

Preface

INTRODUCTION

This collection of articles on peacebuilding includes authors from many nations, for there is no single focus for absolute truth about peacebuilding. Further, the traditional literature on peacemaking seems inadequate to deal with the dangerous realities present in the digital age.

Some academic disciplines can start with the distant view in the hope that all parts will fall into place. However, when it comes to peacemaking, the conceptual terrain is so rocky and irregular that a smooth theoretical basis is impractical. A crystal with many facets, resting on a pedestal in the sunlight, provides a better analogy. In a crystal, one can rotate the object and allow light to penetrate one or another facet. Although all facets are contained in the object, in the case of peacemaking (or peacebuilding), each face affords a unique view, and the viewer will see more differences than commonality when comparing each face of the crystal.

This text contains a kaleidoscope of writing from scholars and peace activists. This startling variety demonstrates that peacemaking has no single correct and just solution. Perhaps the only thing that all writers would agree upon would be that peacemaking is urgently needed before the self-destruction of civilization.

The first section describes the problem of peacemaking as one of the most vital activities in the digital era. Then, on a more optimistic note, the collection details social action projects which actively deal with peacemaking. Next, major problems in peacemaking are analyzed (media, leadership, and religion). Finally, global and permanent solutions are suggested in world government, education and the arts.

The text unearths many unique and exciting ideas which will challenge and sharpen today's expanding literature on conflict resolution, peace, and harmony. It is the hope of the editor that this book will motivate effective action to minimize today's terror and maximize peace and justice in today's world.

THE PROBLEM OF PEACEMAKING

With so many threats to peace in today's world, it becomes impossible to clearly define the problem of peacemaking. In the earliest chapters, this book chronicles two viewpoints that introduce the topic and offer encouragement.

Chapter 1, "Trends in Peace Research: Can Cyber Détente Lead to Lasting Peace?" by Nanad Putnik and Mladen Milošević, reviews peace research literature. Starting with the observation that tragic experiences of two world wars, together with possibilities of modern wars and conflicts, the authors note

that conflict resolution and termination have become the subject of numerous studies. They focus on the question of whether cyber détente¹, if accepted, can lead to lasting peace. The authors conclude that, if certain conditions are met, the adoption of cyber détente could likely lead to lasting peace.

In Chapter 2, “Sacred and Secular Activists Are Now Joining their Strategies for Peacebuilding,” Philip Hellmich and Kurt Johnson identify a new paradigm emphasizing altruism in peacemaking that stands in contrast to mainstream thought. The authors observe that a significant narrative of peace is quietly and powerfully emerging around the world – one rooted in ancient wisdom and accelerated by modern science and technology. The new narrative is more about what people are for and not simply what people are against.

MAIN THREATS TO WORLD PEACE

Although successful strategies for peacemaking might increase at an exponential rate, negative forces are likely to persist. Tragically, there is no way to blithely ignore two main threats to world peace: 1) nuclear war and 2) terrorism. If civilization is unable to control these threats, the last days may be upon us.

Chapter 3, “The Role of Education in Reducing the Threat of Nuclear War” by Gospava Stojanović, offers a graphic account of results from nuclear war. While many may imagine that nuclear skirmishes could be a minor threat to civilization, this chapter proves that nuclear bombs could bring civilization to a dark and tragic end.² Stojanović asserts that nuclear war can be prevented through education.

In Chapter 4, “Minimizing the Danger of Nuclear Weapons,” Steven Lee expands on the danger of nuclear weapons and suggests innovative methods for minimizing their danger. Working at a policy level, he begins with the obvious solution, eliminating nuclear weapons. Sadly, he discovers that the problem is far more complex. Having examined alternatives, Lee offers an encouraging solution.

In Chapter 5, “Mutual Understanding in the Age of Vulnerable Truth,” Ikbal Mualana suggests that information and communication technology advance democracy, democratization process, and international peace. Nevertheless, these media also raise concerns and even anxieties. The author establishes that terrorist social media users exercise power which may affect the social or national landscape of power. This development disperses the power over information which was previously possessed by media owners. The author observes that we are increasingly connected to one another as our lives, our security, and our hopes are inextricably linked to one another by a process of globalization.

SOCIAL ACTION AS A SOLUTION

Against this depressing background, some social action projects give reason to hope for a positive future. As alternatives to hand-wringing over nuclear war and terrorism, these projects demonstrate success in the face of grave challenges. They stand as a challenge for peacemaking in the future.

In Chapter 6, “Process Documentation of Interfaith Peacebuilding Cycle: A Case Study From Nepal,” Bishnu Pathak describes a successful social experiment bringing interfaith peacebuilding to two districts of Nepal, where major socio-cultural violence erupted in 2007. The aim of this project was to bring all Nepal religious and non-religious actors together to give synergy to Interfaith peacebuilding initiatives, including peace and mediation practitioners, academics, journalists and social workers. The project adopted Process Documentation, a social science research neologism. Observational data came

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from open-ended structured interviews, focus group discussions, case studies and existing documents, field diaries and newspaper clippings.³

Another reaction to terrorism is described in Chapter 7, “Tackling Islamic Terrorism and Radicalism in Indonesia by Increasing the Sense of Humanity and Friendship” by Idhamsyah Eka Putra, Dimas Okto Danamasi, Any Rufaedah, Reisa Suci Arimbi, and Sapto Priyanto. The authors cite the Global Terrorism Index (2015), which reported that Islamic terrorist groups were on the rise and have become a global threat. They conducted social programs in three areas of Indonesia which successfully brought terrorists from prison to live normal lives. Further, they interviewed wives of terrorist prisoners.

THE PROBLEM OF MEDIA

Surprisingly, media has emerged as a third threat to world peace. Historically, newspapers gained public trust until radio and television stations began reporting the news. These less expensive media permitted governments and special interests to broadcast propaganda. Within 60 years, the Internet radically altered the situation as advocacy journalism and social media users began to politicize mass communication and create advocacy groups.

Chapter 8, “Identity and Social Peace in the Digital World” by Murat Seyfi, laments the rapid spread of hate speech and violent content via mass media, causing the desensitization of public reactions to violence, which is becoming accepted as normal. He asserts that a profound change in identity is altering traditional concepts like nationalism. Macro and national identities, which are the basis of conflicts in the world, have started to decrease and lose their importance against micro-identities introduced by digitalization. Sadly, this is forming the basis of re-shaping the concept of power in the world.

In Chapter 9, “Social Media and Peacemaking: A Snapshot of Literature,” Bruce L. Cook surveys the complexity of social media in the digital age. Using a “snapshot” of scholarly articles on social media and peace (November 2016 – February 2017), this literature review extracts a useful list of subjects dealing with social media. This review surveys a rapidly evolving literature to help researchers approach positive and negative aspects of this relatively new (since 2006)⁴ form of communication.

In Chapter 10, “Dynamic Co-Evolutions of Peace Frames in the United States, Mainland China, and Hong Kong: A Semantic Network Analysis”, Ke Jiang, George A. Barnett, Laramie D. Taylor, and Bo Feng conduct an extensive content analysis of news texts from three geographical areas. This chapter uses semantic network analysis to examine how news texts on peace embodied different words related to peace. The analysis suggests that a process of cultural convergence between the U.S and China will, in the future, have significant impacts on the maintenance of cultural diversity of small countries and regions. This can contribute to the peace at the global level. Most importantly, in the next few decades, if China overtakes the U.S. as world’s largest economy, Chinese harmony culture may play a more significant role in the maintenance of world peace.

Chapter 11, “Mediating Death. The Role of Mass Media in Thana-Capitalism” by Maximiliano Korstanje, offers a radical view of mass media and even tourism. He supports a developing viewpoint suggesting that audiences are fascinated by death and seek out news of disasters which give them satisfaction because they are survivors who did not suffer a calamity. He charges that the media, while professionally reporting a disaster, become an unwitting accomplice in furthering terrorist goals. The author asserts that this represents a new power: amplification of media terrorism.

Chapter 12, “Social Media and Democracy” by Ali Abdosamadi, focuses on government control of communication, including social media. The author notes a general tendency for governments to seek control. The chapter includes interviews with professors at Eastern Mediterranean University.

THE PROBLEM OF LEADERSHIP

With this radical shift in communication, traditional top-down mass media has given way to laissez faire personal communication. At the same time, government leaders have less power to achieve their objectives. Thus, responsible leadership has become one of the major challenges of this age.

Chapter 13, “From Negative Leadership to Healing Leadership: A Therapy Strategy to Remedy African Instability” by Rais Neza Boneza, traces the sad remains of a continent devastated by colonial rule. He offers a wide-ranging historical account establishing that Africa’s problems are a product of setbacks endured from slave trades, colonial conquests, resource-plundering, wars, dictatorial regimes, and neo-colonialism brought by the cold-war era.

In Chapter 14, “Responsible Leadership and Peacemaking,” Bruce L. Cook places the responsibility for peace upon leaders, asserting that world peace is being threatened by rogue leaders who take advantage of economic, social, historical, religious, or environmental situations to create and maintain their personal power and prestige. He places part of the blame on advocacy journalism, which unwittingly offers free promotion to rogue leaders.

Chapter 15, “Women in Leadership: Why We Need More Women Leaders” by Ayo Ayoola-Amale, asserts that the inclusion of women in leadership positions will improve productivity, economic performance, and improved prospects for peace. She identifies a need to invest more in girls’ education and bring more women into employment to successfully fight global poverty and lessen civil conflict. She suggests that this goes beyond fairness, and further that women bring remarkable talents, creative ideas and skills that make them great leaders.

THE PROBLEM OF GOVERNMENT REPRESSION

Despite technological advances which can overcome government interference with mass media and social media, the problems of censorship and jamming signals persist in the digital age. Alarmingly, in recent years, governments have employed media to urge population groups to kill people in other groups. Thus, even with advanced technology, irresponsible excesses in government control remain a problem.

In Chapter 16, “Peacebuilding, Media, and Terrorism in 21st Century and Beyond: A Psychological Perspective,” Claude Rutagengwa describes the chilling situation in Rwanda and Uganda where hate media “RTL Radio” motivated the Hutu majority group to kill Tutsi minority members and their supporters. For Bosnia, he documents a situation where broadcast media disseminated rumors and fear to fuel a war, along with biased perception of Western media. Further, he traces the Arab Spring phenomenon and reveals how its proliferation was due to the power of Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Skype and the like. His main concern is the effect of these media events on the minds of young people in the world today. For young people, his analysis finds that social media propaganda from terrorists and others threaten the possibility that they will establish strong bonds with their communities. Instead they learn grandiose thinking, deviant behavior and distorted perceptions, all through the unpredictability of digital and social media communications.

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Chapter 17, “Recognition, Apology, and Restoration of Indonesians’ Past Maltreatments of People Labeled as Communists” by Idhamsyah Eka Putra and Any Rufaedah, examines the maltreatment of people labelled as members of the communist party. It analyzes the tragic construction of a stigma against individuals named as responsible for a coup in 1965. As a result, the authors assert that five hundred thousand to one million people lost their lives. The authors recommend reconciliation and apology as a possible solution to the stigma which remains today.

THE PROBLEM OF RELIGION

Religion has been cast as another cause for terrorism in the digital age. Each religion has its historical roots and used to be confined to specific, isolated geographical areas. In the digital age, this communication is worldwide, and many adherents of traditional religion claim a legacy to “win” in a battle to convert world citizens to their dogma.

In Chapter 18, “Understanding Our Minds and How We Can Liberate Ourselves and Others From the Hex of the Internet: A Vedantic Case Study,” Sister Gayatriprana (Jean MacPhail) laments a rising tide of inchoate fury that is manifesting like bursting abscesses all over the world. She identifies a clash of materialistic modernity with traditional religions and cultures that is especially rapid and violent as it is pressed into service by Eastern fighters who battle for their own traditions. At the same time, the author looks forward to time of coexistence where people genuinely understand each other in the most solid basis for peace.

SOLUTIONS FOR PEACE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

World Government

As nationalism gives way to social media groups, the notion of one world government is receiving increased interest. In the original campaign for world citizenship, Garry Davis (2000) tore up his US passport and became “World Citizen Number 1” in 1948. Practical plans for an earth government are now receiving thorough attention and planning with the Earth Constitution under the leadership of Glen T. Martin.

In Chapter 19, “World Citizenship,” Glen T. Martin advocates that citizens of all nations should join as Citizens of a world order. The chapter shows similarities of cultures and religious traditions, suggesting interconnectedness of our planetary ecology, global economics, communications, and politics, all coming together with enlightenment ideas about human rights, democracy, and human dignity. Thus, the author asserts, one’s identity transcends geography or political borders, and humankind is essentially one.

Education for Peace

Education may well be the most attractive long-term solution for peace. Here students can learn a moral basis for living in harmony with others. Even the classroom setting can become a model for life. At the same time, there’s an increasing need to protect educators from domination for political motives. While education is surely the key to the future, school administrators and teachers must be permitted to teach justice, peace and harmony.

Chapter 20, “Education for a New Age: New Education for Establishing Peace and Harmony in the Globe” by Pravat Dhal, argues that our educational system suffers from a structural irrationality which is largely ignored by academia. He recommends specific structural changes, an integral approach, and a fusion of spirit and matter. He hopes for both teacher and taught to face such changes, with school considered as a place of worship where every learner will go with love (shraddha) with God as the source of all knowledge.

In Chapter 21, “Importance of Classroom Settings in Educational Institutions to Promote Peacebuilding Through a Specific Intended Learning Outcome,” Chammika Mallawaarachchi suggests that peace and education are inter-reliant. In this way, education builds peace while maintaining cohesion and prosperity within social groups, enhancing knowledge and positive attitudes in harmony. At the same time, the author cautions that poor classroom settings can abuse the entire peace situation, and this may lead to similar problems for society.

Chapter 22, “Soul Education for Children of the Earth” by Nina Meyerhof, advocates soul education and moral education, tapping into higher consciousness to translate experience into societal actions for external global harmony. The author observes that schools are institutionalized by rules and regulations having a mechanistic view to maintain the status quo. Instead there’s a need to educate for soul recognition and allow our culture to alter its rigid views and strangling preconceived ideas of what a good life is about. She concludes with a description of her organization, Children of the Earth.

In Chapter 23, “The Responsibility of Educators in Peacemaking: A View from the USA,” Carol McPeak Brinjak suggests that educators should introduce various role models such as Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Anwar Sadat and Mother Theresa. While youth are badly informed today, the author suggests that the causes of bad education are many: bad parenting, dysfunctional families, absent parent, alcoholism, corrupt politicians, and negligent governments. After describing the religious roots of terrorism, she asserts that peace through strength is the only sure way to defeat terrorists.

Communication for Peace

While digital communication is often seen as a cause for conflict and terrorism, it is also possible to see it as a solution. Technology was an innocent party in the early stages of the Internet and social media. As time progressed, however, irresponsible users of these media became a serious problem. Despite this history, there is merit in the notion that digital communication can restore peace.

Chapter 24, “International Diaspora Involvement in Peacemaking Through Social Media Like DiasporaEngager” by Roland Holou, takes a unique approach to peace by establishing a neutral system of communication. His “DiasporaEngager” system was founded to help mitigate the problems of the diaspora⁵ and their stakeholders and to help them work together in a win-win framework.

Folktales for Peace

Beyond education, the arts have always supported peace and harmony. While it is difficult to assign peacemaking to specific offerings in art, music, and literature, cultural examples such as folktales offer new insights into the peace process.

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In Chapter 25, “Interethnic Conflicts: Understanding the Important Role of Folktales,” Muli wa Ky-endo analyzes cultural traditions in Kenya to illustrate successful use of folktales for harmony and peace. The paper uses from Kenya where disastrous post-election ethnic violence occurred in 2008. Kikuyu, Luo, and Akamba areas of Kenya are chosen for analysis to gain an insight into (a) attitudes and values contained in their folktales and (b) reaction to colonialism and modern nationhood. The author argues that the key to lasting inter-ethnic peace lies in understanding the attitudes and values that are contained and transmitted through a culture’s community folktales.

Nonviolence and Peace

Given the complexity of today’s digital world, there’s a danger of forgetting the primary argument of yesterday: nonviolence. Several heroes stood for nonviolence in the past. Prominent examples are Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi.

Chapter 26, “Gandhi’s Satyagraha and the Earth Constitution” by Glen T. Martin, offers a thoughtful analysis of Mahatma Gandhi’s stance for nonviolence. Martin reveals that Gandhi concerned himself with the possibility of setting up a nonviolent police force, a nonviolent army, and peace brigades to mobilize popular opinion behind constructive programs. Yet, Gandhi warned, a militarized modern state cannot be democratic. Martin establishes that Gandhi compared power to welfare, wholly a byproduct of social activity and the complex web of human relationships, as expressed through a variety of groupings, from the family upward. He describes the possibility of actualizing Satyagraha for the first time in human history, a vision that Mahatma Gandhi clearly embraced. This was a form of nonviolent resistance dedicated to breaking the cycle of violence and winning over the oppressors through transforming their hearts, allowing them to recognize the gigantic truth that encompasses us all.

The Importance of Love

Underpinning these views on human relationships, none could be as powerful as love. For love is the basis for justice, harmony and peace. While comparisons between love and other emotions abound, it is fascinating to compare the emergence of love with today’s culture of fear.

In Chapter 27, “Understanding Our Human Potential for Universal Love and Peace,” Howard Becker establishes that humans are susceptible to an artificial separation from our true selves and the world. This can become the experience of fear in numerous manifestations. Ultimately, this fear can become the basis for control, domination and enslavement of minds, bodies, societies and cultures, along with countless battles, wars, needless deaths and destruction. Instead, the author recommends a new appreciation for unity and oneness. He asserts that the time is ripe for the establishment of peace on earth where everyone can walk in joy and harmony and know that all is well.

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ENDNOTES

¹ The authors define cyber détente as hypothetical bilateral or multilateral agreement that would define the steps, measures and actions to reduce tensions between the States Parties, caused by mutual confrontation in cyber space.

² This brings new truth to T.S. Eliot's poem "The Hollow Men" - This is the way the world ends; Not with a bang but a whimper (Eliot, 2009).

³ The study also demonstrated the value of process documentation. As an analogy, consider Barbara Reeves' use of "formative evaluation" in the popular educational television series, Sesame Street (Ball, 1970).

⁴ Social media as we know it today started in 2006 (Cook, 2015).

⁵ Per Holou, the word Diaspora refers to anyone living in a country or town that is not his or her place of origin or ancestry or the place called home. Some synonyms of the word are immigrant, stranger, and alien. To some extent, we all are passengers on this Earth and can be considered as an immigrant. Therefore, the word Diaspora as used in this article can be applied to anyone.