and holds a Master of Divinity with a special emphasis in Christian Ethics from Methodist Theological University in Seoul, Korea. He also earned an STM (Master of Sacred Theology) from Yale Divinity School, where he studied the relationship between *agape* love and justice. His dissertation research focuses on the public theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King, Jr. He is an ordained pastor in the Korean Methodist Church, and he founded Pacific Methodist Church in Seoul, Korea, where he served for five years as a senior pastor. He also been a guest preacher for several churches in Korea and the United States.

Parush R. Parushev has a BS/MS and PhD (Scs) from Saint Petersburg State University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics in Russia; an MDiv from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary of Kentucky; and a

PhD (Th) from Fuller Theological Seminary in California. He is a native of Sofia, Bulgaria. He is an ordained Baptist minister. Currently he is the Vice Rector of the International Baptist Theological Study Centre in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, the Director of the Institute for Systematic Studies of Contextual Theologies at IBTS Centre and the Director of IBTS of the EBF Prague. He is also a senior faculty member at the Free University in Amsterdam and of the Saint Trivelius Higher Divinity School in Sofia. He teaches theology, philosophy and ethics. He is currently serving on the editorial boards of the *Journal of European Baptist Studies* (Prague, Czech Republic), *Journal of Baptistic Theologies* (Prague, Czech Republic), *IBTS Occasional Publications and Research Publications Series*, *Theologica Wratislaviensia* (Wroclaw, Poland) and *Jurnal Teologic* (Bucharest, Romania). He is an author, co-author and co-editor of several books and has published a number of academic works in science and theology.

Fyodor Raychynets is the dean of the postgraduate studies program of the Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary (Kiev). He is also a Baptist pastor and a member of the steering committee of the Euro-Asian Accrediting Association. He earned degrees from Regional Bible Institute (Polyana, Ukraine), Evangelical Theological Seminary (Osijek, Croatia) and the MTh in Biblical Studies (University of Wales). He is a PhD candidate at the International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague, Czech Republic. He has been a lecturer or dean at Saint James Bible College, Kiev, Ukraine; Christian Bible College, Belaya Tserkov, Ukraine; Bible College Tashkent, Uzbekistan; Sarajevo Bible Institute in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Ukrainian Evangelical Theological Seminary; Donetsk Christian University; Lviv Theological Seminary; Kiev Theological Seminary; Slavic Christian Educational Center, Seattle, Washington and Slavic Theological Seminary, Mukilteo, Washington (USA).

He has published articles in English, Ukrainian and Russian. He lives with his wife and children in Kiev.

Laura Rector holds an advanced MDiv from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky and a BA in Christian Studies from Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. She was one of Glen's last PhD candidates in Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary, where she will defend the dissertation she wrote about children's human rights under Glen's mentorship in front of David Gushee this month. Glen once told her that she had been his TA more than any other student. She now serves as a member of the adjunct faculty at Fuller Theological Seminary. In the past, she was a lecturer at Loyola Marymount University and visiting instructor of Christian Ethics at the Southern Philippines Baptist Theological Seminary. She has taught homeless preschoolers and served in cross-cultural ministries in the United States and various countries in Asia. She has published about 45 articles with Associated Baptist Press, Ethics Daily and others, and she wrote the chapters titled "Children" in *A New Evangelical Manifesto: A Kingdom Vision for the Common Good*, edited by David Gushee (Saint Louis: Chalice Press, 2012) and "Delivering Love" in *Ethics As If Jesus Mattered: Essays in Honor of Glen Harold Stassen*, edited by Rick Axtell, Michelle Tooley, and Michael Westmoreland-White (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2014).

Peter Sensenig was born in Swaziland, southern Africa, to Mennonite missionary parents. He spent part of his childhood in Mogadishu, Somalia, before his family moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He earned a BA in Culture, Religion and Mission from Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia (2005). He also holds a Master of Divinity from Palmer Theological Seminary in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania (2008) and a PhD in Theology (Christian ethics concentration) from Fuller Theological Seminary (2013), under the direction of Glen Stassen. He is an ordained minister in the Mennonite Church USA.

Sensenig has taught at the University of Djibouti, Fuller Seminary and Underwood University (Atlanta, GA). He was the Wilberforce Scholar for Faith and Public Policy at Palmer Seminary (2005-2008) and a Max De Pree Fellow at Fuller Seminary (2011-2012). He was also the founding associate director of the Fuller Just Peacemaking Initiative from 2010-2012, working closely with Stassen to increase the influence of just peacemaking practices. Sensenig has published and presented in the areas of Christian ethics, just peacemaking and religious leadership. He is married to Christy Harrison and has one son, Moses. In 2015, Sensenig will begin teaching peacebuilding at the University of Hargeisa, Somaliland.

Jesse Wheeler is Projects Manager for the Institute of Middle East Studies (IMES) at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) in Beirut, Lebanon. In addition to providing administrative support for IMES, Jesse directs the Middle East Immersion (MEI Lebanon) summer internship program and acts as managing editor for the IMES blog (IMESLebanon.wordpress.com). Jesse holds a Master of Divinity with special emphasis in Islamic Studies from Fuller Theological Seminary and a Bachelor of Arts in History specializing in international and Middle Eastern history with a minor in Political Economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

Paulus Sugeng Widjaja lives in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, where he teaches courses related to Ethics and Peace Studies and serves as Director of the Postgraduate Studies

Program at Duta Wacana Christian University. Widjaja has a BTh from Duta Wacana School of Theology, a Master of Arts in Peace Studies from the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Indiana, and a PhD in Christian Ethics from Fuller Theological Seminary. While at Fuller, Widjaja was awarded the Harold Stassen Fellowship and served as Glen Stassen's teaching assistant. Widjaja is an adjunct faculty member of the Center for Religious and Crosscultural Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, and a member of the academic council of the Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies. He is the president of Muria Christian Church Synod, one of the three Mennonite synods in Indonesia, and is the chairperson of the Mennonite World Conference Peace Commission. Widjaja's PhD dissertation was published in 2010 under the title *Character Formation and Social Transformation: An Appeal to the Indonesian Churches Amidst the So-called Chinese Problem* (Saarbrucken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller Aktiengesellschaft & Co., 2010), while the book *Culture of Peace: God's Vision for The Church* (Intercourse, PA: GoodBooks, 2005) that Widjaja co-wrote with Alan and Eleanor Kreider was chosen for the 2006 Mennonite World Conference Shelf. He has published numerous articles related to peacemaking. He is married to Janti Diredja, the lead pastor of the Mennonite Church in Jogjakarta, and they have two children, Adira Paramitha Wijaya and Aditya Mahardhika Wijaya.

Peter Zvagulis is a senior media analysis lecturer at Charles University (CIEE program) in Prague; he also teaches media communication at the University of New York in Prague. He recently earned his PhD in Applied Theology at IBTS/University of Wales, thus becoming the last graduating student of Glen Stassen. He has studied Linguistics and Pedagogy at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the University of Latvia where in 1978 he was awarded the MA? (nostrified as Mgr. by Charles University in 2013). His other academic endeavors have been in History of Philosophy and Communication. His early professional career was related to translating classical French philosophers and researching medieval French philosophy at the Academy of Sciences of Latvia. He also had a long journalism career, gradually building professional experience from freelance reporter to Director and Editor-in-Chief of the Radio Free Europe service broadcasting to Latvia. The sociological part of his doctoral thesis, which he wrote under the supervision of Glen Stassen and Parush Parushev, has been accepted for teaching and research purposes by both universities where he is teaching. It also has served for two EU government-funded studies investigating the role of media in exciting ethnic tensions. Peter and his family are part of the community that is continuing the Sharka Valley Community Church tradition in Prague after the departure of IBTS to Amsterdam. ■

Politically-apolitical Jesus: Reflections on the evangelical churches' response to crises in Ukraine

Fyodor Raychynets and Parush Parushev

This essay is intended as a minute tribute to the life-work of Glen Stassen -- a scholar, a mentor and, most importantly, a friend. One of us, Parush, walked alongside him as a student and a colleague in the last 20 years of his life. The other, Fyodor, got to know him through Glen's association with the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague and through Glen's work, along with David Gushee, on recovering the ways of Jesus in contemporary contexts.[1] Glen used to tease us that there are the two ends of the spectrum of theological reflections. At one end was Glen's approach, that of a trained physicist approaching subjects with scrupulous attention to details and facts. The other end was Parush's approach, that of a former trained mathematician who approaches subjects through generalizing and conceptualizing. We would agree, however, that history is the true laboratory of human social experimentation. History is also a laboratory in which faith is tested.[2] One must examine models, conceptual schemata, theological systematizations and social-ethical paradigms against the witness of the two-storied dramatic historical narrative of God's Word.[3] By properly paying attention to the lessons from the context of the past, one can discern and apply the lessons in the present. The current dramatic events in Ukraine calls the church for such an examination of faith-witness in the present based on the experiences we find in Scripture.

The Drama of Ukraine and the Response of Evangelical Communities[4]

The sequence of ground-breaking events that changed the political landscape in Ukraine started in November 2013 through a movement known as *Euro-Maydan*. Maydan is a central square, often referred to as Independence Square, located right in the downtown of Kiev, the capital city of Ukraine. But it is also known and used as a historically symbolic place of people's resistance against political oppression, persecution, exploitation and injustices. Large numbers of people gathered in Maydan beginning that November to protest the government and to advocate for closer association with Europe.

That movement gradually grew into "Maydan dignity" when, in December 2013 through February 2014, Russia annexed part of Ukraine, Crimea, through forceful action. Since that action, there has been tension and violence in southeastern Ukraine as the Russian military and Ukrainian separatists have conducted actions to break that region away from the rest of Ukraine. The Ukrainian government fights to contain and eventually dissolve the insurgence of Russian separatists in southeastern Ukraine. The world's attention has been focused on these actions. When a commercial airliner was shot down with all aboard killed, and then when recent national elections were widely interpreted as a referendum on association with Europe rather than Russia, the nation of Ukraine experienced the great trauma of socio-political turmoil.

Revolutionary events have led to the alteration of the political leadership from Russian-loyalists to independent Ukrainians in the country. For the first time in the 23 years of an independent Ukraine, the country finds itself in a war with those they call the "brotherly nation," Russia.

This in turn has put some acutely important questions before the evangelical churches in Ukraine. What should be the posture of the evangelical churches in all of this? Should the churches participate in or abstain from the issues facing the public and political life of society and the state? What, if any, is the churches' role or involvement in the unfolding events? If evangelical communities[5] choose to take part in this struggle, then on which side? If they decide to remain uninvolved, then for what reasons? In any case, since evangelicals all highly value the teachings found in Scripture, the question is are there biblical grounds for one position or the other? Traditionally, evangelicals in Ukraine look for biblical justification of their moral and social stances – usually based on quite literalist hermeneutics.

Today we have all the more reason to claim that Maydan has revealed internal dissent among the evangelical communities on matters of political activism. This dissent has resulted in the conditional division of evangelical communities into several factions. One part of the evangelical constituency openly supports the Maydan movement and shares its political, social and economic demands – standing up against political repression. They call for social and economic justice and equality, for the human dignity of persons and for freedom and rights.

Another faction of evangelical churches has publicly supported Maydan, not so much in their political and social yearning, but spiritually with their prayer support. This was witnessed by the erection of a prayer tent on the Maydan Square. Evangelical participants performed deeds of mercy while sharing New Testaments and religious literature, as well as providing clothing, food and warmth for Maydan protesters.

Yet another part of the church pre-

ferred to express its assistance and participation privately, quietly, and from a distance. They gave assorted support to those who did choose to express themselves publicly through all available means, such as spending time in prayer, helping those who were present on Maydan and driving or carrying necessary materials such as food, medicine and clothing.

Furthermore, yet another part of evangelicals consider the church and Maydan incompatible and believe that the events at Maydan were clearly 'dirty politics' and not the church's concern. This group sees church and politics as incompatible, so by taking part in Maydan the church in reality is moving away from its true mission and does not act according to its calling and purpose. It is worth noting, however, that within this group of evangelicals there is an internal division as well. A number of them, without taking an active part in Maydan, still have been praying about the events in the country and asking for the Lord's mercy, protection and peaceful resolution of the situation. Others within the group pretended that nothing of importance was going on in the country and there was no point in taking note of the events.

Finally, another part of the evangelicals represents those who not only refuse to take any public actions directly or indirectly, but who openly criticize all those who took part in the events in any capacity. While criticizing others, these evangelicals fail to account that by such unqualified criticism they in essence support the structures of power resisted by the Maydan movement.

Whatever the reasons were and whichever side was taken by the evangelicals, the very phenomenon of the protests at Maydan forces all segments of the evangelical movement to search for new answers to the questions related to their political position in the emerging circumstances. Such questions asked in a time of peace result in premeditated answers, which the evangelicals find to be inadequate or unfitting in times of political turmoil experienced during the confrontation of people and power structures in the revolutionary events of Maydan. The need for re-thinking the evangelicals' political position is even more pronounced with the continuation of the military confrontation in the east of the country today.

It is interesting also to observe how the earlier declared pacifism and rhetoric of individual evangelical churches, especially when discussing the military events in other countries and when these churches called for the peaceful resolution of such situations, started being gradually modified to more violent or militaristic rhetoric in connection to the events unfolding in their own country. It turned out that being a pacifist or a sympathizer of a pacifist position in times of peace is one thing, but in times of violent encounters, it is something different. Realities of life forced evangelicals to think through previous theoretical statements and abstract beliefs. The new situation significantly challenged foundations of faith earlier declared 'right' in times of calm. Now, their frailer side and the lack of vitality in times of political turmoil were laid bare. The process of rethinking and discarding former beliefs due to dramatically changing political situations was unpleasant and painful.

Hermeneutical Communities

All this reminded the Ukranian evangelical community once more that she is a '*hermeneutic community of faith*' which has to consider and understand its mission as an extension of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world through participation or direct involvement in the life of society and the state. And this participation or involvement forced the church to rethink critically and interpret anew its participation in the world in light of the emerging realities. This also called for rethinking and co-measuring the church's life and mission in society in light of the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles. The question that called for an answer now was: What did Jesus teach and how did He act in similar circumstances? Social and political upheavals now seriously challenge Ukrainian evangelical communities. They, together with the society at large, felt their vulnerability and fragility.

The same sort of concerns that the evangelical churches have faced has led them to two sometimes diametrically opposed positions: (1) Some of them see in the life and teachings of Jesus a command and encouragement for political activity. (2) Others reflecting on the life and teaching of Jesus find justification for their political passivity toward, separation from and indifference to the political life of society.

For example, in the current Ukrainian context, an interpretation of Jesus as supporting political activity represents Jesus as a prophet and political activist. Jesus, through His words and deeds, posed a serious threat to the political and religious ruling establishment of His time, confronting their oppression, domination, injustice, manipulation and exploitation. Precisely, this very protest was the reason for His crucifixion by the hands of the same power-structures He was seen as rebelling against. However, God by resurrecting Jesus justified the way of Jesus Christ and judged the political and religious system that sentenced Him to death.[6] Such a reading of the life and teaching of Jesus calls Christians to take an active political stand. It also gives reasons for criticism of those who reject such a position. Interpretation of Jesus as an active prophet and revolutionary often inspires and justifies all sorts of social and political revolutionary actions, which even if not leading to the change of existing political regimes, at least calls the attention of society and the political elite to acute social and political questions.

Supporters of the *active political position* must ask themselves the question and try to explain: Why did Jesus not use a political title in regard to Himself? Perhaps one can discern political hints in the title 'Son of Man,' but why was Jesus not seduced by political power either in

the desert at the beginning of His public ministry (Matthew 4:1-11) or at the end of His public ministry in Jerusalem (Matthew 26 and parallels)? And, most importantly, how can they explain the fact that every time in the Gospels where Jesus was asked questions with obvious political connotations, He declined to respond with a straightforward answer? We see this in questions about taxes in Matthew 17:24-27; 22:15-22 or in Mark 12:13-17. Again, we see questions about authority in Matthew 21:23-27 and Mark 11:27-33. In those situations, Jesus preferred responding to the question either with another question or with vagueness. Also, how do we explain the practical absence of political appeals or even hints of political confrontation in the teaching, preaching and mission of Jesus? And yet, the *political activism* of Jesus demonstrated itself in His restraint from political statements and appeals, as well as the way He expressed ambiguity in response to questions with political intimation. Nevertheless, Jesus become a political threat to the political and religious powers in Galilee and Judea, and in turn their reaction caused Him to become a political threat to the powers in Rome.

There is obviously an open question: What was so threatening to the existing political order of the world in the seemingly naïve and peaceful teaching and mission of Jesus Christ? What was so dangerous in what He preached, especially in the Sermon on the Mount? He called for domination of love; over-embracing mercy and forgiveness of sinners, tax collectors and prostitutes; peace; social justice; and love not only to the neighbor, but also to the enemy. His message was indeed not a threat, but apparently a fragile and naïve alternative to a well-established religious and political system of oppression and exploitation. The preaching of Jesus only looks so if one looks at it on the surface.[7]

In fact, His call for peace and active peacemaking (Matthew 5:9) became a dividing 'sword'[8] (Matthew 10:34 ff), which separated His followers not only from their former religio-political value system but also from their closest kin, who preferred the old ways of life to the new way of Jesus. This separation resulted in persecutions for 'righteousness sake' (Matthew 5:10-12, 10:35-39). The righteousness of the Kingdom of God is expressed in empathy, care and service, not to those who are in power, but to those who are in need, and this undermined the previous system of oppression, domination and exploitation in the name of God by uncovering its greed and wickedness. It de-masked its representatives and defenders; Jesus called them a 'den of robbers' (Matthew 21:13 and par. Mark 11:17). The all-encompassing forgiveness of Jesus and acceptance of the stranger undermined the former system of punishment and control, and His commandment to 'love your enemy' became subversive to the politics of hostility, enmity and opposition between 'us' and 'the others' (Matthew 5:44).

Supporters of the *apolitical position of Christ* among Ukrainian evangelicals see Jesus removed from any form of public political activity. They represent Him exclusively as a wise teacher of His pupils who came to this world to reveal to humanity His heavenly Father, or else they depict Him as the spiritual redeemer who came in this world to die for the atonement of sinful humanity. Supporters of this position are unable or unwilling to recognize any political meaning, measure or messianic expectations of Jesus' earthly ministry in the betrayal of Jesus by His closest pupils or in His passion, crucifixion and death on the cross of Golgotha. They acknowledge only the spiritual and salvific purpose of God.

For such a reading of the life, teaching and mission of Jesus, it is difficult to explain the following questions: Why was Jesus a threat, not only to the religious leaders of Israel as well as the political and Temple elite, but also to the Roman Empire throughout His entire life? The powers of the day saw Him as a threat from the instance of His birth as the 'King of the Jews' (cf. Matthew 2:2) or 'Christ the Lord' (cf. Luke 2:11). The powerful saw Him as a threat through His public ministry, proclamation of the Kingdom of God and particularly in relation to the Temple (Matthew 21:12-17, 26:61, 27:40 and par. Mark 11:15-26; Luke 19:45-48). He was seen as a threat by the authorities (Matthew 21:23-27; Mark 11:27-33). He threatened the imposition of taxes (Matthew17:24-27; 22:15-22, par. Mark 12:13-17). See the threat in evidence before His betrayal (cf. Matthew 26:46-56, 61-68, par. Mark 14:43-50), after His sentencing to flogging and torture (Mark 15:6-15), His crucifixion (Matthew 27:33-37, par. Mark 15:21-32) and by His very death.

And finally, in our view the most important question to answer is: Why, if He truly espoused an *apolitical position*, did Jesus define the focus of His public ministry as the community of God, family of God, people of God… instead of precisely the Kingdom of God, which undoubtedly had political connotations in His time, particularly when He juxtaposed His Kingdom to the kingdoms of the world (John 18:36)? How did it happen that Jesus, without calling anyone publicly to any sort of revolutionary action or rallying followers to public revolt or militaristic opposition to the system, became a serious threat to the structures of powers in the Palestine of His time?

An apolitical stand of Jesus can be seen in the fact that in His public proclamation of the Kingdom of God, in His teaching and mission, one cannot find clearly outlined political statements and appeals for political actions or opposition towards existing religio-political establishments. This is the paradox of the good news of the incoming Kingdom of God. The good news in all its dimensions calls for persons' spiritual, social and political transformations while it does not give clear directions on how to act in concrete social and political situa-

tions. In one sense, the message of the Kingdom of God is an invitation to the followers of Christ to set ourselves on the path of continual transformation.

One of Stassen's most significant contributions to moral theology is the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount as a set of 14 transforming initiatives or regular practices commanded by Jesus for Christian character formation.[9] By incarnating the realities of God's Kingdom or God's Reign, disciples inevitably will become agents of transformation in the environment of which they are a part.[10] This calling leaves enough space for creative imagination and freedom of action in the application of the realities of the Kingdom to concrete social and political circumstances.[11]

Gospel Lessons

A careful study of the Gospel stories shows that the description of the life and works of Jesus Christ presents a rather ambiguous picture of His attitude towards political questions. His teaching undoubtedly encourages social and political activity, particularly related to social justice, as well as opposition to political and religious oppression, manipulation and all sorts of exploitation. At the same time, we cannot find direct instructions in the teachings of Christ to guide the disciples' actions in each and every concrete situation where they encounter issues of social injustice, political suppression, religious persecutions or economic deprivation.

An analysis of the Gospel stories of the public ministry of Jesus demonstrates a clearly political context where Jesus gives no direct answer to His interrogators in any of the stories. Instead, He examines those who question Him by asking His own questions. Two sets of stories stand out in this regard. First is Jesus's attitude regarding paying religious or imperial taxes, and the second is His attitude toward the power and authorities of His time. Here is a brief outline of just three episodes amongst others recorded in the synoptic Gospel stories: the Capernaum episode, which is mentioned only in Matthew's Gospel (17:24-27); paying Caesar's taxes (Mark 12:12-17; Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26); and the issue of power and authority (Mark 11:27-33; Matthew 21:21-28; Luke 20:1-8).

In the Capernaum episode, Jesus does not answer the question about paying taxes to the Temple in Jerusalem with a simple 'yes' or 'no.' Instead, Jesus poses a question to Peter (who, already answered affirmatively to the Temple tax collectors): "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?" (Matthew 17:25). Peter answers logically and correctly: sons of kings are free from taxes, but others are subjected to taxes. And here we have an unexpected and somewhat bizarre turn. Jesus commands Peter first to go and catch fish, open its mouth, and get a shekel to pay taxes for himself and for Jesus. Rather than answer, the reader is confronted with Jesus' question, a miracle and an ambiguous action. With His question, Jesus forces Peter and us to think about the earthly powers who are taking taxes from their subjects, whereas, God as King provides miraculously and gives instead of taking. By His action, Jesus, who clearly knows the state of the Jerusalem Temple (later in the Matthean narrative, He will call it the "den of robbers;" see Matthew 21:13), nevertheless pays the Temple tax, so that He will not be accused of disloyalty to the Jerusalem Temple authorities before the right time. The point of the story is not about paying Temple taxes; it is about the essence of two radically different kinds of powers.

The episode with Caesar's taxes is well attested in the synoptic tradition. Jesus again evades direct response, which could be used against Him by various parties in the story, and instead asks His interrogators to bring Him a coin with which taxes to Caesar are paid. When He is given a coin, as expected a question follows: "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" (Matthew 22:20). The answer is Caesar's. Jesus, instead of providing an answer, declares: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:22). Jesus does not support or oppose Caesar's domain of authority. As in the previous episode, He draws clear distinctions between Caesar and God. Things that are provided by Caesar even bear his likeness and inscription and are to be rendered to him. But things that we owe to God, and that is everything that we are and have, we are to render to God. This Gospel lesson has been, is, and will be a challenge to believers of all times.

The last episode has to do with the question of authority. Questions of this sort always have a political subtext. This question was posed to Jesus after three prophetic and symbolic actions that He took in and around Jerusalem, and these are: His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the cleansing of Jerusalem's Temple and the cursing the fig tree. All these prophetic actions provoke a legitimate question from the chief priest and elders: "Who gave you the authority" to act or to behave in this way? Once again, Jesus instead of providing a straightforward answer to His interrogators puts them in a similar situation as He was put by others with the question about Caesar's taxes. He poses His own question to the chief priest and elders about the nature of John the Baptist's baptism: "The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?" (Matthew 21:25). Just as it was dangerous for Jesus to answer the question of Caesar's tax with either 'yes' or 'no,' now it is dangerous for the chief priest and elders to answer Jesus' question ether affirmatively or negatively. In the first case, it meant that they would admit that John's ministry was heavenly affirmed. Consequently, it would mean that Jesus' ministry was heavenly affirmed, too. If they refused to affirm that, then the crowd would turn against them since they considered John a prophet. Their

answer, "we do not know," leads to Jesus' response, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things" (Matthew 21:27).

In all three episodes, Jesus is rather elusive whenever He is asked a question with political connotations. That is, He either poses a counter-question, or makes a declaration, or does not provide an answer at all. Such ambiguity is indicative of the fact that the question of the relationship of Jesus to politics is by far not that simple. There are no trouble-free prescriptions of how to respond to politics. As a result of His careful study of the Lukan account of Jesus' public ministry, John Howard Yoder provides a succinct summary of the temptations to power and political activism experienced by Jesus and the predicaments of Christians in facing these things: "The one temptation the man Jesus faced – and faced again and again – as constitutive element of His public ministry, was the temptation to exercise social responsibility, in the interest of justified revolution, thorough the use of available violent methods. Social withdrawal was no temptation to Him; that option (which most Christians take part of the time) was excluded at the outset. Any alliance with the Sadducean establishment in the exercise of *conservative* social responsibility (which most Christians choose the rest of the time) was likewise excluded at the outset. We understand Jesus only if we can empathize with this threefold rejection: the self-evident, axiomatic, sweeping rejection of both quietism and establishment responsibility, and the difficult, constantly reopened, genuinely attractive option of the crusade."[12]

We do not attempt to give a definitive answer here to the question of whether Jesus was a political activist or apolitical one. Rather, we aim at stimulating a discussion among those concerned with the volatile situation in Eastern Europe and elsewhere on the apolitical politics of Jesus or of His political apoliticity. This is reflected in the cumbersome title "Politically-apolitical Jesus."

Lessons to Be Learned

The question that is worth asking is this: What can contemporary evangelical communities in Ukraine learn from this equivocal and ambiguous response of Jesus to a concrete situation with clear political hints? The response to such a question is particularly significant in the context of political games and intrigues, where politicians try to win Christian communities over to their political side by all possible means, with the purpose of giving a pious appearance to political projects with questionable morality.

There is no easy and simple answer to this question, as we cannot see that Jesus offered such an answer. Contrary to the dichotomist view of many of the contemporary Ukrainian evangelicals, we think Jesus was clear that worship to God and faithfulness to Him is not only spiritual, but also a political activity. Faithfulness to Christ in the context of the state provokes jealousy of the state towards the loyalty of its citizens. N. T. Wright rightly observes that Christ belongs to a particular context in which there is no clear demarcation line between theology and politics.[13] Yoder, McClendon and Stassen teach us that political activism is not so much about action but about being. More specifically, what we do reflects who we are. Discipleship is a political responsibility of Christian communities.[14]

Jesus understood well the ambiguity of the question: Who is in charge of this world? The fact is that this question is not only political, but theological as well. He recognized the reality of the governance of the kings and emperors over their subjects and the power of the powerful in this world. At the same time, He encouraged His disciples to embody an alternative way of being by calling them to submit to the governance of service and love (Matthew 20:25-28; Luke 22:25-26). In the world in which powers rule over others inhumanely, Jesus called His followers to reveal humanity in their personal relations. He not only called us to that purpose, but offered an example: "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (cf. Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45).

In comparison to all kings, emperors and nobility, Jesus tirelessly referred to God as the True King – the King of kings. Jesus did not simplify the picture of the political world, and He did not merge with it. He clearly differentiated the *Kingdom* of God and the kingdoms of the world. He did not call for a rebellion against Caesar, and importantly He did not call for unquestionable submission to Caesar, but rather to God. The legitimacy of Caesar was only to the points where Caesar did not presume to take the place of God and where he only requested what was legitimately his, not God's (in our case, these are taxes). We are obliged in all to God, and we should feel awe and adoration only in front of Him (Matthew 10:28).

The task of *political theology* is not to make the church a political player or teach it skillful political schemes, but to hearten the church to remain the church in the world, while the world remains on its own. As Stanley Hauerwas insists, "The first task of the church is not to make the world just but to make the world the world."[15] And this is possible, paraphrasing Hauerwas, only in the case where the church understands that it does not have a political mission but that its very existence in the world is an "alternative to the politics of the world."[16] That is the church's political mission. The church reflecting Christ in its mission is a representation not of political, ideological, national, cultural, patriotic or ethnic values, but the values of the Kingdom of God. It is Christ, not the surrounding culture, who is the grounding and the inspiration of the church.[17]

Being the followers of Christ and an extension of His mission, the church must understand that Jesus' Word is not an answer to human questions, just as Dietrich Bonhoeffer clearly understood this in his time. Instead,

Jesus' Word is a divine answer to divine questions addressed to humanity. As such, His Word is substantially defined not from below but from above. It is not intended as a solution to human problems. It is salvation. Instead of solving problems, Jesus brings salvation to a person.[18] This is particularly important for us to remember in times of political tension, opposition and conflicts. The task of a community faithful to its calling is not to offer people political answers to particular political challenges, but to give them the ability and courage to embody the virtues of the Kingdom of God as an alternative social reality,[19] while being an inseparable part of society and the state. It is not to give simplistic answers to people in times of crises, but to surprise them by asking relevant questions and helping them find their own answers, which could bring them to salvation.

An apolitical policy of Jesus expressed itself in the absence of a political agenda. Instead, He embodied an alternative to the politics of the world, and in this way He became a significant threat to those politics. The political apoliticity of the church ought not to be in its involvement in political oppositions, revolutionary events, or the support of this or that political power or ideology, or these or those national, patriotic or cultural slogans. Rather, it is in its existence as a *political alternative* to all of them and in its proclamation of the Kingdom of God in the world of politics. ■

Where Grace and Peace Have Always Lain

Late blossoms, cool breezes, soften the summer's wane,
So empathy can assuage a lingering pain,
Kindness paves the way for shalom in train,
A helpful deed may open a bonding refrain,
And care for those in need is never in vain,
An enemy reconciled is a blessed double gain,
Humility may redeem even a troubled reign,
Words are easily shunned, a good life few will disdain,
Sublime it is when life is linked with the transcendent plane,
'Tis the realm where grace and peace have always lain.

—James A. Langley

Jesus Christ, King and Caliph: The Writings of Glen Stassen and Our Middle Eastern Communities

By Elie Haddad and Jesse Wheeler

It was by a providential intersection of interpersonal and geo-political factors that Glen Stassen's witness has come to play such an important role in the institutional and academic life of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary (ABTS) in Beirut, Lebanon. His is a witness with profound implications for our students, our Middle Eastern Christian communities, and our public witness within the Islamic context. Ultimately, it is his prophetic insistence upon the centrality and Lordship of Christ Jesus for both our personal and collective lives, a message ever prescient in the Middle Eastern context, that give Dr. Stassen's teachings such power.

Glen Stassen and the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary

I [Elie Haddad] first met Glen Stassen at the International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) in 2006 in Prague where I am pursuing my PhD studies. Glen was one of the professors invited to come to IBTS for the yearly research colloquia in January to teach and help provide guidance to research students. In addition, I [Jesse Wheeler] was deeply affected by Dr. Stassen's scholarship as a result of my time as student, administrator and teaching and research assistant at Fuller Theological seminary between 2005 and 2012. I became immediately convinced of the relevance of Stassen's work for the Middle Eastern context.

In fact, we at ABTS have been impressed and influenced by Glen from the beginning for many reasons. First, Glen kept drawing people to a "thick" Jesus. Glen took Jesus seriously as Lord of our whole lives. Jesus mattered, being not Lord of one compartment of our lives but Lord of all.[1] Second, Glen Stassen was a Baptist theologian who taught on Baptist Distinctives and always managed to place peacemaking at the center of Baptist thinking. Third, Glen very quickly became one of our favorite ethicists, primarily because he centered his ethics on the teachings of Jesus. More specifically, he brought life back to the Sermon on the Mount, a rather largely ignored piece of the teachings of Jesus. He made the Sermon relevant again and applicable to today's challenges, particularly in the Middle East.[2]

We were not the only ones at ABTS (Arab Baptist Theological Seminary) who knew Glen. Martin Accad, the Director of ABTS's Institute of Middle East Studies, was Glen's colleague, serving as a part-time Associate Professor at Fuller Theological Seminary's School of Intercultural Studies. Martin was also impressed by Glen's system of ethics and contributed a chapter entitled "Just Peacemaking in Light of Global Challenges Involving Islam and Muslims" to Glen's recent book *Formation for Life: Just Peacemaking and Twenty-First-Century Discipleship*.[3] Martin's chapter proved how relevant Glen's principles are to our context.

In 2008, our challenge was to find a biblical, Christ-centered perspective relevant to a contemporary Middle Eastern context. The decision was not difficult. We wanted our students to be exposed to Glen's teachings on the ethics of Jesus and his ground-breaking *Kingdom Ethics* became the main textbook for our course. Our language of instruction at ABTS is in Arabic, so we had to translate large pieces of this text to Arabic. Eventually, in 2012 we managed to publish *Kingdom Ethics* in Arabic for the benefit of the Arab readers. Because translations of books such as *Kingdom Ethics* are expensive projects, and the sale of Arabic Christian books does not cover the cost of publishing, we had to raise funds for a project like this. It is noteworthy to mention that Glen used some of his own personal funds to support this project. He believed in the impact that this material would have on our context and was willing to invest in the publishing of the Arabic translation.

We invited Glen Stassen to ABTS in 2012 for a launching event for the translated version of *Kingdom Ethics*. Glen was also one of our main speakers at that year's Middle East Conference, titled "Love Your Neighbor as Yourself: The Church and the Palestinian in Light of God's Command for Justice and Compassion." The Palestinian problem continues to be a significant, defining political issue in the Middle East. However, the humanitarian and justice dimensions of the conflict remain largely ignored by our churches. Glen Stassen's voice was especially important in this conference, provoking and inspiring us as he brought with him a Kingdom perspective and a "thick" Jesus.

One of our main challenges as a seminary that teaches in the Arabic language is the lack of resources. Not enough Christian books are published in Arabic. Of the limited books published in Arabic, very few are written with an Arab context in mind. The majority are translated from English but not contextualized for our region. The main question therefore becomes: why would a Western book on ethics written by an American be relevant in a Middle Eastern context for an Arab reader? The simple answer is this: Glen's ethical framework was not issues-driven. Rather, it was Jesus-centered, making it relevant anytime anywhere. And, Glen's material has

proven to be very effective for our context and in our classroom.

"Prudent Practice": The Ethical Challenges of Discipleship in Middle East

Different ethical challenges face various communities around the world. Moral norms of a certain community are derived from their value system, from their worldview, and from inherited traditions and practices. As such, moral norms of one culture cannot be easily challenged by the moral norms of another. That would be ethnocentric behavior, not effective in motivating change. This has precisely been the problem with many Christian ethical systems. They have been packaged with distinct cultural norms, usually of Western societies, making it easy to reject the whole package. The ethics of Jesus, however, stand in judgment over all ethical norms within all societies, providing correctives to the moral norms of all communities. Glen Stassen was able to distill his framework down to principles capable of challenging behaviors and attitudes cross-culturally, and herein lies its brilliance.

There are many similarities between the ethical challenges confronting the Arab world and universal challenges. However, some challenges are unique to, or particularly acute, in our region. We experience these challenges first hand in our admissions process at ABTS which requires candidates to complete a comprehensive application form that includes some ethically problematic case studies for candidates to reflect on and provide an answer. What we consistently find is that candidates do not have a problem providing 'creative' solutions to the ethical dilemmas presented. They are convinced that being clever in providing solutions is the right thing to do. The following paragraphs highlight a number of 'clever' challenges especially detrimental for Christian discipleship in our region.

For example, one of the major ethical challenges in our region is a widespread lack of integrity. We live in societies plagued with corruption, and we are governed by mostly corrupt regimes. Growing up in such a context, it is very easy for corruption to become part of one's DNA. This kind of thinking and behavior can very easily infiltrate church communities as well. In highly corrupted societies, individuals learn not to trust. People learn not to trust governments, not to trust systems, and not to trust those in positions of power and authority. People develop a posture of defensiveness, wanting to protect themselves from corrupt systems and people. As a result, breaking the rules becomes a successful defense mechanism. Disobeying corrupt laws becomes seen as a virtue and this filters down to everyday behavior. Cheating on taxes, for example, becomes a good thing. Why give money to a corrupt government when we can give it to church ministry? It becomes so easy to justify cheating, stealing, and lying for the sake of ministry. Of course, people do not label this behavior as cheating or stealing or lying. Instead, they call it cleverness, or prudence, and genuinely believe that they are doing the right thing. In the words of Stassen, it becomes a vicious cycle.[4] By ignoring the social consequences of our actions we simply perpetuate the very corruption from which we seek respite.

Another factor that affects integrity is the honor-and-shame culture of the Middle East. Lack of integrity cannot be confronted head-on. People may not have a problem in cheating, but they will be highly offended if someone calls them cheaters. They may have no problem stealing but they are not thieves. Image and reality are sometimes contradictory in honor-and-shame cultures where questionable behavior hides behind pious facades, because image and perception are of extreme importance.

Candidates applying to study at ABTS must provide references, usually provided by local Christian leaders. It is interesting that in many communities these written references are virtually meaningless, since referees would never communicate anything negative in writing. If we want to hear the truth about a certain candidate, we need to pick up the phone and talk to the referees directly. We have a much better chance of getting the real picture over the phone than in writing.

In an honor-and-shame culture people are reluctant to say something that shames either themselves or others, and under corrupt regimes people learn to fear retribution. It becomes natural for people growing up in this environment not to value transparency. Hence, hypocrisy becomes a major challenge. Doing what looks good becomes much more important than doing what is right as people end up using teleological frameworks for their behavior. The end justifies the means. But not just that; fear justifies the means as well, fear of retribution and fear of being shamed. It all adds to the vicious cycle.

"Christ and the Caliph": Challenges for Public Witness in Islamic Contexts

An additional, deep-seated ethical challenge in our context is the lack of love towards others, those different from us. Christians in our region are brought up in a majority non-Christian context in the midst of inter-community conflict, with much hardship and sometimes hatred, bitterness and persecution. As a result, it is easy to develop a minority complex. We are the weak minority, continuously harassed by the prevailing majority. This attitude drives the church into survival mode, with the church developing a siege mentality as it withdraws from society to form small exclusive communities.

It therefore becomes natural for our communities to adopt an "us and them" mentality, with "us" being those like us and "them" being those not like us. It becomes easy to look at "them" as the enemy and not as our neighbors whom we are called to love and serve. As a result, it is easy for churched people to end up hating their neighbors, or at least not caring for them enough to become witnesses for God's love and grace. So, we grow up in our churches with 'a love problem.' We hate them and

they hate us. This once again results in a vicious cycle whereby all ministry becomes congregational or self-care and the chief objective of the church is to serve itself. Unfortunately, this is also how the church loses its voice in the community, loses its impact, and loses its very purpose for its being. And, it is how the church contributes to its own marginalization, which in the worst of times can have genocidal consequences for its very existence. Yet, it is in these most difficult times that the church's public witness to Christ's saving Reign is needed now more than ever.

On June 30, 2014 Muhammad Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the group popularly referred to as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), declared the re-establishment of the Islamic caliphate, accompanied by a considerable amount of bloodshed. While it is ultimately for Muslims themselves to determine the legitimacy of Baghdadi's tenuous claims, few can deny the power of the caliphate within Islamic discourse.

For it is important to be reminded that at their scriptural core both Islam and Christianity concern themselves with the Reign of God. The first pages of *Kingdom Ethics* open with this very proclamation, that the good news of God's Kingdom has come. This is the heart our public witness. Yet Dudley Woodberry, Stassen's colleague at Fuller, reminds us that "***both*** Muhammad and Jesus preached a message of 'Repent for the Kingdom is at hand.'"[5] In other words, for both Christians and Muslims, God's Reign has begun. God is King.

To say that God is King is a deeply political act for such a statement immediately relativizes any other claim to ultimate authority. In biblical thought, God is King. Pharaoh is not. Christ is Lord. Caesar is not. Everything else flows from this central proclamation, such that in Christian and Muslim thought "both Jesus and Muhammad have become for their followers models for their [respective] understandings of the Kingdom of God."[6] As such, when Christians and Muslims announce the Kingship of God they are ethically bound to strive towards seeing that vision actualized. Or, to borrow a biblical phrase, to work towards "seeing [God's] Kingdom come [and His] will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Of this, two questions immediately surface: What is God's will? How does God's Kingdom come?

As envisioned in Islam, God's Reign on earth is ultimately demonstrated through the appropriation and application of God's revealed law, or Sharia. Joseph Schacht describes Islamic law as "the epitome of Islamic thought, the most typical manifestation of the Islamic way of life, the core and kernel of Islam itself."[7] And, as Woodberry writes, "The Kingdom of God can be realized by introducing the Law -- which applies to all areas of life including political. As people get into the habit of following it, the Kingdom is actualized."[8]

This is a holistic, public vision encompassing all domains of life, both individual and collective. And with Muhammad's Medina as a model, the state and military apparatus is typically understood to be an appropriate means for seeing this Kingdom vision realized. So, as political head of the Muslim community, the caliph ultimately oversees the implementation of God's revealed Will and the Islamic government (however interpreted and applied) becomes therefore the lived expression of God's will, of God's just Reign on earth.

However, this was all called into question when Turkish president Mustafa Kemal Atatürk abolished the caliphate in 1923, sending shock waves throughout the Muslim world from which it has yet to recover. The ensuing epistemological crisis set the stage for the events of the 20th century, witnessing the growth of Islamic liberalism, Arab secularism and reformist Islamism with each offering a potential response. Al-Baghdadi's response is to violently restore the caliphate to its former dominance by force.

What then is the Christian response? We firmly believe Stassen helps provide an answer, and that answer is in the public affirmation of the Kingship of Jesus. Yet, according to historian of religion Hugh Goddard,

"Among the many characterizations and sweeping generalizations which flourish in the realm of the study of the relationship between Islam and Christianity, one of the most persistent is [this]: Christianity is not essentially concerned with earthly matters like politics and the state but concentrates rather on spiritual matters, while Islam on the other hand is integrally bound up with the affairs of this world, politics and state included."[9]

With the above statement, Goddard describes the popular and widespread assumption that Islam and Christianity represent two distinct, even contradictory approaches to the question of faith and public life. Polemicists and apologists from both Muslim and Christian communities have repeatedly built upon this assumption to attack the other, with arguments ranging from the "monastic and otherworldly worthlessness" of Christianity to the "bloody hands and this-worldly dirtiness" of Islam. Even well-meaning commentators, Christian and Muslim alike, build upon this assumption to develop their theological positions. In writing about Qur'anic interpreter Yusuf Ali, Woodberry writes,

"Yusuf Ali, in his notes on the Qur'an, contrasts Islam with what he considers the 'monastic' tendencies of the Sermon on the Mount with its emphasis on 'the poor in spirit, those who mourn and the meek, noting that 'Allah's kingdom requires also courage, resistance to evil . . . firmness, law and discipline which will enhance justice.' God does not mean that believers should have 'gloomy lives!"[10]

And, in reference to the modern missionary movement, Goddard writes,

"Many missionaries [to the Muslim world] came from a Pietist background, where it was indeed assumed

that the faith had nothing to do with politics, and this claim formed part of their preaching on the superiority of Christianity to Islam. In the context of Christian-Muslim polemic, however, the statement was taken up by Muslim apologists and turned on its head as a means of demonstrating the superiority of Islam."

So, not only are Middle Eastern Christians isolated, but our insularity has become central to our very identity, public witness and practice.

"Christ the Caliph": Public Witness at the Heart of the Christian Message

Yet, it is precisely this self-perception which Stassen so profoundly challenges, effectively countering centuries of mutual misunderstanding between Muslim and Christian communities in the process. Stassen's position is that Christianity is every bit as holistic and all-encompassing as Islam, claiming sovereignty over all domains of life, individual and collective. This naturally includes politics. To ignore, therefore, the socio-political message of the gospels is to reject the Lordship of Christ, accepting "other lords" in His place. This, Stassen refers to as "morally disastrous."[11]

In essence, the Christian faith is as concerned with collective ethics as Islam. Christ came not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it and to restore it to its original intention: God's redemptive Reign. For example, it is no accident that Christ climbed a mountain to deliver His most famous sermon, intentionally reminiscent of Mt. Sinai when God first revealed His Law, while also calling for "a radical obedience that went deeper than the act to the thought and intent, what has been called *niyyah* in Islamic ritual."[12] In doing so, however, Stassen affirms that Christ "offered not hard sayings or high ideals but concrete ways to practice God's will."[13]

For Christ's followers to hear the words of Jesus and put them into practice is to become a Kingdom citizen and participant in the Reign of God. As Stassen would say, to obey Christ is to find freedom from the "vicious cycles" within which we too often find ourselves trapped and to work towards the actualization of God's Reign, "characterized by salvation and deliverance, God's presence, justice and peace, and great joy!"[14]

While both Islam and Christianity each offer deeply holistic visions for state and society, there are important caveats thus far left out as to the manner by which Islamic and Christian traditions understand and apply power. For in this lies the primary difference between Christ and the Caliph, each of whom represent for their followers the manifestation of God's just Reign. It is not that somehow Islam is political while Christianity is not. Nor is it that Islam concerns itself with the holistic details of everyday life, while the Christian faith is individualistic and otherworldly. The core distinction between Islam and Christianity with regard to the Reign of God is not about politics, *but it is about the proper use of power.* Consistently rejecting the dual temptations of imperial compromise or armed rebellion, Christ models for us the narrow path of self-sacrificial, non-violent, redemptive love. And, this love culminates in His unjust death on the cross, where an instrument of imperial domination becomes in biblical imagination the ultimate symbol of Divine Love and the power-reversing means by which God reigns.

As such, the re-enthronement of the cruciform King is as central to our public witness in the Middle Eastern context as it is elsewhere. This fact has profound, transformative implications for interfaith engagement and Christ-centered witness. As many Muslims have been asking introspective questions regarding the apparent absence of God's Kingdom, in the wake of such apparent failures as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the repressive Islamic Republic in Iran or the genocidal Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the cruciform Reign of King Jesus has become all the more appealing. We are seeing this among the Syrian refugees in Lebanon. For in addition to helping correct years of entrenched misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims, Stassen's work provides us with the tools to proudly proclaim King Jesus as the very answer to the questions of political authority for which our Muslims neighbors are seeking answers.

So, rather than take shelter in our Christian enclaves, seeking Western economic and military support against our 'enemies,' we actively seek out ways of becoming active agents of transformation, reconciliation, proclamation and peace. Understanding the holistic, transformative nature of the Kingdom provides a powerful motivation to think differently about the role of the church and the role of the Christian. Being agents of the Kingdom is such a powerful incentive to live out life differently, with a different focus and with a different objective. When people are convinced that their role is to live out Kingdom values in the community at large, that conviction by itself counters the devastating effects of the survival-mode mentality. Yet Stassen's contributions do not only apply to one's conceptual framework, but also to the very practical application of such concepts.

"Cruciform Leadership Formation": Implications for the Middle Eastern Church

As the Middle Eastern context becomes more and more challenging and as the church becomes ever more insular, our students have to wrestle with how they can provide leadership in such a challenging context. We have to provide an environment where our students can reflect on what is going on in their communities and how they can go back after graduation to make a difference. We at ABTS are fortunate to witness an exciting transformation taking place right in front of our eyes. As our students are confronted with the Kingdom perspective, they experience a paradigm shift from which they never recover. It is as if someone has seen the light for the first time. Life is never the same again.

One of the most impactful concepts

for our students that Stassen unpacks in *Kingdom Ethics* is that of "participative grace."[15] It is easy for us to see ourselves as the beneficiaries of God's grace. It is not natural for us to see ourselves as conduits of God's grace. It is much more comfortable to be the beneficiaries of grace as we hide in our small community avoiding detection and conflict with the world. However, being conduits of God's grace requires us to be present in the wider world as we take His grace with us, even to Muslims. Framing the Sermon on the Mount, and specifically the Beatitudes, with that mindset is nothing short of brilliant and confronts centuries of religious misunderstanding. It leaves us with no excuse not to get involved in the world, to be missional, and provides a strong motivation to get out there and take a risk, a life-changing concept for many.[16]

Related to this idea is perhaps Stassen's most ground-breaking concept, that of "transforming initiatives," whereby Stassen breaks down the bulk of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount into a triadic rather than a dyadic pattern. Doing so helps move the understanding of the passage away from "high ideals" towards "transforming initiatives," ultimately becoming a deeply pragmatic way of reading the Sermon with huge implications for behavior. It forces people to think about the implications of their behaviors for the broader community and about the necessity of being proactive in breaking free of vicious cycles within which we find ourselves trapped, no matter how difficult the circumstances.[17]

One of our Iraqi students was studying at ABTS at the same time as his church was suffering persecution in Baghdad. Hundreds of Christians were fleeing and our student was preparing to go back to Iraq and serve. He was willing to go back because he understood what it means to return as an agent of the Kingdom, looking for ways to undertake transforming initiatives and participate as a citizen of God's redemptive Reign. This is exactly what he is doing right now, back in Baghdad, with incredible commitment and resolve. He is currently leading his small church community out of survival mode and into a mode of engagement. They have been using their own personal limited resources to help care for Muslim refugees that have fled from Mosul to Baghdad. These transformation initiatives are causing transformation for the church community and transformation for the recipient refugees.

We have discovered that difficulties provide excellent teaching moments. Once, when a few churches were attacked and burnt in Egypt and many people were killed, our Egyptian students were naturally furious. We gathered them together for a discussion and their very natural feelings turned towards revenge, hatred and bitterness. This is exactly how humans react. However, we began discussing how the church in Egypt might proactively engage in transforming initiatives in the midst of these difficulties. This immediately inspired a paradigm shift as students began to view the situation from a Kingdom perspective. ABTS students are incredibly creative in how to bring in the Reign of God into such situations. Once they are thinking through the right framework, it becomes easier to find a Kingdom solution. The solution may not always be to resolve the problem, but the solution is always to bring Jesus into the situation. It is in these very instances where we can observe transformative, cross-shaped moments of God's Kingdom.

Conclusion

As mentioned before, Middle Eastern Christians tend to have a love problem, and perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in one's attitude, and therefore witness, towards Islam. However, in what might be his most powerful chapter in *Kingdom Ethics*, Stassen does a brilliant job of defining *agape* love as delivering love, demonstrating how the cross of Jesus Christ is simultaneously the epitome of such love and the paradoxical means through which God's just Reign manifests itself on earth. As our students reflect on the Kingdom and the manner by which this Kingdom is epitomized by the self-giving love of Christ on the cross, students learn what it takes to love their Muslim neighbor. As a result, we have witnessed firsthand how Stassen's material changes lives. It is highly unlikely that a Christian leader can be challenged with Stassen's treatment of delivering love without being transformed to the core. Once again, we are witnessing this transformation taking place right in front of our eyes.[18]

Glen Stassen provides a unique contribution to the ethical and interfaith challenges of our region. He brings to the table a Christ-centered Kingdom perspective, creating the right ingredients for transformation for our students and churches and serving as the foundation upon which we proudly proclaim the Lordship of Jesus as the solution to our troubled region. God has used scholars and peacemakers such as Glen Stassen in our communities to entice us to think and act differently. We are indebted to ethicists like Stassen who unpack God's Word for us in a way that provokes us and inspires us into action, a different kind of action. ■

Engaging Boko Haram: Exploring Options Beyond Military Approach

By Sunday Bobai Agang

All Nigerians can engage in *just peacemaking,* "because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, *to guide our feet into the path of peace*" (Luke 1:78-79 NIV, emphasis mine).

In *The Other's War: Recognition and the Violence of Ethics,* Tarik Kochi writes:

> before The future casts a shadow, though its shape is not easily discernible…. As if human life has not been bloody enough already, a shadow of apocalypse hanging over our heads, a grand suicidal act of our own making, plays the present with a melody of dreads… Catching this glimpse we might realize it is too early to talk about inevitability and that, even from the point of view of what is the worst in ourselves, the worst aspects of our species, we might still be allowed to hope after.[1]

Yet, can we really talk about hope? Especially, when Michael Walzer states:

> Before since the mid-nineteenth century, history has witnessed an upsurge of political violence committed by revolutionary groups. These groups typically act without state sponsorship, often attempting precisely to overthrow the reigning regime of the state in which they act. Yet they do claim to be involved in war of some kind, and certainly to be fighting a just after cause.[2]

In some ways these two excerpts represent the reality of what is going on in Nigeria, particularly with the Boko Haram insurgency. Each time I reflect on the Boko Haram sect, I am overwhelmed. But I was struck by reading Zechariah's hymn in Luke 1:68-79. Zechariah's hymn is composed of two parts: verses 68-75 and verses 76-79.[3] The first part contains widespread allusions to Hebrew Bible passages. What struck me the most is the second part of the hymn, which biblical scholars call *Benedictus.* In the hymn, Zechariah anticipates the careers of the two children whom divine destiny has brought together. Though John is the child born to him, Zechariah's hymn focuses on the person to whom John will point—the One promised long ago who would be sent to rescue and bless those who turn to Him. Like Mary's hymn, this thanksgiving psalm is filled with Old Testament imagery and declares how the strong one from the house of David will be a light of rescue and guidance for his people, and will "shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death."[4]

The aspect of God's guidance is what prompted me to think of writing this paper as it is. He is "to guide our feet to the path of peace." Those are the feet of those who turn to Jesus Christ for salvation, so that they will serve Him "in righteousness and holiness" in spite of their circumstances.

Zechariah is aware of the fact that "the only way to walk righteously is to follow the path God sets." [5] I admire Zechariah's courage and attempt to come to grips with his circumstances: needing salvation from "the hand of all who hate us," not able to serve God "without fear, in holiness and righteousness;" and being among "those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death." This is much like the circumstances God sometimes puts into our lives with which we must come to grips through an attitude of faith, trust and hope.[6] The hymn reminds us that we are saved to participate in the path of peace, so that when everyone is speaking about military action toward Boko Haram, our Christian language is the language of peace, justice and love.

That Islamic extremism and terrorism have put our global world at risk is not debatable. However, we face the difficult question of how to rid ourselves of this risk. Christians must ask, *How can God guide our paths towards peace?* This is the question to which we now turn by first defining Boko Haram, and second, by proposing a moral vision through an analysis of the efficacy and applicability of Glen Stassen's just peacemaking practices in the context of terrorism, and finally suggesting other contextual ways of moving forward.

What Is Boko Haram?

Boko Haram is an Islamic-revolutionary group which targets, not only those the group perceives as representatives of a putatively oppressive regime in Nigeria, but also ordinary citizens living under that regime.[7] The group began in 2002 as a small Salafish faction based in northeastern Nigeria, led by a chain of charismatic but crudely educated preachers, namely Muhammadu Ali, Mohammad Yusuf and Abubakar Shekau. These leaders believed that British colonialism and the Nigeria state that resulted from it had imposed an un-Islamic way of life on Nigerian Muslims. This led the group to oppose Western-style education, which is how the clique came to be known as Boko Haram. The phrase "Boko Haram," which translates roughly to "Western education is forbidden,"[8] was a label given to the group by outside observers. But the group calls itself by the Arabic phrase *Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Jihad.* This phrase has

been translated as "People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teachings and Jihad."[9] Such commitment to jihadi ideology is what makes the group a terrorist revolutionary movement.[10]

Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria forces us to re-evaluate the morality of terrorism. Can any form of terrorism be morally justified? This question requires us to understand the mindset of terrorists. The use of this term "terrorism" has its origin with the French Revolution, a time when the French government acted violently against its own people. It has also been used to describe the violent activities of labor organizations, anarchists, nationalist groups, minority political organizations and religious movements. In the 21st century, "terrorism most frequently referred to the acts of non-state agents (individually or collectively) acting against another group, be it a government, a multinational corporation, or a dominant religious hierarchy."[11] Most scholars agree that terrorists are indiscriminate in their actions.[12]

One of Nigeria's biggest challenges is to avoid playing the game of the terrorists. Beyond the current military approach to the insurgency, there is need for a moral vision that will help Nigerians find a creative transformation of the situation and a way forward.

A Brief History of Boko Haram

The Antecedents of Boko Haram

A hasty characterization of the Boko Haram sect as a terrorist group might cause us to miss important information about the group. With the kidnaping of the Chibok girls on April 14, 2014, Boko Haram attracted global attention. But the question is what antecedents in the history of Islam are represented by Boko Haram. We have to look at the history of Islamic thought and the key ideas that have dominated that history. Basheer M. Nafi's interaction with the history of the rise of Islamic reformist thought and its challenge to traditional Islam is one very useful tool in helping us navigate through the nuance of Islamic radicalism and intellectualism. Some of his arguments seem to fit the big picture of Boko Haram. For instance, Nafi tells of a situation where "In more than one respect, the Islamic intellectual arena during the twentieth century was a reflection of the late nineteenth-century intellectual rupture."[13] I suppose the same thing can be said of the 21st century intellectual arena.

The intellectual history of Islamic scholars and theologians has a catalogue of various schools of thought. Prominent among them is the salafiyya (reformist school of thought) founded by Ahmad b. Taymiyya (1263-1328). Nafi notes that "Central to Ibn Taymiyya's reformist project was his emphasis on the primacy of the original Islamic texts, the Qur'an and hadith; beyond which he saw only the consensus of the Prophet's Companions and the Companions' Followers as binding."[14] Taymiyya was driven by the search for unity and the desire to confront foreign influences on Islamic culture. He endeavored to re-establish the ultimate authority of the earlier, unadulterated views of Islam.[15] His project has influenced many Muslims, including Usman Ibn Fodio of Nigeria (1754-1817) who used those ideas to engage in constructing an Islamic framework compatible with the Qur'an and Sunna for emerging societies in non-urban environments and with strong local traditional vestiges. Ahmad b. Taymiyya and Usman Ibn Fodio prepared the ground to continue challenging traditional Islamic values. Western imperialism and capitalism, and a desire for the urgent renewal of the moral fabric of society and a new era of *ijtihad*.[16] Boko Haram is an offshoot of the revivalist mission of the 18th century, but the group is also fueled by the social background of the 19th century reformists.[17] In this revivalist mission the reformists see the Shari'a "as the only path for restoration and renewal," because "the Shari'a is the prescribed organizer of life." If that is the case, no limits were prescribed for laboring within its framework. It follows that *ijtihad* was not only desired or recommended but also required and imperative for Muslims in every age and place, through which the position of the umma in the world is continuously redefined.[18]

Boko Haram is agitating for a return to Islamic Shari'a Law. It is important to observe here that, prior to the colonial rule in Nigeria and throughout the period of the British rule (1903-1960), Northern Nigerian Muslims had largely followed the Maliki School of Jurisprudence.[19] However, the situation changed with independence. John N. Paden described the enormous impact of this change. Paden tells of the role Sheik Abubakar Gummi played in the paradigm shift in northern Muslims' intellectual quest. In his effort to revive the Islamic Shari'a Law in Nigeria, Gummi used his connection with Saudi Arabia to reevaluate "the historic legacies of both the Maliki and Sufi traditions in northern Nigeria."[20]

According to Paden, "Gummi focused on going back to the original sources in the Qur'an and was one of the first to translate the Qur'an into the Hausa language. Until his death in 1992, he served as symbol for challenging the cultural legacies of Islam in northern Nigeria, insisting on Qur'anic-based reformation."[21] Gummi became a mentor to many of the younger generation of educated northerners, and Kaduna, as capital of the northern region and a "new" city, became identified with his *Izala* (anti-innovation) movement. Gummi's links with the Saudis' intellectualism eventually strengthened Nigerian Muslims' ties to the custodians of the holy places and weakened those with the traditional West African roots of Islamic culture. [22]

The Evolution of Boko Haram

Boko Haram came out of Gummi's founded Izala sect in Nigeria. Since Boko Haram mutated from the Izala group to a full-grown rebellion movement in 2002, it has continued to metamorphose. The ingredients that fuel the fire of Boko Haram include, among other things, the way the secu-

rity agencies in Nigeria have handled the group with blunt force. Someone has pointed out that "Christians are like nails; the harder you hit them the deeper they go." But I would like to say that by default all human beings behave similarly; the harder you hit them the deeper they go. The Boko Haram sect is clear evidence of this fact. Kyari Mohammed has identified three overlapping phases of the movement that prove that human beings are like nails and further underline the importance of considering just peacemaking as a paradigm shift in the war against terrorism.

The first phase, according to Mohammed, is the Kanama phase (2003-2005). During this phase, the group unsuccessfully waged war on the Nigerian state. It was repelled with casualties on both sides. The leader of the group of this first phase was Muhammed Ali, a Nigerian who was radicalized by jihadi literature in Saudi Arabia and who was believed to have fought alongside the *mujahedeen* in Afghanistan.

The second phase is the *dawah* phase. With the suppression of Boko Haram in July 2009, the group went into hiding and devoted itself to the proselytization, recruitment, indoctrination and radicalization of its members. This phase was characterized by intense criticism of the secular system, debates with opposing *ulama* (other Muslim clerics) on the propriety of Western education, Westernization, democracy and secularism, and unceasing criticism of corruption and bad governance under Governor Ali Modu Sherriff (2003-2011) of Borno State, as well as criticism of the conspicuous consumption and opulence of the Western-educated elite in the midst of poverty.

According to Mohammed, the third phase began with the taking over of the leadership by Abubakar Shekau. After the 2009 suppression of the movement and the killing of its leadership in gory and barbaric form by Nigerian security agencies, Boko Haram again went deeper underground, only to reorganize and resurface with a vengeance in 2010. Since then, the group has not only attacked perceived enemies, but indiscriminately attacked security officials, politicians, businessmen and women and, in utter desperation, resorted to bombing high profile targets in Abuja such as the Nigeria Police Headquarters as well as the United Nations offices in June and August of 2011. As the military crackdown has intensified, the group has become even more aggressive and militant. It has resorted to more desperate measures, which include burning school buildings, kidnapping students, attacking telecommunication stations, blowing up bridges, the kidnapping and slaughtering of foreigners, and so on.[23]

Boko Haram lacks morality in its war tactic. This is demonstrated by the aimless and indiscriminate violence directed at innocent citizens. Understanding the intellectual and social psychology of Boko Haram will help us to grasp the many facets of the group's social life, thoughts, feelings, and behaviours towards Muslims and non-Muslims alike as well as the impact of its attitudes on the Nigerian people in general. The place to start is the group's specific demands. From the sect's outlook, its objective is a political one, even though it calls for the abolition of politics altogether and the replacement of the modern state by Islamic Shari'a jurisprudence. Yet, it has a comprehensive desire which includes religion, economy and politics altogether.

A Moral Vision: Proposing the Way Forward; Why Engagement Has Failed in the Past

Nigeria is facing its defining moment. From all indications, the Nigerian government cannot engage the Boko Haram sect in *just peacemaking* in any meaningful way. The government has had several failed attempts to engage in dialogue, the first in September, 2011. The group identified two key people, former President Olusegun Obasanjo and Babakura Fugu, the brother-in-law of the late Boko Haram leader, Mohammed Yusuf, in Maiduguri, Borno State. While in the process, Babakura Fugu was mysteriously assassinated. The core Boko Haram sect denied responsibility for the murder. Prior to this, Boko Haram had always claimed responsibility for any atrocities it committed against the Nigerian people.

The second attempt at dialogue happened in March, 2012. The group identified the president of the Supreme Council for Sharia in Nigeria, Sheik Ahmed Datti, to mediate between it and the Nigerian government. Sheik Ahmed Datti accepted the responsibility at first, but later changed his mind, because he felt the government was not able to keep the discussion secret and would instead prematurely release information to the media.[24] Akomola Ejodame Olojo believes that these were significant signs that the group was willing and ready for dialogue. But Andrew Walker believes that there are two groups in the sect—moderate and radical or hard-core.[25] This makes engaging the group a complex and difficult task. But as Walker suggested, other factors contributed to the difficulty. For example, the Nigerian police are often led by corrupt or incompetent officers who fight for their own fiefdom rather than for the best interests of the nation.[26] Andrew observed that negotiation would be difficult to foster, because some of Boko Haram's stated demands are practically impossible to realize and are often contradictory. For example, it says it wants to break Nigeria into two, north and south, but also that the whole of Nigeria should come under Shari'a law and convert to Islam. It has also demanded that Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan convert to Islam.

However, there are other demands that might serve as a window for dialogue and just peacemaking. The group has demanded that senior members who have been arrested by the government should be released, that all property taken from its members be restored, and that the

people responsible for the execution of Mohammed Yusuf and other members of the group be punished. "These are political demands and could be part of a negotiation," says John Campbell, former U.S. ambassador to Nigeria, .[27]

It is difficult to see how any meaningful negotiation could be carried out with the group itself. The group has on several occasions murdered its own members who have attempted negotiation, and the group's cell-like structure is open for division and splits. There would be no guarantee that someone speaking for the group is speaking for all of the members.[28] Given that as reality, can we really talk of a way forward at a time when things appear to be falling apart and getting worse? The courage to talk about a way forward must come from an understanding of the mission of the church as the mission of Jesus Christ in peacemaking.

Glen Stassen and Just Peacemaking

This paper is written in honor of the late Glen Harold Stassen, who was an ardent advocate of just peacemaking as a critical supplementary theory to the two traditional Christian theories in response to war -- pacifism and just war theory.[29] This is my attempt to test the applicability of Stassen's practices of just peacemaking in a terrorist context like Nigeria. Thereby, we can see the extent to which the practices of just peacekeeping provide a moral vision that can shape the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency.

Based on his Anabaptist roots, Stassen and his colleagues worried about the world's lack of attention to practices that have worked in preventing war, stating, "A new paradigm needs to be justified by its bringing to attention important dimensions of concern that previous paradigms overlooked, or did not articulate as clearly as needed."[30]

Stassen and his colleagues argued that just peacemaking practices "can enable us to see conflict situations from a new and fruitful angle."[31] In my estimation, just peacemaking as proposed by Stassen and his colleagues[32] can provide additional concrete steps to resolving the Boko Haram impasse in Nigeria. For example, Nigerian ethicists and theologians can use the 10 practices proposed by just peacemaking scholars to interpret the specific social, cultural and religious contexts of Nigerian society and its grassroots communities. I see the efficacy and utility of "just peacemaking" rooted in its focus on practices that prevent war or terrorism from happening in the first place. But even after it has happened, the practices can give confidence to the parties involved because of their focus on justice as Jesus' ethic. For as Adrian Guelke observes, "Common reasons why people resort to violence are the perception that they will continue to be denied justice under the existing political system..."[33] The cry for justice is a key cause for the emergence of Boko Haram. Since Nigeria's returned to democracy in 1999, northern Muslim politicians have generally felt alienated and marginalized.[34]

Stassen saw just peacemaking as one of three theories – pacifism, just war, and just peacemaking – which hold hope for dislodging violence and war. He preferred just peacemaking because it is the practice advocated by the Prince of Peace, who wept over Jerusalem because it did not know the ways that make for peace. He argued that in these radical practices, "Jesus gives us a powerful way of deliverance from the vicious cycles that lead to violent death and destruction."[35] He was among those who firmly believe that Christians should direct their energies toward finding a set of criteria and a model for "just peace" instead of continuing to argue only for pacifism and "just war."[36] He contended that just peacemaking practices have worked, because they are Christ-like transforming initiatives. They are practices that are first and foremost aimed at preventing the occurrence of war or violence by concentrating on justice and seeking to win both parties to the side of justice. Furthermore, his belief in the workability of just peacemaking principles is based on how peacemakers like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela of South Africa successfully deployed the efficacy of just peacemaking practices in the extreme conditions of colonial India, the racist United States of America, and apartheid South Africa.[37]

One may wonder, however, whether just peacemaking can work in situations of Islamic extremism and terrorism. Stassen would say, yes, because its ideas are practices that are faithful to Christ's nonviolent direct action in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). In fact, he would argue that just peacemaking practices are "effective war-preventive practices…in the wake of the threat of terrorism …."[39] Inasmuch as I resonate with his argument, the practices must be applied in each context by careful analysis of the situation and clear understanding of the mindset of those involved in the conflict. Of course, Stassen, along with 22 other just peacemaking ethicists and theologians, has helped us by proposing the following 10 practices:

(1) Support nonviolent direct action;
(2) Take independent initiatives to reduce threat;
(3) Use cooperative conflict resolution;
(4) Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice and seek repentance and forgiveness;
(5) Advance democracy, human rights, and religious liberty;
(6) Foster just and sustainable economic development;
(7) Work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system;
(8) Strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights;
(9) Reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade; and
(10) Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary association.[40]

Space will not allow us to delineate

each of the proposed 10 practices. However, the next two points are some contextual ways Nigerians can engage Boko Haram in just peacemaking.

A Reflection on How We Live: Aggression Our Common Humanity

Engaging Boko Haram in just peacemaking must start with a humble recognition of our common humanity with terrorists -- human aggression. All just peacemakers need to begin by recognizing their participation in this human essential nature of competition, aggression and revenge. Anthony Storr puts it concisely when he writes:

"That man is an aggressive creature will hardly be disputed. With the exception of certain rodents, no other vertebrate habitually destroys members of his own species…. The somber fact is that we are the cruelest and most ruthless species that has ever walked the earth; and that, although we may recoil in horror when we read in a newspaper or history book of the atrocities committed by man upon man, we know in our hearts that each of us harbors within himself those same savage impulses which lead to murder, to torture and to war.[41]"

These succinct words of Storr about the true nature of humans give us a clearer perspective to help guide our feet toward the path of peace in Nigeria. Human aggression is an inborn impulse which is not the monopoly of insurgents, but a reality with which all fallen humans struggle.[42] The necessity of recognizing and focusing on aggression is because it can be used to bless humanity. This approach will enable us to begin thinking of ways we can retrain both adults and children to use aggression positively for the benefit of humanity. Like a coin, aggression has two sides. Kathleen J. Greider calls the two sides of aggression the paradox of "violence and vitality." In her search for a solution to the problem of violence, Greider believes that a way out of the impasse that violence presents in our contemporary history is to pay attention not only "to decrying and devising solution to it," but also "to give equal attention to ways we can help individuals and whole communities cultivate the enormous vitality required to live ethically and empathically and thereby decrease violence."[43] The big question is how do we constructively redirect the energy of violent aggression to vitality (nonviolent aggression) for the protection of the human race? Just peacemaking is an option that can help Nigeria to re-channel Boko Haram's aggressive energies toward national transformation.

Addressing the social and cultural conditions

To indirectly engage Boko Haram is also to address the social and cultural conditions that are the breeding ground for recruits. Studies conducted by Freedom C. Onuaha in 2013 showed that Boko Haram is recruiting Nigerian youths who feel distressed, alienated, discontented and generally uncertain about their futures because of the unfavorable sociopolitical, socio-economic, sociocultural and socio-religious conditions of Nigeria.[44] Onuaha argued that these conditions make it possible for insurgents to recruit young men in Nigeria.[45] Therefore, the Nigerian government must embark on robust programs that would block Boko Haram's chances of getting more recruits. This means the government must strengthen the standard of education, create job programs and provide youth job training, promote peace education and embark on a campaign of zero tolerance for corruption at all levels of society.

Conclusion

As an Islamic terrorist movement, Boko Haram now constitutes one of the biggest threats to Nigeria's stability and security.[46] The group continues to cause widespread emotional and psychological trauma. Even so, researchers need to step aside and take a careful look at what is happening and what else needs to be done to ward off this threat. Just peacemaking is the moral and ethical vision that should shape today's worldview of violent conflicts and how to resolve them.

Advocating the need for engaging Boko Haram's sect in just peacemaking is simply a call for trying all the options humanly available. Just peacemaking brings a rich alternate solution to war and violent conflict. In this paradigm, the focus shifts to initiatives that can help prevent the vicious cycles of war/violence and foster peace. It argues that in engaging insurgent groups and ethnic militias, we must not stop at the level of the symptoms, but must dig deep into the real issues that cause the sickness. It is a paradigm that enables its practitioners to engage in critical thinking and analysis of the assumptions, threats and fears that make it extremely difficult to forge ahead in efforts to bring about the desired reconciliation and transform the situation that breeds insurgent groups and ethnic militias.[47]

Finally, no matter how challenging the circumstances that we face in today's world, there is a way forward because God is always willing and able "to guide our feet into the path of peace" (Luke 1:79 NIV). Based on his experience of how God guides our feet into the path of peacemaking, John Paul Lederach explains that the key to significant change will come not when we are capable of producing a hard, factual, objective view of a situation and the predictable outcome. Rather it comes from a kind of naivety that suspends the lens of presented reality and, with a commonsensical approach, asks questions and pursues ideas that seem out of line with reality as presented.[48]

"Terrorists aim is to rule, and murder is their method."[49] We must be willing to resist the temptation to play the terrorists' game and instead resort to just peacemaking.[50] ■

A Leg to Stand On: Ahmed Haile, Glen Stassen and an Elicitive Theology of Peacemaking in Somalia

By Peter M. Sensenig

Ahmed Ali Haile's life crossed borders of many kinds – cultural, religious, and geographical. He was a Somali, a member of the Hawiye clan. He was a Mennonite Christian, shaped by the North Americans who introduced him to Jesus. As a peacemaker committed to Christ, he actively explored the possibilities and limitations of clan identity, Somali culture and traditions, and the religious resources for peace. His willingness to risk his own life for the sake of peace exemplifies the costliness, but also the fruit, of approaching peacemaking from the ground up.

In working for peace in his splintered home country, Ahmed Haile demonstrated what it might look like to balance the twin axioms of a peacemaking ethic: costly commitment to Christian nonviolence and an elicitive approach that draws from the peacemaking resources of Somali culture. Haile insisted that both aspects of peacemaking, the yes and the no, must have a strong theological and biblical foundation in order to be faithful to the gospel.

The way of the cross as central to Christian identity and practice has been well developed by theologians in the Free Church tradition, most notably Haile's teacher John Howard Yoder. As a Somali Christian, Haile was constantly aware of the cost of following Jesus, including social alienation and scorn from fellow Somalis. The costs were not only social: Haile lost a leg in a violent attack during a peace negotiation in which he was participating. The cost of nonviolent peacemaking in obedience to Jesus, which exposes and challenges the deep-seated violence of all cultures, was always central to Haile's understanding of peace.

At the same time, Haile drew upon the profound peacemaking impulses grounded and Somali traditions. This foundational principle, known as elicitive peacemaking, is articulated especially by John Paul Lederach. Elicitive peacemaking seeks to explore, engage, and prioritize traditional cultural forms of reconciliation.

The theological rationale for an elicitive approach, however, is mostly limited to its compatibility with a noninvasive ethos than it is built upon an explicitly stated scriptural or theological basis. I contend that Haile's peacemaking example challenges Christians to a deeper development of the theological and biblical foundations for the elicitive peacemaking approach. I want to suggest that one way forward in this task is Glen Stassen's incisive interpretation of Jesus' teaching on light in the Sermon on the Mount, read in view of Jesus' identity within the prophetic tradition of Isaiah.

Ahmed Haile: A Life in the Borderlands

Born and raised in a Muslim context in Bulo Burte, Somalia, Haile became a Christian at age 17. For Haile, identifying with Jesus and the church meant no longer identifying with the mosque. Yet he resolved never to speak ill of Islam, because Islam had prepared him to meet Jesus and planted in him the desire for God that was fulfilled in Jesus and for community that was fulfilled in the church, which Haile compared to a spiritual house like an *udub*, a traditional Somali hut.[1]

Shunned by members of his own clan and threatened by the Somali authorities, Haile struggled with his identity as a Somali Anabaptist follower of Jesus. He continued to seek inclusion among his fellow Somalis, sustained by his conviction that Jesus' disciples are called to reflect the incarnational presence of Christ. As the political situation unraveled, Haile's calling to be an ambassador of the gospel of peace brought him back to Somalia again and again. J. Dudley Woodberry notes that the first recorded Muslim convert to Christianity was a migrant in East Africa; "Yet, unlike the first Muslim convert to Christ, who is generally understood to have gone to East Africa to avoid conflict in seventh-century Mecca, the contemporary convert Ahmed returned to the region repeatedly to mediate conflict."[2]

Ahmed Haile and his wife Martha Wilson Haile lived in Mogadishu for three years in the mid-1980s. During this time Haile provided some leadership to the small group of Somali believers. The anti-Christian sentiment in the city had not heightened as it later would, but there was a general atmosphere of suspicion as the Siad Barre regime crumbled. One night a small group of believers was meeting at the home of Elizabeth and Ken Nissley when the police knocked on the door. They took Haile outside, and he did not return. The others did not know what had happened to him. So Ken Nissley found Haile's brother and they drove around Mogadishu all evening, searching the police stations until they found where Haile was being held. They brought his some food and a blanket, and the next day Haile's brother managed to convince an official not to press any charges and to release him.[3]

After moving to Elkhart, Indiana, in October 1991 Haile was called by Somali colleagues, under the auspices of the newly formed inter-clan peace group *Ergada* (which was sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee, an Anabaptist relief and development agency), to return to Somalia for two weeks of peacemaking work, especially between the divided factions of

the United Somali Congress (USC). *Ergada* requested his presence at this volatile time for a number of reasons. Haile shared a vision with *Ergada* of a just, peaceful Somali state built on good clan relations, which he saw as the only possibility for a functioning government. [4] He was recognized both for his boldness in engaging the clan system and for his abilities in mediation, and he had master's degrees in peace studies and public administration. Additionally, Haile was from the Karanle sub-clan of the Hawiye clan. Both the interim president Ali Mahdi and General Farah Aidid were also from the Hawiye clan. The Karanles are considered the "elder brothers"[5] of the Hawiye clan according to Somali tradition, and they play a key role in settling disputes. These qualities, both of pedigree and personality, put Haile in a unique peacemaking position. He served as the only Christian on a team of Muslims. Of his Muslim companions, Haile states, "We were joined by a love for our people, believing that something stronger than guns could bring peace."[6]

As Haile was attending a negotiation near the fighting zones in Mogadishu in January 1992, the house where the meeting took place was attacked by Aidid's forces. Haile's leg was severely wounded in the attack and was later amputated. Yet he continued to be involved in peacemaking among his Somali people, in Somalia, Kenya, and North America. Haile taught for years at Daystar University in Nairobi, where he founded a peace studies program. He also helped to lead the growing Somali Christian community in Eastleigh (a majority-Somali neighborhood of Nairobi), driven by a vision for a thriving Somali fellowship. By the time he returned to Eastleigh, the situation had changed to the extent that he could not work openly at the Mennonite-run Eastleigh Fellowship Center. But he continued to fellowship with Somalis in his home and in other ways in Eastleigh.[7] Haile also gathered Muslim and Christian scholars together to read and discuss their scriptures in what can be considered an early version of scriptural reasoning.[8]

Although his background was known to many, in his memoir Haile chose not to identify his clan, seeking to emulate his father's example of treating all people equally regardless of heritage.[9] He recounted his expectations of positive treatment from his own clan members due to their special bond. He was discouraged to discover that rather than embracing him they rebuked and rejected him because of his commitment to Christ. The experience served as a catalyst for Haile to transform his view of clans based on Philippians 2:1-11, even as the country was disintegrating into inter-clan warfare. "What would happen if clans honored rival clans more than they honored themselves? What if people were ready to die for the enemy rather than seek to dominate the enemy?" Haile asked. Like the Apostle Paul, Haile recognized that he had an enviable heritage but that his genealogy could not offer salvation or peace. It was not long after his conversion that his new commitments were tested by the appearance of a visitor from a rival clan, which was considered by some to be inferior to his own. The visitor was amazed that Haile offered him his bed while he slept on the floor.[10] Haile's life offers a vision and example of a sense of kinship that transcends clan ties even as it acknowledges them.

Haile engaged all of the peacemaking tools he could find: pre-Islamic systems of justice, colonial courts and laws, the *qadi* (Islamic judge) and *sharia* courts, and social sciences. More than only peacemaking theories, they were the fundamental tools for acting in the midst of tremendous challenges and resistance, such as the imam who called for his execution for apostasy and later became his protector. Haile discovered, however, that "ultimately it was the gospel that could end the cycle of retaliation as it was absorbed by Christ and his cross and the Holy Spirit who through the church reconciled people to God and each other." [11]

The North American Mennonites learned from Ahmed and Martha Haile what it might mean to employ an elicitive approach in Somalia, particularly the importance of hospitality and conversation. Elizabeth Nissley says, "Watching Ahmed work with traditional Somali peacemaking was significant for us. Even when he had some hostile family members come, he invited them to eat together and served tea." [12]

Haile was diagnosed with cancer in 2006, and died in 2011. After he learned that his cancer was terminal, he told EMM leaders, "When Orie O. Miller [early Mennonite mission leader] was dying he said, 'Don't forget the Somalis.' I want to say the same thing. Do not forget the Somalis."[13]

The fruit of Ahmed Haile's life continues in both Africa and North America. His memoir, *Teatime in Mogadishu*, was released just days after his death. It is now available in several languages, including Somali.

In July 2011 a group of Somalis, including poets and politicians, gathered in Toronto with North American mission workers and others to celebrate Haile's life and the release of his memoir, and to consider the ongoing work of peacemaking in Somalia.[14] Haile's remarkable life is a catalyst for the sharing of stories across some surprising boundaries. Somalia is a nation of poets, and the weaving of words is prized above any other art form. Upon Haile's passing, an unidentified Somali friend penned these words, rendered here in English:

The departed Ahmed Haile
The sagacious one
Whom the Lord took away…

He was a peacemaker
Whom we honored well
He was widely respected…

He said these abhorrent actions
The endless civil wars
Will one day cease…

He said to hold fast to the rope of God
Without any distractions…

He strolled away with dignity
And returned to paradise
The cherished expert.[15]

The Elicitive Model of Peacemaking

In drawing from the peacemaking resources of traditional Somali culture and Somali Islam, Ahmed Haile was a dedicated practitioner of elicitive peacemaking. This approach builds on local culture and traditions rather than import models based on foreign assumptions and practices. The leading pioneer of the theory and practices of this approach is John Paul Lederach, who teaches in the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame and in the Conflict Transformation Program at Eastern Mennonite University. Lederach was involved in peacebuilding work in Somalia in the 1990s.

Lederach challenges the assumptions that the model we use in one setting can be used in all others with some adjustments, and that culture is an aspect of conflict resolution that can be reduced to technique. On the contrary, conflict resolution itself is a socially constructed, educational phenomenon. Social conflict is a natural experience present in all cultures and relationships, and does not simply happen but is created by people. Conflict centers around the search for shared meaning, which occurs as people locate themselves within the accumulated knowledge of the culture. Lederach sees peacebuilding as a "profound adventure of digging" into this shared cultural knowledge that is at the root of meaning and therefore of social conflict. Rather than the static, foundationalist view that seeks to define conflict for all times and places, he prefers the dynamic, constructionist view that people act on the basis of the meaning that things have for them. Lederach concludes, "Understanding conflict and developing appropriate models of handling it will necessarily be rooted in, and must respect and draw from, the cultural knowledge of a people."[16] Culture is therefore not an obstacle or a challenge to be overcome but a conduit for peacemaking, based on the shared social knowledge. In Somalia, this social knowledge includes proverbs and storytelling.[17]

Salt, Light, and Deeds: An Elicitive Theology of Peacemaking

Lederach's elicitive approach is strongly rooted in sociology, conflict studies, and political science. The theological rationale for an elicitive approach, however, is mostly limited to its compatibility with nonviolent commitments. It is dependent more on an *ethos* of noninvasiveness and the pragmatic goal of peacemaking than it is built upon an explicitly stated scriptural or theological basis. Here I contend that Jesus' teaching on light in the Sermon on the Mount provides the theological basis for the elicitive approach.

Glen Stassen and David Gushee have developed the understanding of the triadic commandment of Jesus in Matthew 5:13-16, in which Jesus describes the mission of the community of his disciples as *salt*, *light*, and *deeds*. After briefly suggesting the meaning of salt and deeds in an international peacemaking context, I will argue that light refers to pointing the nations toward God's saving work, *eliciting* the cultural treasures that can glorify God.

Salt as Nonviolent Communal Witness: In order to understand what Jesus meant by saltiness in Matthew 5:13, it is best to consider the parable with the Qumran community in mind. This community withdrew from the corruption of the world in order to live a monastic life of covenant fidelity beside the Dead Sea. In this sense, Jesus was commending their effort to be faithful to God's will by separating themselves from evil practices, thus maintaining their saltiness. Jesus' polemic in this verse opposes the loss of identity as God's people through the blurring of the distinction from the world, just as salt loses its taste by mixing with the tasteless sand on which people walk. The Greek word for becoming tasteless can also mean becoming foolish, and salt is associated with wisdom in some rabbinic texts. This passage therefore serves as a parallel to the end of Sermon (Matthew 7:24-26), which states that the way one avoids becoming foolish is by obeying the words of Jesus.[18]

Deeds as Service for God's Glory: Stassen and Gushee argue that the traditional emphasis on salt and light in this passage ignores a critical third aspect of Jesus' ethical mission for the church: good deeds. Deeds are the climax of the teaching, clarifying the content of salt and light as actions that show God's light to the world.[19]

Disciples of Jesus cannot be content to remain a light to the world in only a theoretical sense. Their good deeds must reflect who they are as salt and light. Jesus' teaching later in the Sermon, however, issues a stern warning. Doing good works to be seen by others in order to receive glory for oneself (Matt 6:1) is as worthless as flavorless salt.[20] Jesus tells his disciples to do their good deeds publicly for God's honor, never their own.

Light as Eliciting Peacemaking Resources: The imagery of light to which Jesus refers in Matthew 5:14, drawn directly from Isaiah, serves as a theological basis for the elicitive approach to peacemaking that seeks to explore, engage, and prioritize traditional cultural forms of reconciliation. Lederach's framework relies on a web of local actors, whose approaches to peacemaking draw primarily from other sources besides the work of international theoreticians. Knowledge of and respect for tradition is more effective in creating trusting relationships because it engages local actors at a deeply personal level.

To understand what Jesus meant by *light*, it is again helpful to remember the context of the Qumran community. Jesus' words of commendation for the Qumran community are immediately followed by a strong criticism of their separatism. In order to be faithful disciples of Jesus, the church must

be a visible community. According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, for Jesus' followers, "to flee into invisibility is to deny the call. Any community of Jesus which wants to be invisible is no longer a community that follows him."[21] By *light*, therefore, Jesus indicates an ongoing witness and invitation that is extended beyond the community of his followers.

Stassen and Gushee have demonstrated convincingly that Jesus' perceptions of his own mission are best understood in light of the prophetic tradition of Isaiah, with which he identified.[22] While preaching in Galilee about the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus quoted from Isaiah 9:1-2 to declare that a light has come to the Gentiles (Matthew 4:15-16). In Matthew 5:14, Jesus is drawing on the Old Testament tradition of light in reference to the presence of God, especially Isaiah's call to walk in the "light of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:5) and for Israel to be the light of the nations (Isaiah 49:6). Thus Jesus disavows the separatism of the Qumran community; "Disciples are a 'city on a hill' in the Isaiah 2 sense only if we invite and draw people of all nations 'up the hill' and through the gates into an experience of shared eschatological community."[23]

The insight of the centrality of Isaiah for Jesus yields a fuller understanding of what He means by light shining from a city on a hill. Isaiah's call to ascend the mountain of the Lord and to walk in the light of the Lord (Isaiah 2:5) is explained in terms of peacemaking and disarmament. It is a call for a "new world order, shared with the prophet Micah (4:1-5)," in which Zion is a gathering place for the nations, including Israel.[24] The nations come at their own initiative, with the anticipation that they will be taught by the Lord the essential practices of peacemaking. The goal is justice and peace between the nations, and the evidence that the nations are serious about walking in God's light is their willingness to disarm.

The importance of the connection that Jesus is making between the prophetic tradition of Isaiah and his own ministry is that he is depicting his disciples' mission in terms traditionally used for the mission of Israel. Isaiah speaks of God's people as a light to the nations (42:6; 49:6). Indeed, Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6 are likely Jesus' primary source for his teaching in Matthew 5:14-16. He himself would fulfill the mission of Isaiah's Servant, but he expected his disciples to assume the same responsibility (Matt 20:26-28).[25]

Chapters 2, 42, and 49 are not the only passages informing Jesus' reading of light from Isaiah. Isaiah 60 begins, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you…Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn" (60:1, 3). The prophet envisions an open city into which the nations bring their wealth and kings are led in procession, an image echoed explicitly in Revelation 21:24-26. The kings are not compelled, nor is Zion portrayed as the locus of a new nationalism, but rather as the nucleus of the Lord's light.[26]

Free Church traditions can learn a deeper reading of this passage from Reformed theology, which recognizes the eschatological dimensions of the cultural mandate to "fill the earth" in Genesis 1:28. Reformed thought takes this to mean not simply having children, but filling the earth with the "general products and patterns of human culture: language, labeling systems, tools, schedules, works of art, family activities."[27] Richard Mouw asserts that our enjoyment of culture reflects God's own pleasure. Indeed, the future God intends for humanity includes culture – art, music, clothing, and all the treasures of civilizations – in the New Jerusalem, as a fulfillment of God's creative intentions.[28]

Two points from these passages in Isaiah 60:11 and Revelation 21:24 are noteworthy in relation to culture and peacemaking. The first is that the nations are not required to surrender the particularities of their nationality. The same God who created humans with the mandate to fill the earth with culture is now calling them to the peace of Zion *as cultured people*. Secondly, the nations bring their wealth and splendor to the New Jerusalem (Is 60:11; Rev 21:24). In light of the rich variety of ways in which Scripture portrays true wealth, surely this means more than silver and gold. It refers to the treasures that each culture has to offer in the new age of peace, the practices, customs, and values that are precious to its people.

Elicitive peacemaking, therefore, draws upon the treasures of particular human cultures, the gifts that God has given to people groups. God is faithful to the creatures God has called to fill the earth, working alongside them to establish a peaceful and just global community.

Not all of human culture is a gift, however. Viewing culture as a conduit for peacemaking does not mean affirming every aspect of culture, especially elements that are oppressive or unjust. As John Howard Yoder argues in *Body Politics*, the church cannot choose between being in the world and against the world; to be present in the world is always to be both.[29] In *Authentic Transformation* (co-written with Glen Stassen and Diane Yeager), Yoder provides examples of what it means to be simultaneously for and against the world:

> Some elements of culture the church categorically rejects (pornography, tyranny, cultic idolatry). Other dimensions of culture it accepts within clear limits (economic production, commerce, the graphic arts, paying taxes for peacetime civil government). To still other dimensions of culture Christian faith gives a new motivation and coherence (agriculture, family life, literacy, conflict resolution, empowerment). Still others it strips of their claims to possess autonomous truth and value, and uses them as vehicles of communication (philosophy, language, Old Testament ritual, music). Still other forms of culture are created

by the Christian churches (hospitals, service of the poor, generalized education).[30]

The Christian response to culture is always both yes and no. Like the biblical "powers and authorities" (Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 6:12), culture can be distorted in harmful and sinful ways. But culture, the shared social knowledge of a people, is neither the problem nor the salvation. It is rather a locus of God's gracious action in the world, because it provides a venue for neighbor love. If social conflict is an opportunity for God's grace because it is a search for shared meaning, as Lederach argues, then culture makes available the resources for that grace to break through in the mundane reality of human relationships.

The yes and no with which Christians respond to culture is exactly the point Jesus is making in Matthew 5:13-16. The call to be salt represents the *no* to elements of the culture that render one a useless disciple, no different from the surrounding corruption. But the call to be light is the emphatic *yes* to the nations that are being drawn to bring their wealth to the peace of Zion. Furthermore, the way in which the light is being flooded into the world is through the community of Jesus' disciples, the city on a hill.

The tension inherent in Jesus' teaching of salt and light, to be simultaneously different from and involved in the broader society, to be in but not of the world, is also present in Isaiah. The fact that the cultural wealth of the nations is valued in the New Jerusalem is the foundation for the elicitive approach to peacemaking. Yet Isaiah states firmly that the nations do not come to the mountain of the Lord to teach, but rather to learn the ways of the Lord. The practices and richness of human cultures are not enough; the nations must be taught by God how to use those gifts to turn swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks, and never to study war again (Isaiah 2:4). The gleanings of the elicitive approach to peacemaking are not an end in themselves, but rather the prerequisite for learning how to make peace. For this task there is one truly authoritative teacher, the Prince of Peace himself.

A Discerning Elicitive Approach

By what criteria can a peacemaker determine when to say yes or no to a particular cultural practice? This is where the life of Ahmed Haile can provide some clues. In engaging Somali traditions Haile was eminently practical. His methodology was to explore in each situation what practices, whether Islamic, Christian, or from other traditions, effectively move people away from enmity and toward friendship.

For example, Haile expressed deep respect for the Islamic faith of his people. In his analysis of the violence in Somalia, he noted that the Islamic ideal of a global *umma* and justice system that transcend clan held some attraction in a Somali context, where clan loyalties could exacerbate conflict. But Haile observed that in spite of this ideal, the Islamic justice system has been ineffective in peacemaking in Somalia, in part because the way that groups practiced it has been retributive rather than restorative.[31]

A much more fruitful approach, Haile surmised, was to affirm some of the practices of pre-Islamic Somali peacemaking. The Somali system of restorative justice known as *xeer* has remarkable similarities to peace practices in the Old and New Testaments. The Somali greeting, *nabad*, refers to a general wellbeing from God that is equivalent to the concept of shalom. When a wrong is committed, a judge determines what restitution is appropriate, not only to the individual but to the family. Furthermore, reading Somali culture through the lens of René Girard, Haile saw a powerful connection between the restorative sacrifice of a lamb in the process of *xeer* and the Christian concept of sacrificial atonement. [32] Along with the *Ergada* group, Haile actively encouraged the use of these peacemaking mechanisms by the Somali elders, which served as a major part of the success story in Somaliland. The government in the north creatively integrates traditional leadership with Western-style government.

This example demonstrates a key characteristic of the peacemaking work of Ahmed Haile. It is necessarily ad hoc, because peacemaking is about the cultivation of good relationships. An essential trait of a peacemaker, therefore, is the ability to draw constructively from all kinds of practices and traditions.

The Christian community always stands simultaneously in criticism and affirmation of particular cultures. To use the imagery of Jesus, a salty community will practice peacemaking in a way that is distinct from the wisdom of the world. And a community of light points the nations toward God's saving work, eliciting the cultural treasures that can glorify God.

Ahmed Haile carried in his body the marks of a faithful Christian peacemaking ethic. With one leg, he returned to the country where the other leg was taken from him, heralding an unexpected kind of love and forgiveness. Haile's commitment to Christian nonviolence – the salt of Christ's community – was an oddity in a situation where retribution ruled. Yet he also demonstrated more ably than most that Christ's followers are meant to invite others to the light of God's presence by affirming the good gifts that they already bring. Free Church Christians have generally been more adept at the former – maintaining distinctiveness from the broader culture for the sake of the gospel. Haile's life helps us to read the Sermon and Isaiah, along with Stassen, in such a way that an elicitive approach to peacemaking has a leg to stand on. ■

Religious Violence and Christian Violent Narratives in the Indonesian Context

Where Does The Church Need To Repent?

By Paulus S. Widjaja

I met Glen Stassen in 1996 through Ted Koontz, my academic advisor at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. When I moved to Fuller Theological Seminary in order to pursue doctoral studies, I had the honor to serve as Stassen's teaching assistant for a couple of years and to finish my dissertation there under his supervision. Our relationship had developed over the years into more than just a teacher-student relationship. Stassen has been a teacher, a friend, and even a father to me and my family.

One of Glen Stassen's legacies for Christians, indeed for the whole humanity, is his theory of just peacemaking practices. In dealing with one of these practices, Stassen says that we need to "end judgmental propaganda" and "make amends."[1] Without the humility to acknowledge our wrongdoing and to repent, peacemaking is only an ideal, not a way of life -- let alone a reality of the world. Quoting Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Stassen strongly opposes the so-called cheap grace to which many Christians often fall prey. Cheap grace is God's grace that is understood merely as the gross forgiveness of sins. There is no contrite heart needed, let alone the desire to be delivered from sin. In Bonhoeffer's words, it is "the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner." Grace does everything, and the Christian remains passive. In Bonhoeffer's understanding, cheap grace is "the grace we bestow on ourselves." He continues, "Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance . . . Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate."[2]

It is in line with this call, namely, the call for repentance and the correction of our own wrongdoing, that I write this article.

Religious Violence in the Indonesian Context

On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, the Islam Defenders Front (In Indonesia, it is known as *Front Pembela Islam* – FPI), a radical-fundamentalist Moslem group, staged a protest in front of the Jakarta City Council. The issue was the current gubernatorial decree that mandates that the vice governor of Jakarta should serve as the leader of several Islamic institutions.[3] The gubernatorial decree has now become problematic because Basuki Tjahja Purnama, the newly-elected vice governor of Jakarta, happens to be a Christian. The problem itself had emerged several months before when Rhoma Irama, a well-known Moslem religious singer in Indonesia, urged the Moslems in Jakarta to elect a leader who adheres to the same religion as they do, namely, Islam. This is, in his opinion, a religious call that is congruent with the Koran.

In another setting, a pastor in one of the churches in Poso, Central Sulawesi, was praying in a Sunday service for the victory of Regina and Sean during the Indonesian Idol singing competition, a reality show broadcast by one of the national TV stations in Indonesia. The Christian pastor in Poso took the secular singing competition very seriously because Regina and Sean happened to be Christians. He prayed that God would make these Christian singers victorious in the competition. When Regina and Sean did win first and second place in the competition, some Christian tabloids in Indonesia made the victory their front cover story, as if it were the victory of Christians over non-Christians.[4]

Such stories show how religion has been so embedded in the lives of the people in Indonesia that many of them can hardly separate religion from the other dimensions of life. On the one hand, this is good because it shows that the Indonesians are very religious. On the other hand, it is bad because such intermingling has blinded many Indonesians so much that they are unable to distinguish what belongs to which sphere of life. In the case of the gubernatorial decree that was protested by FPI, for instance, we can see that the legislators who wrote the decree did not even think about whether there was any relevance at all for the vice governor of Jakarta to serve in the leadership position of so many Islamic institutions. They did not consider whether it was logical when it discriminates against all the other religions, since the access to power is given only to Islamic institutions. However, it also does not make sense because religion, Islam to be precise, has been made one of the criteria in the distribution of public good, namely, the office. "Every social good or set of goods," Michael Walzer reminds us, "constitutes, as it were, a distributive sphere within which only certain criteria and arrangements are appropriate."[5] Thus the vice governor office should be distributed on the basis of one's qualifications, both one's past and predicted future performance, as demanded by the particular purpose of the office.[6] Religion, whatever it might be, cannot and should not become the purchasing value for public offices in a multi-faith nation such as Indonesia.

The FPI itself was silent when they saw the gubernatorial decree to be beneficial to Moslems, for it gave them special and direct access to

power. But they are very upset when a Christian occupies the vice governor position, which is problematic for the Moslems' interests. So it is really confusing as to whether religion is a matter of approaching God or of gaining economic and political power. Religion seems to become simply a practical matter.

On the other side, in the case of the Indonesian Idol competition, we can also see the irrational sentiment of the Christian pastor in Poso by connecting a secular singing competition with religious victory. Religion should have nothing to do with a secular singing competition whatsoever. If Regina and Sean won the first and second places in the competition, it was not because they are Christians who are blessed with victory by God the Almighty, but simply because they have beautiful voices compared to the other contestants.

Such a problem is very dangerous in a multi-faith context like that of Indonesian society because religion is not simply used as an instrument to get economic or political interests, but it has been knitted and constructed in the societal web of meanings. In such situations, religion is connected to every matter of one's life. An ordinary traffic incident between motorcyclists on a street may trigger big social unrest when the two motorcyclists happen to have different religions. People do not see others as fellow human beings, but as people who have different religions. Religious difference takes precedence over commonality as human beings. Such a social construct of religion, in turn, gives way to religious leaders who manipulate religion in order to legitimize their own economic and political interests. Thus what has been stated in the preamble of UNESCO Constitution is very true, "Wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."[7]

Hasenclever and Rittberger are correct in pointing out that religious violence never just happens. For religious violence to happen, some prior conditions must exist, namely, mass mobilization and social support. The mass mobilization can take place when the relations between religious groups are tainted with mistrust against each other, when there is willingness among the religious rank and file to sacrifice themselves for the cause at stake, and when the conflict is about values.[8] These conditions do exist in many settings in Indonesia. Related to that, a conflict about values, especially religious values, or economic-political interests wrapped up in religious values, is always more dangerous than a conflict about interests. A conflict about values goes to the very heart of a political community.

Such a conflict is prone to violence due to at least three reasons: (1) Individuals usually identify with the values of their community. Therefore, when those values are at stake, they will see it as an existential threat to the community. This explains why the spread of "Western" culture and religion does pose a threat to many Moslem groups in Indonesia. (2) In conflicts about values, the use of violence is seen as morally justified, because it is an act to defend what the respected community regards as right or wrong, just or unjust, and what makes up the identity of the community and its members. (3) The use of violence is also reinforced in a conflict about values, because compromise is seen as impossible and the defeat will become a total reversal of one's beliefs. It is a zero-sum game.[9]

It is against such a backdrop that we need to consider the power of narratives, especially religious narratives, in shaping our morality. Indeed, narratives shape our character, and this determines the kind of attitudes and behavior that we have toward others, especially people who are different from us, in a multi-faith context.

The Role of Narratives in Character Formation

To begin with, we need to be aware that our actions are intelligible only within a narrative context because human knowledge is necessarily narrative-shaped. There are no actions, words, virtues and even character that can be understood apart from a certain narrative context.[10] We may give some money to a beggar whom we meet at a street junction, but that would not be a meaningful action unless we come to know personally who the beggar is, where she or he lives, what kind of family she or he has, what kind of struggles she or he has to undergo, etc. In short, we need to know the person's life narratives. Nor is it a meaningful action when we give the money simply because we happen to have some coins in our car. Such an action can only become meaningful when we do the action for a particular reason that we derive from the narratives within which we live. Those narratives become the watershed for our action and make the action meaningful.

With that understanding in mind, we can see that the religious narratives within which people live are very crucial, because they create the plausibility structure by and through which the reality of the world is comprehended and within which divine legitimization is given by juxtaposing the mundane and the sacred.[11] In a multi-faith context, such narratives have provided maximal and thick morality for the respected religious community. Everyday morality is never self-explained. We cannot rely on minimal and thin morality to shape and determine a livable morality. As Walzer points out, the subject of morality is always "the meaning of the particular moral life shared by the protagonists." The minimal codes only provide "a framework for any possible (moral) life," that we need to further fill in with specific details. We "cannot simply deduce a moral culture . . . from the minimal code."[12] The account of narratives is therefore very crucial to our moral life.

One's life narratives, however, are always correlative to the narratives of the community of which one is a part. Before we can answer the question, "What am I to do?" we have to first answer the prior question, "Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?"[13] As Robert Bellah and others

remind us, "Finding oneself [necessarily] means . . . finding the story or narrative in terms of which one's life makes sense."[14] In this matter, the "cultural tradition of a people -- its symbols, ideals, and ways of feeling," provides "the meaning of the destiny" that all members of the respected community share and makes one's life meaningful.[15] "Narrative history," in short, is what Alasdair MacIntyre calls, "the basic and essential genre for the characterization of human actions."[16]

The FPI protested the gubernatorial decree that renders the vice governor of Jakarta an important position in Islamic institutions, because this group lives in an antagonistic relationship with the Christians. So the problem is not primarily about a Christian occupying an important position in Islamic institutions but about the conflict history between the two groups of people. That is the real narrative that lies behind the protest. The same is true about the intercession of the Christian pastor in Poso on behalf of Regina and Sean during the Indonesian Idol competition; this was not an action that was born in a vacuum. The bloody conflict between Christians and Moslems a decade ago in Poso has provided a narrative context for the pastor to perceive the secular singing competition as competition between religions. Thus, the individual members of FPI cannot be extracted from the narratives of the antagonistic relationship between Christians and Moslems. Likewise, the Christian pastor in Poso cannot be separated from the narratives of religious conflict between Christians and Moslems there.

In that sense, we can say that there is certain givenness in our lives -- a givenness that we inherit from the community we are born into -- yet it significantly determines who we are and who we will be.[17] As Gilbert Meilander says, "We are what we have received."[18] Our character, to a great extent, is given even before we can shape it,[19] because the character of our community inevitably shapes our individual characters. It is by adopting the historical drama of our community and by participating in the continuation of that drama, that we become who we are. Each of us adopts the convictions of our community and makes the community's way of seeing become our own. We then let those convictions and ways of seeing determine our quest and by so doing, we become who we are.[20] "All of us," Stanley Hauerwas once said, "are more fundamentally formed by stories we did not create than those we have chosen."[21] Therefore, we have to be critical of the narratives of religious communities, especially those narratives that nourish violent behavior. We also need to intentionally create and nurture certain kinds of narratives and allow them to shape our character and the character of the generations to come.

With that said, I am fully aware that I cannot speak on behalf of Indonesian Moslems in relation to the kinds of narratives that may drive some Moslem groups into violent actions. I will focus the remainder of my analysis only on Indonesian Christians, even though the same logic may also be applied to both groups.

Christian Violent Narratives

To begin with, we Christians in Indonesia need to be critical of violent narratives such as cosmic war narratives that are very well alive within Christianity, especially among the urban churches.[22] These narratives tell about an ongoing war in the world between two conflicting forces, the good and the evil ones. They also include the narratives of heaven and hell as well as of the end of time, because the cosmic war can only make sense when people believe in the existence of heaven and hell that become the final destination of all people on earth. There are three crucial points that we have to be aware of related to these cosmic war narratives: (1) Religious people tend to believe that war is cosmic in nature and it determines the identity of all human beings in the world. Faced with that kind of war, one has to choose whether she or he belongs to the good force or the evil one. Thus, war determines one's dignity and is therefore directly related to one's basic need. For this reason, one is willing to die in order to win the war because winning is the ultimate sign that one is on the "right side." (2) In the cosmic war, it is believed that what is at stake is one's own eternal life, either in heaven or in hell. Hence, religious people are willing to do anything to win the war. (3) The cosmic war is also believed to end only at the end of time. As long as the world is still moving, everybody has to choose a side and engage in that war.[23]

When religious people are influenced by cosmic war narratives, they tend to perceive themselves as belonging to the good force under God's command. It is therefore just a matter of time before they point their fingers at people of other faiths as belonging to the evil force that they have to fight against and even abolish. Violence naturally follows. And the more religious people see that the war will not be over soon, the stronger the drive within them will be to believe that they are indeed living in a cosmic war situation that has to be won.

The case of Münster Anabaptists in Europe is a perfect example of these dynamics. On February 9, 1534, a group of radical Anabaptists in the city of Münster took over the city council.[24] The group that was born out of a pacifist movement soon turned into a radical group that justified the use of violence because they believed that the apocalyptic reign of God on earth had arrived and that they were the chosen ones who would run the world together with God. On the basis of such beliefs, they felt the right to take vengeance on behalf of God against his enemies. Violent actions naturally followed. They expelled those at Münster who refused to be re-baptized. They used lethal weapons to attack other people because they understood themselves as the "children of Jacob" who were only helping God to punish and abolish the "children of Esau" in order to manifest the kingdom of God on earth. They even justified suicide killing. It is true that such madness may

not happen again among Christians in modern times. Nevertheless, it shows the danger of violent cosmic war narratives in shaping the character of religious people, whatever their religion is.

We must be critical of cosmic war narratives for several reasons. In the first place, we need to realize that those narratives are only a metaphor used in the Scripture to make sense of the reality within which we live. It is a metaphor that biblical writers used to make sense of the seemingly endless battle between the good and the bad, between God and the devil. Yet we should not forget that metaphor is a language strategy that we use to understand a more difficult and abstract reality by comparing it to a more popular, tangible one. We use B in order to understand A, precisely because we understand B better than A, and because we cannot understand A otherwise. Due to such a characteristic, a metaphor is by its very nature always correct and incorrect. It is correct because we can see some resemblances of the more abstract reality in the more popular, tangible reality. But it is also incorrect because the two realities are not completely and perfectly the same. However, a problem soon emerges when a metaphor is used too often. The metaphor will turn into a model and lose its flexibility or ambiguity. We, congruently, will understand the model as the only way to understand the abstract reality that we could not understand otherwise. That is also what happens when Christians use the cosmic war metaphor too often in sermons and other means alike.

We also need to question cosmic war narratives for another reason. If the anger of God were to be understood as a redemptive one, it is only fair to ask why God has to redeem the world by abolishing our enemies. Is there not any other way that is more peaceful? We can even pose the same question in regard to the concept of hell itself. Is it not cruel for God to punish people in an eternal fire without letting them ever die, even if they were the evil ones? By the same token, we may ask why the narratives of the end of time, which are so violent, can be asymmetrical with that of the creation story. If God, as portrayed in Genesis for instance, is able to create the world without violence, that is, only by words -- and that is the genius of the biblical account of creation as compared to other similar accounts in the ancient Near Eastern world[25]– why can God not end the universe the same way? There is a serious problem of theodicy here. If God were able to end the universe by words and thus nonviolently, but does not want to do so, God is absolutely not a good God. On the other hand, if God was willing to end the universe by words, but is simply not able to do so, God is not omnipotent.

Among the churches in Indonesia, the problem with violent Christian narratives is related not only to the cosmic war narratives that many preachers preach, but also with prayers and songs, which are more intimate, personal, and passionate in comparison to sermons. Prayers and songs have to do more with the heart than the head. Nevertheless, we need to remember that there is reciprocity between being and doing.[26] As one's doing is influenced by one's being, so is one's being by one's doing. It is in this regard that we must take precaution to the spirit of vengeance and hatred which is expressed in our intimate, personal, and passionate narratives such as prayers and songs. When the Psalmist, for instance, prays so that God, "Break[s] the arm of the wicked and evildoers" (Psalm 10:15) or that "The righteous will rejoice when they see vengeance done; they will bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked" (Psalms 58:10), such prayers are obviously bound with the spirit of vengeance and hatred. God is here portrayed as the One who will destroy the enemies, their off-spring and all their properties (Psalms 9:5-6; 21:10; 34:16). While we may well understand the reasons behind such prayers, they are nonetheless questionable. It is true that God is willing to hear whatever plea people want to express and is able to handle such a plea as a sovereign, omnipotent God. The problem, however, is not whether God is willing to accept and is able to handle such a plea, but rather whether we, as human beings, can handle it. Our character is shaped not only by what happens to us, but also by what we say and do, including our prayers and songs.

Prayers of vengeance may actually nourish our hatred and, in turn, shape our character as a person of vengeance and hatred. Just as jogging will train one to be a runner, so does a prayer of vengeance train us to be a vengeful person. This is very crucial. Our hatred against the oppressors, not love of neighbors, may in fact become the leitmotif of our struggles for justice. And such hatred might well be nurtured by our prayers. We need to be cautious with this dynamic because when we do not have the power in our hands, we may keep such wishful thoughts of vengeance only in our hearts and express it in our prayers. That is what seems to happen in Psalms. But once we have the power in our hands, we may really act upon our vengeful thoughts and fulfill our wishful thinking. Once again, the crucial question is not whether God is willing to accept and able to handle such prayers and our wishful thinking, but rather whether we can handle it. Non-hatred is, in many ways, much more important than nonviolence. This is true for both religious and secular movements that strive for justice.

The same is true for religious songs. They are even more powerful than sermons in shaping our character, because many people like to sing songs wherever they are and whatever they are doing--whether they are sweeping the floor, cooking in the kitchen, driving a car, etc. These repeated actions will certainly and inevitably shape our character, so it is very dangerous indeed when Christian songs nourish the spirit of conquest and violence. Some examples can be given here. A famous song among the Indonesian churches says:

I was given the power of the Majestic King
To conquer the enemies under my feet
I employ the power of the Majestic King
When God is on my side, who will be my opponents?
. . . You [God] give me the victory
I cheer up celebrating it

Another famous song says:

The Lord is in power,
Fire is burning before Him, to burn all His enemies,
His people shout in joy

Still another song says:

Because God is omnipotent and highly praised
He is mightier above all gods
His power is almighty to crush the enemies

Such songs can be very dangerous, not only because they generate violence but also because many Christians in Indonesia have already been daunted by "the danger of Islam," as my colleague Emmanuel Gerrit Singgih correctly points out. During Suharto's era, Singgih notes, the Indonesian churches preferred to be perceived as "friend of Suharto," not because Suharto was a good president but because the Indonesian churches were afraid of the possibility of the establishment of an Islamic country, and Suharto was seen as carving such possibility by nationalizing *Pancasila*.[27] So the religious violent narratives as expressed in the songs that many Christians sing intermingle with the narratives of hate and fear that already have been well alive among the churches. That is why we need to be cautious of the narratives that we let shape and determine our character, whatever form those narratives take, whether sermons, prayers or songs.

The Church as Hermeneutic Community

We have seen that our character is correlative to the narratives found in the corporate life that we inherit and develop. But, within a multi-faith context such as that of the Indonesian society, there are too many histories we inherit and too many communities we participate in. Each Indonesian person has to live amidst the multiplicity of narratives, which cannot simply be denied nor forced into an artificial harmony.

In such situations, we can escape from violent and destructive narratives only when we develop integrity by being connected to a narrative that is sufficient to lead us through the many values and virtues that form and shape our character. This can only mean letting a truthful story that provides "the skills appropriate to the conflicting loyalties and roles we necessarily confront in our existence," shape and determine our character. The formation of our character, in other words, is correlative to our being initiated into a decisive narrative that displays the virtues by which we live, which is found in a community that claims our life in a more essential, fundamental way than any other community can claim.[28] The difference between Islamic ethics and Christian ethics, to be sure, is not that each prescribes different precepts but that each is based upon different narratives.[29] As Stanley Hauerwas says, "One could change the story and thereby change the rule."[30]

In this light, the church plays an important role as a hermeneutic community because Christian ethics is in essence an elaboration and specification of "the meaning, relation, and truthfulness of Christian convictions." The claims that we make about the way things are always "involve convictions about the way *we* should be if we are to be *able* to see truthfully the way things are."[31] Hence the church is in a position to help us by recognizing the world as it is and interpreting it in the light of God's narratives found in Scripture because "the way to interpret a narrative is through another narrative."[32] It is here that the church helps us discover the "central metaphors"[33] by and through which we see reality, and upon which moral precepts, religious and non-religious alike, are arranged, explicated, analyzed and interpreted.

Such central metaphors, or meta-narratives, are important because they show us the true nature of God, human existence and the world. Their intrinsic values necessarily connect us to the divine and show how we must shape morality for the human life project because those values indicate what really counts for human life.[34] Biblical injunctions, in their truest sense, are not simply information about Christian virtues. In a fundamental way, they tell us about what really counts for love, truth, peace, justice, etc.[35] In the heart of this metanarrative is God's salvation history, which culminated in the birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is indeed a divine narrative since it provides us with Christian basic convictions that are decisive, normative and ultimate, and it helps us see reality "under the mode of the divine."[36]

The church is the hermeneutic community within which we are nourished and provided with interpretations of human experiences and of the transcendent. It is the religious symbols and theological concepts we find within the church that help us see things differently and truthfully, and which help us interpret what is going on in our surroundings.[37] The narratives of Jesus Christ are thus important for the task of interpreting all the other narratives that promote and justify violence, including the narratives that we find within the church itself, whether in sermons, prayers or songs as previously mentioned. We need to acknowledge our part in creating and nourishing the enmity and hatred between people, especially between Christians and Moslems, and then to repent from such wrongdoing. At the same time, we also need to promote those kinds of narratives that will nourish love and shape us to be peacemakers, just as Jesus Christ our Lord has said, "Blessed are the peacemakers! For they shall be called the [children] of God" (Matthew 5:9). ■

Just Peacemaking[1]: Challenging Hate Rhetoric in Latvia's Media

By Peter Zvagulis

When I first attended Glen Stassen's lecture at International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague in the autumn of 2005 and heard his three-fold interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount and how his triads are applied to real life situations as steps of just peacemaking, I suddenly felt that I had just been given the key to what could become a Christian peacemaking initiative in Latvia. This new experience gave direction to my doctoral research with Glen, along with Parush Parushev, my supervisor and guide. This article examines some of the findings of the research and is written in memory and deep gratitude to my teacher and dear friend, Glen Stassen.

Latvia is a post-communist country, which has inherited ethnic tensions between the two main ethno-linguistic groups: Latvians and Russians from the former USSR. Over the last two decades Latvia's media space has become increasingly divided along the ethno-linguistic lines, Latvian and Russian. Also unfriendly rhetoric from each targeting the other group has become a tacitly accepted part of media discourse. The media has amplified and increased the group prejudice on both sides. For many years, since Latvia regained its independence in 1991, it was the print media that played a role in the formative texts of the two hostile ideologies. In the past few years, however, it is the electronic media, both the traditional radio and television, and internet-based news portals, that has taken the lead in provoking in Latvia's society processes that René Girard calls 'bad reciprocity.'[1]

In my previous career, working as a journalist at Radio Free Europe, I had, with some limited success, experimented with reconciliation broadcasting to Latvia in both the Latvian and Russian languages. The difficulties with this secular peacemaking project ranged from a lack of common scale of moral reference to the vagueness of the claimed values and lack of teleological vision. Inspired by Glen Stassen's understanding of just peacemaking I decided to investigate if a Christian peacemaking community could potentially be better equipped for contributing to the reduction of perceptional violence in Latvia's media.

About ten years ago, I surveyed representatives of the Latvian and Russian communities of Latvia, asking them if they had hate speech in their media. I received very similar answers: "No, we don't have hate speech, but *they* do." This perceptional phenomenon is not unique to Latvia. As a journalist, I had observed this same attitude in many other cultural contexts with ethnic tensions, like before the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and before the ethnic wars in former Yugoslavia.

One problem with hate speech is that, while it is a reciprocal process, it is invisible to the offending side. The other problem, therefore, is that this perceptional blindness contributes to an increasingly intense (negative and collective) emotional reaction when the other party responds to the initial offense. This creates a vicious cycle of hostile emotional exchange between the members of the two groups. Such a development may be potentially destructive for the society as, according to Gordon Allport's classical interpretation of the dynamics of group prejudice, emotional attitude is at the core of human motivation for action.[2] In other words, the hateful rhetoric or hate speech, like the tip of an iceberg, is just the visible part of a larger and more complex paradigm that I call 'perceptional violence' and that involves discursive, socio-psychological, theological and ethical issues. Hate speech, however, is an important key element in this vicious cycle because it is the main vehicle of hostile group indoctrination. It creates a hostile collective attitude toward the out-group and works coercively on individuals of the in-group, forcing them to comply with the polarized collective vision.

Establishing the diagnostic methodology for the paradigm of perceptional violence included aggregation of the relevant findings by a number of prominent authors across the fields of the humanities and the social sciences (René Girard, Gordon Allport, Roger Muchielli, Serge Chakotin, Samuel Huntington and others). The curative part of the methodology came from Glen Stassen's work on just peacemaking. The diagnostic part of the methodology was tested by cross-cultural triangulation of well-documented case studies where hate rhetoric was an important contributing factor to political developments leading to mass violence. I found commonalities in the hate propaganda of Nazi Germany, pre-genocide Rwanda and the countries of former Yugoslavia before the notorious "ethnic cleansing" took place.

The works of Glen Stassen and James McClendon helped me to locate these findings in the sphere of Christian ethics and to spot a potential way out of the vicious cycles of mutual recriminations and continuing negative emotional exchanges between the two conflicting groups. When I looked through the new diagnostic lens at the hate rhetoric in Latvia's media, I came across an unpleasant surprise. The same triangulation para-

digm characterized that rhetoric, only at a lower level of intensity. There were some political breaking factors that prevented the inter-ethnic tension from further deterioration, namely the collective fear on both sides of potential military retaliation either from Russia or NATO. This displeasing discovery left me with a question: is there anything that Christians in Latvia can do to reduce, or perhaps end, this vicious cycle of reciprocal offences and deepening dislike? Long conversations with Glen helped to gradually shape the structure of a potential just peacemaking project suitable for the Latvian context.

When seen from the point of view of the above-mentioned methodology, hate speech is a part of the vicious cycle of perceptional violence. It is based on existing negative stereotypes and a prejudiced attitude toward the out-group. The offensive rhetoric provokes a defensive and hostile emotional response from the out-group, which is perceived by the members of the in-group as an unprovoked insult and as confirmation of the stereotypical wickedness and evil intentions of the other group. The hostile communicative exchange continues making both groups into what Girard terms "monstrous doubles," that is, in any sustained symmetric conflict both sides become equally aggressive and unconsciously start to imitate each other's behavior. Emotional contagion within each group produces a uniformly belligerent determination which Girard terms "violent unanimity."[3]

The impact of hate speech on each of the hostile groups generates reactions mainly on the level of collective unconscious emotions. The seemingly rational element of the rhetoric serves, most of the time, only to justify the negative emotional attitude toward the other group. As part of this hostile collective emotion-generating process, hate speech is a very variable and versatile discursive phenomenon. It is one of the most efficient forms of communication, because it operates by the means of symbolic images, both symbolic language and audio-visual symbols. It is very difficult to restrain hate speech legally because it refers to an implied prejudiced metanarrative -- something that Goebbels would have called the Big Lie, and can lead to other symbolic and euphemic terms as soon as the metanarrative is legally unacceptable.

It may be very difficult to detect even relatively intense hate speech because, first, it is visible to only one of the conflicting sides. Second, the implied metanarrative is fully understandable only to the members of the in-group. A third-party outsider who is not deeply immersed in the local context may have a hard time noticing any hostility in subtle hate discourse. Thus the detection of linguistically variable ideological constructs requires us to look deeper and identify the unfriendly collective attitudes behind the visible rhetorical elements.

While the whole mechanism of detection is more complex than it is possible to explore in this article, I will name the 13 main criteria or early warning markers that allow exposing and proving the presence of hate speech in public discourse as a part of the socially destructive process of perceptional violence. These attitudinal markers indicate the presence of hate speech in public discourse:

1) A polarizing hostile attitude (ideology at later stages), based on negative historically rooted stereotypes, dividing one society into *them* versus *us*. The most telling example is the classical Nazi propaganda scheme portraying German citizens of Jewish descent as non-German, thus artificially dividing German society into an in-group and out-group.

2) The old content of an existing stereotype replaced with new content, linked to the current political agenda.[4] Before and during the Bosnian war, Serbian extremist propaganda depicted the local Muslim community as the impersonation of the ancient Ottoman invaders of the 14th and 15th centuries, calling them 'Turks.'[5]

3) Core code words and their derivatives that can be used in hate propaganda of varied sophistication (at later stages, a structured set of core code words).[6] In the Rwandan case the Hutu extremist propaganda called Rwandan citizens of Tutsi descent *Inyenzi* (cockroaches). This allowed the development of a number of euphemic derivatives such as 'cleaning the house,' a coded message preceding the mass killings.[7]

4) Dehumanization is a hate propaganda technique, which depicts the out-group as less human than the in-group or not human at all. Psychologically, violence against a non-human victim seems less disturbing to perpetrators than violence against equals.[8]

5) Demonization is another hate propaganda technique. In its essence this is scapegoating; blaming the dehumanized group for everything that is wrong in society. It transforms otherness into a clearly defined image of the archetypal Enemy.[9]

6) Creation of a siege mentality is a very advanced and intense hate propaganda technique. The main symptom for this marker is a sustained presence of conspiracy theories in the mainstream media. Most of the time, this results from organized manipulation of the media discourse by increasingly influential extremist circles. The creation of a siege mentality is the next step in the further development of the already demonized image of enemy. Media production inspired by the conspiracy theories portrays the "enemy" (scapegoat) as extremely powerful, because of his/her alleged powerful co-conspirators abroad. According to Girard and Chakotin, this propaganda technique allows the portrayal of very small and uninfluential groups as having possession of some mythical power capable of harming the larger society. This also provides an excuse for "witch hunts" for "traitors" and "agents of the enemy," those moderates and dissenters in the midst of their own in-group.[10]

7) Accusation in mirror is a very aggressive, and often programmatic hate propaganda technique. Mucchielli defines this as "accusing

the other of one's own intentions."[11] He further explains the concept with a generic example. Country A wants to start war against country B. In order to overcome the moral defenses of the population and to mislead the international opinion, A accuses B of planning a war against A. After that, A pretending that this is pre-emptive, attacks B.[12]

8) Authorization of hate is a subtle hate propaganda technique that targets the *collective unconscious* (Jung's term) implicitly, absolving any individual participant of the hate campaign from personal moral responsibility. In the context of the discussed methodology, this means endorsement of the aforementioned hate propaganda activities by people holding political, financial and/or moral and religious authority among the larger population. This group of influential people can, to some extent, also be described by the classical sociological term 'opinion-leaders.' The authorization of hate may appear as statements supporting the hate agenda or as absence of condemnation by the opinion-leaders of hate-motivated public actions and hate rhetoric in the media.[13]

9) The self-victimization technique of hate propaganda helps to lower the natural psychological and moral defenses of the members of the in-group. Self-victimization, in this typology, means self-labeling as a victim, i.e. pretending to be a victim.[14]

10) Conditioning by association is a sophisticated hate propaganda technique that targets the unconscious on both individual and collective levels. This term refers to a cluster of conditioning techniques used in combination with the ideological imagery in media and serving the indoctrination process. It includes the organization of mass rallies, legal and physical intimidation and other techniques. This can be illustrated by the classical Nazi indoctrination scheme. Nazis created 'Positive Christianity,' a mix of political doctrine with ancient Germanic mythological associations with adapted elements of Christian imagery that was aimed at justifying their anti-Semitic ideology. By persecuting the dissenting Confessing Church members, they coerced the churchgoing masses into acceptance of their doctrine.[15]

11) "Rationalization" of the irrational and emotional content is an advanced hate propaganda technique that usually appears at late stages of mass indoctrination when the extremist movement already has seized power or at least become very influential and dominant in society. Coordinated indoctrination creates an ideologically coercive social environment and causes, in the individual psyche, dissociation between the previously accepted moral norms and the new emotional information that has been forcibly loaded into the collective unconsciousness. Since psychological comfort requires harmonization (also often termed as 'integration') of unconscious and conscious parts of the information, this provides an opportunity for hate ideology to "explain" the new emotional load in pseudo-rational terms, which in reality are sophisms.[16]

12) A glorious vision of the nation's future as a liberating mission, which by its very logic may only be achieved through violence. It is an indication of a fully formed hate ideology that has acquired violent programmatic attributes. It usually claims to redress past injustices and solve the present problems allegedly caused by the past injustices. Such pseudo-logic is based on a self-centered, vengeful vision of the world. It can be summarized in a short sentence: "The world would be a better place without you!"[17]

13) The face of the national hero becomes identical with the face of an extremist leader and his friends. This is the last step of indoctrination, making the process complete and extremely efficient. The image of the Leader becomes the central symbol, containing in itself all other symbols and the whole meaning of the hate ideology.[18] Chakotin, having personal experience with anti-Nazi propaganda warfare, testifies to the exponential increase of the power of indoctrination once the cycle has become complete with a Leader/Hero image.[19]

From the viewpoint of Christian ethics, hate speech is a lie, false testimony and an evil deed. Its evilness consists both of the bad intentions of the agent and the broader negative emotional impact on others. Considering that hate rhetoric is only the visible part of the larger process of perceptional violence, it is a group phenomenon for which there is no adequate scientific language from the viewpoint of the social sciences. Theological terminology is perhaps still the best approximation in this case. Jung views it as the psychological equivalent of the concept of demonic powers subverting the meaning of good and evil in society.[20] Girard regards this phenomenon as "false gods of violence" characterized by "reciprocal relationships of idolatry and hate."[21] James McClendon describes it by the Pauline language of "powers and principalities."[22] The whole paradigm is too broad and complex, reaching into too many academic fields to be defined in an explanatory way, therefore the best approach seems to be to address it from the point of view of its separate functionalities.

Scientists exploring the biological origins of the group behavior often regard hate rhetoric as a false alarm, abusing the group instinct of self-preservation of species. In other words, by manipulating collective imagination, the public is misled into emotionally accepting an image of a fictional enemy. This causes mobilization for a group defense and poses an urgent need for a leader.[23]

Communication experts view the organized hate rhetoric as a highly effective, condensed and symbolic way of communication, which operates within its own closed semantic field and therefore cannot be defeated in its own territory.[24] From the perspective of social psychology, enhanced by relevant theological insights, we can say that in the phenomenon of hate speech (as part of the paradigm

of perceptional violence) we are dealing with subversion of the corporate character of society.[25] According to Mucchielli, an intense hate propaganda campaign is able to create an artificial and imaginary threatening environment. Individuals in such a society are subject to a coercive double pressure.[26] First, it is the pressure of the indoctrination message and imagery that haunts the person everywhere and at all times. It becomes a continuously sustained, dominant, outside stimulus overwhelming all other stimuli and creating an unbearable psychic condition. The other coercive element comes as peer pressure from the surrounding society, which has gradually been won over by the hate propaganda. In other words, the corporate character of society has been undermined by the hostile propaganda; the meanings of good and evil have exchanged places.[27]

Individuals cannot successfully challenge such a corporate manifestation of evil. If they disagree, they either have to emigrate, or become despised, lone dissenters or even martyrs. In Allport's view this happens because of the primacy of collective socio-psychic phenomena over the individual. Each individual becomes a personality only in a particular social environment that Allport terms his or her 'group of reference.'[28] McClendon and Erich Fromm, each using their own terminology, both agree with this viewpoint.[29]

Furthermore, Fromm raises an important issue: is there a way of opposing a society that has been overcome by insanity? He views such an opportunity only as an alternative social environment. In other words, to successfully challenge a vicious corporate character of society there has to be a strong supportive virtuous community with shared convictions and moral communal practices.[30] According to Girard and McClendon and a number of other authors, emotional contagion is a universal dynamic that theoretically can work both ways, spreading a negative behavioral model as well a positive one. A vicious model can thrive only in the absence of a better alternative. This is why evil regimes coerce people and suppress all other viewpoints. Thus, following this logic, a positive communal behavioral model can produce a spill-over effect that could potentially remedy the viciously subverted character of society.[31]

A Better Way: Just Peacemaking

Christian communities are convictional communities with shared communal practices by definition. Therefore, they seem to be appropriate candidates for a new role-model mission. In Latvia, however, the Christians are mainly unaware of the role that the inter-ethnic hate rhetoric of the media plays in their society. They are even less aware of ways Christians could contribute to curative efforts of inter-group relations and to rescuing the civility of public discourse. The first unawareness could potentially be helped by spreading the knowledge of the cross-disciplinary dynamics and the early warning markers discussed above. For the second one, Glen Stassen's practices of just peacemaking can serve us as guide.

The community of Christian peacemakers in Latvia has to have a higher motivation than a utilitarian orientation toward short-term provable success. Thus, it has to have a motivation that can come only from an eschatological vision, such as that of the in-breaking Kingdom of God here and now.[32] Such a vision invites us to participate in God's plan and makes our efforts meaningful. The teleological essence of this peacemaking is a change of heart and a change of corporate character from vicious to virtuous.[33]

In the Latvian context, this means voicing prophetic dissent with the evil practice of collective hate and hate rhetoric in the media. This also means refusing to engage in a conflictual dialogue between the two hostile discursive parties, offering a new semantic field and viewing the local context from a completely different perspective. In other words, to end hate speech one has to first remove the hatred. The hateful emotional group attitude serving as motivation for the continuous, offensive rhetoric must change.

Glen Stassen's just peacemaking approach emphases non-violence, non-punitive (redemptive) justice, non-judgmental attitudes, a Christocentric vision and an insistence on the normativity of Sermon on the Mount for Christians' personal and communal behavior. Stassen's approach provides the wisdom and sincerity that is necessary for such a mission.[34]

Just peacemaking practices, when adapted to the Latvian context, result in the following seven peacemaking steps or transforming communal initiatives:

1) The Christian community must challenge the corporate evil practice by publicly saying "no" to hate rhetoric and hateful group attitudes. Christians must refuse to participate in it, exposing and demystifying the processes that it abuses and feeds on. In other words, do not be silent, but be salt and light to the world (Matthew 5:13-14).

2) Engage in peacemaking proactively. Renounce the current passivity and draw inspiration from James 2:14: "What good is your faith… if you do not show it in your actions?"

3) Demonstrate what a virtuous community of support means. Stand behind those peacemakers who directly engage in the struggle against hatred and hateful rhetoric. Pray for them openly. Show a loving relationship within the Christian community and loving openness to the world. Such relationships will be in sharp contrast to the hostile corporate attitudes creating collective frustration in the larger society. With time, this will contribute to a positive spill-over effect.

4) After the destructiveness of hateful discursive practices has been exposed and the presence of hate speech proved on both sides, it is important that the two sides agree to abstain from what the other side perceives as offensive or threatening statements or

actions. It means stopping the vicious cycle of retaliation and not responding to evil with evil (Matthew 5:39). This also means practicing a non-judgmental attitude (Matthew 7:1-5).
5) 'Talking to the enemy' is another transforming initiative, which is very important in the current Latvian context. Talking should be about common future goals not about differences or grievances of the past. The content of such an initiative should help people to realize that they live in one and the same society, not two societies; and that they have a common destiny and only together can they make it constructive, not destructive.
6) Showing genuine concern for people's needs (James 2:15) is a powerful social practice and stands in sharp contrast to the hypocritical, arrogant corporate practices prevalent in Latvia's political and economic spheres. In Stassen's interpretation this would also mean concern for human rights for all, which include not only political rights, but also the right to work and not to go hungry in the midst of plenty.
7) Work for the Kingdom of God, keeping in mind Stassen's insistence that peace (just like war) must be waged. Just peace is not an idle situation that can be reached and enjoyed ever after. This would help Christian peacemakers to remain humble and not be carried away by unrealistic ambitions. In the Latvian context, this would mean not absolutizing definitions and rules, but rather being guided by the Spirit and weighing the corporate attitude behind discursive practices rather than their formal compliance with linguistically defined public rules.[35]

These seven corporate initiatives would clearly exhibit the difference between a constructive way of Christian peacemaking and the destructive way of hateful rhetoric prevailing in Latvia. It seems particularly relevant now, with the Russia-Ukraine military conflict sharply dividing the Latvian and Russian language media of Latvia. In Latvia this summer, I observed a considerable increase in the hostility of the media's discourse, which has produced an unwelcome impact on the collective inter-ethnic attitudes in the society. Christian communities in Latvia should not be intimidated by their relative marginality. On the contrary, they should rather view it as an asset, not a handicap, because not being linked to the political elite only proves their sincerity and increases their credibility in the larger society. ■

Following Jesus in the Kenyan Context: A Reflection on Christian-Muslim Relations in the Face of Terrorism

By Emily J. Choge Kerama

Africa has been the host of the three Abrahamic religions for centuries. When Abraham feared famine, he took his family to Egypt for food (Genesis 12:10-20). Later, his descendants also sought food in Egypt during famine (Genesis 42-47). When Jesus was under the threat of Herod the Great, Jesus and His parents took refuge in Egypt until that time when the threat was over (Matthew 2:13-15). When the followers of Prophet Mohammed needed a shelter from the onslaught of the enemies of Islam, he sent his followers to seek shelter in Abyssinia, Ethiopia. In this paper, I will focus on Islam and Christianity and argue that because both have sought refuge in Africa, they should also find ways and means to coexist as neighbors.

Glen H. Stassen calls for peaceful relations among neighbors especially people of different faiths. Stassen notes, "We purposely fashioned the wording of the ten practices of just peacemaking so they could be adopted by persons of many faiths or no official faith."[1] Religion scholar John Azumah says that in Africa, there is "celebration of plurality of belief systems that cut across family, ethnic and national boundaries."[2] He then makes a call to "Africans across religious boundaries. . . to affirm and celebrate what unites them i.e. our common historical, cultural and linguistic heritages and eschew all forms of externally anchored racial and cultural chauvinism be it Western or Middle Eastern."[3] With this in mind, if there is any place that Stassen's practices of just peacemaking can be fulfilled, it should be in Africa.

The call for peace between the adherents of these two Abrahamic religions is urgent today because the continent faces the threat of terrorism due to the breakdown of the traditional family structures, the collapse of nation states like Somalia, the general despair because of difficult economic times, and the spread of diseases like Ebola and HIV/AIDS. Noting this volatile context, the call by Stassen in his development of just peacemaking theory is pertinent: "A war against terrorism requires winning the battle of hearts and minds of potential terrorist recruits."[4]

This paper works at developing the resources that will help gain the hearts and minds of potential terrorists, and thereby reduce the terrorist onslaughts in Kenya. I will examine what in the history of these religions and their past relationships will work to prevent and to deescalate terrorism. I will also look at three key just peacemaking practices that can help restore peace and diminish terrorist activities in Kenya. My primary audience is the Christian church in Kenya whom I call upon to follow the teachings of Jesus and the traditions of our faith that help us to live in peaceful co-existence with our neighbors. I also call upon my Muslim brothers and sisters in Kenya to embrace just peacemaking practices, so that together we can be united in the fight against terrorism.

This paper is mainly a personal reflection drawn from a concern that good relations are being strained by the criminal activity of some in the name of religion that threatens to tear communities apart. I grew up in Kaptumo, Nandi in Western Kenya where we interacted with Muslim neighbors. These were members of our community and shared in our festivals. They cooked very delicious and tasty food. I went to school with some Muslim students, and they are my friends to this day. In high school, the religious education curriculum was such that students could choose from Islamic Religious Education or Christian Religious Education. When I was in college, I was taught Islamic by a practicing Muslim, Badru Katerrega, who co-authored a book with David Shenk, a Mennonite missionary. During seminary, I took a course offered by the late Tokunboh Adeyemo, a Christian convert from Islam. When I started teaching at Moi University, I was asked to teach Islam courses because we did not have an Islamic professor at that time. I did that for two years until an Islamic teacher was hired. Then we co-taught a course, "The life and teachings of Jesus and Mohammed." All of this shows that it is possible to have good relations between Christians and Muslims.

I believe this type of good relationship between adherents of both faiths can help stop terrorism. Ron Mock presents a definition of terrorism that shows its criminal nature: "Civilians are the intended target… They operate through fear. The victims are a means to an end. Deaths have to be spectacular so that they can grab the headlines and reduce to a minimum the number of places where people can feel safe. Terrorists buy worldwide influence spreading worldwide suffering and maximum impact by striking the most unpredictable places possible…[It] is a lawless violence directed at non-combatants to spread fear as a means to a political end."[5]

Christians, Muslims, people of other faiths, and people of no faith have to come together to reduce the threat of terrorism, because no one knows where terrorists will strike. It is not a threat against Christians alone, but the whole of the human race. Many terrorists want to cover their real motives by appealing to a religious affiliation, but Muslims

and Christians of good will have to unmask terrorist activities even when such activities are in the name of religion. One writer shows that though much terrorist activity in the most recent past has been carried out in the name of Islam, it has hurt more Muslims than Christians: "Muslims are the main victims of jihadist violence."[6]

The coming of Islam into East Africa

Muslims came to Africa to seek asylum. That Islam came into East Africa without armies or conquest is clearly attested in history. There were good trade relations between East Africa and Arabia from the inception of Islam. Much trade activity can be noted by the time of the travels of Ibn Batuta in the 13th century.[7] This resulted in the establishment of coastal towns like Kilwa, Mombasa, and Malindi. It was an African Muslim that guided Vasco da Gama in his travels in search of a sea route to India in 1498.[8] The presence of Islam and the good interpersonal relations between Islam and the traditional African peoples resulted in the establishment of a unique culture in the coast know as the Swahili culture with Kiswahili language as the *lingua franca* for the East African peoples. However, the coming of the Portuguese broke that peaceful co-existence on the coast of Kenya, and neither Islam nor Christianity spread much to the interior of Kenya during this period. Much of the activity of Islam in the interior of Kenya came with the establishment of colonial rule by the British from 1895 onward. Trade and improved means of communication helped to spread Islam in the interior. However, when the language of colonial instruction changed to English from Arabic, this affected the Kenyan coast. As one author explains: "The Muslims were suspicious of the European schools and stayed away from them. This had the impact of excluding the Muslims from government jobs because the state machinery now worked through English… On the other hand, those who attended European schools rose to occupy the new strata of the bureaucratic elite, the government functionaries, judges and teachers. The Arabic schools, lacking state support, fell back on local community support. As poverty spread, the support of these schools also decreased, catching the Muslims of the *Swahel* in a downward socio-economic spiral."[9]

Therefore, when Kenya acquired independence in 1964, the Muslims found themselves disadvantaged against the better educated Christians.[10]

The establishment of Christianity in Kenya

The Portuguese presence in the 14th Century was the beginning of Christian contact on the Kenyan coast although the influence was minimal. The full-scale activity of Western missionaries started at the Kenyan coast in the mid-19th century. The early missionaries translated the Bible into Kiswahili. But there were not many converts on the Kenyan coast. However, with the establishment of British colonialism and good infrastructure, more Africans were able to accept the Christian Gospel. Therefore, at independence the Kenyan landscape was pluralistic, and even within the Kenyan constitution the jurisdiction of Islamic law was recognized in family and inheritance matters and today are presided over by the Kadhi courts.

However, because Western education established under colonial rule gave an advantage to Christians, Christians made up the majority in the government. These were the initial indicators of inequity within the system, but otherwise Christians and Muslims lived in close proximity and shared each other's holidays. The centralized system of government concentrated all the resources at the centre of the nation. The coast and the eastern parts of Kenya, which have a predominantly Muslim population, have been mainly on the fringes of society. This provided a recipe for recruitment into terrorism, with events in the 1990s accelerating the sense of alienation and vulnerability within the Islamic population.

The collapse of the Siad Barre regime in Somalia in 1991 caused a substantial refugee population to move to Kenya. The arbitrariness of the colonial boundaries resulted in the Somali peoples being divided into four countries: Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti. Thus, it is difficult to trace who is a Kenyan Somali and who is from Somalia.

Then, the bombing of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-salaam in 1998 brought about tension between Muslims and Christians in the East and South areas of Nairobi. Coupled with this came agitation for a new constitution in Kenya. The relations between Muslims and Christians were strained because of the demand by Muslims for the expansion of the Kadi courts' jurisdiction in the new Kenyan constitution.

The terrorist activity in the waters of the Indian Ocean prompted the Kenya government to send forces to keep the peace in Somalia in cooperation with the African Union. This was to support the fledgling Somali government and to bring stability in the region. However, this has caused much bad blood and, with the forces in Somalia, terrorist activity has been unleashed on the Kenyan population. In Garissa, various attacks were directed at a church, a market, and a pub. A church in Nairobi was also attacked. The Westgate Mall in September 2013 was the biggest of the targets. There also have been many other attacks in Mombasa. The terrorists have been Kenyan Muslims, but they have not been from the communities that are predominantly Muslim. They carry out such activities without even being suspected of being Muslim. However, reprisals against the Muslim community in Nairobi and Mombasa followed the attacks with political representatives crying foul that the Muslims were being targeted unfairly.

In December 2013, there was an attack on a church in Mombasa, and there was talk of the use of the mosques as the recruitment ground

for terrorist activity. One prominent, controversial, outspoken Muslim was gunned down in April 2014, and this has worsened the relations between Muslims and Christians and the terrorism problem. In June, a moderate Muslim leader, who was working to bridge the gap between Muslims and Christians was killed.

Stassen's just peacemaking initiatives could help us to chart the way forward, reduce the tensions, and seal off the grounds for recruiting more terrorists.

What are the just peacemaking principles? Which ones will work in Kenya?

Just peacemaking theory was developed through the work of Glen Stassen and several other scholars who felt it necessary to go beyond the traditional stances of just war theory and pacifism in the ethics of war. Stassen rooted just peacemaking theory very firmly in the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 5-7. He developed the theory in *Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives for Peace and Justice* and, more recently, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in the Contemporary Context*, co-written with David Gushee.[11] He also edited three editions of another book called *Just Peacemaking,* which featured articles by various just peacemaking scholars.[12]

This theory argues that it is inadequate to argue whether wars are just when all wars fought since World War II have brought about untold damage. The theory also says it is not enough to adopt a pacifist policy, because pacifism does not prevent war. So just peacemaking theory notes:

… in the debate another question is frequently overlooked; what essential steps should be taken to make peace? Have they been taken, or should they yet be taken? The just peacemaking paradigm fills out the original intention of the other two paradigms. It encourages pacifists to fulfill their name (derived from Latin *pacim facere*) which means "peacemakers." It calls just war theorists to fill in their undeveloped principles of last resort and just intention- to spell out what resorts should be tried before trying the last resort of war, and what intention there is to restore a just and enduring peace. It asks both to act on their intended intentions.[13]

Just peacemaking was endorsed by over 30 Christian scholars who worked to summarize the theory as 10 practices. More recently, scholars noted that it was not enough to work simply within the Christian tradition, because the practices "can be adopted by persons of many faiths and or no official faith,"[14] so they incorporated the other Abrahamic faiths namely, Islam and Judaism. This group has been working since 2003, and they have endorsed the 10 practices and written the book, *Interfaith Just Peacemaking: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Perspectives on the New Paradigm of Peace and War.*[15] They answered the call from the original Just Peacemaking group which said: "We appeal to all people of good will to adopt these practices and work for them . . . Each person can base these practices on his or her own faith. A Muslim or Buddhist or simply a social scientist or human being whose experience has led her or him to care about making peace, not war, can say, 'Yes, this is happening in ways that I had not fully realized, and it is a making a huge difference for good, and I want to support it.' We hope many, from diverse perspectives, will make these peacemaking practices their own."[16]

The result was a statement of affirmation from scholars of the three faiths saying: "we believe that just peacemaking is the best option to resolve conflicts and actively work towards the elimination of the conditions that lead to violence. . . We all agree to mine our own religious traditions to further develop the just peacemaking practices."[17]

This initial statement bore fruit and developed into *Interfaith Just Peacemaking*, edited by Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite. The book is ground breaking in its affirmation:

"We had been so used to reading the scriptures to ask whether some of them supported war making and some opposed war making that we had not paid enough attention to the main theme: the love of God and neighbor. We had not attended to the importance of practicing peacemaking. Once we focused on the specific teachings of practices of peacemaking in our scriptures, we discovered remarkable similarity."[18]

The book is also remarkable in the process the authors adopted in addressing the issues:

"So we began by acknowledging our own responsibility for some of the hostilities and killings that have happened. This made us each more honest. But more, it made us each less defensive and more open. Muslims and Jews did not have to say, 'You Christians have used the New Testament to justify killing us.' The Christians had already said that. Christians did not have to accuse the others of justifying persecutions or attacks based on their holiest texts--Muslims and Jews had already said that. So we experienced a remarkably non-defensive spirit as we worked together."[19]

Since it is impossible to focus on all 10 of the practices in such a short paper, I would like to explore three of the practices in a Kenyan context. I chose namely the practices of cooperative conflict resolution, fostering just and sustainable economic development, and grassroots and peacemaking groups. All of these practices build on one another, but focusing on them individually will show that they are workable in Kenya.

Use Cooperative Conflict Resolution

First, Kenyans have successfully used the just peacemaking practice of cooperative conflict resolution in working out differences. For example, the work toward the 2010 constitution in Kenya was a joint effort by all the religious groups in Kenya: Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and African traditional religion.

These efforts were known as the Ufungamano initiative. Though demands for the extension of the

Kadhi courts in the constitution created some tension, it was a good effort showing that Christians and Muslims—indeed, all the religious organizations—spearheaded the work of the new Constitution. Eventually, the contentious issue of the Kadhi courts was left as it had been in the earlier 1963 constitution.

With the terrorism that has escalated on the coast, there is still much that can be done by Muslims and Christians working together to reduce insecurity. Most recently, the Christian and Muslim leaders joined together to condemn the attacks that had been targeting Christian worship. Also, the Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics, which brings together all the faith groups and fosters inter-religious training, is well poised to spearhead the work of inter-religious dialogue on the coast. They need to condemn terrorism more strongly and to show that it does not bring any benefit to Christians or Muslims. The losses are shared by all in the communities. There is also need for Christians to take action and acknowledge the legitimate interests of the Muslims, so that they are not targeted wholesale.

Foster just economic sustainability

Additionally, the just peacemaking practice of fostering just economic sustainability is important in a Kenyan context. As mentioned earlier, the coast has suffered great economic marginalization, especially among the indigenous populations. Many of the coastal lands are occupied by tourist hotels, multinational companies, and the political elite. The indigenous people do not have any land title deeds. This creates a sense of injustice and caused the eruption of the post-election violence of 2007/2008. Due to this feeling of alienation, the coastal part of Kenya has always wanted to secede using this slogan "*Pwani si Kenya*" (the coast is not Kenya). There is abject poverty and disparity between the luxurious, opulent palaces of the coast and the local population. The consequence of this economic disparity is that many young women and men are pushed into prostitution, abuse drugs and alcohol, or are recruited into terrorism.

This situation calls for sustainable development as identified by the proponents of just peacemaking which states: "Severe privation and want require our response. A world in which many are trapped in dire poverty while others have abundance or in which nature is destroyed unnecessarily crushes the spirit and offends justice."[20]

Recently, some young people sadly have accused their parents of witchcraft, threatened their lives, and drove them into "shelters of refuge," so that the young people can take over their parents' land.[21] This is very sad especially knowing the high regard in Christianity, Islam, and traditional religion for the elderly. It shows that sometimes people will not stop at anything when they are desperate.

The injustices of the coast are partly redressed by the new Kenya Constitution (2010) that gives the coast six county governments. The present government has also done some initial good in seeing that title deeds have been given to many people on the coast. However, in the most recent attacks in Lamu, certain communities were targeted showing that there are still animosities. This means that Christians and Muslims can work together for the economic sustainability of the county. This is a rich district with great potential with its rich coastlands and beautiful beaches. The *kaya* forests[22] have been recognized as UNESCO World Heritage sites through their preservation by the African traditional elders. This shows that the coast has great potential for sustainable and just development.

Christians and Muslims are working together to meet the social and economic needs of the coastal people. An example is the Catholic Church reaching out to the community through the provision of scholarships to orphans so that they can go to school.[23] They also provide support to those who have been affected and infected by HIV/AIDS. The children are not just given school fees to go to school, but they are also encouraged to keep their grades very high. Those who have done very well in the past are asked to mentor children within the community so that they can give back what they have learned. In the economic development projects, the members of the community are allowed to participate so that they do not just act as receivers, but they claim the project as their own and become participants in their development.[24]

Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations

Just peacemaking theory also argues that ordinary people must be empowered. "The norms of a just peacemaking theory should not assume that the only or primary agents of action are heads of state or the leaders of revolutionary groups vying for power."[25] Grassroots groups "sustain, criticize, goad, influence, reform and wherever possible… contribute to transcending the contradiction and managing and overcoming the conflicts of an anarchic international society."[26] The internet provides a powerful tool to respond to issues, but it cannot replace personal contact. The profit of a citizen's movement is that they are committed to a long term process rather than quick fixes such as those of the government in a single conflict.[27]

One Kenyan group that is poised to work in this area of Christian-Muslim relations is the Program for Christian Muslim Relations (PROCMURA) which brings together Muslims and Christians to work on important issues. It was started in 1959 and so has a reputation of longevity, though Africans did not head the organization until 1989. Based at St. Paul's University, it provides opportunity for scholars and lay people to hone their skills in Muslim-Christian relations. This organization is well placed to help prevent terrorism in Kenya with its commitment to grassroots peacemaking efforts for Kenyans.

There is also the Council for Imams and Preachers of Kenya which is well

placed to organize grass roots participation "…in nurturing a spirituality that sustains courage when just peacemaking is unpopular, hope and despair or cynicism is tempting, and a sense of grace and the possibility of forgiveness when just peacemaking fails."[28]

Other grassroots organizations exist such as the Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance which aims to "empower young Muslims through constructive engagement and encourage participation in nurturing democratic, healthy and peaceful and a just society for all."[29] Friday prayers have been places of encouragement and resistance to authoritarian powers in the Arab revolution. These same prayers can be a place of commitment against terrorist activity that does no good for any member of the human community. Just as such occasions have sometimes been co-opted for evil purposes, they also can be transformed for good ends—to build and not to destroy the community. Indeed, joint interfaith prayers can be organized by the religious community in order to fight against the evils that face the community.

I would also like to suggest that women play an active role in grassroots efforts for peace, especially between Christians and Muslims on the coast. Those who suffer most during reprisals are women and children. And since mothers are entrusted with raising children, they play a great role in nurturing peaceful values in children. A joint grassroots movement of Christian and Muslim women to protest the insecurity caused by terrorism would be a powerful statement for peace. This follows the example of the Wajir Women's Movement led by Dheka Ibrahim that brought peace between warring communities in North Eastern Kenya between 1997-1998.

Conclusion

This paper argues that following Jesus in the Kenyan context means that we take the teaching of just peacemaking seriously in our Christian walk. It means we work to gain the hearts and minds of those who would be inclined to join terrorist activities because of poverty and desperation. It also means that we work for cooperative conflict resolution, foster just and sustainable economic development, and encourage grassroots movements for peace. The people of Kenya have lived in relative peace in the past. Now, our call is to recognize that the criminal activity of terrorism does harm to all communities and to work together as Muslims and Christians to defeat this threat in Kenya. ■

Out of the Antagonistic Destiny -- A Peacemaking Initiative in China's Employment Class Struggles A Comparison of Kuyper, Leo XIII and Stassen

By Agnes Chiu

Introduction

My teacher, the late Glen H. Stassen, was passionate about the 10 practices of just peacemaking. Stassen's just peacemaking initiatives are applicable to my comparison of Abraham Kuyper and Pope Leo XIII on the topic of employment class struggle within the context of China's employment relations. Such a comparison of Kuyper, Leo XIII, and Stassen in the area of employment relations would initially seem unlikely. After all, what do Kuyper, a Neo-Calvinist politician, Leo XIII, a Catholic Pope, and Stassen, a Baptist theologian, have in common, even without the fact of their living in different time frames? And what does the 19th century European society in which Kuyper and Leo lived have in common with 21st century China? The common theme that unites these three theologians is their passion in engaging their theology within the context of contemporary social issues. Each refused to limit his theology only to academia, but sought to make his theological discourse relevant to current social contexts and to apply that theology in response to the social injustices of his times. Both 19th century Europe and 21st century China have experienced a robust economic growth preceding a widening gap between the rich and the poor. The economic disparity and the natural antagonistic nature of the employment relationship form a similarity between the two different continents of two different time frames.

In this paper, I will first define conflicts in an employment context. Then, I will compare and contrast the theological discourses of these three theologians, from the cause of employment problems to the solutions they propose. Kuyper's propositions were delineated in his address to the First Christian Social Congress in 1891 and later compiled into a book by the name of *Class Struggle*, which was later translated under a different title, *The Problem of Poverty.*[1] After discussing this work, I will then turn to the famous *Rerum Novarum,*[2] authored by Pope Leo XIII in 1891 in his discussion on the plight of workers in response to the rise of socialism and industrialization. The materials from Stassen's just peacemaking initiatives are from the book he edited and partially wrote, *Just Peacemaking, the New Paradigm for the Ethics of Peace and War*, as well as *Kingdom Ethics*, and a paper he wrote for the Society of Biblical Literature.[3] I will discuss the cultural differences or similarities in China. Finally, I will propose a Christian paradigm synthesizing the propositions of Kuyper, Leo XIII and Stassen in the resolution of conflicts and class struggles in the employment context in China.

Why Do Employment Conflicts Matter?

We live in a world of relationships. Work takes up most of the time in our lives. The employment relationship naturally has the characteristic of a class-stratification: employers and employees. Often, we consider employers belonging to the powerful and privileged class, ready and able to determine the welfare of their subordinates – their workers. In contrast, employees naturally belong to the weaker class. They usually lack the financial power or the influence to determine their own well-being and are at the mercy of their employers. Throughout the ages, these two classes have been in conflict and strife.

In 19th century Europe, the Industrial Revolution brought growth in industries, allowing wealth accumulation within a privileged employer group and the emergence of a class of urban workers who were once tied to the land in farming. Employment abuses and social injustice in 19th century Europe were common. Both Kuyper, a pastor who turned politician, and Pope Leo XIII, a leader of the Catholic Church, responded to the people's cry of social injustice, particularly related to the problem of poverty and labor relations. In the 20th and 21st centuries, Stassen was a theologian who promoted the concept of peacemaking. In a world of growing political tensions, Stassen was passionate about dialoging with different religions and proposing conflict resolution.

In 2011, Stassen formed the Just Peacemaking Initiative at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.[4] He tirelessly engaged in theological dialogue on the topic. The context of his peacemaking discussion was, of course, in but not limited to, politics. His transformative peacemaking initiatives are also relevant in the dialogue in conflict resolution. In the globalized economy of the 21st century, economic injustice and the tension between employers and employees are ever-increasing. China, as the world factory and the second largest economy in the world, has experienced her share of employment conflicts in last century and continues to go through struggles at the turn of the 21st century. Stassen's effort in finding a way to address the political conflicts is similar to that of Kuyper and Leo in addressing the economic disparity and labor conflicts in 19th century Europe. Searching for a solution to resolve and properly handle conflicts in the context of employment relations is crucial, not

just in 19th century Europe, but also in today's China.

Conflicts or Harmony?

As mentioned, employers and employees traditionally are considered to be antagonistic towards each other and the employment relationship is a form of class struggle. Too often, the handling of employment conflicts is grounded in antagonistic ideology, with both sides fighting, each grabbing the most from the employment struggle. While the class of employers usually is seen to have much more power than the weaker class of employees, the traditional or the socialistic paradigm was to take from one class and give it to the other class, to ensure an equal distribution of material goods. As a result, the nature of the relations remains antagonistic, leading to the natural outcome of resentment. How can we form a paradigm to address this imbalance of power and inevitable resentment? In the search for social justice in this context, what should a Christian's response be?

In his address to the First Christian Social Congress in 1891, Kuyper, a pioneer in Neo-Calvinism, phrased this class struggle as a struggle over poverty and posed a challenge to the Christians of his time. This challenge was later phrased as his famous "Social Question," where he asked, "*What should we, as confessors of Christ, do about the social needs of our time?*"[5]

Earlier in the same year, Pope Leo XIII ("Leo") published a paper titled *Rerum Novarum,* acknowledging the rising problem of poverty and specifically speaking in the context of labor and employment. Leo rejected outright the idea that the two classes of employer and employee should be in conflict. Leo wrote,

"It is a mistaken belief that wealthy and working class will be in conflict. Like different parts of the body, the two classes should dwell in harmony and agreement, so as bring balance to the body."[6]

Leo acknowledged the existence of differences but insisted on the possible harmony between the two groups. For Leo, this was a crucial initial step in addressing the problem of class struggles.

Stassen was very clear in his peacemaking initiatives to include one's enemies in the community of neighbors. Stassen cited the biblical narrative in Leviticus 19:17-18 that God is sovereign over everyone including the evil ones. In answering the question "who is my neighbor?" Stassen challenged his readers to include one's enemies in the community of neighbors. God is sovereign over relations between diverse adversaries. Stassen forcefully advocated for cooperation among adversaries to bring forth peace. Domination would only bring isolation and antagonism.[7]

Conflict Is Not Just Over Material Goods

In the late 19th century, in the wake of the Industrial Revolution and the ever-increasing gap in wealth in the Netherlands and the European continent, employment conflicts indeed revolved around the issue of wealth and poverty.[8] However, both Kuyper and Leo quickly rejected the limitation of class struggles to only wealth. Citing Jesus' example in bringing the two classes together, Kuyper pointed out that Jesus does not reject material possessions. Rather, Jesus was angry when the possession of money led to usury and harshness.[9] Leo took the concept of material possessions even further. It is not only biblical to own possessions, it is a right to own them and the state must safeguard private property ownership rights and take measures to restrain firebrands or any groups that intend to hurt others' material goods.[10] Material possessions have a deeper theological significance. Kuyper referred to the conscious beings within us. Earning one's fair wage through work and accumulating one's hard-earned possessions give each human being value and are consistent with God's command.[11] Leo gave a theological analysis of the biblical foundation of private ownership in Genesis 3 and one's fulfillment of God's mandate to be the head of his household in caring for one's family.[12] Stassen likewise affirmed this understanding in his book *Kingdom Ethics*.[13] Stassen's peacemaking initiatives also concern the fostering of economic power and speak against the hoarding of wealth.[14] Fostering a just and sustainable economic development is an integral part of the peacemaking initiatives. Sustainable development is crucial for making and maintaining a just peace.[15]

Peace is a state of reconciliation. The employment relationship is one of these relationships which require reconciliation. In dealing with our wealth, we are also to engage in peacemaking practices in our daily relations with our work superiors or subordinates. If we are to apply the peacemaking initiatives in the employment context, peacemaking would first demand us to respect others' rights in the ownership of material possessions. In addition, Stassen approached this by advocating the reduction of threats. The reduction involves a long process of negotiation and diplomacy, a decrease in distrust, having verifiable actions, and timely implementation. Applying these initiatives to an employment context, the foremost concerns of workers are wage compensation and work safety. By guaranteeing a basic living wage and safe working conditions, the threat is reduced. Once the threat is reduced, the conflicts will be reduced. Dialogue can begin.[16]

Acknowledging God as the Foundation:

Kuyper and Leo both attributed the cause of such employment conflicts to the exclusion of God from people's lives. In the wake of the French Revolution and the rise of humanism and individualism, social problems had their root cause in people's rejecting God, leading to the moral degeneracy identified by Leo.[17] God did not matter in people's lives. While Kuyper phrased the change as one in the relationship between the human life and one's surrounding world, Leo put it in the context of relationships between masters and workers. Importantly, without the correct understanding of wealth and stewardship, wealthy employers would mistake material

possessions as their private rightful rewards. This incorrect understanding would lead to the conclusion that there is no social obligation owed to God or to their employees. As a result, employers were prone to engage in abusive practices without concern for their workers' well-being

Kuyper and Leo both rejected the answer proposed by the rise of socialism and communism. Pointedly, Leo affirmed the theological grounding for private ownership as a fulfillment of God's design and the law of nature. Importantly, this ownership becomes the motive for workers to work, to earn possessions as a result of their labor. On the contrary, communism, by transferring wealth from individuals to the state, deprives such motivation, leaving workers without hope and the possibility of increasing their own wealth.[18] Stassen recommended all to "acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice; seek repentance and forgiveness."[19] The repentance is not just materialistic, but has a religious dimension. Stassen based his peacemaking initiatives on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Using the command not to take revenge, the initiative to transform and change the nature of the relationship means making peace, changing the nature of how we perceive others, thus altering the nature of relationship.[20] Additionally, Stassen also focused on the theology of grace and the reign of God in which God takes the initiative for reconciliation and does not merely wait passively.[21]

To apply their discussion in search of a solution for employment conflicts, Kuyper and Leo both affirmed the role of Christians and the church as mediators. Kuyper argued for the affirmative duty of Christians to abolish this class difference. The solution first begins with acts of charity and compassion for the poor.[22] According to Kuyper, in addition to teaching the world about God, the church is mandated by Jesus to influence the world, including organizing to abolish hunger and class difference.[23] Similarly, Leo affirmed the role of religion in the resolution of this class struggle. Religion is the most powerful intermediary to bring the two classes together, by reminding each side of their duties to the other, especially the obligation of justice.[24] For Stassen, church and Christians play a vital role in bringing forth just peacemaking. One of the objectives clearly delineated in just peacemaking is to build up church leaders to make a concrete, transformative impact through emerging networks and partnerships. It is not surprising that Stassen would first turn to the religious community. As peacemaking begins with the forgiveness mentioned above, the church community would be the first community to exemplify this mutual forgiveness as they have first experienced forgiveness from God.[25]

Restoration of the Image of God

To overcome class struggles, the abolition of class differences is foremost. In order to eliminate the added-on identities of economics and class, finding the common core value is the most effective practice. The most fundamental and common quality of all human beings is that we are all creations of God made in God's image. Kuyper argued that as workers are made in the image of God, such identity affirms one's dignity and the worth associated with work. Therefore, even as employees, people have value. This recognition allows workers to assert their right to live as people bearing God's image. Therefore, someone's work must allow the person to fulfill his or her calling to live and to serve God.[26] No one can deprive someone else of the right to live. Employers must therefore respect this image of God and the right of workers. Leo, on the other hand, used the image of the God concept to help people recognize that they are all the same, without class differences. Instead of classes, Leo again pointed to the harmony idea.[27] Both forcefully argue for fair wages and the reasonable treatment of workers, grounding these ideas on the image of God concept.

Stassen also sought to find a common language to speak to the non-religious world. He used the language of human rights. This human rights principle is in fact grounded in the religious concept of image of God as well. Stassen agreed with Christopher Marshall that human rights categories have become the universal currency of moral debates. Human rights are grounded in the belief that human beings have innate rights simply from the status of being human, and this human status comes from the status of being created by God in God's image.[28]

Concrete Proposal of the Right to Organize

None of the three theologians stopped at the ideological argument of restoring religion and affirming God's value in people. All championed the right of workers to organize. Leo led the Catholic Church to recognize the need for workers to have their own voice independent of employers' influence. Kuyper similarly agreed that the right to associate is a way to end the abuses for good.[29] Although Kuyper affirmed the duty of the government in passing legislation to protect the interests of the weak, he did not believe the solution to the poverty problem rested solely in government legislation.[30] Kuyper cautioned that workers should be given a sphere of influence, which is outside state interference.[31] Remarkably, and against the idea of socialism, Kuyper believed that monetary help should be kept at a minimum; otherwise, it would destroy the natural resilience that God has created in humans.

Stassen, who lived over 100 years after Kuyper and Leo, also agreed. The right to organize is well accepted as a right of workers. This initiative continues. Stassen's just peacemaking initiatives contain a detailed discussion of strategies to help foster economic justice, including supporting agencies and networks for the protection of workers' rights. First, just peacemaking encourages grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations. Using the biblical passage about how Jesus organized his disciples to engage the world in Matthew 5:1-2 and 7:28-29, Stassen affirmed the value of people's movements to engage in peacemaking.

These associations have the function to press governments for protection in addition to an educational function.[32]

Additionally, Stassen proposed to use cooperative conflict resolution as the key practice to resolve conflicts. It is a bit unclear if Stassen would envision a cooperative comprised of conflicting parties. Three out of the 10 practices are to form voluntary associations on one hand and, on the other hand, to work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system and to strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights. These practices affirm the roles and functions of these international bodies that are comprised of adversaries. Therefore, it is very plausible that Stassen would approve such cooperatives. However, it is clear that to be effective, the organizations must be able to voice the position and valid interests of each side.[33] In that, Stassen, Kuyper and Leo are consistent. There must be an effective voice for each group. For Kuyper and Leo, labor unions free from the interference of employers would be the means. However, I believe that Stassen would not be confined to any set model.

China: Apparent Differences or Similarities in the Core?

China has emerged from being a backward developing country in the 1970s to becoming the second largest economic system in the world in the 2000s. Her abounding economic growth rests in the abundance of her cheap labor that met the needs of the world at the time, earning her the title "world factory." The massive supply of migrant workers from the countryside to coastal city factories enabled China to experience an economic growth beyond the world's imagination. With the massive increase of urban workers and the number of foreign investors and homegrown factory owners, the level of employment conflicts also rose tremendously. The astounding number of industrial accidents in coal mines and the high suicide incidents in Foxcon, a Taiwanese owned factory exclusively manufacturing for Apple, are just examples of this conflict and injustice, but not a total reflection of the full extent of the problem.

In *Moral Dilemma and Procedural Justice*, Gang Cao, an associate professor of philosophy in Beijing's People University, readily admits that the development of entrepreneurship ethics or business ethics in China is lacking.[34] There is insufficient in-depth discussion concerning the work ethics issue in China. In his article titled, "*Enterprises Ethic Construction in China and Foreign Countries and Analysis,*" Jian Fang Wang, associate professor of philosophy in Beijing's People's University, acknowledges how China relatively lags behind many countries in the development of business ethics.[35] Scholars agree that China needs a viable employment or business ethics for her society. However, Wang cautions against an arbitrary application of Western methodology in the study of ethics in China. Wang states that any ethical study must be done from the perspective of China.

In that, Wang argues that there are major differences in the Western concept of ethics and that of China. Specifically, the Western thinking focuses on individual rights while China, being a Communist country, has always been focused on the corporate and communal goods and the pursuit of harmony. Wang also points to the Confucius teaching that focuses on submission rather than the demands of individual rights. The West focuses on systems and procedures. China is still very people-oriented. Due to the long-term, communal practices in China, Wang argues that it is difficult to foster the type of individualism that forms the bedrock of Western-type ethics. [36]

This analysis points to some apparent cultural differences that indeed require attention. For example, China is very much dependent on personal relationships, rather than on a well-established system. Wang is also correct to point to the lack of a complete legal system to provide the support for such ethics. Even when there is the legislature and legal system, the implementation of laws remains difficult. The vast territory allows disregard for the laws and the heavy reliance on people's connections prevents their implementation.

Yet, there are striking similarities beneath the differences. First, with the opening up of a market economy in the 1980s, China went through many changes. Traditional state-owned enterprises collapsed in the 1990s. It is questionable how much of the traditional Communist ideology still remains, particularly in the business world. Behind the economic growth is the individualistic ambition to gather wealth, not the desire for corporate communal goods. Therefore, China might be more individualistic than Wang indicates.

Each corporate entity is a legal person. Inside these corporate persons are the people who work there. Employers and individual workers make up the corporate culture. Confucius teaching is not just about the submission by the subordinates, but also the responsibility of the rulers to the people. This is a heavenly mandate. When rulers do not fulfill their duties, people have the right to rebel. Therefore, the submission is not absolute. There is a mutual responsibility between the rulers and the people. This understanding actually paves a way to embrace the paradigm proposed by Kuyper, Leo and Stassen. The mutual rights and obligations in this cultural context are the same as those discussed by the three theologians. Harmony is, in fact, a balancing of this distribution of rights and obligations, a reconciliation process, a peacemaking initiative. In short, there are similarities in the core cultural values of China that resemble the theological discourse among Kuyper, Leo, and Stassen.

A Christian Paradigm to End the Conflicting Destiny

To bridge the class struggle gap, these three theologians proposed similar paradigms, although phrased in different terms. First, there must be the recognition of God and the re-established connection between humans and God. This recognition of God's sovereignty allows people to have a correct vision of their obligations and need to respect others' God-given rights. In China,

where the country's political system does not share our faith, church and Christians bear the responsibility to exemplify such recognition. We also need to find a language that speaks to the Chinese political system, whether it is the language of human rights or economic injustice. When corporate entities recognize the individual value in their workers, there can be mutual respect and exploitation can be decreased.

Second, the employment relationship does not need to be adversarial. Once we recognize that all are created in God's image and all are equal while performing different functions in the work environment, we can strive to be harmonious. Many have already discussed how having an ethical culture is good for businesses in the long run. There would be more employee loyalty, building a better company reputation, and this eventually will bring in monetary benefits.

Third, the discussion should not ideologically assume that people will suddenly reconcile. True transformation involves the long process of negotiation and education that Stassen envisioned. To foster negotiation, there should be the right to form associations to effectively advocate each side's position and interests. Stating differences in opinions is not necessarily a sign of conflict. Making the other side understand the opposing side's position is necessary to bring forth reconciliation.

Finally, there should be ways or regulations to reduce the perceived threats as Stassen eloquently stated. This includes having a separate sphere of the state to protect workers as Kuyper argued or having a civil society to protect the common good as Leo stated. These measures are necessary to make room for future dialogue and discussion. Although still at the starting line with such practices, China is on the way to establishing a system of business ethics that meets her needs.

Acknowledgment of Difference

Stassen did not apply his just peacemaking theory in an employment context. Therefore, many of the nuances of employment relations are left for the imaginative application of Stassen's principles. There are also other just peacemaking practices, such as the reduction of weapons, that are not applicable in this discussion. However, this comparison shows the relevance of Stassen's initiatives in different contexts. Stassen's 10 practices of just peacemaking are relevant in the resolution of different types of conflicts.

Conclusion

Employment class struggles in China are an important topic in the search for social and economic justice. Abraham Kuyper, Pope Leo XIII and Glen Stassen were all theologians who applied their theologies in addressing the social ills of their times. A comparison of their respective theological concepts and suggested paradigms affirms similar principles. The acknowledgement of God's sovereignty, recognition of one's rights, values, and duties before God and toward each other, a belief in the possibility of a harmonious outcome of the struggle, and finally the right to associate are fundamental in fostering a paradigm to end this class struggle. These principles shed light in how to address China's existing and growing crisis in employment relations. ■

The Transforming Initiatives of the Sermon on the Mount

Traditionally, the Sermon on the Mount was interpreted as twofold antitheses, which resulted in understanding the Sermon on the Mount as "hard teachings." Stassen interpreted the Sermon on the Mount as "threefold transforming initatives," saying that "the emphasis in interpretation is to be placed not on an alleged idealistic prohibition but on the realistic way of deliverance through the transforming initiatives."[1]

Example of dyadic structures:
Traditional Righteousness: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery" (Matthew. 5:27 NIV).
Jesus' Teaching: "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell." (Matthew. 5:28-30 NIV).

The result of this structure makes it seem like Jesus prohibits even a passing thought that someone is attractive.

Example of Stassen's three-fold transforming initiatives:
Traditional Righteousness: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'" (Matthew. 5:27 NIV).
Vicious Cycle: "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew. 5:28 NIV).
Transforming Initiative: "If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell" (Matthew. 5:29-30 NIV).

The resulting emphasis is on taking actions to avoid the vicious cycle. In this case, it means stopping an intentional behavior pattern that leads to the vicious cycle of sexual sin. Stassen says this moves the emphasis from attitude to action.[2] ■

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Banner Elk, NC 28604

Office: (828) 387-2267
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