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SPECIAL REPORT

1200 17th Street NW • Washington, DC 20036 • 202.457.1700 • fax 202.429.6063

ABOUT THE REPORT

Eight Muslim scholar-leaders, six Jewish scholar-leaders, and eight Christian scholar-leaders met from June 13 to 15, 2007, in Stony Point, N.Y., at a conference sponsored by the United States Institute of Peace and the Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy. Conference participants specified practices within each of the three faith traditions that could lay the groundwork for nonviolent alternatives to resolving conflict and addressing injustice, while also identifying roadblocks in the sacred texts of their traditions to creating such processes. The scholars' teachings found that these ancient religious teachings on peace and justice are often consistent with modern conflict-resolution theory. This report examines passages that support violence in each tradition's scripture, presents definitions of "just peacemaking" in each tradition, summarizes places of convergence that might create the foundation for a program offering an Abrahamic alternative to war and presents a joint statement and series of commitments reached at the end of the conference.

*With contributions by Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Jamal Badawi, Robert Eisen, and Reuven Kimelman.

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*Susan Thistlethwaite and Glen Stassen**

Abrahamic Alternatives to War

Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives on Just Peacemaking

Summary

- Jewish, Muslim, and Christian sacred texts all contain sections that support violence and justify warfare as a means to achieve certain goals. In particular historical circumstances, these texts have served as the basis to legitimate violent campaigns, oftentimes against other faith communities.
- Many of the passages from sacred texts in all three religious traditions that are misused in contemporary situations to support violence and war are taken out of context, interpreted in historically inaccurate ways, or can be better translated. Finally, all of these passages need to be understood within (and constrained by) the primary spiritual aims of the individual faith.
- There are also a great many teachings and ethical imperatives within Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scriptures that promote peace and present the means to achieve it. These include mandates to strive for political, social, and economic justice; tolerant intercommunal coexistence; and nonviolent conflict resolution.
- The three religious delegations that participated in the conference leading to this report presented slightly different and yet overlapping methods for peacemaking articulated by their sacred scriptures. The considerable overlap led the scholars to affirm the existence of a coherent "Abrahamic Just Peacemaking" paradigm, which began to take focus through their rigorous interfaith debate.
- Further work is needed to articulate fully this Abrahamic Just Peacemaking paradigm. The conference scholars committed themselves to continued development of this model in pursuit of a rigorous and effective faith-based program to promote alternatives to war.

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Introduction

Eight Muslim scholar-leaders, six Jewish scholar-leaders, and eight Christian scholar-leaders met from June 13 to 15, 2007, in Stony Point, N.Y., at a conference sponsored by the United States Institute of Peace and the Churches’ Center for Theology and Public Policy. The purpose of the conference, titled *Alternatives to War*, was to specify practices within each of the three Abrahamic traditions that could lay the groundwork for a nonviolent program to resolve global conflict and address injustice.¹ Participants were religious scholars and trusted leaders in their own faith traditions who have also studied and practiced conflict resolution.

For nearly two years preceding the conference, a working group of six, two each from the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish faiths, worked cooperatively to produce papers that served as the basis for conference discussion. Originally, the two Christian organizers, Glen Stassen and Susan Thistlethwaite, hoped the working group would be willing to move immediately to a formulation, each from their separate traditions, of a faith-based paradigm of “Just Peacemaking.” It became clear during the preparatory phase, however, that before a model for Just Peacemaking could be conceived, the scholars from each tradition needed to confront and reckon with the specific religious barriers to interfaith work on peace and justice. The main barrier identified was the manner in which passages from each tradition’s sacred texts are used and abused in contemporary contexts to promote violence and sanction war. It was thus decided that each faith tradition would prepare a paper in advance of the conference that addressed the following questions:²

- What are the texts and teachings of my religion that some in my tradition use to justify the use of political and/or military violence between our faith communities?
- How might my religion counter that interpretation of those texts and teachings?
- What does my religion teach about scripturally based measures that can be taken to prevent war and establish peace?

Reckoning with the Sacred Sources of Violence

Jewish Scriptural Mandates to Violence

The Jewish paper, authored by Robert Eisen and Reuven Kimelman, vigorously discusses passages from Hebrew scripture most often used today, particularly in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, to justify violence and war. These passages are drawn from stories in several books of Hebrew scripture that recount the Hebrew tribes’ wars against Amalek and the seven Canaanite nations, which are presented as mandated by God. In these stories, Amalek and the seven Canaanite nations appear as hostile foreign neighbors bent on the destruction of the tribes of Israel. According to the Jewish authors, these passages are used “by some to legitimate violence against some Palestinians, especially those who advocate, as does Hamas, the destruction of Israel.”

Religiously driven proponents of Israel’s military campaign sometimes point to the verse, “The Lord will be at war with Amalek throughout the ages of Israel’s military campaign sometimes,” (Exodus 17:15b), interpreting it to mean that there is a state of permanent war mandated by God against those who are defined as the descendants of Amalek, in this case the Palestinians. War against Amalek is further justified morally in some passages of scripture by referring to the acts of violence they have committed (1 Samuel 15:33, 30:1–2).

However, Eisen and Kimelman outline some of the problems that arise in attempting to interpret and apply these passages literally as warrant for Israel’s contemporary military campaigns. In the above-quoted Exodus passage, responsibility for waging the eternal conflict devolves onto God, rather than the leader of the Israelites. Later, in 1 Samuel,

King David inquires of God whether he should pursue the Amalekites, implying a lack of any “standing order” justifying violence against them. Indeed, Eisen and Kimelman cite passages from scripture and Jewish interpretive tradition that describe the Amalekite community both positively and negatively, demonstrating how over time, attitudes toward the Amalekites became ambivalent. Given some of this incongruence, Eisen and Kimelman argue against a wholesale scriptural mandate for violence against a contemporary community defined as the seed of Amalek. Instead, they affirm an interpretation of Amalek as a metaphor for evil.³ The metaphorical understanding of Amalek is already reinforced within later Hebrew texts and tradition, the authors demonstrate, pointing to a Talmudic anecdote that argues that the proscribed destruction of the descendants of the Amalekites pertains only to those in the community who act like they did.⁴ This move makes Amalek not a marker of the intrinsic “evil” of a particular tribe, but rather a propensity to which all individuals and communities are vulnerable and must strive cooperatively to defeat.

The “exterminations of the seven nations of Canaan” comprise another group of passages from Hebrew scripture that some Jewish communities use to legitimate violence, to expel a nation or nations of people from their land or to exterminate them outright. Eisen and Kimelman reveal how Deuteronomy took “both the expulsion law of Exodus 23:20–33, directed against the inhabitants of Canaan, and the herem (total destruction) law of Exodus 22:19, which proclaims that any Israelite who ‘sacrifices to a G-d other than the Lord shall be proscribed,’ and fused them into a new law that applies herem to all idolaters, Israelites and non-Israelites alike.”⁵ The authors argue that this reveals that these passages are driven by a fear “that Israel will be ensnared, especially through intermarriage, by the local moral and cultic practices.” The primary concern here, then, is a priestly religious commitment to maintaining the purity of traditional practices and culture. Indeed, the tradition of interpretation in Judaism moved away from wholesale extermination of a particular contemporary community. Renowned scholar Maimonides argued that the tribes of Canaan had no contemporary corollary.⁶ And Abraham Kook, former chief rabbi of Palestine, noted that David, the model Jewish king from sacred scripture, refrained from so doing during his reign.⁷ This is further evidence, the Jewish delegation argued, that the jurisdiction of the seven-nations ruling applies to the conditions of ancient Canaan, not current conflicts.

Finally, the authors name Messianism as a third example of conflict legitimization found in Jewish sources that has played a critical role in the ideology of a radical wing of religious Zionism. Messianism uses texts to argue that the world is currently in an extraordinary moment in history when biblical prophecy is being fulfilled with regard to the ultimate victory of the tribes of Israel over other nations seeking their obliteration, inaugurating the epochal era of the Messiah. Some Zionist groups have argued that the creation of the modern state of Israel was evidence of the dawning of the messianic era, which could be further established through capture and settlement of the land God promised the Jews in sacred scripture.

Before one can challenge this ideology, the authors argue, one needs to understand the psychological and existential concerns that motivate belief in Messianism. Messianism represents, in religious terms, “a desire for utopia, a perfect world in which there is no longer war, disease, or suffering. . . . This feeling can run so deep that, paradoxically, people will kill if they believe that utopia is just over the horizon.” This deep-seated desire among some Jewish groups is tied to the centuries of persecution, prejudice, and humiliation the Jewish community has endured. And given that the texts state that terrible strife and violence will usher in the messianic era, war is seen as not only permissible but necessary to bring about the messianic age. (Isaiah 29:1–8, for example, speaks of violence that will be wrought in Jerusalem.)

The authors argue, however, that Messianism was not a central concern of Jewish foundational texts, which were primarily concerned with matters of *this* world. Those passages that do speak to the messianic era are filled with contradictions and inconsistencies, and the messianic period is presented as coming about entirely at the whim and work of God,

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rather than by the human sword. In fact, Jewish rabbinical sources reflect a fear of the danger of Messianism and dissuade Jews from speculating on any contemporary unfolding of a messianic era.

None of the Jewish scholars at the conference believed that challenging the interpretation of these Jewish scriptural passages will immediately stop Jewish-justified violence, though it can help push Jewish communities in that direction. They did recognize its direct effect, however, in interfaith relationship-building. The other faith delegations appreciated their honest accounting of and struggle with these texts, ensuring a fruitful start to the conference discussion.

Islamic Scriptural Mandates to Violence

Muslim authors Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Jamal Badawi note that “Islamic beliefs and the image of a ‘religious Islam’ are under attack internally and externally. Obviously, this feeling is rooted in and linked to the ongoing wars and internal violence involving many Muslim countries and minorities.” In the midst of these local and global conflicts, authentic representation of Islam has become a source of sometimes vociferous debate, and some of those claiming to represent a “true” Islam have relied on certain Qur’anic verses and hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) to legitimize extremely violent measures against both Muslims and non-Muslims.

The authors tackle a Qur’anic exhortation that calls on Muslims to kill infidels “wherever they are found” (9:5). Putting this passage in its historical context, the authors explain that members of the early Muslim community, led by the Prophet Muhammad, suffered various forms of harassment, torture, confiscation of property, and murder due to their faith. The Qur’an commanded them to respond to this persecution with patience and prayer, rather than violence. After thirteen years of unrelenting oppression, however, Qur’anic verses were revealed to Muhammad that justified violence against oppressors as a means of self-defense. The exhortation, the authors explain, is not for the sake of forcing conversion to Islam or establishing an Islamic empire, and indeed the Qur’an instructs that whatever earthly power is achieved through such a campaign must be employed judiciously to foster spirituality and economic and social justice. This contradicts the stated goals of some Islamist groups that call for violence to establish an Islamic empire, the authors point out.

The authors next tackle another set of passages declaring that Islam must “prevail” over other religions [9:33, 48:28, and 61:9]. These passages are sometimes used to justify conquest, forced conversion, or obliteration of non-Muslim communities. The authors argue that those who depend on this passage to legitimate violence misinterpret what “prevail” means when they define it narrowly in a military or political sense. The original Qur’anic Arabic term, *li-yuzhirahu*, can be more accurately translated as “prevail” in the military or political sense, “to proclaim it.” This translation implies a less confrontational mandate to exhibit or declare the merits of Islam nonviolently.

Finally, the Muslim delegation confronts the Qur’anic call to “jihad.” In the Qur’an and Muslim practice, jihad refers to the obligation to strive or exert oneself to follow God’s will. This obligation extends to the individual’s duty to live virtuously, as well as to the Muslim community’s duty to spread God’s rule and law through teaching, preaching, and, where necessary, armed conflict. In his work, John Esposito, professor of international affairs and Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, presents jihad as a centrally contested issue in intra-Islam and interreligious affairs.⁸ Some Westerners have focused on jihad alone to characterize Islam as a religion enthusiastically committed to holy war while ignoring other Islamic principles. Modern Muslim apologists, meanwhile, have sometimes attempted to explain away jihad defined as an armed struggle.⁹

Overall, Muslim scholars throughout Islamic history have agreed that there are conditions that permit jihad, defined as the use of force primarily in instances of self-defense. Many such studies, however, have concluded that jihad does not mean the *constant* use of the sword to resolve problems between Muslims or with non-Muslim enemies. On the

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contrary, the Qur'an clearly states that, "there is no compulsion in religion" (2:256). Different sects in Islam have emphasized the principle that several levels of jihad exist, and jihad in the sense of individual striving to live righteously is the most important and difficult to achieve.¹⁰ Regardless of jihad's differing definitions and interpretations, scholars agree that its current characterization as a "holy war" goes beyond the original notion of jihad found in the Qur'an.¹¹

The Muslim delegation's paper argues that in all these cases, when Muslim groups use selective passages to legitimate violence, they fail to set these passages within their historical contexts, as well as to read them within the larger Qur'anic corpus. The majority of exhortations in the Qur'an, argue Abu-Nimer and Badawi, call for moderation, peace, and just treatment of others. Misinterpretation results when isolating these verses from the Qur'an as a whole. The Qur'an is not ordered by topic like a textbook but instead addresses particular issues throughout various sections. Thus, a perspective given on a certain topic in one chapter or verse must be read in light of other verses pertaining to that topic. Hadith on this topic must also be taken into consideration. Therefore, the authors argue, "few [texts] must be interpreted in the light of the many [texts]." Indeed, values of mercy, accountability for all action, benevolence (*ihsan*), justice (*adl*), compassion (*rahmah*), service, faith (*amal*), love (*muhabat*), social equality, respect for the rights of others, and tolerance are all heavily emphasized in both the Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition.

Hence, while the Jewish authors emphasized a more metaphorical interpretation as a challenge to scriptural interpretations that sanction violence, the Muslim authors make a case for an appropriately translated approach that more accurately expresses the larger Qur'anic mandates of moderation and compassion. They both demonstrated, however, the need to understand these passages in their historical context and to appreciate the ambivalence in the interpretive community with respect to their contemporary application.

Christian Scriptural Mandates to Violence

Many violent campaigns waged throughout history have been legitimated by the concept of "Christian holy war," or "crusade" admit the authors of the Christian delegation's paper, Susan Thistlethwaite and Glen Stassen. The crusade narrative, at its core, posits that, "God is in charge of war and war exists as an aspect of divine will," the authors write. This concept is grounded in the Exodus account of God's parting of the Red Sea to allow safe passage for escaping Israelites, after which the sea walls collapsed onto Pharaoh's army, drowning all and securing victory for the Israelites. This event firmly establishes the Israelite God as a "holy warrior" who uses lethal force to accomplish the aims of those who are faithful to him (Exodus 15:3 states outright, "The LORD is a warrior.").

This same presentation of a holy warrior God who executes violent judgment on all unrighteousness can be found elsewhere in Christian scripture. For crusade theology, the Revelation to John has the most contemporary resonance. "Zionist Christians" sometimes use its opaque narrative—which speaks of God overthrowing corrupt and oppressive worldly rulers and granting land promised to his chosen people—to defend Israel's use of violence as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy regarding the second coming of Christ. The Revelation of John follows in the tradition of Messianism found in Hebrew scriptures and has been drawn upon by violent messianic crusade movements similar to those the Jewish delegation covered.

While the Christian "just war" perspective, which argues for the proper use of limited warfare under certain circumstances, is drawn less from biblical texts, than historical theological tradition, certain scriptural passages are key. Central is a statement St. Paul made in the Book of Romans: "For [the ruler] does not bear the sword in vain! [The ruler] is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the evildoer" (Romans 13:4b). Just war theorists frequently cite this verse and those surrounding it in Romans 13 to argue that

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it may sometimes be necessary for a “right” political authority to execute a limited war to pursue justice in a world that lives under the conditions of sin.

This idea that humanity is captive to the conditions of sin, which becomes entrenched in social and political structures, is a pivotal concept for the just war theory. It is grounded in the idea of “original sin.” In the Book of Genesis, not long after God has punished the earth’s original inhabitants, Adam and Eve, for disobeying divine command, their offspring, Cain, murders his brother, Abel (Genesis 4:8b). This first act of human violence is presented as a consequence of human disobedience, which is an intrinsic ingredient of the human condition, described as “original sin”. Because human disobedience of God’s will is inevitable, violence in human communities and societies results, argue just war theorists.

Therefore, people need rulers who can use force if necessary to restrain injustice and maintain order, argued St. Augustine, considered the father of Christian just war theory, who drew on Romans 13 to make this argument. But war itself, even when waged by a legitimate authority, is not morally neutral in Augustine’s view: “[F]or it makes a great difference by what causes and under which authorities men undertake the wars that must be waged.”¹²

Thomas Aquinas, who lived in the thirteenth century CE and further developed the just war theory, focused even more than Augustine on the rights and duties of rulers. Aquinas was less concerned with the lustful love of power that Augustine regarded as the chief moral risk of using violence, and more concerned with how rulers are to decide when war can be waged justly.¹³ For a war to be just, three conditions are necessary, according to Aquinas. There needs to be a right authority to declare war, a just cause, and a right intention on the part of the war maker, defined as the intention to achieve some good or avoid some evil.¹⁴ Just war theorists later expanded this list to include measures to protect noncombatants and war only as a last resort.¹⁵

Christian just war theory has sometimes been criticized as “justification war theory” in that rulers have stretched the contours of just war criteria to grant religious legitimacy to unjust campaigns, conflating it with the “crusade” paradigm mentioned above. For example, Crusaders in Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and conquistadors in South America in the sixteenth century exploited the just war theory as they slaughtered millions of non-Christians. In this way, the just war paradigm became the means to legitimize mass violence rather than to constrain it.

The third Christian scriptural response to matters of war, pacifism, is arguably the most textually resonant, the authors insist. This is especially the case with respect to the teachings of Jesus, who overwhelmingly argued for nonviolence. For example, Matthew 26:52 reads “Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.’” Many of the prophetic texts from the Old Testament are also key sources for Christian arguments against using violence and war under any circumstances.

The Christian authors stressed that, in their view, “there is no single position on war and peace in the Christian scriptures and the Hebrew Bible.” Different theological perspectives have selected different texts, and sometimes the very same text, to justify pacifism, holy war, and the limited use of force for self-defense. What this demonstrates, illustrated by the presentations of the other faith delegations as well, is the deep ambivalence the scriptures have with regard to war. While violence is presented as sacrosanct in some passages in all three traditions, a great deal of moral repugnancy is also expressed about violence, along with suggestions for alternative means to address injustice. The delegations turned next to delineating these “alternatives to war” as presented in scripture.

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Scriptural Mandates and Methods for “Just Peacemaking”

All three religious delegations admitted that textual and historical criticism, better translation, and a more complete understanding of passages’ contexts within the greater

corpus of scripture and tradition can help call religious ideologies of violence into question as the only valid text-based approach to war. Still, this effort will likely not eliminate the current use of sacred texts to justify violence and war. Thus the need to find a way to deal with the ideological justification of violence remains a paramount concern. This concern drives efforts to discover a viable religiously inspired program that could be offered as a persuasive alternative to war as a means to achieve justice.

As demonstrated by our analysis to this point, all three Abrahamic traditions are scripturally based religious traditions and, as such, any Abrahamic “alternative to war” program of Just Peacemaking must be grounded in and justified by scriptures. Each of the three delegations found a wealth of material in their sacred texts comprising a coherent ethic and method for Just Peacemaking that can not only strengthen the means to address conflict nonviolently but that can address some of the root causes that lead to violent conflict. Recognizing the need for a peacemaking program to go beyond the immediate prevention or resolution of violent conflict, and recognizing the need to create sustainable peace in a manner that is itself just, the three delegations embraced the term “Just Peacemaking” to define their program. In so doing, participants built on an understanding of “Just Peace” that emerged in the mid-1980s and was developed into a list of ten Just Peacemaking practice norms by a volunteer, interdenominational Christian group that worked together for five years to develop this alternative approach.¹⁶ At that time, Christian scholars articulated ten Just Peacemaking practices:

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.
8. Strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights.
9. Reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade.
10. Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations.

Each practice norm was accompanied by a menu of strategies meant to be applied contextually within an overall framework of commitment to finding alternatives to violence.

Participants sought likewise to articulate and refine practice norms and policy priorities inspired by their religious teachings and committed to Just Peacemaking. Many of the ancient principles culled from their religious texts mirror contemporary conflict-resolution theory and practice.

Jewish Just Peacemaking

The Jewish delegation noted that many topics within Jewish scripture could serve as elements of a religiously defined Just Peacemaking program. However, they chose to focus on two predominant themes that run across the corpus of Jewish tradition: human rights and poverty relief. In their paper, the Jewish scholars surmise that Judaism is particularly sensitive to human suffering because of its long history of persecution. This may explain why Jews have been involved in human rights causes during the last two hundred years. Jews were at the forefront of the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1960s, the movement to defeat apartheid in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, and the present movement to save the people of Darfur. Therefore, regardless of whether Jewish sources speak explicitly about human rights, it has become something of a primary religious mandate within the tradition.

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Jewish scripture, explain the authors, does not necessarily speak in explicit “rights-based” language. Rather, moral imperatives are defined primarily as duties requiring the performance of specific actions. But many of those duties *entail* rights, argue Kimelman and Eisen. For example, the duty not to murder implies a right to life. The duty not to steal and the duty to return lost objects imply that human beings have a right to property. Thus, while Jewish sources do not use the language of rights, they take positions that often amount to a defense of rights. In addition, the authors addressed the universality of these moral duties and rights, saying that though the scriptures delineate specific laws for the Jewish community, ample evidence indicates that there are moral norms applicable to all humanity, such as the Noahide code given to all creation.

The Jewish scholars maintain that in arguing for human rights, the emphasis on duties should not be neglected as it often is in today’s discussions of ethics. Rights alone are only protective of people’s interests, while duties go further by proposing that human beings have a moral obligation to seek good actively; that they commit themselves to acts for others out of recognition of their rights and basic dignity. This moral imperative to action on behalf of others is very much needed in today’s world.

The Jewish participants assert that the practical implication of the religious mandate to protect human rights is clear in the contemporary context. Because Jews have ample support in their tradition for the notion of human rights, whatever their differences with their Palestinian neighbors, their basic human rights need to be respected. This does not mean that Jews should abandon their right to self-defense; that, too, is a Jewish imperative. It just means that Jews have to weigh that right carefully against the rights of others, argue the authors.

Second, Jewish texts are also preoccupied with concern for the poor, which extends into rabbinical literature and contemporary Jewish activism and is tied to a larger concern in Judaism for society’s oppressed and underprivileged, a sensitivity that has its source in Jewish history. Jewish nationhood is rooted in the ancient enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt as recounted in the Book of Exodus, an experience that leaves an indelible imprint on Jewish scripture and consciousness. Jewish texts from the Hebrew Bible onward constantly invoke this experience as an impetus to care for society’s needy, arguing that Jews should be sensitive to suffering on account of the hardships they themselves endured. “The importance of these social and economic justice imperatives is underscored by the fact that in a number of biblical passages, God is depicted as the defender of the poor and the oppressed,” write the authors.

The writings of rabbinic and medieval Judaism also speak not only of offering charity to the poor, but of respecting individuals’ dignity by supporting economic empowerment that leads to self-sufficiency. Moreover, although the Hebrew Bible does not specifically issue a decree for this charity to extend beyond the Jewish community, rabbis created a special injunction commanding Jews to support poor non-Jews as part of a category of laws designed to promote “the paths of peace.” Maimonides connected this law to the principle of imitating God, saying that just as God is merciful to all his creatures, so should Jews be.¹⁷

Many of these laws have clear implications for Jews in the international arena. First, Jews are required to provide humanitarian aid to the world’s poor, including non-Jews and Palestinians. Second, charity that economically empowers its recipient is desirable, implying the worth of business partnerships between Jews and Palestinians that can cultivate shared economic interest and benefit. All of this speaks to the importance of economic support, economic empowerment, self-sufficiency, and cooperation as components of peacemaking.

Islamic Just Peacemaking

The Muslim delegation asserted that peace is a central preoccupation in Islam: “Islam is a religion that preaches and obligates its believers to seek peace in all life domains. The

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ultimate purpose is to live in a peaceful as well as just social reality.” The quest for peace in Islam, as relayed by the Qur’an and hadith, is through nonviolent resolution to disputes through arbitration; extension of forgiveness to promote reconciliation following a conflict; and the maintenance of social, political, and economic justice for all humanity.

To begin, the Qur’an shuns violence as a means to settle disputes and repeatedly encourages Muslims to seek peace with each other and non-Muslims as the most righteous path: “the believers are but a single brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your [contending] brothers. . .” (49:10). The Prophet, whom Muslims are called to imitate, was known for acting as a mediator between many competing tribes during his time.

Muslim culture and religion utilize a particular set of values and norms in mediating conflicts, explain the Muslim participants, that may differentiate it from practices in other cultures. Islamic conflict resolution, for example, is based on communal and collective solidarity. As such, mediation or arbitration is often not restricted to the individual disputants but tends to involve additional people from the community and extended family. Promoting inclusion and cooperation with others as members of the universal ummah (Muslim community) is a core value of Islamic peace building. As a result, collectivist and nontangible aspects of a conflict, such as public image, are often central to any process of resolution. Moreover, a mediator is expected not only to facilitate but also to play an active role in articulating certain values of justice and peace that must be considered in reaching agreement. The legitimacy of the third-party intervener stems from his religious, social, and cultural rank. Age, gender, class, and tribal affiliation are often more important than legal training or other formal education credentials in finding the proper mediator.

Second, the Qur’an stresses forgiveness as a proper response to injustice and violence, calling it a higher virtue to forgive than to bear hatred (42:37–43). The Prophet said: “God fills with peace and faith the heart of one who swallows his anger, even though he is in a position to give vent to it.” Throughout the Qur’an, the Prophet set an example of a forgiving attitude. When he was persecuted during the Meccan period, he said: “Forgive them Lord, for they know not what they do.”¹⁸

Therefore, a successful process should result not only in a temporary settlement but, also in a deeper form of reconciliation that can break the cycle of revenge violence that so often propels warfare. It does not mean absolution or forgetting the past but rather pushing communities who have suffered at each other’s hands into a new future and relationship. It is part of a two-step process, one person recognizing and taking responsibility for his harmful action, and the other person extending his forgiveness.¹⁹

Finally, in their paper, the Muslim scholars argued that Islam takes conflict resolution beyond a narrow definition of dispute settlement, presenting peacemaking as seeking to achieve the value of one human family. Equality among individuals is prevalent in Islamic tradition and values, promoted and acknowledged as a basic tenet due to the oneness and common human origin of all people. The Qur’an states:

O mankind! We created you from a single [pair] of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other [not that ye may despise each other]. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is [he who is] the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well-acquainted with all things (49:13).

As demonstrated in this verse, Islam contains no privilege based on race, ethnicity, or tribal association. The only distinction between people is their devotion to Allah, evaluated by their faith (*iman*) and good deeds (*amel-I-salih*). A saying of the Prophet acknowledges the universal equality among humans: “You are all from Adam and Adam is made of dust.” Islam underscores that all people are the children of Adam and Eve, and traditional mediators and arbitrators often cite such sayings in calling for communal harmony.

Nevertheless, pluralism and diversity are also core values in Islamic tradition and religion. The Qur’an asserts that differences are inherent in human life (11:118-119,

The Qur’an shuns violence as a means to settle disputes and repeatedly encourages Muslims to seek peace with each other and non-Muslims as the most righteous path.

Faithful Muslims must continue to grapple with what defines an infidel and consider the mandate to persecute them within the larger Qur'anic message of peace, moderation, and compassion toward others.

10:99, 16:93), and it celebrates diversity and calls for tolerance of differences based on gender (49:13, 53:45); skin color and language (30:23); beliefs (64:2); ranks (6:165); and social groupings and communities (2:213, 10:19, 7:38, 13:30, 16:63, 29:18, 35:42, 41:42, 64:18).

Tolerance of the non-Muslim believers, is repeatedly accepted and emphasized in both the Qur'an and hadith. The Qur'an calls on those of all faiths to abandon fighting and coexist. It reaffirms the validity of other religions and requires its followers to respect the scriptures of other faiths (3:64, 5:68–69). On the other hand, however, throughout history, Muslims have shown intolerance of nonbelievers, or infidels. Those who were cast as “Kafir” were persecuted, their punishment supported by certain statements from the Qur'an or hadith (following literal interpretations and ignoring the historical context of these religious teachings). Faithful Muslims must continue to grapple with what defines an infidel and consider the mandate to persecute them within the larger Qur'anic message of peace, moderation, and compassion toward others.

The Muslim paper repeatedly emphasizes the practice of social and economic justice as a means to build peace. A main call of Islam is to establish a just social reality. Thus, the evaluation of any act or statement should be measured according to whether, how, and when it will accomplish the desired social reality. In Islam, acting for the cause of God is synonymous with pursuing *adl*, justice. The Qur'an states that, “One should do good [*ihsan*—benevolence] not only to one's parents and relations but also to the orphans, the needy, the helpless, and the neighbor whether he is related to one in any way or not at all” (17:24–26). Social and economic justice is so important in Islam that efforts to promote justice are likened to worshiping God, and charity is an obligation every Muslim must carry out within his or her limits, prescribed in at least twenty-five Qur'anic verses.

Throughout the Qur'an, Allah commands acts of justice and forbids all “shameful deeds,” injustice, and rebellion (16:90).²⁰ Muslims are also mandated to take responsibility for correcting social injustice in their communities. As accounted in the Qur'an, this can be accomplished through activism, third-party intervention, and divine intervention. In addition, the Prophet has called Muslims to mobilize and be steadfast against injustice, even if the injustice comes from a Muslim. Struggling against oppression (*zulu*), assisting the poor, and pursuing equality among all humans are core religious values emphasized throughout the Qur'an and hadith.

The connection of peace building with justice is thus never far from the surface in Islam. Justice and peace are presented as interconnected and interdependent: peace is the product of order and justice, and so one must strive for peace through the pursuit of justice. This is the obligation of the believer as well as the ruler. Beyond that, however, Muslims regard the pursuit of both peace and justice as an obligation for all humanity, and not just Muslims; this kind of work brings God's blessings to all people. “God loves those who are Just,” declares the Qur'an (60:8).

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Christian Just Peacemaking

As mentioned earlier, the Christian authors assert that the Christian scriptures overwhelmingly argue for pacifism in the face of war and violence. “Blessed are the peacemakers,” said Jesus, who is referred to as the “Prince of Peace,” “for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9). The authors draw as well from the Hebrew texts in making this argument, noting that the prophet Isaiah is said to have equated the coming of the Messiah, understood as Jesus in Christian theology, with “endless peace” (Isaiah 9:5–7).

However, principled pacifism calls one to go beyond the condemnation of war to promote constructive steps toward creating a just and peaceful world. In framing their articulation of Just Peacemaking, the Christian scholars rely heavily on the paradigm as presented in the book *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War* and mentioned above.²¹ In particular, the Christian scholars focus on the practice norms of actively pursuing peace through nonviolent means; promoting economic, political, and social justice; and strengthening cooperation.

Thistlethwaite and Stassen cite New Testament scripture to promote nonviolent direct action to protest and transform instances of injustice. In his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Jesus calls on his followers to turn the other cheek if slapped. This was not a call for submission to violence, but rather an act of resistance. In Jesus's time, explain the authors, one would have been struck on the right cheek with the back of the right hand because in that culture, touching someone with the left hand was considered undignified. Hence, to turn the left cheek toward the oppressor was to put him/her in a compromised situation, unable to issue the proper backhanded slap with the right hand. Similarly, Jesus called on those being sued by a creditor for their coat to give not only the coat but the cloak, too, leaving the indebted naked in court and thereby exposing the greed of the creditor. In these examples, the authors argue, Jesus is calling on his followers not merely to comply meekly with oppressors but to "take an explicit transforming initiative, nonviolently, to confront the injustice of the oppressive situation."

The Christian scholars also speak of the need to take "independent initiatives to reduce hostility" when tensions between two competing people or communities are escalating. The scholars drew from biblical examples, such as the story of brothers Jacob and Esau confronting each other in peace after years of mutual hostility in the Book of Genesis. In this story, Jacob precedes their encounter with initiatives of respect shown toward Esau. This sort of series of small initiatives to build trust leading to direct engagement is the *modus operandi* encouraged by the Christian scholars.

The Christian delegation, like the Islamic delegation, emphasizes practices of non-violent conflict resolution through third-party intervention, as well as through direct engagement and problem-solving by disputing parties, both heralded by Jesus and the apostle Paul as depicted in scripture. The authors acknowledge that Western Christian-majority cultures may need to modify dominant philosophies such as rationalism and national-interest models that have driven conflict-mediation theory. They instead encourage cooperative and collaborative problem-solving as a model of conflict resolution: "We prefer the term cooperative conflict resolution, which recognizes that in the real world of threat and potential destruction, our security depends on our adversary's sense of security, and theirs on ours." Conflict resolution practices should entail an active partnership where adversaries listen to each other and come to understand each other's perspectives. Disputants should also consider how religion and culture, not just politics and military power, have shaped strategic interests.

Finally, the Christian paper emphasizes the constructive role played when those responsible for inflicting violence or permitting it to be waged offer repentance and seek forgiveness. Rather than judging others, the Christian scholars noted, Jesus called on his followers to work on bettering themselves (Matthew 6:12-15, 7:1-5). By practicing forgiveness and taking responsibility for one's own actions or failures to act, the authors write, one can help to "pull the thorn of resentment out from past injustices, atrocities, and even massacres," which can allow individuals and communities to break the cycle of violence/vengeance-violence and move forward into a reconciled and constructive future.

The Christian tradition is also rooted in and continues the ministry of the ancient Hebrew prophets, who were supremely preoccupied with God's call for social, political, and economic justice. The word "righteousness" in Hebrew, explains the Christian paper, "is synonymous with 'delivering justice' ... the kind of justice that delivers the downtrodden from domination and brings the outcasts into the community." Thirty-seven times in the gospel, Jesus confronted the wealthy and ruling authorities in Jerusalem and their supporters, criticizing them for their injustices: domination of the powerless, exclusion of outcasts, oppression of the poor, and violence against victims.²²

These examples encompass economic, political, and social justice. Those who wield power and influence in social, political, and economic realms are called to wield that power justly and to share it with the less powerful. Economic justice, poverty, and the rights of the poor are a primary focus in the gospels, with Jesus constantly drawing

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attention to the poor in his preaching. He laments the unethical gap between the wealthy and the poor and calls on the wealthy to share their resources with their needy brothers and sisters. Indeed, Jesus highlights a direct link between salvation, or entry into heaven, and the degree to which one has shared his/her wealth with others (Luke 18:25, 19:8–9).

Jesus calls on political authorities to rule justly by recognizing the dignity of all. He decries arbitrary rulings by kings who “rule over” their subjects while calling themselves their “benefactors.” Instead, he calls on his disciples to lead by serving others, an exhortation that resonates with the democratic model of leadership as public servitude (Luke 22:25-27). This sense of justice extends to all, as Jesus draws near to him even the socially marginalized deemed impure or socially inferior: the tax collectors and prostitutes. His model of sharing meals and teachings with all demonstrates radical social inclusion and social justice.

Justice is also linked to peace in the scriptures, the Christian authors note. Isaiah prophesies that when justice comes, then peace will be the effect (Isaiah 32:16). And Jesus’s message of peace is intimately and inextricably linked to his promotion of justice throughout his ministry.

Finally, the Christian paper includes explicit support for transnational cooperation, taking the form, for example, of international organizations such as the United Nations. This is grounded in the Christian scriptural mandate to reach out to foreign nations. The disciples of Jesus traveled extensively and extended membership in their community to others, engaging with them on central questions of what it means to live well, both politically and spiritually. International organizations create this space and incentive for nations to work cooperatively and to resolve disputes nonviolently. Jesus proclaimed to his followers that they must include even their enemies in the community of neighbors (Matthew 5:44–45); this mandate is particularly resonant in today’s globalized world. The cooperative covenants and treaties made between countries in these organizations can help to check the “sins” of nations, the authors argue, which might help prevent the easy proliferation of violence or injustice by an otherwise unchecked power.

The Christian paper speaks specifically of particular international treaties and covenants that deserve strengthening. This includes human rights treaties that protect the sanctity/dignity of all humans, an ethic that resonates clearly with Christian tenets. The Christian authors highlight the necessity of international commitments to reduce weapons and the weapons trade, pointing to Jesus’s commandment to his disciples to put away their swords, (Matthew 26:52). The Christian authors extend their call for global cooperation beyond the obligations of governments to work together; they call on civic organizations and peacemakers to strengthen their cooperative strategic alliances as well.

Toward an Abrahamic Just Peacemaking Paradigm

What was strikingly clear from the outset of the conference, noted the participants, was the strong conviction shared by all about the need for the articulation and promotion of a faith-based Just Peacemaking paradigm. Each faith delegation emphasized the urgent necessity for their faith community to take responsibility for implementing a consistent program for peacemaking grounded in and driven by their religious tradition. A frustration articulated by many participants in the papers and discussion was that though their faith community promotes peace in theory, it is not always borne out with consistent action and practice. A commitment to proactive responsibility to build peace creates the foundation out of which peace might actually be achieved.

For example, Muslim participants asserted in their paper that, “Much of the frustration that exists among many Muslims is . . . the lack of current mechanisms to apply [Muslim] values and principles in their communities.” To identify and eradicate the obstacles that prevent economic, social, and political development, which is so often the root cause

of conflict, an effective strategy within a framework of Islamic values and principles is needed. The achievement of economic, social, and political justice, however, will never be attained through rhetoric alone. It requires actions and deeds, which are simultaneously important responsibilities that God and the Prophet Muhammad instructed followers to adopt. In Islam, Muslim scholars explained, the real spiritual test is faith-inspired action, rather than faith alone.²³

The Christian participants expressed their own frustration with fellow Christians who talk of peace without identifying or committing to specific practices. Christianity's spirit of discipleship, however, calls the followers of Jesus to take responsibility for actions to promote justice and peace. Jesus's commandments to his disciples were often focused on actions, rather than just particular beliefs; accounts of people who took concrete steps to relieve the suffering of others (such as the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:30–35) illustrated his primary commandment to love God and neighbor. Recognition of this motivated the Christian scholars to work toward developing a Just Peacemaking ethic that could delineate concrete steps and actions for Christians to take to help build peace.

This is all to say that any scripturally based abstract principles for peace and justice must be translated into practical steps that faith communities can take. Motivated by a commitment to create such a program that would resonate within all three of their religious traditions, the conference participants were pleased to find several cogent places of agreement in their models of Just Peacemaking as they separately interpreted them prior to the conference. Moreover, these places of convergence in their sacred texts' presentation of the means to create peace are often supported by assertions in contemporary conflict resolution theory. These places of convergence, they affirmed, constituted the nascent form of an Abrahamic Just Peacemaking paradigm. Elements of this paradigm include the following:

Develop and Promote Processes of Nonviolent Conflict Resolution

Conflict-resolution processes are based on the principle of cooperation and the merit of collaborative problem-solving to shift parties away from a competing and adversarial relationship toward a mutual understanding to resolve the issue. This historically proven method for peacemaking comes from recognizing that conflict is an inevitable outcome of human and social relationships, but that violence is not an inevitable result of conflict.

The Christian and Muslim delegations both emphasized nonviolent conflict resolution in their papers, though differences emerged with respect to what a conflict-resolution program looked like in practice. The Muslim delegation emphasized the influence of cultural tradition and tribal practice in shaping specific conflict management techniques, some of which differ from Western negotiation-based models. The Christian delegation emphasized cooperative problem solving, the role of international organizations to create mechanisms for nonviolent engagement over disputes, and the promotion of international covenants. The Jewish participants did not specifically address practices of nonviolent conflict resolution in their paper; however, they did mention the need to engage in dialogue with extremist groups in their own community and with adversaries in other communities to build avenues through which to understand their needs and address conflict nonviolently.

As the book *Just Peacemaking* points out, political scientists also make the case that nations that participate actively in the United Nations and its local agencies make war less often. The same is true of nations that engage actively in regional political organizations, such as the Organization of American States, NATO, ASEAN, etc., and also in international cultural and trade relationships. These organizations create institutional mechanisms for nonviolent conflict resolution when disputes between or within member states arise, and have been able to intervene to successfully de-escalate conflict.

This historically proven method for peacemaking comes from recognizing that conflict is an inevitable outcome of human and social relationships, but that violence is not an inevitable result of conflict.

What is needed is to ensure not only that the institutions for successful nonviolent resolution of conflict are available, but also that there are cultural and religious norms that compel individuals to use these mechanisms over violence.

Mechanisms to ensure greater economic parity at the state and global level are necessary components to peace, a fact increasingly recognized by both development and peacemaking specialists, and a value proclaimed in ancient religious texts.

In addition, anthropologists have repeatedly found that societies that have traditional mechanisms to resolve conflict through mediation, arbitration, and negotiation are far less likely to resort to violence in the face of conflict. What is needed is to ensure not only that the institutions for successful nonviolent resolution of conflict are available, but also that there are cultural and religious norms that compel individuals to use these mechanisms over violence.

Pursue Social and Economic Justice

Participants from all three faith traditions strongly emphasized social and economic justice as key components of building peace. This emphasis derived not only from the scriptures of all three traditions but also out of the recognition by conference participants that contemporary conflict and violence are often rooted in social and economic disparities.

All three papers highlighted a scriptural mandate to eradicate poverty. However, each delegation outlined slightly different means to achieve this goal. The Jewish paper emphasized that this should be done in a manner that empowers and sustains the poor, rather than through a model of charity that promotes dependence on aid. The Christian paper emphasized the need to eradicate poverty through sustainable development that will further promote just institutions and environmental preservation. These two emphases are not mutually exclusive, and in tandem might create a more comprehensive program.

The assertion within all three religious traditions that peace is dependent on economic justice resonates with economic studies and conflict-resolution theory. Conflicts are more prevalent in poor countries (particularly in those lacking sound political institutions to mediate conflict or ensure self-determination).²⁴ But it is particularly economic injustice in the form of inequality that can drive conflict. In 2000, former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan wrote: "The past half-century has seen unprecedented economic gains. But 1.2 billion people have to live on less than \$1 a day. The combination of extreme poverty with extreme inequality between countries, and often also within them, is an affront to our common humanity. It also makes many other problems worse, including conflict."²⁵

In other words, while globalization has brought new benefits to many around the world, including increased living standards, it has also led to greater economic inequalities. These lead to social and political unrest, which in turn often stagnate economic growth, thereby exacerbating the situation and increasing the likelihood that conflict will emerge.²⁶ Mechanisms to ensure greater economic parity at the state and global level are necessary components to peace, a fact increasingly recognized by both development and peacemaking specialists, and a value proclaimed in ancient religious texts.

Promote Political Justice, Human Rights, and Religious Tolerance for All People

The interrelationship of political justice, human rights, and religious tolerance was another recurring theme in the three papers and in the conference discussion. As with social and economic justice, these are mandates found within the ancient scriptures of all three traditions, presented as imperatives to create peacefully ordered societies.

Once again, the religious mandates lifted up from the scriptures and traditions of the three Abrahamic faiths resonate with contemporary political science research. For example, extensive empirical evidence shows that spreading democracy and respect for human rights, including religious liberty, is widening the zones of peace.

Lack of self-determination can have the opposite effect. Political scientist Robert Pape has written that, "From Lebanon to Israel to Sri Lanka to Kashmir to Chechnya, every suicide terrorist campaign from 1980 to 2001 has been to establish or maintain self-determination for their community's homeland by compelling an enemy to withdraw."²⁷ Self-determination and protection of human rights, particularly minority rights, are crucial features of democracy that can mitigate violence as a way to achieve political justice.

Statistics have shown that democratic states make war with each other much less often as well. The need for democracy, however, does not legitimize military means to produce it, argue the Christian scholars. The most effective way to spread democracy has been by emphasizing human rights, not by imposing it through war, an argument that is reflective of the Jewish delegation's emphasis on human rights preservation as a path to peace. Violent force, in fact, undermines democracy, since a healthy democracy can only develop when citizens' groups can organize and exercise their influence through persuasion without the threat of violence.

The most effective way to spread democracy has been by emphasizing human rights, not by imposing it through war.

Conclusion

Participants to the Alternatives to War conference were surprised to discover just how much overlap existed among their presentations of the Abrahamic faiths' peacemaking programs. This discovery led the group to give a general vote of support for an emerging Abrahamic Just Peacemaking paradigm as an appropriate model to frame and propose an alternative to war that resonates with the priorities and values of the Abrahamic traditions. However, it was clear that much more work is needed to flesh out the areas of agreement and to explore areas of difference in the creation of an authentic and comprehensive Abrahamic Just Peacemaking paradigm.

In a joint statement written at the end of the conference, all three faith delegations committed to continue writing and conceiving, drawing from their religious tradition and understanding of contemporary conflict, and to develop further a Just Peacemaking paradigm resonant with each tradition. The conference members also committed to continue meeting with the other faith delegations, and to work collaboratively to fully develop an Abrahamic Just Peacemaking paradigm.

Participants share the hope that this kind of work may focus attention not simply on a religiously inspired ethic of restraint in war making, but on concrete practices of peacemaking that can prevent wars. By promoting religiously inspired peacemaking, a force might arise to challenge religiously motivated violence and inter-religious divisions. Moreover, as evidenced in the papers and conference discussion, the scriptures and traditions of these three faiths contain a great deal of insight about the means to create sustainable, peaceful societies.

A Joint Statement

Religious leaders and scholars of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism gathered at Stony Point, N.Y., from June 13 to 15, 2007, to discuss alternatives to war from the perspective of our common Abrahamic traditions.

We live in a fearful world of mutual suspicion, mistrust, and misunderstanding. The preparation for war leads to the waste of human economic and intellectual resources that could be utilized to address critical global concerns. Violent conflict causes immense human suffering and destruction. Deep unresolved tensions could even eventually ignite a global war.

In light of this urgent world situation, we have committed ourselves to continued conversation and to the development of practices of peacemaking that are an alternative to war. Our exchange with each other was deeply enriching as we learned from each other and as we discovered many ideas and peacemaking practices that we held in common. We agreed to adopt the following consensus statement.

1. As Believers in the one God, we all believe that to continue our conflicts is violation of God's moral code and its imperative of justice. Violent actions as humans do not promote the cause of God and have negative repercussions for all.
2. We all believe that the concepts of "holy war" or crusades are neither compatible with the will of God nor with the true spirit of our religions.
3. We all believe that Just Peacemaking is the best option to resolve human conflicts and actively work toward the elimination of the conditions that lead to violence. We define violence as the illegitimate use of force.
4. We all believe that we have the responsibility within our respective communities to correct scriptural misinterpretations used to justify violence, through education of our own religious communities about the true message of our faiths, and also through engagement in intrafaith dialogue.
5. We all believe that we need to look both inward to our traditions as we do this work, and look outward to share results and receive feedback.
6. We all believe that psychological issues, social issues, and historical narratives must be taken into account as critical components of the process of conflict transformation.
7. We all believe that there is no religious justification for "terrorism" that targets innocents/noncombatants.
8. We recognize that we have continuing tensions, unresolved issues, and tasks, such as:
 - a) to take account, soon, of the extraordinary crisis and risk to human survival in current global affairs. We cannot wait, however, to solve all the "issues" before we act;
 - b) to understand in what sense each tradition must promote its own claims for "truth" without engaging in triumphalism. Can an "invitational" religion not imply some form of superiority over others?
 - c) to determine if our diverse historical experiences remain merely side by side, or must we work to write a common account of our histories? Are histories reconcilable? Can we internalize the "other's" history?
9. We propose to explore a world day of celebration of shared human dignity.
10. We all agree that we should explore the necessary procedures and steps to implement this document.
11. We all agree to mine our own religious traditions to further develop the Just Peacemaking practices.

Participants

Muslim

- Dr. Mohammed Abu-Nimer—American University
Dr. Jamal Badawi—St. Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
Dr. Muhammad Shafiq—Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue, Nazareth College
Dr. Sayyid Syeed—Secretary-General, Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)
Ms. Rabia Harris—Muslim Peace Fellowship
Ms. Shaza Khan—University of Rochester
Mr. Ibrahim Ramey—Fellowship of Reconciliation
Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi—Fiqh Council of America

Jewish

- Dr. Robert Eisen—George Washington University
Dr. Reuven Kimelman—Brandeis University
Dr. Raquel Ukeles—Fairfield University
Dr. David Gordis—Hebrew College
Ms. Blu Greenberg—Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance
Rabbi Dr. Eugene Korn—Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding of Sacred Heart University

Christian

- Dr. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite—Chicago Theological Seminary
Dr. Glen Harold Stassen—Fuller Theological Seminary
Mr. Matt Hamsher—Fuller Theological Seminary
Dr. Andrew Sung Park—United Theological Seminary
Dr. Duane Friesen—Bethel College
Dr. Pamela Brubaker—California Lutheran University
Dr. Traci West—Drew University
Mr. James Burke—Duke University

Moderators

- Dr. Donald Shriver—Union Theological Seminary
Dr. Peggy Shriver—National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
Rev. Barbara Green—Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy

Notes

1. The “Abrahamic tradition” encompasses Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The term recognizes that all three religions share foundational narratives and texts that derive from ancient Hebrew scriptures. The figure of Abraham, a patriarch in the Hebrew scriptures, is important in all three religious traditions.
2. References to the unpublished paper, submitted at the conference and authored by members from each of the three faith delegations, appear throughout this report.
3. Menahem Kasher, *Torah Sheleimah* (Jerusalem: Beth Torah Sheleimah, 1949–1991), 14:272f.
4. “The possibility of the Exodus text already being taken metaphorically is reinforced by the account in Numbers 14 where Moses warns Israel of defeat were they to attack Amalek without any mention of the aforementioned Exodus episode. In light of the alleged prominence of Amalek this argument from silence is quite eloquent.” *Alternatives to War: A Jewish Perspective*, 3.
5. Jacob Milgrom, Numbers, *The JPS Torah Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 429.
6. Maimonides, Laws of Kings, 5:4; Laws of Prohibited Relations, 12:25.
7. Abraham Kook, *Tov Ro'i* (Jerusalem 5760), 22. See also Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 197; Sprinzak, *Ascendance*, 30–32, 43–51, 106–77.
8. John Esposito, *The Islamic Threat* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and his earlier work, *Islam: the Straight Path* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).
9. Unfortunately, the association of Muslims with violent jihad has become standard, particularly in Western media. Some argue that the self-fulfilling prophecy of jihad has become a phenomenon of our time. Muslim activists (violent and nonviolent alike) suffer the imagery of age-old misperceptions and misrepresentation. A great deal of generalizations are made in scholarship on Islam in general and political Islam in particular. Esposito has captured such misperceptions when he stated: “A combination of ignorance, stereotyping, history, and experience, as well as religious-cultural chauvinism, too often blind even the best-intentioned when dealing with the Arab and Muslim World.” Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 170.
10. Several hadith support such interpretations. Also, some Muslim groups emphasize the spiritual, rather than the physical, jihad (Sufism, Ahmadiyya); others suggest that *da'awa* (calling—the spreading of Islam through preaching and persuasion) is the major form of jihad for Muslims.
11. Abdulaziz A. Sachedina, “Justification for Violence in Islam” (War and Discontents: Pacifism and Quietism in the Abrahamic Traditions. Burn, J.P. (ed.) Gerogetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 1996), 129.
12. St. Augustine, Answer to Faustus, A Manichean, ed. Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2007), 222.
13. In coming to this conclusion, Aquinas drew on the writings of Aristotle, positing a seamless “great chain of being” that comes from God as first cause and ultimately spills out into the last speck of secondary causality in the world.
14. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, QQ 1-189, Question 40, #1, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/summa.ss.i.ss_Q40.ss_Q40_AL.html.
15. The traditional criteria for *jus ad bellum*, or right to wage war, include just cause, comparative justice, legitimate authority, right intention, probability of success, last resort, and proportionality. The criteria for *jus in bello*, or constraints to those waging war, include noncombatant protection, proportionality, and military necessity.
16. “A practice is neither an ideal nor a rule, but a human activity that regularly takes place and that a sociologist could observe. We have judged some practices to be ethically normative because they embody love, justice, and peacemaking initiatives and because they do, in fact, spread peace. But we have not simply derived our ten practices on peacemaking deductively from love, justice, and peacemaking initiatives; we have observed them inductively as actually happening in our history and then have judged them to be ethically normative.” *Just Peacemaking: The New Paradigm for the Ethics of Peace and War*, ed. Glen Stassen (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998), 23.
17. Maimonides, Laws of Kings, 12.
18. Based on Ibn Sad Al-Tabaqa Al Kubra, vol. II, 142, Beirut 1957. (Cited in K. G. Saiyidain, *Islam the Religion of Peace*. (New Delhi: Leaders Press, 1994) 107.
19. Among conference participants, the two-step process of taking responsibility for how their faith traditions have condoned and waged violence, followed by a spirit and offering of forgiveness by others, bridged a divide between the delegations and created conditions in which they could work together cooperatively.
20. Other relevant passages from the Qur’an include: “Allah doth command you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due; and when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice: verily how excellent which giveth you!” (4:58); “Ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, whether it be [against] rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. . . . Follow not the lusts [of your hearts], lest ye swerve, and if ye distort [justice] or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do” (4:135); “O ye who believe, stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to justice, and let not the enmity of others make you swerve from the path of justice. Be just: that is next to righteousness, and fear God. Indeed, God is well acquainted with all that you do” (5:8).
21. *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*, ed. Glen Stassen (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998), 6-20.
22. Glen Stassen and David Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 21.
23. As stated in the Qur’an, “On those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, will (Allah) Most Gracious

- bestow love”(19:96). Furthermore, “If you do good, it will be for your own self; if you do evil, it will react on you” (17:7). In other words, an individual is responsible for his or her deeds and their consequences.
24. Kofi Annan, *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*. (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 2000) 19.
 25. Kofi Annan, *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century*, Executive Summary.
 26. For a more in-depth presentation of the relationship between economic development, stagnation, inequality, and humanitarian crises, see *Economic Development, Inequality, and War: Humanitarian Emergencies in Developing Countries*, eds. E. Wayne Nafziger and Juha Auvinen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 30–50 and 90–113.
 27. Robert Pape, *The American Political Science Review* (August 2003), 344.

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**United States
Institute of Peace**

1200 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036

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