

‘BEYOND VIOLENT FUTURES: CULTIVATING PEACE’

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During my paper last night I referred to the way in which Jonathan Schell draws on the work of Hannah Arendt to argue that power is not the result of some people coercing others but rather power is best understood as common action in support of common purposes. Moreover I referred to Schell's suggestion that there is a great challenge for any country that possesses massive military with no enemy to fight.¹ Possession of a military is very dangerous for any country that fails to understand Arendt's point that a country's violence can destroy its power.² Schell concludes, "The days when humanity can hope to save itself from force with force are over. None of the structures of violence--not the balance of power, not the balance of terror, not empire--can any longer rescue the world from the use of violence, now grown apocalyptic. Force can lead only to more force, not to peace. Only a turn to structures of cooperative power can offer hope."³

Schell's confidence is precisely what I find to be so appealing about his analysis in his recent work *The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People*. As I said last night he doesn't deny that the twentieth century has been the bloodiest in history, nor does he think that a shift towards non-violent action will come immediately, but what he does offer is an insight into a 'less-noticed, parallel history of nonviolent power'. This is a story, as he says, of violence disrupted or in retreat--of great-power war immobilized by the nuclear stalemate, of brutal empires defeated by local peoples fighting for their self-determination, of revolutions succeeding without violence, of democracy supplanting authoritarian or totalitarian repression, of national sovereignty yielding to systems of mixed and balanced powers."⁴ His book therefore is a chronicle of the 'good news' of the twentieth century, albeit with the recognition that this positive narrative that has been more or less overwhelmed by the narratives of violence and genocide that have occurred alongside it.

I think that Schell's analysis is a good place to start thinking about cultivating peace because what Schell shows us is that, the violence of the last century notwithstanding, we can discern a small though significant shift in the centre of gravity which, if nurtured may provide a way of resisting the logic of violence which has captivated our political milieu. Moreover, as I argued last night, enacting and narrating the future depends in part on the manner in which we narrate the past, i.e. whether we see in it the seeds of reconciliation, peace and therefore hope, or whether we read it as confirming the inevitability of conflict and violence – as do the political realists. For Christians, our realised eschatology, brings both the promise of peace and the challenge of peace-making. At the same time it also presents to us a reading of history in which the eschatological promise of peace is already enacted, realised, achieved. Christians inhabit a space between the already and the not yet, a space in which we must acknowledge that the task of peaceful justice seeking is one of the obligations of discipleship

When one uses a title like 'Beyond Violent Futures: Cultivating Peace' one is immediately inviting criticism – criticism of the alleged utopian character of the task in hand. The idea that we can strive for a future that is beyond the reach of the logic of violence would no doubt be regarded, by realists, as hopelessly naïve, as idealistic, as ridiculous. However, in political theory, the term 'realism' has been colonised by those who hold a particularly

¹Schell, 322.

²Schell, 344.

³Schell, 345.

⁴Schell, p. 305.

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negative interpretation of human nature and the way it is inclined to use power. To be a realist, in political terms means holding some version of the view that the core of human nature lies in the egoistic passions and as a result, political realists believe that conflict is inevitable. Moreover realists also look to the anarchic structure of international relations as another sphere in which this conflict and insecurity is rooted. The result is that states need incessantly to acquire, maintain and exercise power. Thus in the words of the classical realist Hans Morgenthau “the main sign-post that helps political realism to find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power”. The term ‘realism’ has colonised the territory entirely so that any claim that resists, disputes or tries to challenge this relentlessly negative interpretation of human nature and of state-craft, is now not realist, read not realistic, read idealistic, read utopian.

Now although we may not be able to insist on a redefinition of terms, we can certainly dispute the realist designation of all alternative interpretations as utopian. Moreover, regardless of definition, as the World Council of Churches insisted in inaugurating the Decade for Overcoming Violence, ‘we are obliged as Christians to witness to peace and non-violence, and to engage in constructive efforts to build a culture of peace.’ So what might these constructive efforts to build a culture of peace consist in, or, to use the language of William James in his famous essay, what would be involved in generating a response to injustice that would essentially be the moral equivalent of war?⁵ In attempting to move out of the logic of violence, we will need to find a non-violent equivalent of the just war, i.e., an ethical way of dealing with the crisis situations that the just war tradition believes can only be responded to through the use of violence.

It is useful in this context to introduce a distinction made initially by Johan Galtung, between ‘negative peace’ and ‘positive peace’.

- negative peace refers to the cessation or absence of direct or physical violence – so in this sense peace is understood as the absence of war or armed conflict. It is connected to security, or to the removal of immediate threats to one’s well-being and survival. In addition to attempting to establishing cease-fires, i.e. spaces in which negotiations can take place, working towards the establishment of negative peace typically involves demobilisation of combatants, disarmament through decommissioning or elimination of weapons, and demilitarisation both institutionally (through reform of the security apparatus) and ideologically, through peace education.
- positive peace refers to the elimination or alleviation of the underlying causes of war and armed conflict through initiating processes of peaceful social, economic and political change. It is thus linked to a broad conception of justice (both procedural and distributive) as providing the essential conditions for a peaceful society and preventing the occurrence of armed conflict. It involves strengthening civil society, particularly as a way of gaining acceptance for peace agreements, or peace processes. It can involve promoting democratisation, or transparent accountable governance in other forms, support for the rule of law. It also would typically include economic development, poverty eradication programmes and equality programmes.

If our hope is to work towards achieving peace by peaceful means, then obviously we will need to give attention to both the negative and positive dimensions of peace. Moreover it is useful to be reminded that in signing up to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the 192 states who are party to that Declaration have not only given a commitment to respect and promote the rights of individuals in a whole host of different areas, but also, in signing up to Article 28 of that Declaration each state acknowledges that ‘everyone is entitled to a social

⁵William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War," in *The Moral Equivalent of War and Other Essays*, edited by John Roth (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1971), pp. 3-16.

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and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration can be realised’. This much neglected article of the Declaration is an important reminder that states not only have obligations to their own citizens, but also through this and other international treaties and conventions states have obligations too to the international community and to the global citizenry. Moreover as I argued in my paper last night, I am convinced that a just and peaceful international order will not be created through war-making, but rather will require a long-term commitment to address the complex synergy of violence and poverty that is at the heart of most conflicts.

For the rest of this session therefore I would like to focus attention on what the creation of a just and peaceful international order will involve, and talk about what I see to be some of the signs of hope in our current situation.

Cultivating Peace

At the very least, if we are serious about resisting the logic of violence and finding non-violent alternatives to resolving conflict, then we will need to address the systemic injustices that lead populations to despair for their futures. Thus cultivating a culture of peace will necessarily involve:

- The Promotion of Ethical Forms of Globalisation
- Creating A Culture of Accountability
- Support for multilateral institutions - Commitment to interdependence UN reform
- Commitment to developing early warning systems linked to institutions that can initiate preventative nonviolent action. Commitment to non-violent resolution of grievances
- Democratic or other forms of transparent accountable governance
- Respect for the environment
- Addressing Intergenerational Injustice

It will not be possible to discuss all of these challenges in detail. Indeed the workshops which follow will provide an opportunity to explore some of these issues in detail. What I would like to do for the remainder of this session therefore is to pick out and comment in a little more detail on some of these points. I so doing I want to emphasise the elements that will enhance both positive and negative forms of peace. Political initiatives alone will not help move us away from a culture of violence. Rather political combined with economic reform is essential if we are to cultivate peace.

In all of this perhaps the most challenging issue for the international community today is the promotion of ethical globalization.

The Promotion of Ethical Forms of Globalisation

On the one hand, globalisation has produced an enormous increase in the aggregate wealth of the planet. However the distributional effects of that wealth are radically unequal. There are also questions about who or what drives globalisation, how decisions are made within it and what is the legitimacy of the process. WE now live in a world of unprecedented inequalities, including inequalities in terms of access to basic income and health. In many countries moreover, because of the effects of globalisation the past decade has marked a reversal in development gains made in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. There is thus no doubt that globalisation needs to be framed by a global ethical vision. The economic imperative of globalization requires a humane measuring line, i.e. globalization in its economic, social, cultural and political dimensions must be evaluated (to rephrase Brian Hehir) in terms what it does **to** the dignity of the person and what it does **for** the dignity of the person. It is the dignity of the

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person in all its complexity that must provide the yard-stick in assessing the merits or otherwise of globalization.

We already have many components of this ethical framework in place. The UN Declaration of Human Rights and the international covenants that flow from it have created a set of international obligations, in terms of the distribution of resources. I don't want to dwell too much on this aspect of the cultivation of peace, other than to affirm, as indeed 192 nations have, that human rights provide us with a way of expressing what the protection of human dignity in the social realm involves. The Millennium Development Goals but flesh on these obligations, though unfortunately the targets set only 4 years ago are already being missed. In the case of my own government for example at the UN's Millennium Summit in 2000, the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) made the commitment that Ireland would reach the UN's goal of 0.7% of GNP to official aid by 2007. However in November of 2004 it was announced that this wouldn't now be met. The Irish government has argued that it already has expanded its aid programme considerably and that its donations are amongst the highest per capita already. However what is at issue here is not so much the amount of aid that is given, but rather the cavalier way in which resource-rich countries derogate from commitments. The initiatives to make globalisation more mindful of and responsive to human dignity would be highly advanced if states actually honoured the commitments they have already made and if they abided by the international obligations they already have.

There is no doubt that some advances have been made. There is now a general consensus that international trading structures need to be made fairer and that the indebtedness of poor countries needs to be addressed. There is also a growing recognition that odious and unpayable debts need to be dealt with by special arrangements. The advocacy of NGOs and civil society, together with a form of ethical consumption in resource-rich countries has already shifted mind-sets in the market as well as in the international economic institutions. The new initiative to 'Make Poverty History' which was launched at the beginning of this year is a further sign that citizens in resource rich countries are recognizing the extent of their responsibilities and urging their governments to dramatically increase spending on overseas aid so as to meet the Millennium Development Goals. So there is reason to hope that the excesses of globalization that have contributed to the growing impoverishment of vast portions of our world, can be moderated, if that is, we honour the commitments we have already given.

The second commitment that I would like to comment on involves our need to create an international culture of accountability.

Creating A Culture of Accountability

There is no doubt in my mind that a culture of accountability is an essential pre-requisite for a more peaceful international community. In order for citizens to have confidence in non-violence as a means of resolving conflict, the international community will have to find ways to deal with those who plan and perpetrate gross violations of human rights and to hold them accountable in a consistent and apolitical manner.

Of course the means by which the international community hopes to achieve accountability on this issue has changed over the decades. While there was some discussion of international criminal prosecution of German leaders after World War 1, these discussions were aborted and it was only after World War II that the first international criminal proceedings began. The trials at Nuremberg and Tokyo in 1945-6 at which Nazi commanders and military officers were prosecuted was significant, although, the taint of victor's justice was pervasive. However since neither Nuremberg nor Tokyo was followed by another international tribunal for almost 50 years, it is difficult as yet to assess the likely success of such instruments in deterring other atrocities. In the '90s the UN created two international criminal courts, the first in almost 50 years - the International Criminal

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Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in 1993 and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 1994. With all their difficulties, and indeed sometimes precisely because of their difficulties, these *ad hoc* tribunals have generated a renewed momentum for the creation of a standing or permanent criminal court.

It is worth noting I think that there has long been the recognition of the need to establish an International Criminal Court for the prosecution of certain crimes - including the crime of genocide. Indeed Resolution 260 of the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1948 proposed that genocide should be regarded as a crime under international law, and that there should be international co-operation to ensure that those guilty be tried. A Committee drafted statutes to establish an international criminal court in 1951, which were then revised in 1953. However the adoption of the statutes was postponed pending a decision on the definition of aggression (crime against peace) and although the issue was raised periodically over the intervening 40 years, it wasn't until 1993 with the ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia that the issue of an international criminal court was raised again.

At the 56th Session of the General Assembly in 1998 the UN convened the UN Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court in Rome June 15 to July 17 1998. The ICC came into force 60 days after the deposition of the 60th instrument of ratification on July 1 2002 and had its first session from 3-10 September 2002 in New York.

By consensus the ICC will not prosecute all crimes and all criminals, but will focus on the most serious and egregious instances of violations and on the most serious and influential criminals. It will prosecute those who are engaged in genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and eventually crimes against peace. The ICC will operate on the basis of complementarity – i.e. the court will not function unless a state in question is unable or unwilling to investigate and subsequently prosecute for one of the covered crimes. The ICC does have its limitations. It will only be able to deal with a limited number of cases, and its jurisdiction is limited to those countries that are party to the statute. Moreover it may limit the ability of governments in post-conflict situations to make political decisions regarding impunity and will look suspiciously on amnesties. Critics of the ICC for example point to South Africa and argue that had the ICC existed at that time it would have regarded the newly elected government's option for a truth commission with amnesty as very problematic.

However the establishment of the ICC does represent a very important step in the creation of a culture of accountability. The fact that we now have a permanent international body that is dedicated to prosecuting the most egregious crimes and is determined to focus, not on the foot-soldiers but on those who are responsible for planning, inciting and managing genocides and aggressive wars is a major step forward. However by institutionalizing criminal prosecution as **the** means by which the international community will deal with such occurrences we will run into other problems.

For example what are we to make of the concern of critics that criminal prosecutions of this sort simply re-inscribe and exacerbate existing conflicts and thus make the process of national reconciliation more problematic? Post-conflict societies typically face many problems and challenges, one of which is how to deal with the legacy of violence and atrocity. Peace may bring an end to violence but it doesn't remove the memory or indeed the legacy (distrust, hatred, grief etc.). It is of course true that if societies are to move beyond the cyclical imperative of violence begetting more violence then they will need to make some attempt to deal with their past, in a just and ethical manner. However it may be that criminal prosecution will destabilize fragile peace agreements and make reconciliation very difficult. (This is the major criticism of the ICTY and, depressingly, seems to be borne out in much of the evidence coming from the region). Moreover, to a certain extent, the range of

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options available to post-conflict states to deal with their past is narrowing. As Geoffrey Robertson points out ‘fact-finding followed by forgiveness may be a plausible exercise in reconciling the political divisions in a particular society, but it is hardly consistent with the view that crimes against humanity attract an *erga omnes* obligation to prosecute and punish’.⁶

It is certainly vital that at a national and international level the culture of impunity be replaced by a culture of accountability. Moreover the prosecution of key individuals will, over time, undoubtedly ‘enhance the chances of establishing the rule of law and signaling that no individuals are outside the reach of legal accountability’.⁷ However this commitment to prosecuting those who plan and manage atrocities of these kinds will need to be part of a wider process whereby accountable, transparent and equitable government is established. In the international arena the ICC cannot be regarded as a panacea. It will not deal with all of the complexities of moving from violent conflict to peace. Rather it represents one more piece of the scaffold of international justice. It will be one more mechanism by which we can hope to replace the culture of impunity with a culture of accountability. It will punish, it may act as a deterrent, and, in the context of more extensive reconciliation programmes, may help communities to disentangle themselves from cycles of violence.

Addressing Intergenerational Injustice

I don’t want to dwell in any detail on this issue, though its importance in the Australian context is obvious and will undoubtedly be the subject of discussion in one of the workshops. This is the issue of intergenerational justice. Many of our most intractable conflicts (though they often don’t pose a threat to international peace) involve the legacy of historical injustice and of inherited disadvantage. Whether we are talking about the legacy of slavery in the USA, the colonisation of Africa, the treatment of indigenous or first nation peoples in many parts of the world, or other more contemporary disputes such as in South Africa, the Middle East or Northern Ireland, the memory of historical injustices casts a long shadow over the international community.

The idea that victims might be compensated for the injuries that were inflicted upon them, by the perpetrators of that injustice is a fairly recent phenomenon. Moreover the issue of restitution for indigenous or first nation peoples has been a source of much debated worldwide. Although the experiences of first nation peoples are diverse, their claims for restitution tend to cluster around the key issues of land, sacred objects and sacred sites, human remains (which were gathered with great zeal by museums and anthropologists) and sacred and cultural objects. Moreover the different concept of ownership that often characterises indigenous peoples’ approach to land and other precious objects means that the issue of restitution is even more complicated. Restitution or reparation can take many forms including: **monetary compensation** and **cultural/symbolic compensation** (here there are questions about how best to restore respect to a tradition that has often been plundered – the restoration of sacred sites – to whom – for what – what if these sites have already been developed? Will such symbolic restitution deplete national museums? Should symbolic restitution be accompanied by monetary restitution?) The issue of apology too is very much part of the ethical discussion. Questions such as whether current populations should feel guilt because of injustices perpetrated by forebears, and on whose behalf should governments apologise, have all been raised in this and other contexts.

We will have the opportunity to discuss this in more detail in the workshops. I raise it here because of its significance in the Australian context and because of my conviction that intergenerational justice is crucial for the development of an international order in which

⁶ Robertson, G., *Crimes Against Humanity, The Struggle for Global Justice*, Penguin, 2002, 284

⁷ Minow, M., *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*, Beacon, 1998, 55

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peace can be cultivated. The means of achieving this will obviously be open to extensive debate, though the principle (especially if people are living with long-term inherited disadvantage), for me is central.

Support for multilateral institutions - Commitment to interdependence UN reform

A further, immediate challenge involves the defence of (and support for) multilateral international institutions and a commitment to the principles of international law. The threats of unilateralism are all too familiar to us here. Indeed the threat of unilateralism was discussed extensively by the Secretary-General’s High Level Panel on Threats, challenges and Change, which issued a report in December 2004. The reports suggests the reinvigoration of the UN’s core purposes and its institutions and advocates the development of a strong sense of collective security. It argues that the unilateral use of force is wrong in all circumstances (save Article 51) and argues “For those impatient with such a response, the answer must be that, in a world full of perceived potential threats, the risk to the global order...is simply too great for the legality of unilateral preventive action to be accepted’ (incl Brent Scowcroft and David Hannay).

Multilateralism is crucial for a culture of peace. However it must be a multilateralism that is strongly committed to peace-keeping, conflict resolution and preventive diplomacy. Ireland’s faltering and fragile transition from violence to peace both suggests caution and gives some hope for many caught in seemingly intractable violent conflict. The complexities, difficulties and compromises involved in committing to this slow unglamorous work of justice and peace also provides an important witness to the possibilities of non-violent political action. Moreover it suggests that even when violence has been the means through which the conflict has been pursued, ultimately the conflict can only be solved through dialogue and compromise. We have extensive experience of peace-keeping and conflict resolution. We know it works. We have seen extraordinary successes for non-violent preventive action.

What we don’t seem to have today is the willingness to commit the resources that would be necessary to make this work at a global as well as the local level.

If we were to make a serious commitment to developing early warning systems linked to institutions that can initiate preventative nonviolent action, if we were to have faith in and adequately resource the non-violent resolution of grievances then we would genuinely be able to cultivate peace. It would however require that we withdraw our support for the war system, in all its aspects (and would include the resource-rich countries paying the price for dismantling their extraordinary arms industries).

The Challenge for Religious Actors in Cultivating Peace

There is plenty of evidence from history and from the contemporary context that would support the assumption that religion is intimately connected with the violent impulses of human beings. [The wars of religion in Europe, 1560s – 1650s the hundred years war, in the late 20th century, Ireland, Sudan, Nigeria, the Balkans)

However while the link between religions and violence is often made, I am reluctant to accept the conclusion that religions are inherently violent, or incline human beings to violence. Scott Appleby forwards what he calls ‘the ambivalence thesis’ a thesis that I think is persuasive. He argues that while violence is a temptation for all religious militants (i.e. those who hold their religious beliefs firmly and uncompromisingly) and while the religious components of ethnic, racial and national identity can be appropriated in conflicts that are essentially about ethnicity, race of nationalism, ON THE OTHER HAND, it can also be and has frequently been a source of non-violent militance, a force that has forwarded the cause of peace and reconciliation – what Appleby calls ‘the militants for peace’.

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We have many examples of this - including -

- Buddhist peacemaking in Cambodia
- Mennonite participation in peace-building in Nicaragua (Lederach), Somalia, South Africa, Haiti, Israel/Palestine, Northern Ireland. Christian Peacemaker Teams,
- World Conference on Religion and Peace, NGO affiliated with UN (UNESCO) established in 1970. Aim to build zones of inter-religious co-operation, and especially (under Secretary-General William Vendley) to bolster interreligious contributions to conflict prevention. Examples from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sierra Leone -
- Communita di Sant’Egidio founded 1980, Rome (RC) –Ricardi (first president.) Oct 27 1986 day of interreligious prayer for world peace Assisi. 1982 Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt and Patriarch of Lebanese Melchites, Maximos V met in Sant’Egidio HQ and signed an agreement to end conflict between Christians and Muslims in the Shuf Mountains south of Beirut. Significant success in mediation in Mozambique (civil war).

One final narrative, which is not a specifically religious one, is also worth noting. It relates to Rwanda to a commune outside Kigali called Giti.

At the entrance the commune displays a sign which says ‘Giti did not commit genocide’.

The Hutu mayor of the commune and its leaders refused to listen to or follow any instructions to kill Tutsis. Not only that, in the midst of the genocide they punished even minor crimes, even those like stealing goats from Tutsi neighbours. This responsible and just leadership, combined with appropriate implementation of the law, safeguarded the people of Giti and those who took refuge from the horrors of genocide.

It is important that we tell these stories and that we narrate this ‘less-noticed, parallel history of nonviolent power’ because these stories help us to have confidence in a future that is based on non-violence. Indeed as Schell suggests they provide a resource for how we tell the story of our time that makes war less likely.

Let me end, where I began with Schell’s compelling argument in *The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People*, which I think provides both motivation and hope for us today....

“The days when humanity can hope to save itself from force with force are over. None of the structures of violence--not the balance of power, not the balance of terror, not empire--can any longer rescue the world from the use of violence, now grown apocalyptic. Force can lead only to more force, not to peace. Only a turn to structures of cooperative power can offer hope.”⁸

⁸Schell, 345.