



## Christian Reflection

A Series in Faith and Ethics

### Focus Article:

📖 Just Peacemaking in an Age of Terrorism  
(*Peace and War*, pp. 36-43)

### Suggested Article:

📖 A Gentle Embrace  
(*Peace and War*, pp. 44-45)

### What do you think?

Was this study guide useful for your personal or group study? Please send your suggestions to:

[Christian\\_Reflection@baylor.edu](mailto:Christian_Reflection@baylor.edu)

### Christian Reflection

Center for Christian Ethics  
Baylor University  
PO Box 97361  
Waco, TX 76798-7361  
Phone 1-866-298-2325  
[www.ChristianEthics.ws](http://www.ChristianEthics.ws)

© 2004 The Center for Christian Ethics

# Just Peacemaking

We need a positive theology of peace that spells out the proactive practices for individuals and nations that work to prevent war. The ten practices of the new ethic of just peacemaking tell us what actions will dry up the sources for terrorist anger and recruitment.

### Prayer†

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed, kindle in the hearts of all people the true love of peace.

Guide with your strong and peaceful wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth, so that in tranquility your kingdom may go forward until the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:9, 38-48

### Reflection

The wisdom which God brings about in our lives is very different from the world's standard operating procedures. "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy," says James, echoing Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. "And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace" (James 3:17-18). Righteous lives and just relationships are the result of peacemaking.

"Jesus teaches us not to get stuck in vicious cycles of revenge and hatred toward enemies," Glen Stassen notes. "But much more he instructs us to do the things that make for peace. He teaches the peacemaking practices of going to make peace with the brother where there is anger, going the second mile to make peace with the Roman soldier, loving our enemy and praying for our persecutors, practicing the justice of investing our money in God's justice and righteousness rather than hoarding it all for ourselves, and acknowledging the log in our own eye rather than putting all the blame on the other."

Stassen advocates ten peacemaking practices to reduce the threat of war and foster just relationships among people and nations: (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 associations.

These are realistic practices today, he urges, for they "tell us what actions will dry up the sources for terrorist anger and recruitment." They guide us to reduce the threat of biological weapons and to seek reconciliation between Israel and Palestine.

William Blake, in the cover art for *Peace and War*, celebrates the gentle embrace of peace and justice that is the goal of these just



## Christian Reflection

A Series in Faith and Ethics

Robert B. Kruschwitz, the author of this study guide, directs The Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University. He serves as General Editor of *Christian Reflection*.

© 2004 The Center for Christian Ethics

peacemaking practices. “True reconciliation always involves a delicate balance of peace with justice, and mercy with truth,” Hornik observes. This truth came home to peacemaker John Paul Lederach in the Nicaraguan civil war. His International Conciliation team of the Mennonite Central Committee reflected daily on Psalm 85:10, “Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other” (KJV), and imagined four voices – of mercy, truth, righteousness, and peace – coming before God with their varying perspectives on the tragic discord in Nicaragua. “The verse, when understood this way, communicated to diplomats, rebel generals, and peasants alike. As an exercise in reconciliation, the team invited individuals or small groups to identify with one of the voices and to ask, ‘What would this voice say in our situation of conflict?’ Truth, he reports, wanted to establish what really happened; mercy desired to forgive and move forward. Justice called for a full accounting of wrongdoing; peace was ready for healing to begin.”

### Study Questions

1. “Failed states in which something like anarchy reigns...create havens for terrorist training, drug trading, and money-gathering,” writes Stassen (p. 38). Which peacemaking practices might end these havens? Which could dry up the ongoing sources of terrorist recruitment and anger in the world?
2. Many people fear that terrorists will use biological weapons. Do you agree with Stassen’s view on peacemaking practices that would help alleviate this threat (pp. 39-40)?
3. Imagine four voices – of mercy, truth, righteousness, and peace – coming before God with their varying perspectives on the discord in Israel and Palestine. What might they say?
4. How is your congregation involved in peacemaking? Examine the resources available from organizations like Every Church a Peace Church ([www.ecapc.org](http://www.ecapc.org)), Peace & Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA ([www.peace.mennolink.org](http://www.peace.mennolink.org)), Bruderhof Communities ([www.bruderhof.com](http://www.bruderhof.com)), and Catholic Peace Fellowship ([www.catholicpeacefellowship.org](http://www.catholicpeacefellowship.org)).

### Departing Hymn: “Your Kingdom Come, O Lord” (verses 1 & 2)

Your Kingdom come, O Lord,  
wide circling as the sun;  
fulfill of old Your Word  
and make the nations one.

One in the bond of peace,  
the service glad and free  
of truth and righteousness,  
of love and equity.

*Frederick L. Hosmer (1905), altered*  
Tune: ST. CECILIA (Hayne)

<sup>†</sup>Adapted from *A Prayer Book for Soldiers and Sailors* (1941), accessed online at [justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1928/S&S\\_index.htm](http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1928/S&S_index.htm).

# Just Peacemaking

## Lesson Plans

<i>Abridged Plan</i>	<i>Standard Plan</i>
Prayer	Prayer
Scripture Reading	Scripture Reading
Reflection (skim all)	Reflection (all sections)
Questions 1 and 2, or 4	Questions (selected)
Departing Hymn	Departing Hymn

## Teaching Goals

1. To understand the ten practices of just peacemaking, and to explore how these practices can be a framework for responding to terrorism.
2. To introduce the complex relationships among mercy, truth, righteousness (justice), and peace in conflict resolution.
3. To explore resources for individuals and congregations to become more involved in peacemaking, both locally and internationally.

## Before the Group Meeting

Distribute copies of the study guide on pp. 8-9 and ask members to read the Bible passage in the guide. Distribute copies of *Peace and War (Christian Reflection)* and ask members to read the focus article and suggested article before the group meeting. For the departing hymn, "Your Kingdom Come, O Lord," locate the tune ST. CECILIA (Hayne) in your church hymnal or at [www.cyberhymnal.org](http://www.cyberhymnal.org). If you plan to discuss the fourth study question, ask several group members to review the resources available online from Every Church a Peace Church, Bruderhof Communities, Peace & Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA, and Catholic Peace Fellowship.

## Begin with a Comment

"Isn't this the way of the world?" observes George Mason. "Violence begets violence, revenge breeds revenge, and retaliation produces retaliation ad nauseam and ad infinitum. The eye-for-an-eye, tooth-for-a-tooth principle, which is often mistakenly cited as the pinnacle of biblical justice, originally was given to limit vengeance and prevent violence from getting out of hand. But taking justice into our own hands by chopping off the hand of an enemy for stealing does nothing but hand us a lifetime of animosity and worry.... If we hate our enemy, we may be doing what comes naturally, and we may even be justified for doing it, but we only end up caught in a cycle of hatred that will always, always, always end badly for everyone, including us" (*Peace and War*, pp. 64-65). The gospel of Jesus Christ breaks the cycle of vengeance. But how do we practice his peacemaking in an age of terrorism?

## Prayer

Invite members to share their personal celebrations and concerns with the group. Provide time for each person to pray silently and then ask members to read aloud together the prayer in the study guide.

## Scripture Reading

Ask a group member to read Matthew 5:9, 38-48 from a modern translation.

## Reflection

This study introduces a realistic framework for Christian peacemaking. Stassen and others use the phrase "just peacemaking" to emphasize that a rich and lasting peace includes righteous lives and just relationships among people. James 3:17-18 also highlights this link of peace to personal righteousness and interpersonal justice. The Greek word *dikaiousune*, which is translated "righteousness" in 3:18, also means "justice" (as in Acts 24:25, Romans 3:5, and Hebrews 11:33).

The study questions encourage group members to review Stassen's application of the practices of just peacemaking to deliverance from terrorism, deliverance from biological weapons, and deliverance for Israel and Palestine. It also would be valuable for members to consider how the practices might apply to other local or international conflict situations that concern them.

### **Study Questions**

1. The just peacemaking practices of (5) *advancing democracy and human rights* and (6) *fostering just and sustainable economic development* might eliminate the havens for terrorism, Stassen suggests. "The problem is that present policy emphasizes military action too much and community development and civil-society development too little" (p. 39).

Many terrorists are recruited from Muslim communities in the Middle East. "The history of American dealings with the Muslim world is long and complex," Cavanaugh observes. "We must actively explore that history in dialogue with Muslim friends and enemies, and not allow terrorism to impose a fog of amnesia on our dealings with others. Where foreign policy is driven by narrowly-defined national and corporate interest, Christians must realize our vocation to confess the Christian story truthfully and speak truth to power" (p. 34). Members might discuss the value of peacemaking practices such as (3) *use cooperative conflict resolution*, (4) *acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice and seek repentance and forgiveness*, and (10) *encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations* to open dialogue with these Muslim communities and mutually address their concerns about the United States and western democracies.

2. Small, transportable, and difficult to detect, a biological weapon could cause an epidemic of disease. "Were terrorists to introduce a fatal virus into an airplane flying from London or Paris to New York (it would not be detected by the x-ray machines), passengers could transmit the infection to their different cities for a week before their symptoms appeared, and the disease might spread further as doctors take another week to diagnose it" (p. 39).

Members may discuss Stassen's view that several peacemaking practices—(7) *work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system*, (8) *strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights*, and (9) *reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade*—would urge the United States to endorse verification procedures for the Biological Weapons Treaty, such as "annual declarations by nations describing their programs and factories that could be used to produce biological weapons, random visits to declared facilities, and short-notice inspections of suspected facilities" (p. 40).

3. Subdivide into four groups—for mercy, truth, righteousness, and peace—and brainstorm on what each perspective, when narrowly understood to the exclusion of the others, might say about the discord in Israel and Palestine. Should we combine the insights of the four viewpoints? Or should one perspective be privileged over the others?

Members may wish to substitute in this question another local or international conflict situation of concern to them. For more about John Paul Lederach, see "The Heart of Reconciliation," *Forgiveness*, issue 1 of *Christian Reflection: A Series in Faith and Ethics*, pp. 78-84. This article is available free online in the ethics library at [www.ChristianEthics.ws](http://www.ChristianEthics.ws).

4. Encourage members to discuss how worship, mission projects, and church education programs shape their attitudes toward peace. Do their congregations openly discuss issues of peace? Ask members to describe the resources available online from Every Church a Peace Church, Peace & Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA, and Catholic Peace Fellowship—including sermons, bulletin inserts, worship materials, lesson plans, children's activities, short articles about peace issues, and stories about other congregations' experiences. Bruderhof Communities offers excellent free e-books for group study.

### **Departing Hymn**

If you choose not to sing the hymn, you may read the hymn text in unison, or silently and meditatively as a prayer.