VALUING PEACE

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Summary

One of the significant challenges facing people committed to creating a culture of peace is a challenge of values. Values are important because it is out of values that people make decisions and engage in actions reflective of their values. This chapter invites people to identify and analyze cultural paradigms, including an analysis of seven strands -- values, images, language patterns, systems and structures, policies and practices, education, and actions that are common to cultures throughout history and throughout the world. The article also explores core value systems important to grounding a culture of peace. Core values emerge from a search of the spiritual traditions of the world's religious teachings, as well as from world order and feminist thought.

From religious and spiritual traditions, people acquire spiritual values; from people's understanding of themselves as members of one human community, people develop world order values; and from the teachings of those who seek justice and equality for all people and care for the eco-system, people embrace feminist values. Integral peace is grounded on spiritual values, and is manifested through actions that flow from both personal and public values. Personal values, which are absorbed during the daily experience of living with family, and through the daily interactions with others in the wider community, shape character and foster moral intelligence.

Public values, which are not so much absorbed from the experiences of daily living, but are adopted, instead, as a conscious decision to treat others and the ecosystem in just, caring, and peaceful ways, contribute to affirming just relationships, honoring human rights, caring for the common good, promoting global security, and engaging in just actions. Transforming personal and communal paradigms empower individuals and families to work for community, national, and global wholeness; enhance the quality of life for all; cultivate an integral culture of peace, and aid in moving toward the actualization of peace in the home, the communities where people live, work, play, study, serve, and worship, and in the world. Ultimately, this can lead to the creation of a culture that values, cultivates, and celebrates peace.

1. Introduction

One of the most significant challenges facing people committed to creating a culture of peace is a challenge of values. Every person, every family, and the leaders, workers, and members of every business, every religious group, every community, and every government operate on a set of values.

Values are important to creating a culture of peace with justice because it is out of values that people make decisions and engage in actions reflective of their values. People who proclaim peace as the presence of justice reveal the importance that a core value system holds in their lives as they engage in creating a culture of peace with justice.

Before moving on to consider the relevance of values, it is important to first understand the meaning of culture in general, and the meaning of a culture of peace in particular.

1.1 Understanding Culture

Culture can be described as a social system that binds a particular group of people together and aids them in adapting to and functioning within any given social milieu. Culture describes an integrated system of knowledge, meanings, and actions that are shared by the majority of the people in a given society. Culture can refer to a broad social group, such as the peoples of Asia, South Africa, the Roman Catholic Church, or Brazilians, or culture can refer to a more limited sector of society, such as football players, students, the homeless, soldiers, or peace activists. People who are a part of a given cultural group can be identified by their acceptance of a shared pattern of beliefs, shared values and attitudes, a common understanding of terms associated with a specific culture, a common agreement on the norms of the group and the roles members within the group perform, and a common manner of communicating and acting in everyday life.

Culture has been linked to a worldview in important ways. A worldview, or paradigm, shapes the thinking and acting of people in one culture, and also distinguishes one culture from another. Communication specialists, anthropologists, educators, psychologists, social workers, sociologists, and theologians are among those who provide an understanding of a worldview

A worldview has been defined as a pattern of beliefs that shape how people think about their world and how they come to understand their world. A worldview also influences how people think about their own place in the world, how they think about the place of others within this world, and how they come to understand how and why things are the way they are.

A worldview is influenced by diverse factors, including religious, philosophical, and scientific teachings, among others. A paradigm influences how people act within the scope of their worldview. A paradigm is passed on across the generations, shaping people's thoughts and actions far into their future, often without their conscious understanding of or active participation in the process.

Transforming a culture requires an examination of the values and paradigms that shape people's perspectives and that either impede or enhance the possibilities for the creation of a culture of peace, one that both values and cultivates peace in a family, a classroom, a community, a workplace, a nation, and the world.

1.2 Identifying Cultural Paradigms

Embedded within cultural paradigms one can find seven strands that, although expressed differently in differing times and places, are strands that are common to cultures throughout history and throughout the world. Evidence of these seven strands can be found in all cultures, whether one is referring to the culture of a family or neighborhood group, a workplace, a school, a university, a sorority, a country club, a fraternal or military organization, a sports team, a religious group, a political party, a village, a city, a state, a country, a nation, or even an international body. Each of these

seven strands reflects, perpetuates, supports, fosters, or challenges a particular cultural paradigm or worldview.

Paradigms that perpetuate and support any given culture include

- Values that ground and strengthen a particular cultural or world view;
- Images that inspire with possibilities for a particular cultural or world view;
- Language patterns that give expression to how people name and communicate a particular cultural or world view to others;
- Systems and Structures that support a particular cultural or world view;
- Policies that protect a particular cultural or world view;
- Educational theories and practices that stimulate youth and adults across the generations to accept a particular cultural or world view;
- Actions that lead to the manifestation of that particular cultural or worldview.

Any effort to change cultural paradigms must begin by first identifying and examining current cultural paradigms.

1.3 Acknowledging Current Cultural Paradigms

The importance of these seven strands -- considered either alone or together -- is evident when considering people's relationship and response to almost any cultural institution or phenomena, including their relationship and response to the phenomena of war and the military. Over the centuries, peoples' social groups, social structures, and therefore their worldview have changed, evolving first from tribal communities to feudal states to the nation-states of the present. During each stage of human evolution, social groups identified values, generated images, and invented language to justify claiming territory and developing laws, policies, structures, and even weapons of defense or offense to address disputes and defend their people from threat of migration or invasion. Such acts were and are grounded on the value of protecting one's family and group, even when it means devaluing the life of another deemed the enemy. In order to assure that humanity and the universe will survive long into the 21st Century and beyond, there is a need to examine more carefully current world views.

1.3.1 Perpetuating a Culture of War

All seven of the strands identified above can be found in the current understanding of, preparation for, and engagement in acts of aggression, including violence, terrorism, and warfare among peoples within and between countries throughout the world.

The values of warfare include military solutions to intra- and inter- regional and national disputes, competition for resources, and domination, control, and manipulation of others to gain access to scarce resources or further one's area of rule or domination.

The images of warfare include war rooms, generals and soldiers; swords, tanks, guns and suicide bombers; missiles exploding in the night; bodies tortured and torn; civilians wounded or dead; caregivers tending to wounds; and weeping women, dazed and

disoriented elders, and lost and orphaned children wandering about aimlessly in war-ravaged cities or desolate fields.

The language of warfare is that of enemy, collateral damage, body counts, patriotism, war heroes, and being number one, while military terminology -- trigger, bomb, weapon, force, capture, assault, etc. -- now permeates all dimensions of everyday human communication, including people's communication about sports, education, psychology, religion, business, politics, and even family life.

The systems of warfare are competitive, undemocratic, and authoritarian, and the structures an interlocking of a massive military-industrial-scientific-medical and education complex that spans the planet and expands into the solar system itself.

The policies of warfare are those of aggressive retaliation aimed at weakening the one called enemy, tax incentives and subsidies for military development, limitations on freedom of assembly, constrictions on movement, restrictions on a free press, and a growing militarization of a culture.

The educational theories and practices in support of warfare are based on rote learning, individual achievement, competitiveness, authoritarianism, obedience, domination, control, and on a selective interpretation of historical and current events.

The actions of warfare are directed to preparation for and engagement in war-making in government offices, financial institutions, factories, battlefields, the media, movies, and within the hallowed halls of some religious, educational, and community-based organizations, and family homes.

For many people, the images and the language of warfare are concrete, based on things people see with their eyes and hear with their ears. They can imagine warfare as a means of response to conflict, perpetuate a belief system that justifies war, establish systems and structures that support a militaristic culture, debate policies that foster a war system in their institutions of government, develop educational materials and processes that motivate people to accept war, and they participate in actions in support of warfare.

What is common to the values, images, language, systems and structures, policies and practices, education, and actions in support of warfare is the way these reveal engaged human activity. Someone conceptualizes the domination of a people or the building of a bomb; someone promotes institutions and policies that will support war; someone finances it; someone designs it; someone builds it; someone transports it; someone drops it; someone is injured or dies from the bomb explosion; someone cares for the injured; someone morns and buries the dead; someone rebuilds the infrastructures; and someone cleans up the mess that remains. People can see all of this. They can imagine it. They can give these engaged human activities a name. What can they say about the engaged human activities that reveal the presence of peace? John Macquerrie, Birgit Brock Utne, and Helena Meyer Knapp are among those who comment on the limitations of the imagination and language to express concepts important for creating a culture of peace.

People face the reality of living together and sharing the same limited resources on planet earth or perishing together in global chaos and warfare. Both men and women today challenge a value system and a worldview that depends upon dominance, superiority, authoritarianism, competitiveness, and exploitation for its existence. Such a value system has permeated many dimensions of life, affecting relationships at the personal, social, and professional levels, locally, nationally, and internationally. Attitudes of superiority and competitiveness lead to the establishment of vast defense networks needed to maintain a system of domination and exploitation. People within and between tribal groups and nations compete with others, even to the point of death, in order to secure a favored position, or access to scarce resources or positions of authority, giving proof that where such values are dominant, property and control are often valued more highly than life itself.

Patricia Mische suggests that people organize their societies in a manner that assures both local and global security. Security is often conceptualize and organized around concepts of law enforcement or military security. Such an understanding of security affects people at both the conscious and unconscious level, leading people to experience distrust, fear, and doubt with and about others, and influences perceptions about roles, positions, and security systems.

It is people's myths, their fears, their visions, and their values that both impact on the present reality and at the same time influence the future. For it is a truth that people create their future out of the decisions and activities of their daily lives. People who cling to visions of superiority, of military, economic, political, social, religious, or ideological dominance seek to be number one in all areas of domination and control over other peoples. Further, people act out of their vision, creating the means, the social, economic, and political structures that lead to control and dominance, and the sophisticated weapons and military security systems that support it. If people fear domination of themselves or their group by another, then their paradigms, their worldview, will effect their personal as well as their corporate and government policies.

If people as individuals and as a people are to address critical and complex issues that affect their lives in an effective, life-sustaining way for the benefit of all people, they need to embrace new visions, new paradigms, and new ways of thinking about and resolving these critical and complex issues.

1.3.2 Articulating a New Paradigm

Effectively meeting the challenges of the Twenty-first century requires that people's paradigms shift to reflect a new way of thinking about themselves, each other, their community, their world, and their place within it. To do so, however, requires a belief that change and transformation are possible. It also requires awareness that change is a slow process, taking place over time.

People seeking change need to exhibit a willingness to articulate ideas that others consider doubtful, a willingness to take a risk to bring their idea to fruition, and even a willingness to forego recognition of their idea, as occurs when others begin to take such ideas for granted. Johan Galtung provides examples, naming institutions eliminated in

part or in full because of the beliefs and actions of a few. In an ever increasing number of countries around the globe, poor houses have been replaced by welfare states to alleviate poverty; slavery has been replaced by emancipation to eliminate forced labor; and colonialism has been replaced by democracy to promote freedom. With political will, the same can be done to abolish biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, and even the act of warfare itself.

People may incur ridicule, rejection, and even life-threatening danger as they seek to bring about paradigm change. Still, even acknowledging the risks faced, people world-wide are joining their voices with others from across the continents who are calling for a more holistic, experiential, empowering conception of a worldview oriented toward the development of a world of peace with justice, one which will benefit all members of the human community. They are taking steps to move from a culture that promotes a culture of war, or a culture where people are encouraged to prepare for the next war, or even a culture that considers peace as the absence of war and violence to a culture that promotes, protects, and preserves a culture of peace.

Just as values, images, language patterns, systems and structures, policies, educational theories and practices, and actions are all important for perpetuating a culture of war, so too are they important for valuing and creating a culture of peace. Such a culture, grounded upon a spiritual core value system, can be conceptualized as the presence of just and faithful relationships with oneself, with each other, with all others within and between all nations, with all of creation, and with a Spiritual Being/Higher Power who both gives life and gives life meaning.

2. Grounding a Culture for Peace with Justice

Core value systems both ground and strengthen a culture of peace. Core value systems influence people's ways of thinking about themselves, their families, their businesses, their communities, and their countries, and influence people's thinking about their own place within the wider global community. Core value systems important to grounding a culture of peace emerge from a search of the spiritual traditions of the world's religious teachings, as well as from world order and feminist thought.

From religious and spiritual traditions, people acquire spiritual values; from people's understanding of themselves as members of one human community, people develop world order values; and from the teachings of those who seek justice and equality for all people and care for the eco-system, people embrace feminist values. Each of these core value systems enrich understanding while strengthening the framework necessary for creating and sustaining a culture of peace with justice.

2.1 Affirming a Spiritual Core Value System

Spirituality grounds people in all cultures in something bigger than themselves. People of diverse spiritual traditions acknowledge their connection to a Spiritual Being who goes by many names, among them Allah, Creator, God, The Great Spirit, HaShem, The Holy One, Jehovah, Life-Giver, Supreme Being, Yahweh, and other common terms such as Inner Spirit, Guiding Light, or Higher Power. They affirm their belief in a

spiritual presence or Spirit-God force who both gives life and gives life meaning. A spirituality that flows from this belief helps people remember that a spiritual power continues to nurture and sustain them throughout their life.

Spirituality has been referred to as the total style of life by which people live in relationship with a Spiritual Being/Higher Power who both gives life and gives live meaning. Spirituality encompasses a way of viewing and living out the meaning of life, a way of living with others, and a way of celebrating life. Spirituality is holistic, revealing the connections that exist among the physical, emotional, mental, psychological, and religious aspects of a person's life. Spiritual people experience and express the full range of deep human emotions: love, anger, fear, discouragement, sadness, hope, and joy. Spiritual people also engage in the full range of human activities in the personal, professional, and public activities of daily life.

Spirituality is distinct from religion and thus encompasses more than the explicitly religious moments of worship and prayer. Spirituality encompasses the whole of a person's life, while religion is often described as the institutionalization of beliefs and rituals. There are three interwoven aspects of spirituality -- personal, communal, and global -- that each reveals people's sense of their connectedness to their God.

2.1.1 Embracing a Personal Spirituality

A personal spirituality flows from an awareness of a connection to a Higher Power, a Spirit Presence in daily life. People who value personal spirituality express a spirit of centeredness and purpose that grounds one's direction in life. If people's life and work are to have meaning, there must be time in the day for personal reflection, contemplation, and prayer. People need time to center themselves, time for personal reflection on the experiences of their lives, the work of their lives, and the influence and impact these have on their life. People also need time to reflect on the impact these have on the lives of others who share space in the global society. Grounded in the spirit, people express a spirit of integrity that leads them to be truthful in their relationships with others in their families, their communities, their workplaces, and their life. They express a spirit of openness that compels them to both vision and explore new possibilities. They express a spirit of wonder, creativity, and playfulness as a means of celebrating their own and others' existence. They express a spirit of gratitude as a means of giving thanks to God and others who bring blessings to their lives.

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Biographical Sketch

Jacqueline Haessly, Ph. D., a peace education specialist, is founder and president of Peacemaking Associates, and serves as adjunct professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She also lectures and offers Peacemaking presentations nationally and internationally. She is the author of *Peacemaking: Family Activities for Justice and Peace* (Paulist Press, 1980); *Learning to Live Together* (Resource Publications, 1989); and *Weaving a Culture of Peace* (in press). She has contributed essays to a number of scholarly works: "A Hero for the Twenty-first Century", in EOLSS (2004); "Imaging Peace: A Pedagogical Challenge for Peace Educators", in *Holistic Education Review* (December 1997); "From Violence to Wholeness: Families Confront Challenges and Embrace Possibilities", in *Mothering Teens* (Gynergy Press, 1997); "Mothering Sons with Special Needs: One Peacemaker's Challenge", in *Mothers and Sons* (Rutledge, 2001); and "Spirituality and Peacemaking", with Judith Myers Walls in *Families as Educators for Global Citizenship* (2001). Other works include "Values for the Global Marketplace", in *When the Canary Stops Singing: Women's Perspectives for Transforming Business* (Barrett-Koehler, 1993); "Soul Work: A Corporate Challenge", in *Rediscovering the Soul of Business* (New Leaders Press, 1995); and "Journey Toward Inclusion", in *Working Together: Promoting Synergy by Honoring Diversity* (New Leaders Press, 1997). She also produced, directed, and edited *Peacemaking for Families*, a four- part video based on the Catholic Bishop's Peace Pastoral (Peace Talks Publications, 1983). Jacqueline and her husband, Daniel Di Domizio, co-facilitate workshops and retreats on the theme of Spirituality and Social Justice, and share in the love, tears, joy, and laughter of busy family life with their children and grandchildren.