

PEACE EDUCATION: A NECESSITY FOR SURVIVAL

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I am involved in peace education because I have become convinced of the need for educating other people for peace and have taken advantage of an opportunity to share out of my love and deep concern for people and our world.

Since this whole subject of Peace Education cannot be neatly and completely separated into isolated compartments, I may step into the territory of other speakers. I trust they will forgive me when this happens.

"Peace Education" as a field of educational endeavor has gained popularity in recent years, as evidenced by the fact there are now over 10,000 colleges and universities in the U. S. offering such courses, whereas only a few years ago, in 1972, there were estimated to be perhaps 150 or so.

But "Peace" as a concept has been part of our common heritage from time immemorial. Each of the worlds great religions lifts before its' adherents the ideal of a peaceful kingdom which encompasses the whole world.

As I look back through history I can see the concept of peace, the elements that make up peace, has grown from a rather narrow, negative attitude to a much broader, positive understanding that we find today. Let me sketch very briefly the ideas concerning peace that have come down through the Jewish-Christian faith, with which I am most familiar.

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Moses, the early Hebrew leader, gave his people a set of laws, known as the Ten Commandments. These included a strict admonition against killing ("Thou shalt not Kill"), against desiring what belongs to someone else ("Thou shalt not steal"), and a command to love other people was added ("Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"). Many Biblical scholars believe this law was established around 1200 or 1300 B. C.

The prophet Isaiah, about 750 B. C. wrote of the day when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any-more".

In New Testament times Jesus condensed and strengthened all those writings which we call the Old Testament. He taught "it says you should not kill but I say to you it is wrong even to hold ill feelings about others". Then he gave his message a positive dimension by saying we should love our neighbors and also love our enemies and pray for them.

Jesus also appealed to nonviolence when he said "when someone strikes you on the right cheek turn the other to him also". And he added "when someone requires you to go one mile, go with him two miles". This last command lifts the slave (Roman subject) out of his subjection (inferiority) to the master (Roman) and makes them equal. The subject person serves of his own free will—he has now become a free man, indeed he even puts the other person in his own service (obligation to return the favor). Our common understanding of (attitude toward) the "second mile", (do more than is required or expected) does not quite express the deeper meaning inherent in Jesus' words.

The injunction against killing and the countercommand to love even our enemies was apparently well understood and practised by the Christian Church in its' first three hundred years of existence (approximately

A. D. 30 to A. D. 330). We see their opposition to killing in these actions: 1) Christians did not join the (Roman) army, 2) if a member of the (Roman) army became a Christian, he either left the army or 3) stayed in the army only as long as his duty was that of a Policeman, but refused to take part in any military campaign where he might be called upon to kill someone, or else he resigned.

Unfortunately this attitude seemed to have changed abruptly after the Emperor Constantine made the Christian Church the official religion of the Roman Empire in 323 A. D. By the fifth century *only* Christians could serve in the army. Even after years of terribly bloody wars and campaigns the pacifism of the early church remained strong enough to give rise to the idea of the Just War, clarified by Augustine around the year 354. This theory held that wars could be fought only for the right reasons, for the right ends and with a minimum of killing. If any violations of those basic rules occurred the war had to end.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, with the division of the Christian Church into Protestants and Catholics, some small pacifist sects formed within the Protestant group, the Mennonites in Holland and the Quakers in England. The Brethren Church was begun in Switzerland in the 18th century. These three 'peace churches', though not being very large, still carry on an active peace witness in the U. S. and around the world.

Let me mention one 'peace society' of the many that formed after WWI to carry on various activities in opposition to war.

One story holds that at the beginning of WWI the Fellowship Of Reconciliation was organized by two Christian ministers, one English, and one German. Just before the outbreak of war separated their two countries, they vowed that they would not let the war break their friendship and common love of their fellow human beings, even those who might be

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considered enemies. Another story says that it was started by Richard Roberts, a Presbyterian minister and Henry Hodgkin, a Quaker, both Englishmen. Whichever story is true, this group spread quickly to the U. S. and to Europe. Today there are many national affiliates, including one in Japan, the Yuwakai. There is also an International Fellowship Of Reconciliation, headquartered in Holland.

This group has continued its' opposition to war, has printed and distributed anti-war and peace-oriented literature. It has organized meetings and provided lecturers who have traveled throughout the U. S. and other countries. In recent years, from the time of the civil rights movement in the U. S. they, as well as other groups, have provided training in the techniques of nonviolent action.

I would also like to mention briefly three of the many individuals who have played a great role in the peace movement and who were also peace educators.

Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian writer, influenced, and still continues to influence, many people through the Christian pacifism expressed in his writings.

Gandhi, the great Indian leader, used nonviolence and civil disobedience in his campaigns to gain India's freedom from British control, from 1915 to 1946. This caused much excitement in 'peace' circles, but many people failed to recognize the great significance of what he was doing. He was adapting the pacifist elements of his own Hindu faith and of Christianity, and applying them to the conditions in India. Unfortunately, for India and the world, Gandhi was assassinated at the height of his power. Martin Luther King, Jr., in recent years, discovered the writings of Gandhi, Thoreau and Tolstoy while he was preparing himself to help the Blacks in the U. S. overcome the harsh conditions under which they were forced to

live, even though they had been granted freedom following the Civil War.

Basing his preaching, teaching and actions on Christian pacifism and Gandhian nonviolent techniques he was able to lead the U. S. in making great strides toward freedom for not only the black people, but for all people in the U. S. As Gandhi had said, "the victory is not over another person or race, but over injustice, and it is a victory in which everyone wins." Unfortunately for his people and the world, once again a great leader was assassinated before he could lead all Americans on to ever greater successes.

Though many of the early peace movements and peace societies had begun in opposition to war, both Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. had gone well beyond this narrow view of what was needed to bring peace to our world. They correctly saw that peace was much more than the absence of war. It was also the absence of injustice.

Though there were peace-related courses being taught at many colleges, particularly those related to the three peace churches, beginning with Manchester College in 1948, the outrage against U. S. involvement in the Vietnam war brought a great increase in interest in such studies. Out of this intense anti-war activity, which involved not only students and teachers but many others outside the educational system, came the great impetus toward the establishment of peace education programs on university campuses.

Between 1968 and 1973 an explosion in growth took place. I was not aware of the extent of its' spread until I bought the Peace Studies Guide for 1973. This guide listed 30 colleges out of the more than 400 course outlines, syllabi and bibliographies received from colleges where courses were being offered, many leading to undergraduate degrees in conflict resolution or peace studies, and some even offering graduate degrees.

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The latest guide, published in 1983, is limited to 116 course outlines and 31 case studies out of more than 12,000 responses. You can begin to understand the extent of the continuing explosion. Courses with similar content are now being taught in high schools, too.

Other 'peace' groups have formed in opposition to the wastefulness and danger of nuclear weapons research and production, even against specific weapons, especially nuclear weapons like the MX missile and Triton submarine. Still others have centered their activities on social and economic problems, such as food production, poverty and famine, and unemployment. All of these groups publicize themselves through sale of literature, news releases, films etc., and so are engaged in educating people for peace.

But our discussions here are centered on education of a different sort, that of education in the classroom.

Though peace education, carried out by religious groups and other groups organized around specific projects or goals, has been in existence for many years, this explosion of classroom-oriented peace education is a new phenomenon. Though this explosion has occurred after the Vietnam War, and perhaps gained impetus from opposition to that war, I feel there are other reasons for its' strength. It may be in answer to some sudden awareness of a particular danger (like the threat of a nuclear war). Certainly there is no dirth of dire predictions : 1) runaway population growth signals widespread starvation because the earth cannot produce enough food 2) nuclear weapons threaten total destruction of the human race 3) destruction of the ozone layer will cause increasing incidence of skin cancers and related deaths 4) misuse of land and water resources contributes to the spreading desertification 5) destruction of tropical rain forests may result in too little oxygen to support life 6) in our abuse of the

earth's resources we are threatening the existence of many plants and animals 7) modern agriculture destroys our soil base and pollutes both the soil and water resources and brings about their rapid depletion 8) nuclear waste threatens us all.

Perhaps it has come as a backlash against the great surge of overt violence of the wars and violent revolutions taking place around our world that we can so easily see on our TV screens.

Perhaps this has come at the confluence of two rivers of thought, 1) an understanding of institutional violence as the underlying cause of much of the overt violence taking place, 2) and a feeling that the problems of our world, which until recently seemed unsolvable, are in fact open to solution if enough people put their energies into working toward that solution. Or it may be because of an urgency stemming from a widespread feeling that something must be done before it is too late to save our planet.

All of these threats, and more, whether real or only imagined, have caused great concern in the minds of many people, and fed the sense of urgency I mentioned. If any one of them, or any combination of them, were really to occur, the existence of the world as we know it really is threatened. We would no longer have a world in which peace could prevail, for any survivors would be faced with unimaginable difficulties.

When we attempt to talk about peace education, or education for peace we are immediately confronted with the problem of defining "peace" so that we, and our students know what we are talking about.

I understand 'peace' to mean 'shalom', an ancient Hebrew word. I like this definition; "Shalom means wholeness, integrity, and selfpossession as evidenced by bodily health, longevity, and prosperity. To have shalom means to enjoy the free, uninhibited growth of the soul in community with others and in right relationship with God". But before I offer this defini-

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tion to my students I ask them to list on paper words or ideas that come into their minds when they hear, see or think of the word 'peace'. I write these on the blackboard so all can see and then we discuss them. If some element seems missing I add it and explain why I think it is important. Then I present my definition and we see how all the ideas we have expressed fit in.

We must keep this ideal clearly before us if we are to concentrate our energies on working towards it. If we lose sight of our goal our energies will be dissipated and wasted.

So we try to keep this vision before us as we begin to look at the world in which we live. Immediately we find that actual conditions are often far from the ideal ones. And then we ask ourselves two questions: 1) Why are they different? and 2) What can we do about them? How can we bring conditions closer to the ideal?

I introduce students to the concept of Institutional Violence (Structural Violence) and the Spiral of Violence as described by Dom Helder Camara of Brazil. This helps students to understand that the overt violence of protest cannot be eliminated by further violence on the part of authority.

It is the under-lying problem of Institutional Violence on which we must concentrate our knowledge and energy if we are to put and end to the violence that destroys peace, that prevents peace from being actualized.

By examining closely a few examples of the structural violence in our society with which students are familiar, (but may not have recognized as violence) I bring this concept to life in their minds. For instance, we look at the problems of hunger and poverty and find these 'third world' conditions exist not only in S. E. Asia, Africa, South and Central America but here in Japan, and in the U. S and Europe as well. As we look for

solutions to these problems we find ourselves in a dilemma. Poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy, these 'third world problems', are found to result from institutions we hold dear: the rights to own property and direct its use, the right to change to more efficient means of production; the right to make a profit on an investment; the right to move a business operation to an area where costs are lower; the rights, in other words, to carry on business anywhere in the world without restrictions, rights which underly the whole concept of free private enterprise and free trade.

What are we to do, allow these institutions to remain intact and watch the conditions I mentioned grow worse? Or alter the institutions by creating a New International Economic Order so all people can share the worlds' wealth and live with dignity?

I try to help the students to see injustice closer to hand in discussions of racial discrimination, sexism, ageism, etc. . These may not be so easily discovered, or so often reported in the news media. But after we discuss these in class the students have a better understanding.

Incidentally, before the introduction of each new form of violence, materials are given to the students for their study. After the following weeks' introductory session and discussion, they are asked to bring a brief report for the next class on some current act of that type of violence or incident related to the topic, telling what happened, why it happened (which type of violence) and what we can do to help correct the situation. This exercise helps open their eyes to the different forms violence can take, and helps us take a positive attitude toward it.

We look at the increase in the militarization of our world and ask why it is happening and what are its consequences?

We study article #9 of the Constitution, with the Japanese and English in parallel. We analyse the important words and their meanings as well as

the intent of the whole article. We discuss the Self Defense Forces and their activities in light of the constitutional concept.

We take up the concept of 'defense' and try to vocalize what we mean by 'defending' our country and society. We discuss briefly what might happen in the event of a military attack and consider whether military defense is possible in light of modern military technology.

We discuss the concept of nonviolent civilian action as a possible alternative to military action. We use the Japanese translation of Gene Sharps' book *Exploring Nonviolent Alternatives*, Buki Naki Minshu no Teiko.

Here Sharp describes several historical examples of nonviolent civilian resistance to military action and other violence. Then he analyzes nonviolence to show why it can be effective. He makes no claim that this method will be one hundred percent effective. But he reasons that, in the light of the terribly destructive nature of modern warfare, any reasonable alternative should be studied, and he proposes this as one reasonable alternative that deserves attention.

If there is still time left before final exams I introduce the idea of unarmed neutrality as another possible alternative for Japan to consider. For this we use Hibuso Churitsu Ron by the former Socialist Party chairman, Mr. Masahi Ishibashi.

Let me summarize very briefly. First of all, I entered upon this course of action because of a deeply held religious conviction that it is not only wrong to kill others but to do violence to others or to our earth in any form.

As I saw the growing militarization of Japanese society I felt it was time I tried to counteract it, by helping students understand what was happening. Although war is the ultimate overt violence, it is still only a symptom of the disease of Institutional Violence. Therefore I felt I should start

at the beginning and help students understand the subtle but pervasive nature of violence.

First we envision a peaceful world to serve as our guide, then we investigate as many forms of violence and injustice as we can, and seek ways to resolve the conflicts so that we move closer to our ideal. We finish with a study of nonviolence and perhaps unarmed neutrality.

I am happy about the efforts in peace education some of you are making, along with the writing of textbooks and curriculum materials. And I thank those of you who have shared those materials with me. I am trying to put it all to use.

By way of recommendation may I add two things. I would like to see those professors, who are teaching and researching group dynamics, and perhaps social psychology, carry out some experiments with students in this field of nonviolent action. Some practical training in this area is already taking place. I am thinking more of laboratory situations where students practice countering violent situations or conflict situations with nonviolent means. If these experiments show some promise and the students gain confidence in the technique, then perhaps the experiment could be taken out on the campus in 'street theatre', where others could become involved and the reactions of onlookers could be observed and measured.

In this way we can find out if nonviolence has the beneficial effects that Gene Sharp and others claim for it. Unless we try it we will never know, and it will remain as an intellectual exercise.

I also feel we must put more effort into two areas of peace education that are outside the high school-university level. One is early childhood education. I know that some work is being done here in Japan. But I am thinking more particularly of education in the home. The earlier this

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education begins the better.

The Institute For Peace and Justice in St. Louis, in addition to its curriculum materials for Jr. High-High School classes, has recently developed study materials to be used by parents, called Parenting For Peace and Justice, which is proving to be very popular in the U. S.

This program of study helps parents learn how to deal with their children nonviolently and how to raise their children from infancy to recognize violence and to act and react in nonviolent ways. This education is crucial if we are going to eliminate violence from human society.

The other area is adult education. It is the adults of our world who are making the crucial decisions that affect us all. We need to train them to become more peaceful, to learn to trust the power of nonviolence. We must make the priorities of peace meaningful to those in power now. Otherwise we will have to wait until after the next world war, which is not a very bright prospect.

Peace education is necessary for our survival!

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