

Lift up your Hearts: Peace-Making in an Anglican Voice
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Thankyou for the invitation to speak tonight. I am very pleased to be here.

When I was worshipping at St George's, Paddington, many years ago, I was part of the small choir that met for special occasions. In December of 1981 we were rehearsing for the Christmas services, and I was at that time 7 months pregnant. My friend Janet, also in the choir, was 8 months pregnant. Apart from having trouble singing the high notes, we were conscious that we stood out from the crowd. I suggested that perhaps we should stand either side of the choir and act as its bookends. Should the choir inadvertently lean to one side during its singing, we would be there to keep it upright and true.

I begin with this reference to bookends because I would like to bookend my talk on peace-making with the beginning and the end of the Anglican Eucharistic liturgy. The call to prayer opens the service: 'Lift up your hearts'. It is a signal that we are entering a space of grace. The service ends, after we have been sent out into the world thankfully and with courage, in the power of the Spirit, with a blessing. And this blessing is one of peace – the peace of God that passes all understanding.

In his essay on 'Theological Integrity', Rowan Williams advises that theology be kept closely aligned with liturgy. That is, our talk *about* God should be done alongside our talk *to* and with God. The danger of theology is that it goes off on its own, constructing systems and towers of thought as if God is an object to be studied and captured by our clever words. Although God is the object, that is, the focus, of theology, God is not *an* object among others. So by aligning theology with worship we are reminded that we are talking about a Subject who is mystery, who passes all understanding, who cannot be captured or controlled in human thought. This gives us a sense of humility and openness when we undertake theology, even as we try to say something with conviction about God. So, I bookend my talk with the call to worship and the blessing of peace. They will keep us upright and true.

In my work on peacemaking I am continually led back to Jesus on the road to Jerusalem. There are two moments on this journey where Jesus laments over the city for its violence. On the first he is warned not to go there as Herod was planning to kill him. After some sharp words about Herod, ('that fox'!) Jesus continues: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!' (Luke 13:34). On the second occasion, Jesus catches sight of the city in the distance, his dusty sandals stopping in their tracks as he breaks down and weeps: 'Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace!' (Luke 19:41–2).

What made Jesus cry on that occasion? Was it grief for the city and people he loved who would not embrace him? Was it grief for himself and fear of his own impending death? We can never really know, but since in Christian theology Jesus is the interpretation of God (John 1:18), some observations are called for.

Three things stand out for me in these moments. First, while facing his own violent death, Jesus reached out in love *to his enemies*. What broke his heart was that they *were* his enemies, yet he still saw them as a mother hen sees her brood and wanted to embrace them.

Second, Jesus did not meet their violence with more violence. He belonged to a better regime than the one that was about to put him to death. *We* get caught all the time in spirals of violence and retaliation. God is bigger and more gracious than that.

Third, Jesus' weeping was not the end of this journey. After his betrayal, abandonment, torture and death, he returned *in peace* and with blessings (Luke 24:30–31, 50; John 20:19, 21, 26). His greeting to his disciples, 'peace be with you', will never cease to astound me. They are not only from some source of love above and beyond all that he had been through, but they imply forgiveness as well. I am drawn to know more of the God that Jesus proclaimed, and God's peace that passes all understanding.

In my research over the last few years I have sought the wisdom of theologians who have been thinking through and acting for peace and reconciliation over the long haul. They are from such places as South Africa, Northern Ireland, the former Yugoslavia and Palestine. I have learned much from this research and offer you six things that make for peace. I could have given you sixty-six, but I have also been learning about mercy, so I thought I would spare you. I will then conclude with a few reflections in an Anglican voice.

The six points are:

- 1 Justice
- 2 Reconciliation
- 3 Truth-telling
- 4 Ghost-management
- 5 The inner work of peace
- 6 God's regime of peace

1. Justice

It would be difficult to imagine that any people could live in peace without justice. Injustice is a wrong-doing that causes suffering, degradation and violence. In turn it promotes resentment, hatred, retaliation and further suffering. How can this lead to peace? Establishing justice and making peace belong together.

What I have learned, however, is that justice is not a simple term that everyone agrees on. More to the point, some people assume that, after conflict and violence, justice is fulfilled when the offenders are punished. Others see that justice needs to restore right relationships, to give victims back their dignity, to enable confessions and forgiveness, reparations and truth-telling. Both forms of justice contain important truths and both are found in the Bible – punitive justice and restorative. Peacemakers put more emphasis on restorative justice, and because peace is the goal, the means need to reflect the end.

When South Africa moved from the old regime of Apartheid into a new regime, they chose a restorative justice model. They sought healing from the past, and a future in which all people would be counted equal under the law, and afforded the same dignity and respect in their own country.

Because the aim was to achieve a better regime, then the *way* they got there mattered. Those overseeing the transition from the old to the new were keen to model, by the way they dealt with the past, a better and more humane treatment of its victims and offenders. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission facilitated the transition by giving perpetrators, bystanders and beneficiaries of Apartheid the opportunity to confess, repent and apologise. It allowed for victims to tell their testimonies, to have the wrongs done to them publicly acknowledged as wrongs, and for them to forgive if they felt willing and able. This was justice informed by a vision of future peace. You don't achieve that through violent means.

However, other Christians there and around the world saw this approach as too soft. They have a more punitive view of justice. Commenting on this, one American theologian, who taught a Masters course in Sing Sing prison, was appalled by the punitive spirit so pervasive in his largely Christian society. 'Most of us want those who have done wrong to be punished – not healed, but punished... what we have created to address our need for vengeance reveals a cancer within the national culture.'¹

He said that the soul of a society can be measured by its prisons, and comments that 'what we do to those we incarcerate suggests that our soul is cold, to the point of death'.² There are plenty more humane alternatives to prison, but the basic problem, he said, was 'that our culture is captive to a spirit of punishment. Until we address this spirit, all calls to reform will fall on ears that cannot hear and hearts that cannot feel'.³

So one of the things that make for peace is justice, but many Christians have been schooled in a punitive view of justice, and this affects the way we think about God and God's work of atonement. It is a challenge for us to think outside this box for the sake of peace.

2. Reconciliation

In the Christian faith, reconciliation is a work that God has achieved for us. Therefore, as people of God, we have a ministry of reconciliation. As 1 Cor 5:17 says,

So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

The word 'reconciliation' in the New Testament comes from two Greek words: 'according to', and 'another'. Put as one word, it means to exchange, as when money is reconciled, or to change places with another. It implies being willing to understand and be in solidarity with others rather than against them.⁴ This is in order to change relationships from ones of enmity to friendship. In theology 'reconciliation' means 'being put into friendship with God',⁵ even 'while we were enemies' (Rom 5:10; cf 2 Cor 5: 18-19).

¹ T. R. Snyder, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Punishment*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2001, p. 1.

² Snyder, *The Protestant Ethic*, p. 2.

³ Snyder, *The Protestant Ethic*, p. 3.

⁴ De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, pp. 24, 51.

⁵ K. Aland et al (eds.), *The Greek New Testament and Dictionary*, 3rd edition (Corrected), United Bible Societies, Stuttgart, 1983, p. 94.

If you want to understand another person, you ‘put yourself in their shoes’. God’s reconciliation with humanity begins with the incarnation, where Jesus walked in our sandals, even when we were enemies of God.

Nelson Mandela said, ‘To make peace with an enemy, one must work with that enemy, and that enemy become your partner.’ The purpose of this partnership is to reconstruct a relationship or society after wrong-doing and rebuild its moral order.⁶ It involves a regime change for a better order, whether that is in a country, a town, a household or a church. I have started to think of the kingdom of God as a regime change, a new and higher moral order into which we are invited as friends and partners of God.

Our ministry of reconciliation flows from God’s. Whether we are working for reconciliation between various racial groups in South Africa, or between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, or between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Australia, reconciliation is our calling as partners with God in a new and better order.

But a word of warning. The work of reconciliation is hard and costly. It takes courage and is a journey of sorrow, as we saw with Jesus weeping. People involved with Truth Commissions, whether they are commissioners, investigators, reporters, translators or engaged in data entry, all become traumatised by the events they hear recounted and which they then report or record.⁷ Even Archbishop Desmond Tutu occasionally ‘broke down and sobbed like a child’ while hearing victim’s testimonies.⁸

He said of his work in South Africa:

True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the pain, the degradation, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse.⁹

In the work of reconciliation, the truth is sometimes hard to bear, and may provoke retaliation. How then does truth-telling serve reconciliation and peace?

3. Truth-telling

The purpose of Truth Commissions is to enable a transition from an old regime that was repressive, authoritarian, violent and unjust, into a more just and humane order.¹⁰ Truth-telling is meant to serve this transition.

Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch talk in terms of a ‘right to truth’ after wrong-doing. They speak of ‘the need to uncover the truth, the need to restore the honour and reputation of the victims, and the need to individualize the guilt and bring perpetrators to justice’.¹¹

⁶ David Stevens, *The Land of Unlikeness*, Columba Press, Dublin, 2004, pp. 19, 38–9, 42.

⁷ Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths*, pp. 149–50.

⁸ Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, pp. 144–5.

⁹ Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Doubleday, New York, 1999, p. 270.

¹⁰ From John 8:32, this saying became a motto for the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

¹¹ Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths*, p. 183.

The truth also preserves the history of a people, prevents denial that the violations ever happened, and documents a case history so that others may learn from it so that it may never happen again. It is in all these senses that the truth can be liberating and healing.

So, peacemaking is a truth-telling venture. That includes the truth of the past, and it holds open the possibility of a peaceful future, even against great odds.

In this work of truth-telling, I learned an important distinction. It is the difference between truth as something one possesses, and truth-seeking which is a moral task. Conflicts often arise where each side assumes that they know and *possess* the truth. Things would be very different if all parties involved had a mutual commitment to *seek* the truth. As Miroslav Volf puts it:

If I claim to possess the truth, I am unlikely even to entertain the possibility that others may be right, or at least partly right, and I wrong, or at least partly wrong; unlikely to enter imaginatively into the world of others so as to learn to appreciate the force of their account of what happened; unlikely to...examine from their vantage point my memories as well as their own...The obligation ...to seek the truth, counters the dangers involved in claims to possess the truth.¹²

Seeking the truth means we are willing to see from the other's point of view, to walk in their sandals, as well as in our own.

4. Ghost-management

The term 'ghost management'¹³ comes from two theologians in Northern Ireland working for reconciliation. It refers to the voices within us, the ghosts of family and history, which call us to act in certain ways now. These ghosts arise in particular when one is 'talking to the enemy'. Here are two examples of ghost-management for the sake of peace.

The first is a confronting one for Christians. It is from a Jewish Rabbi, Marc Gopin who developed a theology on 'the heart of the stranger' from his Hebrew Scriptures. He is committed to hospitality and peace as the highest expressions of his Jewish faith.¹⁴ So far, so good. But in this work of peace he sometimes meets with Christians, and when he does, he finds that a voice arises within him, 'that mournful voice of parents and community'. This voice says that, even by meeting with Christians, he is a traitor to the millions of innocent Jews tortured, killed or made miserable because they 'would not utter the name of Jesus as a name of God'. Accompanying this voice is a deep anger, a confusion within his soul and a threat to his identity. He has to live with this always. Yet he hopes that, over time, he 'will be able to embrace the angry voice inside as yet another beloved stranger'.¹⁵ The temptation is to move into negative identities – of goodies and badies, 'us' and 'them'. Rather, Gopin advocates the reverse move – to a more generous, positive identity that embraces the other in the spirit of the highest ideals of his religion and culture.

¹² Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 2006, p. 57.

¹³ Liechty and Clegg, *Moving Beyond Sectarianism*, p. 181.

¹⁴ Marc Gopin, 'The Heart of the Stranger', in Tombs & Liechty (eds.), *Explorations in Reconciliation*, p. 6.

¹⁵ Gopin, 'The Heart of the Stranger', all quotes from pp. 19–20.

A second example comes from post-Apartheid South Africa. Theresa, a white South African, found herself engaging in conversation with a black male colleague about their different lives under Apartheid. She felt ashamed hearing his life story, for she was complicit in his hardship and suffering. He felt angry hearing her story and the privileges she enjoyed at his expense. It was an uncomfortable situation. But as they spoke more, both of them began to see how they had each been constructed by the system of Apartheid. They had been separated by race, made into enemies and formed according to a certain world view that they now saw was a lie.

Theresa currently works as a psychologist in the healing of identities, helping people face in themselves what is hurtful, harmful, arrogant or debilitating, and to let these go.¹⁶ Managing the ghosts that keep us in our old identities belongs to the work of peace and to the Christian calling to become a new creation.

5. The inner journey of peace

A number of theologians writing on justice, forgiveness and reconciliation recognise the importance of spiritual practices to sustain and guide their work. A path of healing and a growth in spirit is integral to peacemaking. This requires practices and disciplines to form new habits, to heal and transform us from old ways of responding to hurt and violence to new ways that enable peace.

Laurence Freeman, Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation, takes this point even further. He says it is easy to condemn violence from a safe distance, or to pray for peace from the comfort of our suburban churches. But such condemnations and prayers are aimed at changing *other* people around us or in other parts of the world. Freeman, however, offers a challenge: the sincerity of our desires and prayers for peace is shown in how much *we* are prepared to be changed in the process.¹⁷

We are all implicated in violence through our own actions, our governments, our societies and our histories. What Freeman adds is that we are also implicated by our very human natures. We remain so until we begin to walk a path of peace, doing the inner work required for healing, for dealing with our anger and sadness and opening ourselves to the work of God's Spirit for a more peaceful and compassionate heart.¹⁸ For him, this is the fruit of meditation. Until we start on our inner work, we remain part of the problem.

The inner journey of peace can also be seen as a kind of regime change. Most of us are ruled, not just by our ego, but by our wounded and fragile ego from which comes suspicion and fear, bullying and abuse, an overinflated or a diminished sense of self. The inner journey to peace means dealing with these, through counseling and spiritual practices, so that one moves from being self-ruled by fear and anxiety, to being healed and under the regime of the God of peace.

6. God's regime of peace

¹⁶ I learned of Theresa's work and testimony through her paper given at the *Religion, Reconciliation and Restorative Justice Conference*, 10–13 March 2008, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch.

¹⁷ Laurence Freeman, *Why Meditation Breaks the Cycle of Violence*, Retreat given at the John Main Seminar, Ontario, 2002, Medio Media, London, CD set: Disk 3 'The Cycle of Violence', Track 4.

¹⁸ Freeman, *Why Meditation Breaks the Cycle of Violence*, Disk 3, Tracks 2 to 4.

Jesus was hailed the prince of peace at his birth. He preached peace, lived peace, blessed the peace-makers and returned, after his torture and death, in peace. Jesus is the interpretation of God. God is a God of peace.

I have spoken already about the reign of God as a regime change, from old ways of being human (marked by violence and death) to new ways (marked by peace and the gracious life of God). What mediates such a change?

During Truth Commissions, testimonies had the power to give people an understanding of their past such that they were undone by them, saddened, appalled and remorseful. One white South African journalist covering the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for 2 years, was so affected by the testimonies that she exclaimed on behalf of her people, 'We are so utterly sorry. We are deeply ashamed and gripped with remorse'.¹⁹

I was reminded on hearing this that the New Testament is also a testimony (John 3:11, 19:35, 21:24; 1 Corinthians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:8). Jesus gives testimony to who he is and what he knows, and others testify to his life, ministry, crucifixion and resurrection. This testimony includes Jesus as the victim of human violence. It has the power to convict us, so that we may exclaim with the South African journalist: 'We are so utterly sorry. We are deeply ashamed and gripped with remorse'. The scriptures testify to God's alternative reign of grace and peace, God's forgiveness and reconciliation, God's work of renewing our hearts and the whole creation.

It is an oxymoron to speak of a reign of grace and peace, and include in that regime inequalities and hierarchies between people. For sure, at workplaces we have hierarchies of authority and positions of subordination to those authorities. But these are based on merit, and there are due processes for removing from authority any who abuse their power or neglect their duties.

Hierarchies and discrimination based on gender, class, race, sexual orientation or anything else that pertains to a person that cannot be changed, is against the gospel. The early church was characterised by its breaking down of divisions and its shocking inclusiveness. The transition to God's regime of grace and peace involves breaking down divisions and inequalities between people, thus overcoming the shame of subordination. 'No-one who believes in him will be put to shame' says Paul, because the former distinctions are now gone (Rom 10:11; Rom 8:33, Gal 3:16) and our salvation is by faith alone, not through merit and favour.

Peace-making in an Anglican Voice

The on-campus ordination program at St Mark's meets on Fridays, and begins each year with a mixed bunch: young and old, male and female. It also has conservative evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics and a broad group in-between who may or may not answer to these labels. I don't teach in this program, but I have heard that at the beginning, the evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics tend to spar with one another, each having their key words and tests of what makes a proper Anglican and indeed Christian. As time goes by, they form friendships, support one another throughout the two years of the program, and by the time they are ordained, they are congratulating each other with hugs and kisses.

Most of us don't get to spend quality time with Anglicans of different persuasions, so there is much in what I have said that would be constructive for intra-Anglican relations. Forming friendships

¹⁹ Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull*, Random House, Johannesburg, 2002, p. 99.

across divides is powerful. But it also helps if we become seekers of the truth rather than possessors of the truth; if we work with restorative justice and overcome the ‘spirit of punishment’ characterised by many Christians. It would help if we walked in each other’s sandals, and learnt to manage the ghosts of our past and present communities. I will have to leave it up to you to work out further implications.

Here, I will return to my bookends, and place what I have said within the Anglican Eucharistic liturgy. When we worship we are called to be uplifted, not from our own effort and will, but as a response to the God who is grace and whose peace astounds us. We are sustained on our Christian journey in the eucharist by feeding on Christ, the Prince of Peace. And we are blessed as we go out into the world, in the power of the Spirit, blessed with God’s peace. By keeping our theology and liturgy closely aligned, we are peace-making in an Anglican voice.
