10.

Peacebuilding
A Practical Strategy of Hope

An introduction to the theology and practice of Christian peacebuilding was provided in the first chapter.\(^1\)\(^2\) Christian peacebuilders embrace


Peacebuilding goes beyond ending direct violent conflict. It “overlaps with development and good governance” and refers to “the broad, complex, and sustained process of creating, securing, protecting, and consolidating a peaceful order.”

This chapter will further highlight important dimensions of peacebuilding. These are the underappreciated effectiveness of nonviolent resistance to violent power; the reality that conflict and violence create long-lasting barriers to peace, creating dilemmas and conflicts within peacebuilding processes themselves; the importance of a broad view of restorative justice, and with it the importance of changing worldviews and imaginations across society; the crucial yet rarely recognized role of women peacebuilders in conflict zones; the important role of social and ecclesial practices in re-forming identities and dispositions; and the need to work interreligiously and interculturally to overcome exclusive identities and build sustainable structures of peace. The second half of this chapter will turn the peacebuilding lens back on the United States. US policies contribute to violence internationally. In addition, violence exists at home. Changing these realities requires broad social momentum toward restorative justice and reconciliation. What do we learn from US peacebuilders combatting racially motivated violence? How do they resemble peacebuilders globally? At least six shared dimensions of peacebuilding can be identified. These will initially be illustrated with international examples and, in conclusion, invoked to illumine the work of peacebuilders in the United States.

Nonviolent resistance works. Historically, Christian pacifism was the practice of a minority with little ambition or claim to political influence. It wasn’t really until the middle of the last century that this stereotype of powerlessness began to erode. However, pacifism and nonviolence are still seen as more idealistic than realistic political stances, despite the fact that peacebuilding and religious peacebuilding have been actively and creatively alleviating conflict for decades. In fact, Martin Luther King...

from the 1960s and the Filipino People Power Movement in the 1980s are precedents. One way in which peacebuilders work is through dialogue, bringing members of communities together around goals and constructing shared social initiatives. But direct nonviolent resistance can also be very successful. When political violence is the problem, the first line of defense tends to be military. But could the results be dramatically different if comparable resources were poured into nonviolent action? Nonviolence does not always work—consider what happened to unarmed protesters in East Timor and Tiananmen Square. That being said, the power of nonviolence to resist and defeat adversaries is underestimated.

In their award-winning *Why Civil Resistance Works*, social scientists Erika Chenoweth and Maria Stephan make an evidence-based case that resisters can defeat an opponent by working through noninstitutional or even illegal channels, mobilizing diverse publics, and ultimately depriving oppressors of legitimacy and therefore of power by eroding the commitment and resource contribution of their support base.⁴ They studied thousands of cases worldwide since 1900. In most cases or to a large extent, the power of even a state with resource and military capacity depends on the consent of the civilian population.⁵ Hence two factors are key to the success of a nonviolent revolution: "mass mobilization that withdraws the regime’s economic, political, social and even military support" and alienation of the adversary from its most important constituencies and providers of resources.⁶ A “movement mindset” does not necessarily require a high degree of organization or intensely dedicated membership, but it does require funding, nonmonetary support, and "convening spaces" (physical or virtual), all of which could be supplied or enhanced by donors, nongovernmental, and governmental organizations.⁷

To give a concrete example, Maria Stephan discusses what it might take to defeat ISIS through civil resistance.⁸ Technology could be an essential tool, given crackdowns and reprisals against assembly of

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⁶ Hayward and Marshall, “Religious Women’s Invisibility,” 44.
dissenters, and public resistance. "Hacktivists" from outside support groups are already subverting ISIS's online social media recruiting mechanisms. Humor and satire, part of a long Arab tradition going back to ancient poetry, can also undermine authority and credibility. Testimonies by defectors can counter ISIS's claim to provide an honorable Muslim lifestyle; rebuttals by Muslim religious scholars would also erode support. Outsiders could support these forms of resistance and noncooperation by providing educational materials, by supporting alternative media and communication, and by strengthening the cybersecurity of resisters while undermining that of ISIS members. According to Stephan, organized nonviolent resistance was already going on in Syria, prior to any prospect of military intervention from outside; but instead of funding nonviolent resistance, the United States and potential collaborators turned to the feasibility of military options.

Maria Stephan's advice to the Catholic Church, for example, is that it "take its work on 'just peace' to the next, practical level," by prioritizing teaching and training that brings together the dialogical and the civil-resistance modes of nonviolence. "Catholic universities and peace-building organizations like Pax Christi, Mercy Corps, Caritas Internationalis, and Catholic Relief Services are well-placed to integrate dialogue with nonviolent collective action approaches in their education and field operations." A historical example of religiously inspired, successful, nonviolent resistance is the campaign waged during the Second Liberian Civil War (1999–2003) by a coalition of Christian and Muslim women to pressure president Charles Taylor to attend peace talks in Ghana and finally to go into exile, preparing the way for the election of Liberia's first woman president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Led by Leymah Gbowee, the women used a combination of nonviolent mass protests that drew increasing numbers of women, tactics like a "sex strike" that drew media attention, and direct confrontation with Taylor and his supporters, even following them to Ghana and demonstrating outside the negotiation room. The women managed to alienate portions of Taylor's high-level support, first drawing sympathy and funds from an official in Taylor's government, Grace Minor; then winning the cooperation of the

head mediator in Accra, former Nigerian president General Abubakar. While the mediation mode of nonviolence meshes better with inclusive gospel values like reconciliation, the resistance mode can sometimes be more effective in aiding and empowering the oppressed. Perhaps both are necessary and justified from the standpoint of Christian social ethics.

Violent conflict leaves deep wounds and requires a comprehensive response. When one thinks of the extreme and protracted killing and human rights abuses suffered in Syria or Liberia, or at the hands of ISIS, it is easy to recognize that the wounds of war in the body politic are deep. While Maria Stephan and colleagues argue that nonviolent conflicts and revolutions have better long-term success than violent ones, other evidence shows that when violent conflicts are settled by negotiations rather than by the victory of one side, they actually are more likely to break out again into violence. This may seem counterintuitive. But upon reflection, some reasons surface. A negotiated peace will cede some institutionalized power to competing sides, meaning that power is shared among greater and lesser perpetrators and possibly that no one authority has firm control. Further, no matter who settles a conflict, or under what peace arrangements, not everyone in the society will participate or consent to the same degree, nor benefit equally, nor have the same interest either in ending conflict or prolonging it in lower-level or behind-the-scenes ways.

A good example is the fate of United Nations Resolution 1325, adopted by the UN Security Council in 2000 to protect women from gender-based violence after peace accords have been agreed. The magnitude of wounds made by violence varies according to social status, and it especially affects those who exist at the intersection of multiple disadvantages, such as gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class or caste, religious affiliation, and poverty. Even in countries that are signatories to this Resolution 1325, rape and other types of violence against women often continue with impunity after a conflict has supposedly ended, because buy-in is lacking in the culture as a whole, or by local communities and authorities. When former adversaries coexist on more or less equal terms, it is that much easier for remaining tensions to regain political traction.

Moreover, even when or to the extent that a postconflict society is solidly on the way to reconstruction and the rule of law, past wrongs continue to have deep present effects. Daniel Philpott calls these “the wounds of political injustice.” He distinguishes between primary

13. Daniel J. Philpott, Just and Unjust Peace: An Ethic of Political Reconciliation (New York:
wounds like denial of human rights and secondary wounds like memory, which can impede healing and political cooperation. The primary wounds are human rights violations; physical damage with lasting effects on victims, especially torture; traumatic uncertainty about who is responsible for harms like the death of a loved one, why the harm occurred, and its circumstances; lack of public acknowledgment, or acknowledgment by perpetrators, of the suffering of victims, making them feel “invisible”; the “standing victory” of the perpetrator’s injustice in a “culture of impunity”; and harm to the persons of wrongdoers, who in perpetrating evil “diminish themselves.” Secondary wounds include memories and emotions arising from traumatic events and wrongs suffered (or perpetrated). They also include derivative judgments about justice and responsibility and the actions that should be taken in the future. These judgments can apply to groups and states, not just to individuals. Finally, actions follow from judgments, as individuals, states, and international bodies determine whether and how to bring ostensible perpetrators to justice and make (or not make) reparations to supposed victims. Memories, emotions, and judgments can lead to resentment, hatred, and a desire for acts of vengeful retaliation.

Peacebuilding is multidimensional, consists in a gradual and fallible process, and involves moral dilemmas. While the restoration of right relationships among individuals is an important and worthy goal, the primary goal of political reconciliation is the constitution or reconstitution of a society in which all can trust that their basic needs are met and human rights protected. This is the primary political meaning of just peace. To build a just peace requires that violations or attempted violations of human rights generally will be met with the effective, fair and transparent rule of law within just and participatory institutions. A supporting category is “restorative justice,” which does not dispense with just punishment, but aims ultimately to bring those who have committed violence and those who have suffered it into new relationships of mutual respect, based on compensation for harm, and the ability to contribute to the common good of society going forward. Both political reconciliation and restorative justice as a dimension within it require a holistic approach,


14. On political reconciliation, see Philpott, Just and Unjust Peace, 54–58.

as is widely recognized by peacebuilding theorists. In fact, the need for a holistic, comprehensive and multidimensional political response to violence is a key point of peacebuilding and perhaps especially of religious peacebuilding.17

The processes of peacebuilding, restorative justice, and political reconciliation are necessarily complicated and imperfect. In fact, speaking of South Africa, Charles Villa-Vicenzio says that the process of working toward “better understanding, respect, and trust building” is “inevitably uneven,” sometimes “counterproductive,” and “even violent.”18 Of course reconciliation and peacebuilding processes can fail and break down; but the ambiguous nature of peacebuilding is deeper than that. An example often raised, including by Philpott and Villa-Vicenzio, is that just peace requires trust, and trust cannot coexist with impunity. Peacebuilders indefatigably try to bring former adversaries together in mutual commitment to the common good going forward. However, in the inevitable case that some perpetrators refuse this effort, the rule of law will sometimes require coercive force, up to and including weapons. Moreover, the very project of bringing ongoing perpetrators to justice can play into and exacerbate social divisions that remain, even inciting reprisals. And in the larger picture, bringing adversaries to the negotiating table may have already required compromises and concessions regarding culpability, punishment, and reparations, if not total amnesty for past crimes. As Villa-Vicenzio states, if past perpetrators of gross human rights violations now want “to contribute to transforming the country, then we need where necessary to ‘strike a deal.’”19

For this reason, Todd Whitmore maintains that peacebuilding, especially Catholic peacebuilding, needs a much more robust and operative concept of sin.20 Sin can make even peacebuilding a morally conflicted and ambiguous enterprise. Peacebuilding unites partners with different levels of commitment to the justice and integrity of the process. Agents are inevitably entangled in decisions and policies that enable the wounds of past injustice to continue as part of the cost of building a more just but not entirely just peace. Philpott perceives that peacebuilding involves a “predicament” because practices are “suffused with blemish. . . . If the practices were ineffectual, the ethic would be futile; if they

17. See, for example, the essays in Strategies of Peace, especially John Paul Lederach and R. Scott Appleby, “Strategic Peacebuilding: An Overview,” 19–44.
19. Villa-Vicenzio, Walk with Us and Listen, x.
did not involve partiality, compromise, and intractable dilemmas, the ethic would be pointless.”

For the peacebuilder and the peacebuilding ethic, this underscores the importance of maximizing all efforts toward broad social conversion, and to enhancing the integration of peacebuilding at all levels, from local communities (and their churches, mosques or temples) to midlevel entities in the national context, to regional and international social initiatives, policies, and laws. Religious institutions can be especially useful and effective in that they have a presence at all these levels. The Mennonite John Paul Lederach, who works with the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, has noted that the Roman Catholic Church has an almost unparalleled local, regional, and international networked presence and can use its transnational nongovernmental relief and service organizations to do the work of peacebuilding in a coordinated way.

Lederach himself has developed a widely referenced model of peacebuilding, emphasizing, for example, that it requires leaders at the top (high visibility leaders, high-level negotiations and actions like cease fire), middle range (ethnic and religious leaders, academics, staff of aid organizations, and actions like workshops and conflict resolution training, peace commissions), and grassroots (community leaders and activists, local health officials, refugee camp leaders, doing grassroots dialogue, training, psychosocial assistance), all of whose activities can form an integrated network of change agents. Lederach stresses the necessity of building a “peace constituency” of people who can be resources for peacebuilding within a conflict setting itself, using cultural resources. Ultimately what is required for successful peacebuilding—for reducing situations where wounds continue, and enhancing those in which both political and personal reconciliation are accomplished—is a transformation of imaginations and worldviews so that a different reality is grasped as truly possible.

This is an essential part of the hope of survivors, but it is equally and perhaps even more necessary to the reintegration of perpetrators. Song, story, art, and ritual can be powerful vehicles of conversion and change in which the participants re-envision not only their relation to their former adversary, but also their own identity. In a coauthored study, Leder-

22. Lederach, Building Peace, chart on 39.
BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

John Paul Lederach and Angela Jill Lederach provide many moving cases.\(^{25}\) Angela Lederach writes of her experiences in West Africa, including Liberia, where after the war child soldiers and child mothers, many of whom had been abducted a decade ago, streamed out of the forest with literally nowhere to go. In many cases their villages, homes, and families had been destroyed by their own hands or those of their fellow abductees. In all cases, they were crushed down by the stigma of the life they had endured and the atrocities they had been forced to commit. Outside one village a small band of ragged, dirty, hungry, and unarmed boys and young men gathered and subsisted around the trunk of a large kum tree they called the Tree of Frustration. They felt unable to enter the village; that was as far as they would go.

The men of the village skirted the path that led by the tree. The women began to approach a few at a time, sometimes leaving food and engaging the boys in conversation—talking about the ancestors, the community, telling folktales, singing, and praying. They built a palava hut near the tree, the traditional place for resolving conflicts. As Lederach puts it, they “surrounded” the boys and the tree, making a “shared space” in which their identities could be recreated. When their relationship was strong enough for the boys to agree to enter the village, the “mothers” demanded that they first clean up and cut their long, matted hair. This turned into a daylong haircutting ritual by the tree, enacting a traditional form of intimacy between mothers and children; in effect, the young men were symbolically reborn.\(^ {26}\) If celebrated in similarly context-specific forms, Christian rituals like baptism and Eucharist, as well as nonsacramental liturgies, carry rich possibilities for the constitution or reconstitution of community and of just peace after division and violence.\(^ {27}\)

Women are essential peacebuilders. As the previous incident reveals, women are not only targets of violence, they are often key to rebuilding broken community relations, encouraging others to acknowledge and


\(^{26}\) Lederach and Lederach, *When Blood and Bones Cry Out*, 147–49, chapter written by Angela Lederach.

overcome the wounds of war. They take initiative to set aside divisions and harms of the past, while men consider it unjustified or pointless. Yet there are few globally recognized women peacebuilders, and where religious communities or organizations are active in bringing peace, it is exceedingly rare that women’s role is highlighted. Women are often denied access to political spaces where men dominate. Women are usually marginalized from formal peacebuilding activities and negotiations, and they lack access to institutional support, funding, and policy-setting. Moreover, men have more control over the processes by which policy is (or is not) implemented. For peacebuilding to succeed more fully in its reconciling and restorative roles, the presence and voices of women must be appreciated, amplified, and brought into peace and development negotiations, policies, and implementation at all levels.

When previously excluded women gain power, they sometimes imitate traditional models of power as dominance and control. Yet women typically bring specific assets to peacebuilding, especially inclusivity and a commitment to justice informed by compassion and forgiveness. Perhaps women’s disadvantaged role in patriarchal societies helps them to recognize the effects of structural violence. Religious women frequently stand up for all people’s inherent dignity, including perpetrators. Women seek democratic participation, and “are keenly aware of how external power dynamics, including between urban elite and rural poor, majority and minority communities, or among identity groups, can seep into peacebuilding programs and processes.”

Women are especially engaged in citizen advocacy, drawing together disempowered or minority groups, or other women—on behalf of “those suffering the brunt of war.”

Rightly, men who are religious peacebuilders are recognized for the valuable work they do and the risks they courageously take. In the drug wars in Colombia, for example, Roman Catholic bishops have been

30. Noma, Dee Aker, and Jennifer Freeman, “Heeding Women’s Voices,” 20. Speaking specifically about Catholic women, Maryann Cusimano Love confirms this same picture in “Catholic Women Building Peace: Invisibility, Ideas, Institutions Expand Participation,” in Hayward and Marshall, Women, Religion, and Peacebuilding, 41–69. She highlights that while Catholic women share the values of Catholic social teaching, such as participation, restoration, right relationship, and reconciliation, women are often excluded from formal leadership, even though their presence is essential to the day-to-day activities of the Catholic Church, which is hardly alone in this regard.
among the few mediators trusted by adversaries on all sides. The episcopal conference's National Conciliation Commission worked tirelessly to resolve the violence among competing factions in their country in a peace settlement, which was reached in 2017. Individual priests and bishops have ventured into very dangerous situations among armed combatants to negotiate or to offer sacraments in the hope of converting hearts.32

Yet clergy also often receive credit for the women working in allied ministries, or they receive appreciation for more visible gestures while women's day-to-day persistence in local community-building and problem-solving stays under the surface of public attention. One reason for this, no doubt, is that women frequently operate by creating relationships of mutual support and networks that enable community survival. For women, strength is often found in collective empowerment. Women often mobilize solidarity, support, and volunteers by organizing through their religious communities or institutions. Funders and intermediary organizations in the global North and South (such as the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, the women Peacebuilders Program at the Kroc Institute at the University of San Diego, the international Network of Engaged Buddhists, and Action Asia) can provide resources to these networks. They can increase capacity and infrastructure, facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices at the international level, and provide educational opportunities for network leaders.33

When I had the privilege to travel to Colombia with the CPN as a theological advisor in 2007, we not only visited the bishops' conference but also made "site visits" to witness local peacebuilding activities. In a barrio near Bogotá, the inhabitants had been displaced from their rural villages by the rampant violence caused by the three warring groups: the leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), and paramilitary forces. The name of a group of women working in the barrio captures eloquently the way they envision their teamwork: "Hormiguitas de la Paz" (Little Ants of Peace). Although the slum dwellers were threatened with eviction as illegal squatters, they were still being charged for water and electricity, and their children were in constant danger of conscription by armed groups. But the women banded together to accompany children to school, to build a one-room community center by digging out a hillside, and to use microgrants to produce income for their families. These efforts were supported by a

small Catholic foundation, Codo a Codo (Elbow to Elbow), whose guide and mentor is a Catholic nun, Sr. Inez. 34

Theologians working on peace tend to focus similarly on formal religious leadership, male theologians, and male organizational representatives. In some ways, the marginalization of women in Catholic institutions and in public representation has freed them from constraints on their activity so that they can work more creatively and effectively behind the scenes to build peace, including work with members of different religious traditions. Women's willingness to “reach across lines of difference in tense environments,” to “mobilize communities,” and to challenge dominant theological constructions of gender roles when working for peace, “holds the promise to change discourse and preconceptions about how religious organizations can be involved in peacebuilding work.” 35

Women can often exploit traditional roles (especially motherhood) to advance the cause of just peace, but reinforcing stereotypes and with them limits is always a danger. Women can be “locked into” grassroots activities such as trauma healing, education, community services, or parish outreach programs, while the far-reaching consequences of gender inequities, and the ways they contribute to violence, are overlooked or denied. 36 Therefore women in general and religious women in particular (including members of women’s religious congregations) have a tough challenge in building bridges for peace, while also advocating for and claiming their own dignity, rights, and authority. To be sure, in Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became president, and she and Leymah Gbowee won a Nobel Prize. But they are the exceptions. The women reconcilers at the Tree of Frustration were denied any further role by village men, after the former child soldiers had been accepted back into the community. It was only when the young men themselves insisted on the “mothers’” participation, that their presence and voice were acknowledged by village leaders.

Yet a different case from Burundi, in the Great Lakes region of Africa, shows how one woman courageously and in the spirit of Christ converted her mothering role into a multipronged social intervention that set a different example for leadership in church and society. Like its

34. See further examples in an essay by a colleague, David Hollenbach, SJ, who was present for the barrio visit I describe, “Lessons from the Wounded Edge,” The Tablet, (August 11, 2007), 8–9.
neighbor, Rwanda, where a 1994 genocide led to the deaths of over 800,000 people, Burundi has suffered politically motivated conflict over Hutu and Tutsi “ethnic” identities that were in fact imposed by colonial rulers. “The ‘Divide and Rule’ policy practiced in the colonies was aimed at creating differences among the people and favoring one group, which enabled the colonial officials to consolidate their rule.” These identities were later manipulated to serve political parties and ideologies after Africa was divided into nation states in the postcolonial era. Burundi saw ethnic violence similar to that experienced by Rwanda during a civil war beginning in 1993.

Although a significant number of members of the Catholic Church, including priests and nuns, participated in the ruthless murder of their coworkers, neighbors, and even family members, some did resist the tremendous evils occurring. Emmanuel Katongole, a Catholic priest and former student of Stanley Hauerwas, recounts the witness of a Catholic woman, Maggy Barankitse. Despite rising danger, Maggy adopted seven homeless Hutu and Tutsi children. After the killings began, many Hutus took shelter at the bishop’s residence, where she worked. One Sunday Tutsi assailants invaded the residence, tied up Maggy, and murdered seventy-two Hutus, although her own children escaped by hiding in the sacristy. Maggy saved twenty-five more children from the burning building and secured shelter for them with the assistance of a German aid worker. Maggy recalls that God’s call and an incredible strength came to her on that day, along with a powerful, even mystical, experience of God’s love.

Thousands of children and former child soldiers eventually came to Maggy. She founded Maison Shalom to care for them, which expanded into four children’s villages and a children’s center, then into shelters for over 20,000 children in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda. The children are given an education and job training, but most importantly they learn to grow beyond hatred and bitterness to rediscover their identities as children of God. After the government of Burundi shut down Maison Shalom’s operations in retaliation for Maggy’s human rights advocacy, she moved to neighboring Rwanda.


and continued her work with refugee children. Sustained by prayer and the Eucharist, as well as by a large community of supporters inside and outside the church, Maggy sees her real call as proclaiming the gospel through her life, the “good news” of God’s love, revealed to her especially as God’s presence and power on the cross.\(^39\) She is one of what Katongole calls “ambassadors of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:18-20), living a “kingdom realism” in the face of violence—standing up to violence, renewing Christian communities of faith and life, and beginning a transformation of the societies around them.\(^40\)

To build a lasting peace, it is essential to engage structurally with injustices that cause tension, and to reach the root causes of conflict, furthering development.\(^41\) This brings the Christian peace mission into partnership with other religious traditions, as well as with other entities in civil society and government. Here women are also vital targets and agents. To take just one illustration, Catholic Relief Services has initiated a project with the Catholic dioceses at the borders of the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi to bring together sixty women cross-border traders, who distrust one another due to different ethnic or religious backgrounds and nationalities. This project builds informal networks of trust and solidarity, while improving skills, businesses, and long-term financial security, thus increasing the women’s status in families and communities. While overcoming prejudices and building friendships along with economic assets, the women traders become “agents for peaceful change” in their communities.\(^42\)

Formative or re-formative social practices are key to lasting and just peace. It is not easy for people who have been bitter adversaries to see one another in a new light, as members of the same community, who contribute to and share in the common good together. Contemporary social sciences make it clear that individual identity is strongly shaped by social context and by the cultures, practices, and institutions in which individuals participate. This does not mean human freedom and self-determination do

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\(^40\) Emmanuel Katongole, *Mirror to the Church: Resurrecting Faith after Genocide in Rwanda* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 110-11.


not exist, but that they arise within a shaping environment. Institutions and practices are not “external” to individuals, because identity arises in and through participation. It is the intentions and actions of individuals that sustain cultures, practices, and institutions; institutions and social structures are simply the social organization of individual agency, which, when collectively coordinated and encouraged, takes on direction and efficacy greater than that of an individual alone, or of an unorganized or loosely organized group of individuals.

This is why peacebuilding movements or movements of nonviolent civil resistance can be such powerful forces for good and for transformation, both of social practices and institutions, and of individual and group worldviews. Yet it is also why patterns of injustice are intransigent, conscripting the identities, social perceptions, and habitual behavior of participants, so that the possibilities of mutual respect, political reconciliation, and just peace fail to penetrate the status quo.43 “Because resistance entails a price, most people most of the time make decisions that avoid significant costs and provide significant benefits. They ‘go along’ and sustain the existing social structure by their compliance.”44 Importantly, such patterns of behavior also come with sustaining symbols systems that help connect them to the value systems and worldviews of which they are a part. These symbols give force to the significance of the pattern or structure for the participants, often connecting it to religious, ethnic, or national identities that it serves. The worldview and the structure, as well as the identities of participants can be formed around a just and peaceful, or a violent and exclusionary, set of symbols. These are often given transcendent or religious meaning, which can become a vehicle either for solidarity and altruism or for the kind of “collective egotism” that Reinhold Niebuhr saw as the social manifestation of sin. This explains the depth of wounds of war, the persistence of sexism even in peacebuilding movements, the dependence of lasting peace on the mitigation of root causes, and Whitmore’s observation that peacebuilding requires a robust concept of social sin.45

43. For an illustration and critical theological-ethical discussion, see Kristin Heyer, “Social Sin and Immigration: Good Fences Make Bad Neighbors,” Theological Studies 71, no. 2 (2010): 410–36. Heyer argues that structures are both the cause and the consequence of the moral quality of individual participation. Thus individuals bear responsibility for situations and ongoing practices in which they participate, even if they are not the single, primary, or independent cause.


45. See Mark O’Keefe, What Are They Saying about Social Sin? (New York: Paulist, 1990). O’Keefe recognizes that sin is not an “external” force or reality that “shapes” individual consciousness, it is both internal and external to individuals as participating in a social environment. Catholic social teaching recognizes the barrier of structural sin, but not always how interde-
As the above case of the women traders demonstrates, profound changes in worldviews and attitudes do not occur unless there is the kind of practical validation of social trust that occurs when people share in activities together around shared goals. To move from a sinful, exclusionary, and violent worldview to a just, inclusive, and peaceful one, with its attendant set of practices, institutions, and symbols, requires new patterns of action, not just verbal persuasion or preaching. An extremely clear example of the importance of social identity formation for the values of peace and justice is the story of Maggy Barankitse, who, inspired by love, created villages in Burundi where children could grow up without hatred and bitterness in their hearts. Maggy created a gracious environment within but not of the murderously divisive surrounding culture that had taken the children’s parents and families. She interrupted the cycle of violence to form a new generation whose identities were different. This also describes the patient work of the village women at the Tree of Frustration; it describes the Hormiguitas de la Paz, who were empowering women to recognize their own collective agency for peace; it describes the work of Myla Leguro, a Catholic Relief Services staff member in the Philippines, who runs the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute, where Muslims, Christians, and indigenous peoples with a conflicted history can learn a different way to see one another and become partners for peace.46

Taking social re-formation to the necessary next level, Myla knows that if the community goes forward structured by continuing injustices, then respectful coexistence is superficial and not lasting. She coauthored a report for CRS on land reform, since marginalization of indigenous peoples and Muslims from rights to their ancestral land, by colonial and postcolonial governments, is an ongoing cause of conflict. Not waiting for national reforms, CRS is implementing a plan to use traditional processes and authorities to resolve land disputes. As a “traditional leader” and “village councilor” commented, “Now, people listen to each

Social practices that form identity must be social justice practices as well as spiritual and interpersonal practices.

Forming people differently for a different life together is necessary to every illustration of peacebuilding treated in this book. Core dispositions (virtues and vices), personal behavior, and patterns of social life are interdependent. Social life is no mere product or result of virtues and vices; it instills and enables them too, for the social relationships in which we participate are coconstitutive of our identities and self-understandings.

Interreligious and intercultural cooperation is necessary to expand and revise personal and social identities and create the worldviews, symbols, and structures that sustain and express them. The need for communication and practical action across boundaries of identity has been amply illustrated by many of the foregoing peacebuilders, especially Myla Leguro. Yet pluralistic cooperation is worth lifting up more explicitly. A final example, that of Zilka Spahić Šiljak, a Muslim woman from Bosnia and Herzegovina, will bring into view some concrete dimensions of structural sin, the need for re-formative practices, and the resistance of personal and communal identity-formations that make recurrent violence more likely.

The former Yugoslavia was formed against the background and in a continuing history of contested territories, religiously exacerbated violence, and political turmoil going back to the sixth century. From 1463 to 1878, the region was ruled by the Ottoman Turks. The large numbers of Bosnians who converted to Islam became the privileged class, whereas the Christian Serbs and Croats were mostly peasants. In 1878, Ottoman control was supplanted by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The event catalyzing World War I was the 1914 assassination in Sarajevo of the Austro-Hungarian archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serb nationalist. After the war, the territories and ethnic groups were united and named the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929. In 1945, the dictator Marshall Tito consolidated control of the region, which he maintained for thirty-five years. The federation of Yugoslavia comprised three major ethnic groups: the Serbs (primarily Orthodox Christians), the Croats (Roman Catholics), and the Bosniaks (Muslims).

In 1991, the eruption of violence in Croatia began the disintegration of the country, due largely to a struggling economy, continuing ethnic-religious tensions, and the absence of a line of succession after Tito. Slobodan Milošević, a Croat Serbian nationalist, exploited the power vacuum and attempted to maintain by force a united country, under his

control. By the end of 1992, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina had all seceded from Yugoslavia. When Serb paramilitary forces set up barricades and snipers in the streets of Sarajevo, thousands of Sarajevo residents demonstrated, at first successfully. However, the Serbian paramilitary soon began a campaign of ethnic cleansing of Bosniaks and Croats, laying siege to Mostar and Sarajevo. Ultimately Croats and Bosniaks also took up arms, and atrocities were committed on all sides. International peace initiatives failed in 1993 and 1994. In 1995, NATO attacked Serb forces in response to a massacre of 8,000 Muslim Bosniaks at Srebrenica. In 1995 the Dayton Peace Accords were signed, with Bosnia and Herzegovina emerging as an independent state.48 Between 1993 and 2017, the International Criminal Court for the Former Yugoslavia convicted and sentenced ninety people for crimes against humanity, genocide, and other war crimes, including the former Serbian and subsequently Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milošević.

This series of events has resulted in a “classic” case of an uneasy “peace” established by outside forces, lacking the consent of the governed and disturbed by remaining ethnic resentments, prejudicial historical “memories” of injuries and insults, and religious alignment with factional politics. It illustrates the many moral ambiguities of using armed force, and specifically of humanitarian intervention, to accomplish political goals and establish human security, even when it is justified in the name of protecting the innocent. Religion has played a major role in fomenting divisions and violence and continues to do so, validating the ideology of each group as fighting for ancestral lands against centuries-old demonic enemies. All the main religious constituencies were in some way complicit in the war; accused other groups without admitting responsibility or guilt; and, even after the peace accords, have legitimized ethnic fears and ambitions, which have been manipulated by politicians.49 Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a volatile region, in danger of slipping back into the violence and death that is so recent a memory.

According to a 2015–16 survey of the Pew Research Center, most people in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia are reconciled to, if not entirely accepting of, a multiethnic society. Yet “underlying signs of tension and distrust remain.”50 For example, while 95 percent of Bosnians accept members of other religious groups as citizens of their country, and 90

49. Little, Peacemakers in Action, 106.
percent accept them as neighbors, only 42 percent would accept them as members of their family. This is most true of adults with less than a secondary education. Correlatively, 68 percent of Bosnians believe “our culture is superior to theirs.” Unsurprisingly, then, public trust is low across the region, with only 6 percent of Bosnians agreeing that “most people can be trusted.”

Owing to resettlement after the war, many more areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina are ethnically homogenous than before the conflict. No nationwide reconciliation process has been implemented; instead, “religious symbols and narratives are habitually put in service of ethno-political point scoring,” and the construal of religious others as a danger to one’s own well-being and survival. A prime barrier to political reconciliation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is the postwar construction of an educational system in which youth are segregated by ethno-religious background and taught the heritage and values of their own religion, contrasted positively with others. Those working on youth interfaith education “testify that the levels of religious knowledge of other communities is at an all-time low.”

Zilka Spahić Šiljak is a Bosnian academic and activist whose work focuses on gender studies, human rights, Islamic tradition, and religion and politics. She has taught at several universities in her home country and abroad and is the author of *Shining Humanity: Life Stories of Women Peacebuilders in Bosnia and Herzegovina.* As she states in the introduction, the purpose of the book is to counter the narrative of the country’s past and present, as dominated by violence, destruction, crimes, corruption, and ethno-nationalist rhetoric, raising up the stories of women who worked as peacebuilders during the war and now continue to build networks of connection and mutual support to reduce hostilities and enhance solidarity. This is despite the fact that, subsequent to the war, the retrenchment of each religious-ethnic group involved reassertion of traditional patriarchal roles. In order to work across identity boundaries, these women did not emphasize their religious affiliation, especially at first, yet most were inspired by religious visions of common humanity, compassion, and care.

Spahić Šiljak is currently the director of the TPO Foundation, Sarajevo, a nongovernmental organization supported by a Dutch foundation. TPO is dedicated to the development of democratic civil society and gender equality. One of its primary missions is intercultural, multireligious, and civic education, including the introduction in schools of programs fostering a sense of common humanity, "universal" human ethical values, and greater appreciation of the values and points of contact among different religious traditions. Through an initiative called "Promotion and Integration of a Global Ethic in Education and Politics BiH," the TPO Foundation is implementing programs for elementary and secondary school teachers, both in schools and online. The content of this program emphasizes that all people share certain basic, humanistic values that transcend religious divisions. Its aim is to "build a new mindset," which can form the basis for the cooperation of people of different worldviews in the public sphere. The trainings both expand the outlooks of teachers and equip teachers with language and program materials to communicate to children the importance of mutual understanding, to overcome trauma and move toward an inclusive, democratic society. Educators are convened from divided educational institutions and encouraged to collaborate going forward. The TPO Foundation supplements and supports its education projects with efforts aimed at adults, for example, invitation to intercultural dialogue both through public venues and by bringing together members of divided groups in small communities.

Postconflict conditions and challenges in Bosnia and Herzegovina illustrate, perhaps more acutely, problems that beset virtually every situation of peacebuilding and political reconciliation. A first step is to empower victims of violence so that they become survivors and resisters. A second step is to change the mindset and behavior of perpetrators, so that they recognize the humanity of their former targets and see themselves as sharing in a common enterprise. A third step is to engage multiple social groups at the practical level in constructive civic, economic, governance, and religious activity. Even in relative "success stories" like South Africa, Rwanda, and Colombia, ambiguities, tensions, and complaints will remain, for example, about the proper political role of forgiveness (South Africa), the fairness of traditional systems of trial and judgement (Rwanda), and just punishment and/or reintegration of former combatants (Colombia). In all these cases, cooperation across religious, ethnic, and ideological boundaries is both necessary and difficult.

It cannot happen successfully unless adversaries have the opportunity and will to engage together in socially reconstructive programs and institutions, for the good of all.

VIOLENCE AND PEACEBUILDING IN THE UNITED STATES

Most of the peacebuilders showcased in this chapter have been from parts of the world, usually the global South, in which conflict has ravaged society generally and in which stable and accountable government has completely broken down. Yet relatively safe and secure regions and countries are no strangers to violence, including my home country, the United States of America. In the first place, the economic, military, and environmental activities and policies of the United States have been historically and continue to be contributors to violence elsewhere. According to a 1995 report from the Berlin-based Berghof Foundation for Conflict Studies, the most important factor disposing to intrastate armed conflict is poor economic conditions (e.g., the 2008 global financial crisis, which began with poorly regulated mortgage lending in the United States), followed by repressive political systems (which have received support by the United States, e.g., Saudi Arabia), and degradation of renewable resources (as of this writing, the United States is not a signatory to the 2015 UN Paris Climate Agreement to control greenhouse gas emissions, and US corporations are involved in pollution and the extraction of mineral and other resources from countries in the global South). In addition, US military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria have contributed to long-term violence, instability, and displacement and fueled the rise of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS).

In the second place, the United States suffers violence within its borders, including gender-based violence and violence against ethnic, religious, and racial “minorities,” intensified by rhetoric defending and promoting white Christian culture and identity as the national norm. The discussion to follow on US peacebuilders will focus on racist, white nationalist violence within the United States. But first it is important to see how these two types of American violence, internally and externally directed, are connected in a political culture that produces the kind of leadership that validates violence at home while breeding it abroad.

To state the obvious, perhaps oversimply, United States economic, military, and environmental policies depend to a great degree (even if not absolutely) on the political parties in control of the presidency, the two houses of Congress, and the appointment of members of the Supreme Court. The power of political parties depends in turn on the
electorate, within a democratic process that is subject to significant economic influence through campaign donations. A major factor determining the future of US policies that affect international conflict is the direction of voter support for federal and congressional candidates and the level of voter participation in the electoral process.

In 2016, American voters elected as president Donald J. Trump, a politically inexperienced businessman who ran on a platform of “America First,” used racially toned campaign rhetoric, denounced the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, criticized NATO as unfair to US interests, and promised to build “a wall” barricading the country from immigrants from Latin America. As a commentator on Trump’s first year in office phrased it, Trump represented a trend toward “populist isolationism” and his inaugural address portrayed “the world in darkly narrow zero-sum terms.”

The electoral process that produced President Trump revealed an American public that was deeply polarized, with a very significant number of citizens experiencing some mixture of resentment of political elites, personal economic stagnation if not loss of ground, a tendency to blame other racial-ethnic groups and immigrants for their adversity, and a general cultural anxiety about societal change. The latter was strong both among Trump voters who were white working class (but not among the poor, the majority of whom voted for Clinton), and those who were college-educated, white middle-class suburbanites. Majorities of the white working class say that American culture has gotten worse since the 1950s, the United States is losing its identity, and immigrants threaten the culture. Seventy-one percent of white working-class Americans are Christian, and they are significantly more likely than the general population to identify as evangelical. And white Protestants in the United States are quickly moving from majority to minority status (54 percent in 2009, 45 percent in 2016), a reality that most are slow to acknowledge and accept. “Besides partisan affiliation, it was cultural anxiety—feeling like a stranger in America, supporting the deportation
BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

of immigrants, and hesitating about educational investment—that best predicted support for Trump.”

In an essay on immigration and Christian ethics in the Trump era, Kristin Heyer captures the consequences of these dynamics. “The administration has connected economic anxieties with anxieties over cultural shifts,” provoking “the demonization of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. Bias-related hate crimes surged following the election.” Within ten days of Donald Trump’s election, the Southern Poverty Law Center tracked 900 bias-related incidents against minorities. The elevated rates continued in 2017, culminating in an August white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. After one year in office, Trump had lost ground in the opinion polls. Yet while 46 percent of whites disapproved of his performance, that paled in comparison to 76 percent of blacks. White evangelical Protestants gave the biggest share of religious support to Trump (72 percent), while 60 percent of Catholics and 76 percent of black Protestants disapproved. Toward the end of Trump’s second year, the number of Americans who recognized racism to be a national problem grew, but the increase was almost entirely among Democrats, with Republicans in agreement declining slightly from 2015. This difference was symptomatic of the partisan divide in America. Party polarization made it highly unlikely that Congress would be able to work together to solve the country’s problems, including racism, immigration, and gun violence.

Both before and after Trump, America struggled with its legacies of slavery, racism, and white privilege. African Americans have never enjoyed equity with white Americans in education, employment, housing, medical care, or standing before the law—regardless of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or their individual social class or income level. African Americans have always been subject to physical attack and killing on the basis of their race, have always suffered extrajudicial violence from law


enforcement authorities, and have been subject to disproportionate and unfair rates of arrest, conviction, and incarceration for crimes. According to FBI data, black people accounted for 31 percent of those killed by police, despite constituting 13 percent of the population. A 2014 report by the Baltimore Sun found that the city had paid about $5.7 million in settlements to over 100 people who claimed to have been beaten by the police, and the majority were black. In 2015, a black man named Freddie Gray was assaulted and pinned to the ground by Baltimore police for allegedly carrying a switchblade knife, a charge the state prosecutor later said was false. Begging for medical attention, he was restrained and driven away in a police van, later to die of spinal cord injuries suffered while in police custody. Charges were brought against six police officers, but none were ultimately convicted. In fact, police are rarely prosecuted and convicted for use of violent force.

But in the second decade of the twenty-first century, police violence against unarmed black men and boys achieved unprecedented notoriety, due in large part to the ability of witnesses to capture images of police assaults on cell phone video cameras and circulate them widely via social media. Witness videos publicized the Gray case, among many others in which unarmed black men were killed by police, including Michael Brown, Erik Garner, Walter Scott, Philando Castile, and Stephon Clark. In the wake of an earlier shooting, of seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin (unarmed and carrying snacks from a convenience store), the Florida neighborhood watch volunteer who fatally shot him was likewise acquitted.

On news of the 2013 Trayvon Martin verdict, three black community organizers from California working in immigration and prison reform, Alicia Garza, Patrice Cullors, and Opal Tometi, began to strategize a campaign, circulating the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on Facebook and other social media. In the next few years, the initiative grew to a decentralized network of over thirty local chapters, working primarily through social media, and attained a high national and international profile. This twenty-first century civil rights movement is inclusive, local, and democratic, contrasting to earlier movements that emanated from a single charismatic leader. From the beginning, the leadership of women

65. Jewel Samad, “Police Shootings and Brutality in the US: 9 Things You Should Know,” Vox, May 6, 2017, accessed February 23, 2018, https://tinyurl.com/y7a87alc. This article is the source for the data in this paragraph that follows the previous note.
and LGBTQ activists has been basic and contagious. Theologian Shawn Copeland captures the importance of Black Lives Matter founders and activists:

the critical interruptive performances they inspire have engaged the moral imagination and courage of women and men across the country, especially young people of all races, of differing economic classes, cultural–ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, physical–ableness, religious beliefs, education and work experience. The principles of BlackLivesMatter resonate with political theology's efforts to interrogate and repair, reweave and restore the fraying webs of relations that comprise the U.S. cultural and social (i.e., the political, economic, technological) matrices.67

While a majority of Americans (55 percent) came to support the Black Lives Matter movement, the support remained much stronger among blacks (82 percent) and Democrats (80 percent) than among whites (52 percent) and Republicans (23 percent).68

Many churches and religious leaders became leaders in seeking justice for African Americans and a just peace for our racially divided and violent society. In August 2017, a white nationalist “Unite the Right” rally invaded Charlottesville, Virginia, the home of the University of Virginia. In violent clashes of rally supporters with counter-protesters and police, dozens were injured and three were killed, including two police officers and one woman who was intentionally hit by a rally-goer who ran his car into a crowd of protesters. Many Christian leaders condemned the racist violence in no uncertain terms, including Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops; Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago; Russell Moore, head of political action for the Southern Baptist Convention; and Traci Blackmon, who leads the justice ministries of the United Church of Christ. As one Protestant pastor in New Jersey told his congregation, “To see American streets with people walking down doing the ‘Heil Hitler’ salute is just disturbing. . . . We live in a pretty politically divided country, but as followers of Jesus, we need to make sure that . . . we clearly and loudly condemn any ideology that espouses bigotry, hatred, discrimination, and violence.”69

That being said, US Christian churches remain segregated along ethnic and racial lines. Not all pastors spoke out against the violence, or

68. Neal, “Views of Racism.”
linked it with its specific cause, racism. The majority of white evangelicals voted for Trump, and in lesser proportions, so did other Protestants, Mormons, and white non-Hispanic Catholics. Some believe his election empowered white supremacist hate groups like those who rallied in Charlottesville. They represent neither the American majority nor traditional Republican values like personal liberty, small government, fiscal conservatism, and support for business. But will the majority of Americans be committed enough at the practical level to eradicate racial divisions and institutional racism in this country? Will we overcome the sense of entitlement and apathy about racism that is rooted in the fact that what is (for now) a white majority benefits from unacknowledged and unchallenged privilege? Theologian Elisabeth Vasko contends that “unethical passivity (apathy) is manifested by whites in the form of systemic unknowing, permission to escape, and ineffective guilt.” In an essay that, like this chapter, applies just peacebuilding norms to US racism, Alex Mikulich insists that white people must be actively accountable for white racism and privilege, and they must begin with humility, truthfulness, and solidarity to change racial attitudes among fellow whites. To be a white ally in a movement for racial equality requires more than personally repudiating biased beliefs and attitudes, and it cannot be accomplished by any one person alone. The social and systemic tentacles of privilege and oppression call for collective and individual action that changes working attitudes, ingrained practices, and standing institutions by beginning to enact a different way of life.

The challenge is steep, but some religious leaders and communities are taking initiative. The Moral Monday protests in North Carolina, and the Forward Together coalition of which they are a part, are led by an African American pastor, the Reverend William J. Barber III, who is a former president of the state NAACP. Every Monday, protesters peacefully enter the state legislature, and some are arrested. The demonstrations began in 2013 as an effort by religious progressives to mobilize public opinion and motivation against the policies of a recently elected


71. Elisabeth T. Vasko, Beyond Apathy: A Theology for Bystanders (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 73.

Republican governor who, together with Republicans newly in control of both state houses, was rolling back civil rights and social welfare legislation, including benefits of the Affordable Care Act. In 2016, the governor was defeated for reelection, and Democrats regained control of the state Supreme Court and Attorney General's office.

Barber's political vision is oriented theologically and pastorally by the fact that the Bible is far more focused on how "the least of these" are treated (Matthew 25) than on abortion, same-sex marriage, and prayer in schools. Barber and the Moral Monday movement are most centrally concerned with the multifarious manifestations of racism, but their portfolio is not limited, extending to the environment, tax cuts, abortion rights, public education, cuts to unemployment benefits, and voting rights. Barber's movement has since its inception drawn participation from many races, professional walks of life, religious traditions, and even political parties. The marches have grown into a multiracial and multireligious effort, involving thousands, and inspiring similar action in other states. Barber explains that Forward Together and Moral Mondays exist and thrive "so preachers can fight for fifteen and workers can say 'black lives matter,' and a white woman can stand with her black sister for voting rights, and a black man can stand for a woman's right to health care, and LGBTQ folk can stand for religious liberty, and straight people can stand up for . . . queer people, and a Muslim imam can stand with an undocumented worker." 73

Deep and sustainable change requires a coalition that is broad-based and ready to act. In Barber's analysis, political divisions in the United States in the era of Trump are just another iteration of a reliable American political strategy: bar a politics of solidarity by dividing working and middle class by race, stir up nativism and animosity toward immigrants, and distract from the economic advantages that accrue to the winners. 74

The 2017 annual march drew the largest crowd ever, 80,000 people; and in May 2017, Barber resigned the presidency of the NAACP to focus his efforts on building a national movement. 75

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74. Wootson, "Rev. William Barber."
William Barber has a white Catholic counterpart in the north, Cardinal Blase Cupich of Chicago. Following Pope Francis’s World Day of Peace Message on nonviolence, and in the midst of an epidemic of gun violence primarily afflicting Chicago’s black communities, the Archdiocese of Chicago established an Anti-Violence Initiative directed to interreligious and interracial peacebuilding in its own streets and neighborhoods. The Initiative’s mandate covers not only actions against guns, but also programs proven effective in lifting people out of poverty. The $250,000 funding for the new foundation was provided by the cardinal’s discretionary charitable fund, money to be used in part to expand mentoring, educational, and job programs under Catholic auspices and to partner with non-Catholic agencies.

In a news conference to launch the program, Cardinal Cupich implored civic, education, and religious leaders and “all people of good will” to make nonviolence a practical and local strategy for peace. “The causes of the violence we are seeing in our city are complex and deep seated, but I have a strong belief, based on the good will and the many dedicated efforts of our civic and religious leaders, that these causes can be addressed and the suffering can end if we all work together.” Thus proclaimed Cardinal Cupich at a press conference in a church-sponsored community center dedicated to safety from gang violence and drugs, and providing social services. At the event, he read a supporting letter from Pope Francis linking violence to discrimination and indifference, proclaiming that “nonviolence is not an unattainable dream, but a path that has produced decisive results,” and commending the example and words of Martin Luther King Jr. Ten days later the cardinal led a Good Friday “Peace Walk” to commemorate the city’s murder victims. In early 2018, Cardinal Cupich appointed Phil Andrew, former director of the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence and FBI veteran with experience in Chicago, as the Archdiocese’s director of violence prevention.

An important lesson from Chicago is that visionary leaders often build on the efforts of others and rely on extensive support for the implementation of their ideals. These others do not always get the credit and publicity they deserve. Two years before the cardinal established the archdiocesan anti-violence foundation, Chicago’s black Catholic deacons dedicated a Sunday to preaching against violence in African Amer-


ican parishes across the city. At the end of Mass they revealed T-shirts reading “All Lives Matter,” and led prayer and protests in the streets outside the churches. A letter signed by LeRoy Gill, chair of the Black Catholic Deacons of Chicago, called the newly appointed Archbishop Cupich to join the Black Catholic Deacons in addressing “violence, distrust, and prejudice.”

The success of the cardinal’s efforts in that direction are interdependent with those of many working in Catholic parishes and educational institutions. One example is St. Sabina’s, a primarily African American parish pastored by the Reverend Michael Pfleger, who gained public attention for his support for the presidential candidacy of Barack Obama. Also key to the parish’s leadership and its public role is St. Sabina’s full-time pastoral associate (since 2000), Dr. Kimberly M. Lymore, who also directs the Tolton Scholars Program at the Catholic Theological Union. The Tolton Program partners with the archdiocese to prepare black Catholic women and men for lay ministry among black Catholics. According to Dr. Lymore, “Racism is in the DNA of America, so therefore it is in the Roman Catholic Church,” and it is being expressed more overtly since Trump’s election. “We get a lot of hate calls in our office [at St. Sabina]. The callers usually identify themselves as a ‘devout Catholic.’ We have a lot of work to do in the church in order to dismantle the racism that is present.”

She—as along with many other black Catholic lay women and men in Chicago—is on the front lines of nonviolent but active, determined, and prophetic resistance.

Of course, to produce significant and sustainable social change, it will be necessary not only to condemn and resist direct violence and killing (including better regulation of gun availability), but also the attitudes that lead some “devout Catholics” to condemn antiracism activism and lead others to disengage from the issue, or engage in only a peripheral or impersonal way. For that, it will be necessary to approach, communicate, and even empathize with those individuals and the circles to which they belong. Just as in Bosnia and Herzegovina (and numerous other places), people who enact, defend, or simply ignore violence in the United States


80. For leads and insights concerning the activism of black Catholics in Chicago, I thank Dr. C. Vanessa White, a Catholic Theological Union faculty member, scholar, administrator, and spiritual and pastoral worker who preceded Dr. Lymore as director of the Tolton Program. She received the Juan Diego Award for Distinguished Service in the Church from the National Association of Lay Ministry in 2015 as well as the Augustus Tolton Award for Ministerial Service in the Archdiocese of Chicago in 2002.
are working out of a worldview, symbol system, and set of social prac-
tices that are part of identity formation. While not necessarily impervious to challenge on the basis of logic and data, they have a hold that extends to loyalties, emotions, imagination, and a basic sense of belonging and security. The prophetic voice of resistance is necessary, and the recognition and empowerment of those who are violence’s targets is essential, as we see with the community action of black lay Catholics in Chicago. But an equally important step is to convert those who have the interest in and power to maintain the status quo—and who also may have fears and anxieties about displacement from the social environment that until now has been familiar, secure, and taken-for-granted. For this reason, Rev. Barber, Cardinal Cupich, and the members of their movements are working across multiple sectors of society.

One religious leader who is a longstanding advocate for racial equality in the United States but is not a Pope Francis appointed bishop like Cupich, and who is not like Cupich and Barber readily identified with “progressive” causes, is Archbishop William Lori, of Baltimore, another racially divided city torn by gun violence and riots. Mark Gray, a polling expert who interprets data on Catholics and voting, observes that Catholics, like other Americans, are attracted to partisan causes, “so if you’re a Democrat and a Catholic, you may strongly emphasize Pope Francis’ statements about climate change or the preferential option for the poor. . . . If you are a Republican and a Catholic, life issues may be the most important to you.”81 It can reasonably be inferred then, that while Cupich’s advocacy for nonviolent resistance to racism might appeal to Democrats, who already see racism as a national problem, Catholic Republicans, who are much less sympathetic to Black Lives Matter and the need for a new conversation about race, might see his message as outside of their zone of identity, concern, and comfort.

Lori, however, who serves as the Supreme Chaplain of the Knights of Columbus, has a track record on the more typically “Catholic Republican” side of the ledger. Appealing to all, one hopes, he has taken swift action in clerical sex abuse cases, and he was one of the first US prelates to establish a local review board. He also joined many other bishop’s in denouncing President Trump’s plan to terminate DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals). Yet he publicly and actively opposed provisions in the Affordable Care Act that would require private health insurance plans to cover contraception and abortion, opposed similar services for trafficking victims receiving protection under Catholic auspices, opposed requirements that Catholic agencies receiving federal

81 O’Toole, “New Data.”
funding provide contraception and condoms as prophylactics against AIDS, and supported the Defense of Marriage Act that would have barred same-sex couples from civil marriage. Given this profile, Lori’s leadership on race has the potential to attract a hearing from those who might feel threatened by Black Lives Matter, or at least not see themselves as active participants in the cause of racial justice.

As a young priest, Lori asked to be assigned to an African American parish to learn more about a Catholic culture and its challenges that was outside his own experience. During the 2015 explosion of violence in Baltimore, Lori visited one of the affected neighborhoods, and saw a priest in the street with a broom, cleaning up the debris—not the steps of his church, but the neighborhood space. Soon others joined him with brooms and rakes, and in this Lori found an important lesson about addressing racial tensions. He shared with other Baltimore faith leaders in a 2017 panel on “violence, faith, and policing,” describing their “partnership” as helping the community move forward.82

In his 2018 pastoral letter, issued in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, Lori thanks members of the archdiocesan Office of Black Catholic Ministries for their efforts to educate young people about the accomplishments and legacy of Dr. King, and he recognizes the efforts and support of many in local government, faith communities, education and nonprofits, and well as in the neighborhoods, to birth hope through creative action. Speaking for and to other white people, Lori names “the sin of racism” that “has tarnished the soul of our society for so long that racist attitudes can be deeply embedded in our subconscious, such that we may hardly know they are there.” He repudiates coarse and vitriolic public rhetoric. He calls for action on “deep and systemic” problems spawning despair and violence, such as lack of education, housing, and employment; easily available illegal weapons; drug abuse and gangs; and “disintegration of the family.”83 He then develops the contemporary relevance of King’s six principles of nonviolent action, concluding with the reconciliation of “opposing parties” in US political and racial debates: “we should not be competing with one another . . . but rather cooperating, networking and pooling our wisdom and resources for the good of others.” Realizing this goal in Baltimore are organizations like Catholic Charities’ Safe Steps, the grass-

roots thinktank Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle, Showing Up for Racial Justice, which organizes white people, and the Harriet Tubman House, which revitalizes local communities through projects including artistic opportunities and neighborhood gardens.

Martin Luther King Jr. was an advocate and example of nonviolent resistance to injustice. He was convinced that “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” He did not believe that outcome was to be left entirely in the hands of God or fate, however. He took decisive public action that forced a confrontation between a segregationist culture that tacitly promoted physical violence against African Americans and a rising tide of black confidence and empowerment that, accompanied by some white allies, was intervening decisively in US history. Yet King is sometimes remembered more for his legacy of nonviolence than for that of effective confrontation.

In Racial Justice and the Catholic Church, Bryan Massingale delineates in detail the difficulty of eradicating racism ingrained in the mental furniture, language, and daily behavior of white Christians (even in church), showing how it retains its grip and force, even long after it is flatly contradictory to clear Church teaching about human equality and respect. The teaching fails to hit the ground. In his 2010 Presidential address to the Catholic Theological Society of America, Massingale questioned whether a necessary conversation partner for Christian theology and ethics is Malcolm X. Christianity, according to Malcolm, has with its white imagery of God and segregationist practices, brainwashed both whites and blacks into a false consciousness of white superiority. “Little wonder, then, that many white Christians regard ‘white,’ ‘Christian,’ and ‘American’ as interchangeable and even equivalent identities.”

It is not adequate, according to Massingale, to see Christian compassion, solidarity, and work for the oppressed as smoothly convergent values, since the arena in which they must be actualized is one of social conflict. Echoing not only Malcolm X but implicitly Reinhold Niebuhr, he insists that “authentic transformation cannot evade social conflict, resistance and recalcitrance if it is to be of genuine service in the quest for social transformation.” It should factor in not only the conversion of

84. This line, quoted from the nineteenth-century clergymen Theodore Parker, was written by King in a 1958 article in The Gospel Messenger, a publication of the Church of the Brethren, and delivered in a 1964 baccalaureate sermon at Wesleyan College in Middletown, CT. See “The Arc of the Moral Universe Is Long, but It Bends toward Justice,” The Quote Investigator, accessed March 1, 2018, https://nyurl.com/yabnq64.


87. Massingale, “Vox Victimarum Vox Dei,” 76, 78, respectively.
the powerful, but also “the potential power of the disposessed.” Yet, concludes Massingale, the lamentable and sinful conditions that marked America during the lifetimes of Martin and Malcom still exist. He names several. Most people (or at least most white people) would probably regard “racial violence and hate crimes” as the most frightening and urgent. But Massingale concludes with the heartbreaking example of an experiment in which small black children were asked to say whether white dolls or black dolls were the ones they most “liked” or were “nice” (white dolls were chosen by a majority), then selected a black doll as the one that was most like them.

Reaffirming the difficult realities portrayed by Bryan Massingale, Kelly Brown Douglas reflects personally and theologically on the reality that—over half a century after King’s 1963 “I Have a Dream” speech, which she saw televised as a six-year-old child—racialism in America is strong enough to make her worry and lament what the death of Trayvon Martin means for her own black son, Desmond. Reaching to the roots of current events, Douglas documents a myth of white Anglo-Saxon exceptionalism that has infected America’s identity since before the days of the “founding fathers.” But black life is not circumscribed by this culture; it defies the culture by living in a different and prophetic way, by living as “embodied prophetic testimony” to the resurrection. To overcome its racist narrative, America must forge an honest moral memory of its past, let go of present white presumptions of superiority, affirm at a practical and not just notional level the humanity of all, and most importantly, recognize that faith is not about ideas, but about “commitment to a certain way of ‘living and moving and having our being’ in the world.” That requires a moral imagination “driven by the future,” an imagination with which “one is able to live prophetically, that is, as if the new heaven and new earth were already here.”

**US PEACEBUILDERS IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

Comparing the situation in the United States to the international contexts discussed in the first part of this chapter, some important differences stand out. The most important is that we have a relatively functional

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88. Massingale, “*VoxVictimarumVoxDei*,” 83.
government and judicial system, which defines our first challenge, not as creating public institutions, but as surfacing and defining the ways existing institutions do not serve equality and justice for all groups of people, most especially (but not exclusively) African Americans. Levels of violence in some urban areas domestically can approach the level of international war zones. At the same time, the commonalities in the kinds of responsive action required to meet this violence are striking and obvious. To reiterate briefly: Nonviolent resistance works, especially if it is unafraid of conflict and grows into a social movement. Black Lives Matter is a good example of nonviolent resistance, expressed partly through appropriate indignation and anger. The movement’s courageous, confrontational, and black-affirming tactics and message have drawn public and media attention to the plight and political power of African Americans. Black Lives Matter is now moderately or strongly supported by the majority of Americans. What is still needed is action by white allies who take responsibility for personal and systemic racist bias, and who are more committed than in the past to surfacing and confronting the direct violence of the few and the complicit disengagement of the many. Violent conflict leaves deep wounds, as is evident in the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators, the continuing lack of public acknowledgement of rights violated, the “standing victory” of the perpetrators, the internalized racism of innocent children, and the grief and lament of parents sorrowing for their children. Not to be overlooked are the social and psychological wounds borne by white people whose distorted consciousness and fear prevent authentic human flourishing.

Peacebuilding is multidimensional, fallible, and involves moral dilemmas. The peace processes in North Carolina, Chicago, and Baltimore embody good-faith and comprehensive, yet fragile and fallible, processes of reform. Given the nature of racist violence in this country, the need for moral courage seems more salient than the reality of moral dilemmas. However, dilemmas will certainly arise in choices of resource allocation, and even more clearly in the political activism, negotiation, and compromise that will be a part of the consensus-building process toward more just laws, policies, and practices. Moral ambiguities are also part of the challenge to maintain compassionate connection among different constituencies (Republicans and Democrats, black and white Christians), even when there is pain, misunderstanding, unrecognized complicity in injustice, and the responsibility to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable.

Women are essential peacebuilders, as we see in the creative, bold, and effective founders of the Black Lives Matter movement. Women in
ecclesial settings are active peacebuilders too against American violence, both external and internal, as we have already seen in the ministry of Kimberly Lymore. The Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States (ACHTUS) has enjoyed both male and female leaders, and the top four officers in 2017–18 were women (María Teresa Dávila, Jaqueline Hidalgo, Neomi DeAnda, and Elsie Miranda). After the Charlottesville violence, ACHTUS released a statement of solidarity with the Black Catholic Theological symposium, on “the recent surge in racist violence.”

Some women peacebuilders work in the just peace context and explicitly make the connection between the internal and external effects of violence in the United States, and between US actions and policy and violent situations globally. Marie Dennis is cochair (with Bishop Kevin Dowling of South Africa) of Pax Christi International, was a principal organizer of the 2016 Rome conference on nonviolence and just peace, and for fifteen years worked with the Maryknoll missionaries to bring their global experience into US public opinion and into the policies of the United States, United Nations, and international financial institutions. In 2016, Pax Christi released a statement called “We Cry Out for Racial Justice in the United States,” declaring “No Justice, No Peace,” committing to racial justice education and activism. Rose Berger is an editor at Sojourners magazine, a member of Pax Christi, and a founding member of the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative. In 2010, she published a book about a nine-year-old African American child who was shot and killed in front of his apartment building in her Columbia Heights neighborhood in Washington, DC. Berger says that in the United States “few face ISIS or North Korea, but many deal with drug houses, crime and gun violence in neighborhoods. . . . If the church could make its nonviolence teaching a prominent part of daily life . . . it could help with such grassroots problems.”

95. For reflections and papers emerging from the conference, see Marie Dennis, ed., Choosing Peace: The Catholic Church Returns to Gospel Nonviolence (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2018).
women in churches' efforts to overcome violence and build community deserves more recognition, even in faith traditions reluctant to formalize women's equal leadership, like the Roman Catholic Church.

Re-formative social practices are key to sustainable peace. This criterion of peacebuilding runs into the huge challenge of knitting together transformative movements across identity divides that are also chasms of misunderstanding, ongoing grievances, and even enmity. That is why the leadership held up in this chapter is portrayed more in practical terms than in intellectual or strictly theological ones. William Barber, Blase Cupich, William Lori, Alicia Garza, Patrice Cullors, Opal Tometi, Marie Dennis, and Rose Berger—along with the grassroots and community movements that make their work possible—are all in different ways bringing adversaries together by attracting them at the practical level to shared ideals, common goals, and most importantly, opportunities to join together in forging new relationships of partnership and action.

Intercultural and interreligious cooperation is necessary for this process to be successful, as is well-attested in North Carolina, Chicago, and Baltimore. The “cultures” of blacks and whites, Democrats and Republicans, Christians and Muslims, Jews or other faiths, are different; in fact, this is one of the biggest factors in the polarization that US society and politics today experience. Alleviating this polarization will require confronting identity-based conflicts without minimizing or disparaging difference. The goal is what Daniel Philpott calls political reconciliation: the constitution or reconstitution of a society that is just in the sense that victims, perpetrators, citizens, institutions of government, civil society groups, and religious groups that have been involved in political injustices are now united going forward in shared understandings of, commitments to, and practices of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Political reconciliation requires the social institutionalization of relations of respect, but not necessarily full personal understanding, forgiveness, or friendship—though these aspirations may eventually be realized.

PEACEBUILDING AND HOPE

Peacebuilders carry on despite profound obstacles and devastating losses. They carry on even when they do not meet with success, and even when their efforts risk death. How can they maintain hope when all the odds are stacked against them? There is a simple, even platitudinous, answer readily heard in Christian contexts: hope is a divine gift, transforming

100. Philpott, *Just and Unjust Peace*, 58.
Hope is humanly inexplicable, and does not depend on any real-world conditions; it is purely and simply a work of grace. I believe this answer is too facile and, in important ways, false. It is true that hope is a gift of God—but God’s presence or “grace” is often if not always mediated through worldly realities and human relationships, such as women’s peace demonstrations in Liberia, the Hormiguitas de la Paz in Colombia, and the black church in the United States. God’s grace-filling presence is in the body of Christ, the actual community of solidarity in God’s presence as Spirit and in resurrection life. The Christian virtue of “eschatological” hope not only bestows trust and courage from beyond ourselves but it is enhanced and increased by practical action for this-worldly goals. Action for peace and justice in history intensifies our relation to God and makes real the presence of God’s reign. Building peace increases in us the virtue of hope, of both a this-worldly and an eschatological kind.

As religious peacebuilders are quick to testify, it is God’s grace that enables them to work in solidarity with others, and relations of solidarity and compassion mediate grace. God’s grace does not reach us apart from our social identities, or at least not only so. To Christians in Congo, Myanmar, or Colombia, in Berlin in 1943, New York in 1965, Memphis in 1968, or Charlottesville in 2017, authentic Christian identity requires political action for a just and peaceful world. Participation in collective action inspires and sustains a hopeful vision in which this world is really possible.

In the words of the Mexican American theologian Maria Pilar Aquino, for oppressed peoples, “hope is not a far-off ideal or a palliative. It is a deep spiritual force—because it comes from the Spirit—that encourages the poor in their struggles. It is an objective reality, an anticipation of God’s justice and love as experienced in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus,” and in his ministry of the reign of God. Kelly Brown Douglas reinforces this point in an especially powerful way, testifying that

black faith took root “in the context of bondage.” Black faith witnesses to the reality that God “is present even in the midst of the particular brutalities of ‘living while black,’ and that God wills people to be free.” The paradox of the cross is central because it enables faithful life to go on in the midst of contradictions. Even after the Trayvon Martin verdict, “no one lashed out at God. No one doubted God.” There is “an inherent absurdity in black faith,” which is exactly why it is an indispensable witness to the possibility of faith and the character of God. This faith testifies to God’s presence and promises as real, reliable, and existentially validated, even when they are not borne out by “the facts.” Privileged people who despair of changing longstanding injustices, or who see them as challenging the existence of a good God, might have something to learn from those who know the crucible of radical suffering and proclaim a living faith and hope.

From the instances cited in this chapter, it is obvious that peacebuilding starts with the desire, determination, and courage of people who are willing to take risks. Peacebuilders are driven by a passion to live in peace, but also by a faith and trust that people can make peace and build a life together. Peacebuilders empower individuals and communities to name and resist violence. They voice and magnify the agency of those who are targets and survivors of violence. They reach out in solidarity across religious, racial-ethnic, and cultural divides.

Peacebuilders go beyond personal acts and relationships, creating community and larger social institutions that encourage and support just peace. In the real world, peacemaking or peacebuilding must usually proceed in circumstances where it is precisely justice, equal respect, and human rights that are sorely lacking or entirely absent. To act when oppressive power makes action risky, or to take risks for those who have no power, is a hallmark of God’s inbreaking reign. Taking the first step can break apart violent cycles and bring enemies to recognize one another’s humanity.

It is important to stress that peacebuilding must issue in social practices that become broad and deep enough to resocialize former adversaries into coexistence, political reconciliation, and, in the ideal case, interpersonal empathy, respect, and forgiveness. Peacebuilding is a process that is always marred by incompleteness and moral ambiguity. The wounds of war and human rights violations are deep. It is difficult to reconcile

105. Douglas, Stand Your Ground, 164.
enemies, establish social trust, honestly face complicity and corruption, make reparations to victims, and overcome an ethos of impunity.¹⁰⁸

Peacebuilding is thus a practical strategy of hope. Peacebuilding demonstrates the possibility of and way to hope in the face of overwhelming adversity. Peacebuilding is sustained by the actions of courageous individuals who resist the oppressive and violent activities and expectations in which everyone around them seems trapped. But peacebuilding also requires the action of groups like the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, black church initiatives, the World Council of Churches, and all those in worldwide religious traditions inspired by divine care, compassion, mercy, and righteousness. Peacebuilding consists most specifically in risky yet hopeful practices of solidarity and change. These practices engage not only the oppressed and the innocent, but also oppressors and sinners, who can come to imagine and embody reality differently. Practical peacebuilding strategies, by reaching out to victims and to adversaries within ongoing violence, already recognize human dignity, build social capital, and shape the building blocks of justice even if their short-term fate is defeat. Thus, even when there seem to be no rational or empirical justifications for the permanent cessation of violence, peacebuilding is a practical strategy of hope for conversion, transformation, and justice. And, though not guaranteed, peacebuilding is demonstrably and amply rewarded by concrete instances of success, when common humanity is recognized and solidarity renewed, when God's healing presence is among us, and peace with justice seen and touched.