

Small Group Ministry Session Plan

Building Peace Globally

(by Sharon Welch, Charlie Clements and Jim Nelson)

IMPORTANT NOTE:

These SGM topics are a bit different from the ones with which you are most familiar. Right away you'll notice that they are more educational, and contain more material (to be read in advance) than most SGM topics. We included this material as a matter of accessibility --- to provide everyone with a common language base regardless of their background, knowledge base, or access to libraries.

The questions these topics ask may also require more than one SGM meeting to complete. This may not be new to many of you (we've heard about the "Mothers" topic taking six sessions!) We encourage you to take your time and not to rush the material or the topics.

Chalice/Candle Lighting

Opening words:

“The terrorists will not achieve their ends by blowing up innocents. And we will not be able to bomb the terrorists into submission. Atrocities like yesterday’s hideous bombing of Israel cannot be allowed to continue with impunity. But it is time for all of us to begin searching for alternatives. . . We need to overcome our feelings of helplessness, and channel our rage and our anguish toward constructive ends.” Bob Herbert, The New York Times March 28, 2002

“The United States is a mighty power, but it is not omnipotent. If history is any guide, it will not remain even a mighty power forever. Wouldn’t it be wiser, then, while we have the power, to enter wholeheartedly into the creation of international norms, be they legal or behavioral, that best reflect our values and then respect those norms and their attendant procedures even when we may be found in violation?” William F. Schulz, Tainted Legacy: 9/11 and the Ruin of Human Rights Nation Books, 2003.

Check-in/Sharing

Discussion

The shifting debate:

What are effective means of preventing, resolving, and reconciling severe long-lasting conflict within and between states and peoples? In between the last resort of just war and the principled renunciation of violence in all its forms lies a vast expanse of constructive and preventive work. Rather than continue the principled debate between just war and pacifism, many scholars and activists are working together on the areas where they do agree, the need for strategic peacebuilding: preventing war, resolving conflicts, and restoring conflict-torn societies.

Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, describes a global paradigm shift, a move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. This paradigm shift is expressed in many forms, including the joint efforts of those committed to nonviolence, and those who support just war, to find effective ways of preventing war and maintaining a just peace. Advocates of just peace and strategic peacebuilding explore actual practices that foster sustainable peace. Not all nonviolent actions are effective, nor do all practices work in every situation.

We will describe four overlapping approaches to enduring security and sustainable peace, and then explore a series of questions about each approach. Although the terminology differs, the basic approach to constructive peacemaking is the same.

1. Strategic peacebuilding

According to Lisa Schirch, of the Eastern Mennonite University Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, there are four multifaceted components of strategic peacebuilding . (1) Waging conflict nonviolently includes “monitoring and advocacy, direct action, civilian based defense.” (2) Reducing direct violence includes “legal and justice systems, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, military intervention, cease-fire agreements, peace zones, early warning programs.” (3) Building capacity includes “training and education, development, military conversion, and research and evaluation.” (4) Transforming relationships includes “trauma healing, conflict transformation, restorative justice, transitional justice, governance and policy making.” Lisa Schirch, The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding, Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2006, p. 26.

2. Just Peacemaking

During the mid-1990’s a group of Christian scholars, international relations scholars, peace activists and conflict resolution specialists met and developed a road map of effective peacemaking practices. They describe ten practices that have been used and that can be developed further in order to abolish war.

1. support nonviolent direct action
2. take independent initiatives to reduce threat
3. use cooperative conflict resolution at all levels of society, from interpersonal conflicts to conflicts between peoples and nations

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 such as Regional Cooperation and Security Organizations and the UN Peacebuilding Commission
 8. strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights (standing peacekeeping forces, International Criminal Court, etc)
 9. reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade
 10. encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations
- Glenn Stassen, editor, *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*. Second Edition. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press.2004.

3. A United Nations Emergency Peace Service

“A growing global movement of citizens groups, academics, government officials and UN agencies is coming together to create a permanent UN Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS) to ensure that the tools and capacities are in place to prevent the next humanitarian disaster. Sir Brian Urquhart, Former UN Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs believes that this initiative is of "the greatest importance both to the UN as a responsible institution and to the millions as of yet unknown, innocent victims who might, in the future, be saved by this essential addition to the UN's capacity to act on their behalf... There is one overwhelming argument for the United Nations Emergency Peace Service. It is desperately needed, and it is needed as soon as possible".

It is envisaged that UNEPS would be permanent, and composed of 12,000 - 15,000 personnel recruited from volunteers from many countries. It would be an expertly trained, integrated service encompassing civilian, police, judicial and military personnel with the skills and capacity to conduct multiple functions in diverse UN operations and able to respond to crisis situations within 48 hours.

UNEPS is described as a 'service' because it is designed to enforce international laws in cases of genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes. Against the background of the tragedies of Rwanda and Darfur, the concept of 'responsible sovereignty' is becoming widely accepted, establishing the norm that if governments do not protect their own citizens from gross violations of their rights, the international community has a duty to act.”

Robert Johansen, editor. *A United Nations Emergency Peace Service: To Prevent Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*. New York: Global Action to Prevent War, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, and World Federalist Movement, 2006.

Definition of human security

The phrase ‘human security’ refers to “The protection of individuals and communities from war and other forms of violence.” “Human security is a relatively new

concept, now widely used to describe the complex of interrelated threats associated with civil war, genocide and the displacement of populations.” Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century. New York: Oxford University Press. 2005, p. viii.

4. United Nations Peace Operations

Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis have analyzed UN peacebuilding efforts since 1945. They examine the failures of UN peacekeeping efforts as well as the successes.

“But the failures in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Somalia by no means prove UN peacekeeping to be a bad idea. Recent UN operations have helped bring an end to bloody civil wars in Cambodia, El Salvador, Namibia, Mozambique, Croatia (Eastern Slavonia) and East Timor; all enjoyed free and fair elections and are now on the road to national reconciliation and substantial stability...” (349)

Doyle and Sambanis describe the importance of integrating the work of peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. Peacekeeping stops violence through the “containment and demobilization of military forces.” Peacemaking brings hostile parties to agreement. Peacebuilding creates long-term structures for redressing injustice and resolving conflicts. (Doyle and Sambanis, 15)

While there is no fool proof formula for attaining a sustainable peace, they do find salient elements in reaching “a comprehensive peace agreement:.”

“First, the Secretary-General developed new strategies to help broker an agreement (*making the peace*) by drawing in the assistance of interested states that lent national clout to UN diplomacy just as the UN legitimized and monitored national interests. Second, the Security Council authorized a peacekeeping operation to build confidence in the agreements (*keeping the peace*) that often included ad hoc semi-sovereign institutions that encompassed all the previously warring factions. These interim institutions, such as the Supreme National Council in Cambodia, provided forums for consultation and .. dynamic adjustment of the peace process. And third, the UN as a whole provided the right tools and assistance to encourage national reconciliation and repair the torn social and economic infrastructure (*building the peace*). By expanding the scope of Cold War peacekeeping operations to include units to organize and monitor elections, investigate human rights abuses, train national police forces, and encourage economic redevelopment, recent operations in Mozambique, Cambodia, and El Salvador have transformed bloody civil wars into democratic elections. Discrete, impartial force sometimes made the difference, but at no point did the peacekeepers rely primarily on force, as they did in both Bosnia and Somalia, to impose outcomes, thereby making war.”
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Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, Making War and Building Peace:United Nations Peace Operations. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2006

Concluding question:

- 1) Given what you know about international conflicts, do you favor any of these approaches? Why/ why not?
- 2) What changes would be necessary for the U.S. or any other country to shift to a much greater reliance on proactive peacebuilding, peacemaking, and peacekeeping (e.g., what changes in budget allocations, public awareness and support, foreign policy guidelines, etc.)?
- 3) In situations of grave crimes against humanity, is there not only a right but a responsibility for the United Nations or other international bodies to intervene?

Concluding words:

”Peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflict -- alternatives to passive or aggressive responses, alternatives to violence.” Dorothy Thompson