

DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM FOR GLOBAL MISSION  
WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON  
PEACEMAKING AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

A professional project submitted to the Theological School of  
Drew University in partial fulfillment of the  
Requirement for the degree,  
Doctor of Ministry

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October, 2007

UMI Number: 3284523

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of the project was to develop a course on global mission for Drew Theological School and affirm the need for curriculum development in mission at the United Methodist seminaries. This thesis will discuss all phases of the project: genesis, planning process, implementation, evaluation and recommendations for curriculum development in mission.

The project was born out of my deep conviction in God's transforming love through mission. I believe that the church is at its best when it is engaged in mission. A zeal for mission is planted, grows and flourishes when stories of God's mission are told. Mission education is one of the best ways to tell stories of how God is working in our human history.

Mission education, however, is currently at the periphery of the curricula in the United Methodist Seminaries. My work with the General Board of Global Ministries made me keenly aware of the need of more curriculum development in mission at United Methodist seminaries. I was in a position to oversee the work of the Mission Education Unit that related to United Methodist seminaries and professors of mission. I heard staff reports where professors of mission gave somber assessments of the state of mission education at seminaries.

Inadequate mission education often results in inappropriate understanding of Christian mission. At the least, Christians are not united in an understanding of what Christian mission is. The term "mission" is historically connected with the Western

colonial era, its subsequent military campaign and the evangelizing work of missionaries.<sup>1</sup> Traditionally by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, therefore, “mission” almost exclusively referred to Christian work outside Europe among non-evangelized “foreign” people while the home mission movements had a profound influence on missionary developments in American churches during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Such understanding of Christian mission as foreign mission has been under attack or self-criticism for many decades.<sup>2</sup>

Now an active discussion on a contemporary understanding of global Christianity is under way. Dana Robert relates that the students who take her classes on “Debate over Modern Mission” come representing the full range of perspectives of the essence of mission.<sup>3</sup> While some identify mission and evangelism as the same thing and define mission and evangelism as calling non-Christians into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, others understand mission as facilitating social change here and now.

This project and thesis understands mission as God’s mission or *missio Dei*. In the context of *missio Dei*, mission is an attribute of God rather than an activity of the church. Because mission is a movement from God to the world, the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. David Bosch asserts that God’s concern is for the entire world, so the scope of the *missio Dei* must be global in extent. Bosch

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<sup>1</sup> David Bosch, *Transforming Mission, Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1999), 226-230.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 369. These critical reflections of missionary movement were primarily done at the missionary conferences from Edinburgh 1910 to Mexico City 1963. Some of the missiologists who are conscious of this shift in missionary thinking include David Bosch, Carols F. Cardoza-Orlandi, Wilbert R. Shenk, M. Thomas Thangaraj, and Andrew F. Walls. Their perspectives are discussed in various chapters of the thesis in more detail.

<sup>3</sup> Dana L. Robert, *Evangelism as the Heart of Mission* (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church, 1997), 1.

says, “Missio Dei affects all people in all aspects of their existence.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, mission as missio Dei naturally calls for a “*holistic*” or “*comprehensive*” view of mission.

This view of mission represents a shift in missionary thinking, which was solidified by the Uppsala Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1968. In essence, this new paradigm embraces both "mission in word" (Christianization) and "mission in deed" (humanization<sup>5</sup>). Ludwig Rutti summarizes comprehensive mission as follows: “Mission is the comprehensive terms for all conceivable ways in which people may cooperate with God in respect of this world.”<sup>6</sup> Taking this holistic understanding of Christian mission, this thesis aims to place special emphasis on peacemaking as part of mission, especially in a multi-faith context.

This particular understanding of Christian mission is based upon two things: the current reality of violence and war and the theology of mission as missio Dei. First, the unprecedented horrors of violence, conflict and war define the global experience of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.<sup>7</sup> Consider the following:

- The United States administration led the country into a war on Iraq.
- Street children and teenagers who wander the streets in Rio De Janeiro are quietly killed by off-duty police who are supposed to protect lives of Brazil's citizens.
- Young people in Boston are brutalized by the gang members chasing them, while Muslims are jailed as terror suspects.

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<sup>4</sup> Bosch, 391.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 383. This term *humanization* was used as the goal of mission in the North American Report in *The Church for Others and The Church for the World* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1967).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth E. Rowe, *Introduction to War and Peace in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Ocean Grove: Drew at Ocean Grove, July 6-11, 2003).

How do we as Christians learn to build a culture of peace in the face of such violence, conflict and war?

A concern of today's missionary congregation, from a holistic perspective and from the commandments of Jesus, must include social responsibility.<sup>8</sup> Peace is a primary theme in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is God's mandate to build justice and establish peace in God's creation. Therefore, peacemaking as mission is critical in the context of violence and war. Mission is an enterprise that transforms reality.<sup>9</sup> I believe that the essence of Christian mission is about calling upon our faith to examine and change reality, particularly when reality is found to be dehumanizing. If bringing non-Christians to Christ is mission, bringing peace and justice is also God's mission. I also believe that interfaith dialogue is a great basis in seeking common ground for God's purpose in history, and in working with neighbors of other faith traditions in a common cause to serve justice and peace.

At the heart of the matter in interpreting the meaning of mission and in learning to become peacemakers lies the importance of mission education. It is critical to provide opportunities in mission education so that people may understand the holistic nature of mission in the church, and for personal and corporate witness to peace and justice through involvement in and support of the mission. To this end, the

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<sup>8</sup> C. René Padilla, "Holistic Mission", *Occasional Paper No. 33* (Pattaya, Thailand, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2004). This paper was produced by the Issue Group at the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization hosted by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, in Pattaya, Thailand, September 29 to October 5, 2004. Here Padilla describes Roger C. Bassham's comprehensive view of mission which was expressed in *Mission Theology: 1948-1975 Years of Worldwide Creative Tension: Ecumenical, Evangelical, and Roman Catholic* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1975), 231. Bassham said in the above paper, "I now see more clearly that not only the consequences of the commission but the actual commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility.

<sup>9</sup> Bosch, xv.



General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) works with various entities of the church, including schools of theology and professors of mission, in providing an emphasis on education for mission.

The GBGM is the global mission agency of The United Methodist Church, its annual conferences, missionary conferences, and local congregations. It works to fulfill the mission mandate given by the denomination through the General Conferences. Its mission mandate includes four goals:

- 1) Make disciples of Jesus Christ
- 2) Strengthen, develop and renew Christian congregations and communities
- 3) Alleviate human suffering
- 4) Seek justice, freedom and peace

The GBGM is organized into the Women's Division, General Administration and eight program areas. The Mission Education Unit, which I oversaw, is one of the eight program areas and is the one that relates to schools of theology and professors of mission.

The work of the Mission Education Unit of the GBGM found that most United Methodist seminaries demonstrate deep commitment to their task of preparing seminarians for Christian mission. However, Christian mission as a theological endeavor is generally undervalued and underfinanced in major United Methodist seminaries. For instance, out of the thirteen United Methodist seminaries, only a few have full time faculty members teaching Christian Mission. As a result most seminary graduates enter professional ministry settings not appropriately equipped with knowledge or training in Christian mission. It is essential that United Methodist

seminaries meet this great need to equip competent and effective pastoral leaders to proclaim the Gospel in every place, nurture and care for the church, and reach out in creative ways to do justice and show mercy in the contemporary world.

In order to help respond to this need, this project aimed to provide a teaching model on global mission at a United Methodist seminary. Further, the thesis makes essential policy recommendations to enhance the current state of mission education at seminaries.

The thesis is divided into six chapters, in addition to an Introduction and Conclusion. These chapters provide a theoretical or theological basis as well as practical case studies for the project. Most of these were presented to the students during the course. Actual classroom interaction and student learnings will also be described in conjunction with each topic.

Chapter I gives an overview of the project and details the methodologies used in the project. Chapter II describes the current situation in mission education at United Methodist seminaries. Chapter III examines theologies of mission and peace. Chapter IV examines differing views of war and peace in Methodist history, and root causes of violence. Chapter V looks at the current context of global mission in light of a multi-faith world, globalization, violence, conflict and war. Chapter VI explores ways of creating a culture of peace and in particular peacemaking through interfaith dialogue. Case studies are presented to illustrate efforts in the latter. Chapter VII presents an evaluation of the impact of the project through various perspectives, including accomplishments and weaknesses of the project.

In the Conclusion, policy recommendations are made for the enhancement of mission education at seminaries. The Conclusion also invites Christian communities to create opportunities to enhance an understanding of mission in general and of peace-building in an interfaith context in particular. Ultimately the message of justice, peace and compassion is the core teaching of Christianity and also represents the core values of the other world faiths. God's new creation seeks justice, peace and freedom for all.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **PROJECT OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **Project Overview**

This project was the development of a curriculum on Christian mission and its implementation at Drew University. It was an effort in facilitating opportunities for providing academic courses on mission with a special emphasis on peace-building. This particular course at the Drew Theological School, in active partnership with the General Board of Global Ministries, attempted to provide an opportunity to strengthen and extend theological education efforts for preparation of competent and compassionate leadership.

When I worked as Deputy General Secretary of the program unit of Mission Education at GBGM, I became aware of a disconnect between mission education at seminaries and pastor's work to lead mission in local churches. I became keenly aware that insufficient courses in mission education are offered to students, many of whom enter the field of pastoral ministries where they lead the church in mission. As a result students graduate without receiving appropriate training with which to lead the church in mission endeavors.

Therefore, I became interested in looking deeper into the situation of mission education at United Methodist seminaries, and welcomed the opportunity to join Dr. Randolph Nugent, retired General Secretary of the

General Board of Global Ministries, in teaching a mission course at Drew Theological School. Together we developed a course proposal on Global Mission in the Contemporary World (Appendix A). I was very grateful that I was able to add to the course a focus of peace-building and interfaith dialogue.

The intent of the course was to further strengthen Drew's distinct commitment to mission that is reflected in its mission statement, "empowering leaders for a global Christianity of justice, ecumenism, and the integrity of creation." More specifically, it was created to help Drew achieve its vision and dedication to class opportunities on mission and mission theology from a global, ecumenical and interfaith perspective.

Thus the purposes of the project were three-fold. First, it was to explore with students the meaning and the significance of Christian Mission in a contemporary context, especially in contexts of religious diversity. Second, it was to create a teaching model for bringing an understanding of mission and the practice of peacemaking in an interfaith world to Christian leaders and pastors. The class sought to explore ways of interaction and conversation with other religious communities in our mission to bring peace, love and justice to humanity. Third, the project aimed to create an opportunity to review the understanding of mission and explore various mission contexts from a western context as well as from Asian Pacific, African and Latin American/Caribbean perspectives.

The scope of the teaching project was broader, including an understanding of Christian mission in a general framework as well as in a variety of specific mission contexts. The thesis is focused on an understanding of the peacemaking movement in a multi-faith world, in which the global church must face ethical and theological

challenges posed by globalization and conflicts. The thesis argues that creating interfaith communities is a critical way to create and sustain a culture of peace. In order to achieve that goal, this thesis will demonstrate the need for more curriculum development in mission at seminaries.

Planning of the project entailed the development of the syllabus (Appendix B). A concern of the Lay Advisory Committee that the scope of the project was too broad was reflected and incorporated into the final version of the syllabus. The curriculum was developed under the title of "Global Mission in the Contemporary World: Peacemaking and Interfaith Dialogue" for the January, 2004 term (Appendix B). As the course was designed as an intensive, five-day class, the development of the curriculum and the preparation of the teaching content needed to be done well ahead of the actual class time. Also, because Dr. Randolph Nugent and I were co-instructors for the proposed course, good teamwork and collaboration was critical during both the times of preparation and actual teaching.

The list of required reading was distributed to the class several weeks ahead in order to help students prepare for the class. However, it was still a challenge for students to meet reading assignments because it was such an intensive course.

The course was offered during the week of January 19-23, 2004. The class met from 9:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. with a one-hour lunch break. A class field trip to the General Board of Global Ministries (see Appendix C for the agenda of the field trip) was held on Wednesday, January 21, 2004, which was the third day of the class. The GBGM staff, including board cabinet members, shared different aspects of the work of mission at the GBGM. This field trip proved to be an effective tool.

## **Project Research Methodology**

Three methods were primarily used in the project- the preferred stories approach, social analysis method and postmodern theology. First, the method used to establish the claim of the project was the “preferred stories” approach. The project used the preferred stories method to discern the present situation and the preferred future of mission education at seminaries. As the course began, students in the class were asked to describe their understanding of Christian mission. The students’ responses were shared in class settings. All students who took the class said that they had either a limited or negative understanding of mission. One student said, “I knew before I walked into this class that mission was a ‘weak link’ in my theological and religious background.” Another student related that her understanding of mission was primarily that of the evangelizing work of missionaries abroad. Mostly, students’ understanding of mission was a conversion or colonialistic model of mission in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. These stories represent the present situation of mission education at seminaries: inadequate in training missiologically minded church leaders.

Then, toward the end of the course, students were asked again to share whether their understanding of mission had changed as a result of taking the course. This was shared both verbally and in writing (course evaluations). One student said, “This course changed my idea of mission. It was a 180 degree turn-over.” Another student said, “This course has had a profound influence on my understanding of what mission is and what my responsibility must be.” Another student said, “As I am preparing or at least anticipating a future in missions, this class has helped me to understand what that means. It also put flesh and blood on the mission field with the

United Methodist Church.” Most students said that they would highly recommend continuing the course because it was an invaluable experience for them.

In accordance with this methodology, the goal of the course was to move from “the discerned present” to the “preferred future.” Savage and Presnell describe the process of moving from “the discerned present” to “the preferred future” or from “what is” to “what it could be” as follows: “With this approach we often are trying to discern ‘what is’ from a small sampling. In archaeology one often extrapolates on the basis of three or four aligned to portray a building or floor or wall, likewise with this method we make assessment from the ruins we uncover about ‘what it could be’?”<sup>1</sup>

A preferred future for mission education was derived from students’ storytelling. One student said, “This course should be mandatory for all students at theological schools.” This comment practically nailed the central purpose of this project. Students also discussed the need of training of missional-minded church leaders. These discussions represent the preferred future for mission education at seminaries. In this project, therefore, the preferred future derived for mission education at theological schools includes more active attention to the curriculum development at seminaries, and “cooperation among the seminaries, the general agencies, and the annual conferences of the United Methodist Church so that the holistic Wesleyan witness and fruits of mission can be renewed for the twenty-first century.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Savage and William A. Presnell, *Postmodern Research Approach For Faith Communities* (Ph.d. diss. Drew University Doctor of Ministry Program, 2004), 17.

<sup>2</sup> The Seminary Task Force on Mission of the General Board of Global Ministries, *A Call for Conversation on Theological Education for Mission for the United Methodist Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (April, 2006), 4.



The second method used in developing the curriculum on mission was social analysis. Social analysis as a method of ministry was found to be very helpful in pursuing this project, for the project fundamentally dealt with social justice and global peace-matters that this method claims to serve. By using social analysis, the project was able to more effectively link faith and justice. The project greatly benefited from the model of the “pastoral circle.”

The purpose of the study of social analysis by Holland and Henriot is “to describe the task of social analysis and its relevance to social justice action, to provide illustrations of analytical approaches to various problems, and to explore the suggestions and questions they raise for pastoral responses.”<sup>3</sup> The underlying principle of social analysis is “linking faith and justice.” The complete task of social analysis is “to link faith energies with energies of justice and peace in service of the Living God and social transformation.” Social analysis, therefore, serves as a tool of pastoral action in the ministry of social justice. Social Analysis is not simply an academic exercise or tool used in responding to a certain problem. It is a pastoral approach, i.e. “an integral part of the faith that does justice.”

Essentially social analysis is an effort “to obtain a more complete picture of a social situation by exploring its historical and structural relationships.”<sup>4</sup> The project and thesis followed these two basic dimensions of the social analysis approach: historical and structural dimensions. First, the project dealt with the historical question, how has Christian mission been present in various historical times and

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<sup>3</sup> Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis* (Maryknoll, Dove Communications and Orbis Books in collaboration with The Center of Concern, 1986), 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

situations? The historical dimension of Christian mission places current context and challenges in a historical perspective. Holland and Henriot suggest that history clarifies our past and offers insights into our future. The purpose of the project was to deal with the present and future reality of Christian mission in a pluralistic global context. Therefore, the historical question, where are we coming from and where are we going in Christian mission, helps develop a historical consciousness in doing mission. A fundamental purpose of Christian mission is to bring change according to the Good News of Jesus Christ. In that sense, a critical historical consciousness liberates us from the role of historical objects, empowering us to become its subjects- i.e., agents of change.<sup>5</sup>

The social analysis method employed in the project also looked at the structures of our society and the global world. The structural questions included economic structures, political structures, cultural structures and institutional alliances between these structures. In addition, the project took a serious look at the pluralistic reality of the human community: race, class, ethnicity, religion, and geography. The course highlighted aspects of Christian faith which, in its fullness and in its exclusivity, helps us understand our relationship with other faiths and points to the openness and inclusiveness of our faith. The class also explored means of interaction and conversation with other religious communities in our mission to bring peace, love and justice to humanity.

Finally, it is important to recognize that social analysis is only one of four moments in the “Pastoral Circle,” and this project attempted to utilize all. The

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 22.

Pastoral Circle is a cyclical "praxis" showing an ongoing relationship between reflection and action.

The first moment is *insertion*. This moment focuses on what people are feeling, what they are experiencing, and how they are responding. The first moment of insertion is a process similar to that of discerning the present situation. This method was used to identify the current status of mission education at United Methodist seminaries.

The second moment is *social analysis*, which, in this project, was most extensively used of the four. Social analysis studies the interrelationships in the experiences. It studies the causes, the consequences, the linkages, and the actors in the experience. The class and project explored the linkages between globalization, poverty, and conflict and war in studying the contemporary context of global mission. It also examined the root causes consequences of poverty and violence.

The third moment is *theological reflection*. This attempts to understand the moment in light of a living faith, scripture, church social teaching, and the resources of a religious tradition. Theological reflection was an important phase of the project. The class attempted to view global mission from a theological perspective and studied the theology of peace.

The fourth moment is *pastoral planning*. In light of the experience that has been analyzed and reflected upon, what response is called for by individuals and by communities? As a call to action, the class sought peacemaking through interfaith dialogue. Most importantly, based upon the study and research, the project invites the United Methodist seminaries to enter into conversation about the teaching of mission

today. This planning and call initiates new experiences and the pastoral circle continues for future reflection and action.

Last, postmodern theology under-girded the development of theology of mission, particularly in the multi-faith context. The formation of a theology of mission today requires a constructive way of theologizing instead of falling into “cynicism.” Cynicism only leads us to despair and paralyzes us in “our guilt.”

Like M. Thomas Thangaraj, I take special interest in widening the circle of discussion as an aspect of postmodernism.<sup>6</sup> In doing so, Thangaraj presents the postmodern critique of the traditional or modern Christian missiology. First, Thangaraj urges us to recognize the public character of the term “mission.”

Such a recognition of the public character of mission has serious methodological implication for constructing a theology of mission. It compels us to do our theology in public and in the open market place of ideas and concepts. Where and how we will begin our construction, how we will proceed further in our reflection on mission, and other such questions become important in the process of constructing a theology of mission.”<sup>7</sup>

Second, Thangaraj challenges us to begin our theological construction with local stories- both one’s autobiography and the story of one’s local community. As a woman pastor I very much resonate with this method of theologized autobiographically. The method of autobiography not only enables theologians to acknowledge their social location but allows them to take responsibility publicly for their theological work. This brings us to the third point: widening of the circle of discussion. Thangaraj argues, “if we bring our “local” stories into the task of theologizing, we need to guard against the possibility that our theologies might

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<sup>6</sup> M. Thomas Thangaraj, *The Common Task: A Theology of Christian Mission* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 27.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 28.

simply become matters of our inner subjectivity and autobiographical fancy.”<sup>8</sup> In other words, our local stories need to be “in conversation with” those of other Christians and persons of faith. Thus conversation and dialogue are recognized as an important method in doing theology, particularly within a multi-faith context. In this project, dialogue became a critical foundation of the discussion of a primary theme, i.e., peace-making through interfaith dialogue. Postmodern theology used in developing theology of mission is discussed in Chapter III in more detail.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 29.

## CHAPTER 2

### DISCERNING THE PRESENT

This chapter discusses the current state of mission education at United Methodist seminaries. Currently, mission is viewed as “appendage to theological study,”<sup>18</sup> so this was an important starting point for the project. Through research a conclusion will be drawn that mission as a theological discourse is at the periphery of the curricula at seminaries. The present understanding of Christian mission will also be examined as it is greatly affected by mission education in theological schools.

#### Mission Education at United Methodist Seminaries

Mission education is a process of sharing God's mission in the world. It proclaims and communicates the Biblical and theological mandate for mission and helps people to understand the political, economic and social context of the world in which the church is called to serve.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, it is important to provide opportunities in mission education for people to understand the holistic nature of mission in the church and to engage in mission partnership with God through involvement in and support of the mission. Mission education greatly affects the way in which we interpret the meaning of mission and learn to become peacemakers.

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<sup>18</sup> Norman Thomas, "From Missions to Globalization: Teaching Missiology in North American Seminaries," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 13.3 (July, 1989), 104.

<sup>19</sup> The General Board of Global Ministries website on Mission Education, <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/connections/missioneducation/> accessed May, 2007.

Thus, one of the purposes of the project was to create a teaching model for bringing an understanding of mission and the practice of peacemaking in an interfaith world to Christian leaders and pastors. The class sought to explore ways of interaction and conversation with other religious communities in our mission to bring peace, love and justice to humanity. As the project was part of the effort of facilitating opportunities of providing academic courses on mission with a special emphasis on peace-building, the need of preparing seminarians for Christian mission was presented as part of the basis of the project

Here, the research on the present status of mission education at United Methodist seminaries was conducted in three ways. First, opinion was gathered through students' responses in the class, second, through questionnaire responses of professors of mission, and third, through a search of on-line catalogues for the mission classes in the curriculum of United Methodist seminaries.

All students shared that before they took this course they had little understanding of mission other than the 1950's definition, which is presumably converting non-Christians or bringing the Gospel to "foreigners." Or they understood mission as mission programs on social justice. They said they had never paid attention to global mission, particularly in an organized fashion as is used by the United Methodist Church. Stating that this class helped them to better understand what mission or global mission is about, they agreed there is need of mission education for seminary students who are preparing themselves for ministry. Some said that this course had a profound influence on their understanding of what mission is and what their responsibility must be. Others said this course completely changed

their idea of missions. They related that it was a 180 degree turn-over or transformation.

This indicates that many, if not most, seminarians have little understanding of mission in general, that their understanding of mission is a colonialistic one, or that their understanding is limited to that of social service and social change. This result is regarded as partly due to the lack of emphasis on mission education at theological schools.

Second, nine professors of mission at United Methodist seminaries were asked to share their perspectives on “the present status of mission education at United Methodist seminaries” via a questionnaire and cover letter (Appendix D). An introduction letter by Dr. Donald Messer (Appendix E) accompanied some.

The questions included:

- 1) Seminarians’ general understanding or interpretation of the meaning of Christian mission.
- 2) Effectiveness of United Methodist schools in providing an emphasis on education for mission.
- 3) The level of commitment of United Methodist schools of theology in preparing seminarians for Christian mission.
- 4) The effort to be made if Christian mission as a theological endeavor is generally undervalued and under-financed in major United Methodist seminaries.

Three responses were returned.<sup>3</sup> A higher rate of response would have helped the assessment. However, I feel that these responses represent the scope of the standing of mission education at seminaries. With regard to the first question of

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<sup>3</sup> Responses were received from Professors at Iliff School of Theology, Perkins School of Theology and Garrett Evangelical Seminary.



seminarians' general understanding of Christian mission, Donald Messer at Iliff related that he repeatedly encounters third-year students who come to his class on "mission and evangelism" indicating they have only been exposed to the negative dimensions of "mission and evangelism." Don Kim at Garrett noted that most often seminarians primarily understand Christian mission as "bad" or negative, relating it to the past history of Christian expansion. All three respondents agreed that many students regard "doing good" (social justice or social service) as primary mission programs. They noted that some students still relate the term to membership recruitment and church growth, if not converting non-Christians. Messer continued, "Those students who are generally not negative about mission, but have little experience or perspective on how to engage a community of faith in mission, and how to raise significant funds for mission, other than an occasional offering."

With regard to the effectiveness of United Methodist seminaries, Messer responded, "What is seriously lacking are courses in depth on the historical, theological, biblical and practical dimensions of mission, including perspectives from both evangelical and ecumenical traditions."<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Robert Hunt stated in his response, "Most United Methodist seminaries put little or no emphasis on education for mission per se."<sup>5</sup> He did not hesitate to point out that only one, Boston Theological Seminary, has a department of or professor of mission studies. Dr. Don Kim noted, "Although evangelism and mission courses are required for United Methodist requirements for ordination and

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<sup>4</sup> Response from Dr. Donald Messer, Emeritus Professor of Mission, Iliff School of Theology.

<sup>5</sup> Response from Dr. Robert Hunt, former GBGM missionary from 1984 – 2004, currently Director of Global Theological Education, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University.

commissioning, most of students simply take one or at best two courses to meet the requirements rather than out of passion for mission and evangelism as the core of the church's ministry to serve the world."<sup>6</sup>

The level of commitment of United Methodist schools of theology in preparing seminarians for Christian mission seems to be low. Don Messer states, "Mission professors are an endangered species in United Methodist seminaries. I have heard that all Presbyterian graduate theological schools have full time professors of Christian mission." According to Messer, the reason that Evangelism professors exist is that they have been funded by the Foundation for Evangelism. This statement seems to be supported by the website of the Foundation for Evangelism which lists fifteen E. Stanley Jones Professors of Evangelism currently teaching at various United Methodist seminaries.<sup>7</sup> In pointing this out, Messer further noted that "to elevate evangelism" as a stand-alone approach or academic discipline is problematic. I agree with Messer because mission is larger than evangelism. In the context of *missio Dei*, God's activity includes "everything that the church is sent into the world to do."<sup>8</sup> In other words, evangelism is just part of this all-encompassing perspective of mission.

However, the issue is not established evangelism professors and curricula; I think that these professors of Evangelism are a welcoming presence at United Methodist seminaries. Rather, the issue is lack of a comprehensive approach of mission. As Messer said, what is seriously lacking are courses in depth on the

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<sup>6</sup> Response from Dr. Don Kim, Professor of Mission and Evangelism, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary.

<sup>7</sup> The Foundation for Evangelism: E Stanley Jones Professors of Evangelism. [http://evangelize.org/ministries/professorships/professors\\_of\\_evangelism/](http://evangelize.org/ministries/professorships/professors_of_evangelism/) accessed September, 2007

<sup>8</sup> Padilla, "Holistic Mission," 9.

historical, theological, biblical and practical dimensions of mission, including perspectives from both evangelical and ecumenical traditions.

With regard to United Methodist seminaries' commitment to mission education, Hunt stated, "United Methodism was conceived by John Wesley as a missionary movement, and the church today is at its best when it is (doing) mission." Hunt also related, "None, to my knowledge, have required classes or courses specifically intended to prepare a person to engage in cross-cultural mission or to lead a congregation into missionary engagement with the world."

With regard to the question whether Christian mission as a theological endeavor is generally undervalued and under-financed in major United Methodist seminaries, all three professors said "Yes." This response was not totally unexpected as it is commonly known among missiologists or mission programmers. Hunt's observation is quite critical.

"Mission is undervalued because the UM seminaries are primarily answerable to two constituencies: the churches to which their students will go after graduation, and the professional colleagues of the seminary professors themselves. Our United Methodist churches are intensely interested in locally sponsored and led short-term missions, and would like for pastors to have the necessary experience and training to lead the church in such endeavors. But they are far *more* interested in church growth and self-care for the community and thus focus on these issues. To the extent that the churches are interested in training missionaries and mission leaders they have not communicated this to the Annual Conferences and General Conference and thus there is no compelling reason for UM seminaries to change and expand their curriculum. Moreover, among mainline Christian academics mission studies is not generally regarded as a proper field of academic study, and indeed is regarded with suspicion. In the constant competition for academic resources within seminaries mission studies has been met with resistance from theologians, church historians, biblical studies scholars, and practical theologians who believe that their fields together constitute the appropriate constellation of academic preparation for ministry."

Messer stated that mission is undervalued or under-financed because neither the trustees nor faculty at United Methodist seminaries are willing to make mission education a financial priority. He further noted, “Presidents of the theological schools lack mission experience or mission perspective so administratively there is no special effort at fund-raising or fighting the academic culture that devalues the teaching of Christian mission.”

What then should happen to improve the situation? I agree with the respondents that systemic change is required. As Messer said, perhaps only an action and funding of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church is likely to change attitudes and actions of the United Methodist seminaries. The action of the General Conference will “let the seminaries and their faculties know that the UM church wants mission studies to be part of pastoral training.” I agree with Hunt that this could happen only when “The United Methodist Church rediscovers the value of the life of the mind for spiritual growth and development, beyond thinking that a warm fellowship, conformity to American cultural norms are the only things necessary to either salvation or spiritual maturity.” There needs to be rediscovery of the importance of intellectual or academic endeavor of mission studies. Another prerequisite of this action is the support from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and the General Board of Global Ministries. Hunt stated,

“The GBGM will have to value and promote the vocation of both missionary and missiologist in ways that it has not done in the last three decades. In particular it will have to treat missionaries as equal participants in the ongoing process of understanding mission theologically, and accept the work of academic missiologists in developing its own self understanding. It is largely the GBGM that taught the United Methodist Church that missionaries required

only technical skills and obedience to its ideology to be effective, and taught the seminaries that the only missiology it was interested in came from its bureaucrats and their overseas clients rather.”

Hunt’s critical view of the General Board of Global Ministries is noteworthy. The GBGM may need to view and treat missionaries as true mission partners in developing theology of mission and mission policies.

A search of the curriculum resulted in a similar trend where missiology courses are treated as elective courses at best. Boston University School of Theology and Candler Theological Seminary seem to offer more mission related courses than the other United Methodist seminaries. For instance, at Candler School of Theology at Emory, missions is one of the two approved ethics course substitutions in fulfillment of the eighty hours required for the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree. These substitutions include sociology of religion or religion and personality; world religions, world Christianity, or missions or in gender, race, or ethnicity (GRE) studies. The Master of Divinity program at Boston University School of Theology requires a minimum of six semesters of full-time study for a total of twenty-four semester courses (ninety-six semester credits). Courses on Mission are offered under the category of Biblical and Theological Studies, including “The Debate over Modern Mission,” “Women in Mission,” “Religion and Society in East Asia,” and “Emergence of Christianity as a Global Movement.” These courses are offered as core electives. The Master of Divinity program at Garret Evangelical Theological School requires students to complete 87 semester hours of work. Mission and evangelism courses at Garrett are also offered as elective courses.

Based upon student responses, questionnaire results and a curriculum research, the following conclusions have been drawn concerning the effectiveness of mission education at seminaries:

- The United Methodist Seminaries in general do not effectively provide an emphasis on mission education.
- Few United Methodist seminaries in the United States requires classes or courses on mission. Missiology is primarily offered as elective courses.
- Classes on “mission” are mostly offered in the form of various study programs or specialized programs of urban ministry, multi-cultural ministry, world religions, and religion and culture. They are not an integral core of the theological curriculum.
- Students who come to seminary have usually been exposed to the negative dimensions of “mission.”

In summary, the present situation of mission education at United Methodist seminaries is not very effective in equipping students with knowledge or training in Christian mission. This finding is also affirmed by a GBGM report titled, “A Call for Conversation on Theological Education for Mission for the United Methodist Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”<sup>9</sup> Certainly a renewed commitment is needed to rethink theological education for Christian mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In response to the present state and need of more curriculum development, recommendations for policy changes in mission education are made in the Conclusion.

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<sup>9</sup> Seminary Task Force on Mission of the General Board of Global Ministries, *A Call for Conversation on Theological Education for Mission for the United Methodist Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (April, 2006).

## CHAPTER 3

### THEOLOGY OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY OF PEACE

#### **Theology of Mission**

Considering the current state of mission education at seminaries, it is not surprising to observe inconsistency in the understanding of Christian mission. Interpreting the meaning of mission seems to be the persistent problem or issue. That is, Christians are not united in an understanding of what Christian mission means. A negative understanding of “mission” is still prevalent especially among more “progressive” circles of theologians, pastors and seminarians. Students who took this course were not an exception. As stated in the previous section, all students said that before they took the class they had little understanding of mission other than that of a conversion model in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Such negative understanding of mission is influenced by the patterns and theologies of the 17<sup>th</sup> century type of mission. In fact, the term mission is historically connected with the Western colonial era, its subsequent military campaign and the evangelizing work of missionaries.

For instance, the rulers of Spain and Portugal had dominion over their colonies both politically and ecclesiastically. Colonialism and mission were interdependent. The right to have colonies carried with it the duty to Christianize the colonized.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the term “mission” came from this right to send ecclesiastical

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<sup>27</sup> Bosch, 227.

agents to distant colonies. Mission meant the activities and the assignment of the envoys at colonies, and the envoys were called “missionaries.” Thus the term mission is historically linked with the colonial era and with the idea of a magisterial commissioning. Reflecting such Eurocentric understanding of mission, those missionaries such as the Jesuits who engaged in the most culturally sensitive missions in China in the history of Christianity were condemned as heresy by the pope at the appeal of the Franciscans and Dominicans who had a much more rigid, Eurocentric view of the Chinese Rites Controversy or ultimately what it meant to be a Christian.<sup>2</sup>

Such understanding of Christian mission as foreign colonialistic mission has been under self-criticism for the past half-century or so. There is indeed an acute recognition that the Christian church has done much harm with its triumphalism and confident prediction of the imminent total victory of Christianity. It is not a coincidence that this awareness came with the fall or breakup of Christendom. The Christian church is a minority on most continents of the world although the church in Africa has grown most dramatically. Therefore, it is seen as a real gain that the church, being stripped of “the accoutrements of privilege and power,”<sup>3</sup> is waking up and more committed to servanthood and in the power of the spirit.

Along the same vein, there is a rebound in the claim that Christian mission is *good news*. Snyder states that the Christian mission is indeed the good news.

“The Christian church has often twisted the good news into bad news. Too often it has talked about Jesus but acted like the devil. Nonetheless, the gospel is really good news.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Robert, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Wilbert R. Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission* (Marynoll, Orbis Books, 1999), 189.

<sup>4</sup> Snyder, 7.



Thus, as an active discussion on a contemporary understanding of global Christianity is underway, and there has been a definite shift toward understanding mission as God's mission. Throughout the course, the instructors- Dr. Nugent and I- used the definition of mission as God's mission or the *missio Dei*. This understanding of mission helped enable the students to gain a new paradigm of Christian mission for the 21<sup>st</sup> century global world.

The concept of *missio dei* represents a major shift in the understanding of Christian mission during the last one-half century. It means a major rift from a primarily soteriological understanding: saving individuals or saving the world. Since Karl Barth articulated mission as *missio dei* at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932, this new theological paradigm has gained virtually all Christian persuasions.<sup>5</sup>

*Missio Dei* denotes a God-centric understanding of mission as opposed to church-centric missionary thinking. Most missiologists are in agreement that mission is not something of human origin; rather it is *missio Dei* that enunciates the good news that God is a God-for-people. Mission is not derived from humankind but is that which emanates from God the creator, son and holy spirit, who sends us into the world- the *missio Dei*.<sup>6</sup> As far as missiology is concerned, therefore, *missio Dei* is mission as participating in the sending of God.

“In essence, mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God. Mission is a movement from God to the world, and the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. There is church because there is mission, not vice versa. To participate in mission is to

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 390.

<sup>6</sup> Robert, 5.

participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love."<sup>7</sup>

As the concept of *missio Dei* underwent changes over the last half-century, there came a development to view *missio Dei* as a basis for a wider understanding of mission. "God's concern is for the entire world, so the entire world should be the scope of the *missio Dei*. It affects all people in all aspects of their existence."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, mission as *missio Dei* calls for a holistic view of mission. David Bosch expounds on this wider understanding of mission quoting Kramm, "Mission is God's turning to the world in respect of creation, care, redemption and consummation."<sup>9</sup> This concept of *missio Dei* is a starting point for viewing peacemaking as mission. Conflict and peacemaking is an important aspect of human existence. If God's mission includes God's turning toward all aspects of human existence, peacemaking should be embraced as part of *missio Dei*.

As stated in the Introduction, this project takes a holistic understanding of Christian mission. Such a view, which aims for the church to be faithful to all aspects of human existence, places a special emphasis on mission as peacemaking- especially in a multi-faith mission context. This particular understanding of Christian mission is also based upon the reality of the unprecedented horrors of violence, conflict and war that define the global experience of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.<sup>10</sup> Of this violence-ridden global context, one student said, "Throughout the course, I learned anew the reality of people of the world such as poverty, racism, oppression, gender issue,

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<sup>7</sup> Bosch, 390-391.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Bosch, 391.

<sup>10</sup> Rowe, "Class on War and Peace in the Wesleyan Tradition" (Drew at Ocean Grove, July 6-11, 2003).

global diseases, conflicts and etc. The current reality proved a vocation of the church to be peace-making which is derived from Jesus' mission of giving a new life.“

Missiologists almost universally affirm that the gospel must be contextualized. Maintaining balance between faithfulness to the core of the gospel and appropriate contextualization is an ongoing issue of discussion in missiology.<sup>11</sup> Mindful of this balance, Bosch emphasizes the transforming nature of mission. “Mission is an enterprise that transforms reality, representing the dimension of our faith that refuses to accept reality and aims at changing it.”<sup>12</sup> If bringing non-Christians to Christ is mission, bringing peace and justice in the face of violence and conflict is also God's mission. God who is a God of peace and God of power helps bring peace by giving us the courage and the knowledge to seek peace.

Peacemaking as God's mission was affirmed by the students who took the class. Students reported that their understanding of mission greatly changed as a result of the class and that they were able to see peacemaking in the contemporary world as a part of mission. One student said, “My idea of peacemaking is based on my view and understanding of the civil rights movement in the United States. To see the application of Christian principles in nations with unfamiliar cultures (but similar circumstances) revealed to me the real power of the Christian witness and mission.”

### **Doing Theology of Mission in a Multi-Faith Context**

*"It is proper for us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15)*

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<sup>11</sup> Robert, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Bosch, xv.

What does it mean to be in mission in a religiously pluralistic world? How may we be authentically Christian and at the same time engage in common mission with other communities of faith? To be in mission in a multi-faith context is to be committed to mutual coordination of mission through participating in mission of mutual interest.<sup>13</sup>

As discussed earlier, in the global, postmodern and multi-faith context, there has been a definite shift in the understanding of Christian mission. We view mission as God's mission rather than the missionary era's colonialistic understanding of Christian mission. When the term "mission" was first used it meant "the activities by which the Western ecclesiastical system was extended into the rest of the world."<sup>14</sup> While the colonialistic understanding saw mission as the activity of the church, in the new image mission is seen as God's activity, which is larger than the activity of the church. It embraces "both the church and the world, and is one in which the church may be privileged to participate."<sup>15</sup>

Certainly postmodernism challenges the burden presented by a theology that regards Christian mission as foreign colonialistic enterprise. At the heart of postmodern criticism of mission is its critique of meta-narrative; i.e., a narrative about God and God's dealings with the whole universe.<sup>16</sup> Meta-narratives of "colonialistic" Christian mission were primarily created and maintained by the European Western theology. Thus postmodernism abandons commitment to meta-narratives or stories that are inclusive of all people or of the whole of reality, "because such universal

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<sup>13</sup> This will be explained in further detail later in the section.

<sup>14</sup> Bosch, 227-228.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Thangaraj, 27-28.

thinking only masks the perspectivalism of one group and its power interests over another.”<sup>17</sup>

Thomas Thangaraj highlights three shifts that the postmodern critique of the Christian missiological enterprise suggests: the public character of mission, the value of autobiographical reflection of mission, and the widening of the circle of discussion of mission. I take a special interest in the aspect of widening of the circle of conversation and dialogue as it becomes a foundation of the discussion of the primary theme of this paper: peace-making through interfaith dialogue. As Thangaraj points out, only in a widening conversation and dialogue with Christians and persons of other faiths can we avoid “our inner subjectivity” and our exclusivistic view.

As the change in religious landscape has been extensive, there has been a dawning awareness that Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus do not live just in other parts of the world, but are our neighbors in our living quarters. Thus religious pluralism is one of major factors that set the context in terms of the church’s response to theology of mission. In the context of this multi-faith reality, then, we need to ask ourselves a question: how do we confidently witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ while listening to neighbors of other faith traditions? What is our Christian mission in a multi-faith global community? Dialogue between Christians and persons of other faiths is required for constructing the theology of Christian mission for today.

In the context of a pluralistic world, Thangaraj proposes that a theological starting point for an understanding of Christian mission is an acknowledgement and affirmation that people of different faith traditions live in a saving covenant with God

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<sup>17</sup> Ted Peters, *God The World’s Future, Systematic Theology for a New Era* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 17.

in their own way. This is based on the *missio Dei*, which is God's activity in other places, persons, communities, and religions.

Thangaraj, however, argues that doing theology of mission in inter-religious context needs another theological dimension as a starting point: *missio humanitatis*. *Mission humanitatis* helps enlarge a circle of conversation with persons of other faiths. Doing mission in a multi-faith context requires recognition of the moral values shared by all the world's religions. Such moral values or imperatives derive from a common understanding of our shared humanity in terms of *responsibility, solidarity and mutuality*.<sup>18</sup> The term that Thangaraj uses for this shared humanity is "mission of humanity" or *missio humanitatis*. In his formulation, this "*missio humanitatis*" is "to take responsibility for ourselves, others, and the world" in a mode of solidarity, shot through with a spirit of mutuality.<sup>19</sup>

For example, this thesis argues that peace building is a moral value or imperative shared by most persons of faith. Peace, harmony and love are a Christian understanding of God's purpose in history- a purpose shared by other faith communities. We as humanity are given *responsibility* to build God's peaceable kingdom on earth. As Thangaraj says, the mission of humans is to give a "responsible" response to "the other" whether that be other humans, animals, plants, trees or simply all that is around us. For H. Richard Niebuhr, being responsible is to be accountable to the conversation that goes on between the self and the world in

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 47-60.

every action.<sup>20</sup> Living in an ever-changing landscape of multi-faith communities requires constant engagement in mutual dialogue and reformulation of one's own faith and beliefs. In particular, ever increasing conflict and violence requires a commitment to mutual coordination of mission through participating in mission of mutual interest- peace, love and justice.

In response to the present context of a religiously pluralistic world with many conflicts and war, therefore, this project was interested in dealing with how we as neighbors of different religious traditions find *solidarity* to be engaged in *mutual* interfaith mission designed to bring justice and peace. In doing so, the underlying theme was to promote an awareness of our neighbors as people of living faiths, whose beliefs and practices should become integral elements in our theological thinking about the world and the human community.<sup>21</sup> This thesis argues that interfaith dialogue has to do with seeking common ground for God's purpose in history, and with working with neighbors of other faith traditions in a common cause to serve justice and righteousness. Thus, a meaningful interfaith dialogue of action includes inter-religious solidarity against social and economic injustice brought on by the global capitalist economy, conflict, violence and war.

### **Theology of Peace**

*"I will make with them a covenant of shalom and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing. And the trees of the*

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<sup>20</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self, An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 65, in Thangaraj, *Ibid.* 50.

<sup>21</sup> World Council of Churches, *My Neighbour's Faith -- and Mine. Theological Discoveries through Interfaith Dialogue: A Study Guide* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986), vii.

*field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land. They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them; they shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will provide for them plantations of shalom.” (Ezekiel 34:25-29a)*

*“Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with each other.” (Mark 9:50b)*

God’s kingdom seeks shalom. Amidst violence continuing to thrive, it is critical for churches to reexamine their biblical and theological understanding of God’s call to peace and reconciliation.

Peace is not simply the absence of war or conflict. Rather peace is understood to be the realization of God’s will for life giving. It is the realization of God’s will for fullness of life for all. That includes healthy food and decent jobs for the poor; security and dignity of life for those who have been violated and abused; and stewardship of the earth’s resources, to name a few.<sup>22</sup>

In the Old Testament, shalom is the substance of the biblical vision of one community embracing all creation.<sup>23</sup> Shalom is for the whole community, not just for individuals. “Together we stand before God’s blessings and together we receive the gift of life, if we receive it at all. Shalom comes only to the inclusive, embracing community that excludes none.”<sup>24</sup> As in Ezekiel 34:25-29a, shalom is the well being that we physically experience in a historical way. It is not idyllic “pie in the sky” but salvation in the midst of trees, fruits and produces. It is peace, freedom, and security.

Surely, shalom is a vision of an assured future. However, Walter Bruggeman rightly warns against a romantic notion of shalom. The Jewish notion of shalom is a

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<sup>22</sup> Longchar, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Peace* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 15.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*



work in progress, therefore marked by fraction and incompleteness.<sup>25</sup> Bruggerman claims that without understanding of appropriate Jewish grounding, the notion of shalom lends itself to a passion for equilibrium, thus tends to ignore the reality of evil, which we often see in exclusionary and exploitative social practice. Peace is not wish nor hope but hard, disciplined, critical resolve. It is shalom-cum-misphat, peace with and through justice.<sup>26</sup>

The New Testament also suggests peace as its core message. The essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ is one of peace. In Mark 9:49-50, Jesus says to his disciples, “Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.” This implies that the community of the disciples should be engaged in peace building for all.<sup>27</sup> As in the Old Testament, Mark’s writing critically concerns building the community of peace. Mark’s community was divided in many ways, and thus it struggled in building community of peace. Palestine then was not only torn apart by the Jewish-Roman war, but there was a serious conflict between Jewish nationalists (Zealots) and Jewish Roman collaborators. Mark also lived in a context in which many were marginalized- the poor, peasants, and the physically disabled such as the blind, the lame and lepers. It is in this conflicting situation that Mark said that peace is the situation in which God’s kingdom is realized. Peace is an active action, including freedom and fellowship, forgiveness and reconciliation, love and justice.<sup>28</sup>

Mark’s model of peace building was to challenge peace seekers to respond to “enmity” with love, and with moral force, not physical force. Mark challenged the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid..4.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.5.

<sup>27</sup> Longchar, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid..6.

value system maintained by the colonizers, zealots, collaborators and those who claimed to be prophets. A covenant of salt (Num 18:19, Chr 13:5) is a covenant of hospitality and a covenant of loyalty. As in Mark 9, I believe that Jesus exhorts his disciples to respond to one another with transformative “saltiness” rather than through a “Zealot” response of military engagement.<sup>29</sup>

The discussion of a theology of peace calls for explanation of just war theory. Both pacifism and just war theory share the same theological departure point. Both believe that God, creator and ruler of all, is in covenant with all.<sup>30</sup> God loves all humans who are mixtures of god and evil. Just war thinkers, however, go separate ways with the belief that there are times that love demands physical force. Since the world is persistently beset by conflicts among people, just war thinkers believe that sometimes war can be justifiable. They believe God’s covenanting love can obligate us to use force to protect the victims of an unjust attack.

Jim Winkler, General Secretary of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society is dismayed at such assertion. He said,

“I believe the Church of Jesus Christ is fundamentally for peace and against war as a means of resolving conflicts. Nonviolence is better than violence. I remain astonished that this is not a unanimously held viewpoint. It seems to me that much of the world’s peoples still cling to what Walter Wink calls ‘the myth of redemptive violence.’ This is played out in cartoons and movies, interpersonal relationships, and international conflicts, and even, in the church. There are those who believe the Bible commands us to obey the authorities, to follow the flag, and to kill our enemies. That is the false gospel. It is the gospel of fleeting popularity.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph L. Allen, *War, A primer for Christians* (Dallas, The Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility and Southern Methodist University Press, 2001), 32.

<sup>31</sup> Jim Winkler, Speech at Northern Illinois Methodist Federation of Social Action luncheon ( June 7, 2003).

Such a statement rings true when you realize the danger of the “unauthorized power of the military complex” that wants to go to war.<sup>32</sup> It is unfortunate to see the Book of Discipline, the official stance of the United Methodist Church as a denomination, basically supports both peace and just war theory. As discussed in the previous section, while the “War and Peace” section of the Social Principles states that “We believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ, another section called the “Military Service” in the Social Principles also affirms the need to use the force of arms when peaceful alternatives have failed.

Throughout the class, this theology- God is a God of shalom- was maintained. I shared with the class my biblical vision of God’s kingdom of peace. If shalom means well being, wholeness, health, welfare and safety for all, there is no halfway to peace. The kind of peace in God’s new creation is so wholesome that “the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox.” (Isaiah 65:24)

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<sup>32</sup> Lt.Col. Karen Kwiatkowski, U.S. Dept of Defense (rt), *Why We Fight*, Documentary movie.

## CHAPTER 4

### WAR AND PEACE

*“We hoped for peace but no good has come, for a time of healing but there was only terror. (Jeremiah 8:15)*

*“So Justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows.” (Isaiah 59:9)*

For the discussion of peacemaking, a historical and theological review of war, peace and mission is helpful. Varying perspectives on war and peace, along with root causes of violence, were viewed and discussed in the class. Theology of peace was also discussed to lay a foundation for exploring various ways of peace building in a multi-faith context. Along with a historical review of war and peace, the theologies of peace and mission provided a common lens through which the class viewed the main topic of peacemaking in a multi-faith world.

#### Differing Views of War and Peace In the Methodist History

Today’s United Methodist view of war and peace stands on the continuum of the movement of churches’ peacemaking, being deeply rooted in its history, especially in the Wesleyan Tradition. Although John Wesley offered no definitive statement of a Christian ethic for war, he clearly denounced war. And yet Wesley was more critically a patriot than a peacemaker. In other words, although Wesley hated war, he justified wars if needed. Wesley thought that war is morally wrong, but

there are times that war needs to be waged to defend oneself. A peacemaker and patriot Wesley may have been, but he was not a pacifist.

History on war and peace offers an insight as to how humans attempt to provide rationale for either just war or opposition to war. For instance, the Declaration of Independence was an attempt to justify the Revolution. At the least it was an effort toward rationalizing a just revolt against a king, if not an effort toward providing rationale for a just war.<sup>1</sup> History repeats itself. How many times have different nations played the theory of a just war? The American war with Iraq is not an exception. Only historians will tell whether or not it was a just war.

Throughout the wars of America, Methodists have developed varying perspectives on war and peace- i.e., from defenders to war supporters, from expansionists to just war theorists and to pacifists. For instance, many Christians saw the Spanish- American War as an opportunity for evangelizing and redeeming the world, but based upon a flawed biblical view and theology. Christians took part in American expansionism, “a form of economic imperialism, ultimately stemmed from sin of self-pride and hatred of others that shaped domestic attitudes and policies toward Indians, blacks, Orientals, and “new” immigrant groups.”<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the Korean War was the first test of peace for Methodists where anti-war sentiment surfaced during the same war. The Methodist General Conference in 1952 refused to endorse war in Korea, and supported peace efforts through the United Nations. The State of The Church Report, as amended on May 1, 1952, reads, “The Church should

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<sup>1</sup> Geroge Marsden, “The American Revolution,” Ronald A. Wells, ed., *The Wars of America: Christian Views* (Macon, Mercer University Press, 1991), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Augustus Cerillo, Jr., “The Spanish-American War,” Wells, ed., *Ibid.* 123.

now lead its people in the quest of the conditions of just and enduring peace, and specifically in the support of a Charter Revision Conference scheduled to be placed on the agenda of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1955.”<sup>3</sup>

The 1960s was a pivotal decade in churches’ peacemaking. Throughout the 1950s, the Methodist Church was easily acquiesced into following national policy.<sup>4</sup> However, in the 1960s, United Methodists seriously questioned war and violence as the Indochinese conflict continued. Was U.S. action righteous? Or was it for self-interest? A growing number said no. Kenneth Rowe rightly observed that the Women’s Division action to purchase a part of the U.N. plaza and build a two million dollar building was a reflection of such growing anti-war sentiment. “The Church Center for the U.N. has provided a sharpened perspective and collective action.”<sup>5</sup> While the Vietnam War dragged and divided the nation, the majority of the church family came to the pacifist tone by this time. For instance, an editorial in the journal *Motive Journalism* disapproved of American involvement in Vietnam, saying, “We conclude our publishing year with a lamentation. In the name of God, this war, in this place, at this time, against this people, must stop.”<sup>6</sup>

The 1968 General Conference of the United Methodist Church expressed a concern over the cause and consequences of United States foreign policy, especially in Southeast Asia. The resolution on Indochina adopted by the 1972 General

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<sup>3</sup> Charles C. Parlin, Chairman and Willard E. Stanton, Secretary, No. 14 State of the Church, *Journal of the General Conference* (1952), 1408-1409.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Rowe, Lecture on War and Peace in the Wesleyan Tradition (Drew University, Summer 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> B. J. Stiles, “Vietnam: Challenge to the Conscience of America,” *Motive*, May 1967, volume XXVII, Number 8, Reader for War and Peace in the Wesleyan Tradition (2003).

Conference continued to urge the leadership of the United States to cease immediately all bombing in Indochina.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1980s the United Methodist Church as a denomination was dominated by a progressive perspective. In particular, the 1980 General Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, reflected the denomination's progressive mood in several ways. For instance, Marjorie Matthews was the first woman to be elected bishop. The charter for Racial Justice, which is at the heart of the Women's Division racial-justice work, was first approved by the 1980 General Conference. The 1980 General Conference also took a progressive stance by condemning capital punishment in the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church, asserting that it violates Christian teachings. It is remarkable to note that at the 1980 General Conference, the Church affirmed the right of annual conferences to determine the fitness of individuals for ministry and openly rejected prohibitions of gay and lesbian persons for ordination, instead stating that "the United Methodist Church has moved away from prohibitions of specific acts, for such prohibitions can be endless. We affirm our trust in the covenant community and the process by which we ordain ministers."<sup>8</sup>

The 1980s also saw the United Methodist Church move further into the dove column on the issue of war and peace. The 1988 United Methodist Bishops' Pastoral Letter titled *A Pastoral Letter to All United Methodists: In Defense of Creation- The*

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<sup>7</sup> Resolution on Indochina, *The Book of Resolution 1972*, the United Methodist Church, 19-20.

<sup>8</sup> It was not until later, after the founding of the Institute for Religion and Democracy, a conservative think tank that works in mainline denominations to promote a right wing political agenda, that the Church instituted a restriction on the ordination of gay and lesbian persons., <http://welcomingministries.blogspot.com/2007/06/homosexuality-and-united-methodist.html>  
Internet: accessed July, 2007

*Nuclear Crisis and A Just Peace* played an important role in the peace movement of the denomination. It was a bold attempt by the Bishops to oppose nuclear arms and advocate for a just peace, using their teaching authority which had not been reflexed before. This pastoral letter was based upon a biblical vision of a holistic peace (shalom) revealed in Scripture to be God's will and purpose for all God's creation. In the same year, United Methodist bishops in East and West Germany issued a pastoral letter on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kristallnacht, the beginning of the holocaust, condemning the annihilation of the Jewish people and urging cooperation towards understanding and reconciliation between peoples. In the fall of 1988, in accordance with the signing of the Civil Liberties Act, May Iwahashi, a Japanese American United Methodist contributed a poem titled "A Nisei's Continuing Faith" to the United Methodist Monitor (Fall 1988). The purpose of the Civil Liberties Act, which was signed by the President in August, 1988, was to acknowledge the fundamental injustice of the evacuation, relocation, and internment of the United States citizens and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry during World War II. Iwahashi, who was a member of Pine United Methodist Church in San Francisco, California, has called this act "a memorial to justice, a beacon of hope."

However, the pacifist stance of the United Methodist Church that started in the 1960s and culminated in the 1980s came under fire in the 1990s and the 2000s. One of the reasons has to do with a general change in ideology in the United States that has turned more conservative. Civil or public religion has been transposed, in public perception, from moderate and liberal contexts to conservative and nationalist ones. Much of the civil religion of America that had been moderate or liberal through



the eras of Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson changed direction to the right.<sup>9</sup> It is alarming that the American conservatives' identification of their God and their own national purpose is consistent with what seems to be a long-term and widespread international trend.

Second, religious forces have been continually "trans-positioned (re-positioned)," and they have turned even more conservative since the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. In recent years so called "conservative renewal groups" have grown as a "religious right" across the mainline denominations. These conservative renewal groups, such as Good News, the Confessing Movement and the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD), aim to target progressive policies, people and structures within the United Methodist Church.<sup>10</sup> Of course, the church has never lived in perfect harmony. Methodism began as a reform movement, and movements have continued to arise within the United Methodist Church. However, these conservative renewal groups are now widely seen as movements that "employ doctrine to exclude rather than include."

Under the pressure from these religious right groups, the 2000 General Conference balanced just war and peacemaking. Paragraph 164G of the Social Principles ("Military Service") of the 2000 Book of Discipline reflects this change in theology.<sup>11</sup> The section states that while the United Methodist Church believes war is incompatible with the teachings of Christ and urges the peaceful settlement of

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<sup>9</sup> Martin Marty, *Religion and Republic: The American Circumstance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 329-343.

<sup>10</sup> Leon Howell, *United Methodism at Risk, A Wake-Up Call*, (Kingston: Information Project for United Methodists 2003).

<sup>11</sup> *The Book of Discipline 2000*, 119.

disputes among nations, the church acknowledges that when peaceful alternatives have failed, armed force may be necessary.<sup>12</sup>

The 2004 General Conference took another step toward accepting a just war stance, acquiescing to pressure on various issues posed by conservatives, especially the “conservative renewal movement.”<sup>13</sup> The “Military Service” section of the Social Principles, where most war supporters may turn, was kept in the 2004 Book of Discipline.

“When Peaceful alternatives have failed, we also acknowledge that “the force of arms may be preferable to unchecked aggression, tyranny and genocide. We honor the witness of pacifists who will not allow us to become complacent about war and violence. We also respect those who support the use of force, but only in extreme situations and only when the need is which clear beyond reasonable doubt, and through appropriate international organizations.”<sup>14</sup>

Another change occurred in the *War and Peace* section of Paragraph 165 C). A phrase was added reflecting just war, which reads, “We therefore reject war as an instrument of national foreign policy, *to be employed only as a last resort in the prevention of such evils as genocide, brutal suppression of human rights, and unprovoked international aggression.*”<sup>15</sup> It would be interesting to apply this paragraph to the discussion of whether military force was used as the last resort in the recent war against Iraq.

As Methodists enter the new millennium, they face strong challenges in keeping God’s mandate for justice and peace. The United Methodist Church as a

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<sup>12</sup> United Methodist News Services Backgrounder on War, 2001, The Reader (2003).

<sup>13</sup> Howell, 32.

<sup>14</sup> *The Book of Discipline 2004*, Paragraph 164 (I). 164.

<sup>15</sup> The part in Italics is added portion by the 2004 General Conference.

denomination will continue to need to respond to a challenging question, "Where should Christians stand on the matter of the use of force?"

The students found an in-depth discussion on the topic very helpful in constructing their view of war and peace. They learned that today's Methodist view of war and peace stands on the continuum of the Wesleyan tradition, and is not isolated from the current national mood or religious forces in the United States. One student said, "My understanding of world politics- of war and peace- as it relates to colonialism and racism was given validity through the readings and the rich, diversified discussions in the class."

### **Root Causes of Violence**

We hear enough about conflicts that are going on and why they are happening. We are "bombarded" by opinions and perspectives on why violence occurs and what should be done. A century ago, the problem of war and peace was one of colonial powers competing in the building of empires around the world. In more recent times, wars rooted in ethnic, religious and cultural loyalties continuously erupt in addition to conflicts that are related to ideological differences and power struggle. The global trend towards liberalization and an open market economy often imposes a consumer culture and the rise of income inequality. This is a culture that intensifies the suffering of people with the lack of adequate resources to have an abundant life. The suffering is compounded by the AIDS crisis where a large number of children are left orphaned.

Poverty, which is prevalent in the world, is primary among several root causes of conflict. Poverty leads to despair, a sense of injustice, and alienation that, when

combined with political grievances, can foster extremism.<sup>16</sup> Extremism can be fueled by the negative impact of economic globalization, which is also at the root of much unrest and conflict in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Globalization continues to widen the gap between the haves and the have-nots in many countries as well as between the developed and developing nations. Thus, economic marginalization and alienation can cause violence and conflict. Where communities feel they are faced with marginalization, foreclosed options for the future or even oppression and eradication, some will inevitably respond by asserting their primary identities more forcefully. As stated in the previous section of “globalization,” there is a deep connection between war and economic process of globalization.

Power is another root cause. Structural violence is carried out by dictatorial or negligent governments. In some cases this structural violence is hidden by so-called ethnic or religious differences or conflicts.<sup>17</sup> Myanmar (Burma) is a good example of the use of military power causing unrest and refugees especially along the border of Burma and Thailand. When it is coupled with corruption in places of authority, it creates further violence.

Many express concerns over the rise of “new empires”—i.e., powerful countries that dominate the political, economic and military scenes of the world and subsequently the weaker countries. There is criticism that “to ensure their control of the unjust global economic order, they have waged the so-called war on terror and

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<sup>16</sup> The AOC Report.

<sup>17</sup> A. Wati Longchar, “Having Salt, Making Peace: Bible Study 1,” *Themes and Stories: Building Communities of Peace for All*,” The Twelfth General Assembly, Christian Conference of Asia (Chiang Mai, April, 2005), 8

have sought the support of Asian countries.”<sup>18</sup> I cannot agree more with the report that Western military interventions in countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, along with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, contribute significantly to the growing sense of resentment and mistrust that mars relations among communities.

Religious identity and plurality may also be identified as one of the root causes of violence. Religious identity is a factor in much of the violence that happens within communities and between the nations.<sup>19</sup> Religious conflicts, especially between Christians and Muslims, cannot be ignored.

What is interesting, however, in the report of the Alliance of Civilizations, is that the chief cause of the growing rift between Muslim and Western Christian societies is not religion or history, but recent political developments, notably the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When this finding was presented in November, 2006, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan said, “No other dispute had such a symbolic or emotional impact on people.” He continued, “We may wish to think of the Arab - Israeli conflict as just one regional conflict among many. But it is not. As long as the Palestinians live under occupation, exposed to daily frustration and humiliation, and as long as Israelis are blown up in buses and in dances halls, so long will passions everywhere be inflamed.”<sup>20</sup> It makes sense that Alliance of Civilizations participants, a cross-cultural group consisting of twenty prominent world figures, called for urgent efforts to heal the growing divide between Muslim and Western societies, and between Israel and Palestine.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.10.

<sup>19</sup> The World Council of Churches, *Why Violence? Why Not Peace? A Study guide to help individuals and groups in the churches to reflect and act in the Decade to overcome Violence* (Switzerland, World Council of Churches, 2002), 18-19.

<sup>20</sup> The AOC, Ibid., in BBC, "Call to Bridge West - Muslim Divide" (November 13, 2006).

The class appreciated the discussion of complexity of growing conflicts around the world. One student related, “I was reminded again that when conflicts occur, we need to examine the histories of both sides for the roots of conflicts.” Another student said, “Since many conflicts have religion as a contributing component, it makes sense that religious answers should be sought. Religion is an imperative way to get at some of the core issues.”

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF GLOBAL MISSION**

The current context of global mission includes a multi-faith world, globalization, violence, conflict and war. This chapter summarizes these contexts, all of which were presented and discussed in the classroom. A block of time (three hours) was devoted to these topics: 1) Globalization and Mission, 2) Mission in a Religiously Diverse World, and 3) Threats to Peace from a Missionary Perspective (See Syllabus-Attachment B).

As Dana Robert puts it, “the ordering of our mission is dictated by the context.”<sup>79</sup> The context for mission is not just a space or place to which we take and deliver mission, as a program or commodity. Context refers to the settings where God is in mission ahead of us and where we are called to follow faithfully. This context is meaningful only if we seek to understand what God’s mission is for the Church at this moment in history. As people of God, we need to be aware of the world’s condition and seek to join God’s mission in faith and hope for the transformation of the Church and the redemption of the world.

The context for mission is a concrete world of complex demographic, ecological, economic, political, socio-cultural, and religious realities. This paper identifies three contextual factors that affect and shape people’s lives for good or ill-as related to the subject of mission.

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<sup>79</sup> Robert, 1.

## Globalization

*“In the abundance of your trade your lands were filled with violence.”*  
(Ezekiel 28:26)

The classroom session on globalization began with a small group discussion (See Appendix B- Syllabus: Tuesday afternoon session, January 20). The questions were given, “What concrete examples can you give in terms of economic globalization? What is the human face of consequences of globalization?” Students named positive aspects of globalization such as technology and telecommunications. They also named negative consequences of the capitalist economy including income disparity and environmental degradation. For students in the class, the study of globalization in general seemed to allow them to better understand the context of global mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In his own 18<sup>th</sup> century context in England, John Wesley lamented the divide between the rich and the poor and the scarcity of provisions such as food and land.<sup>2</sup> Wesley concluded that provisions were scarce because people had no work, but yet a few people lived in luxury and imposed high taxes. Are 21<sup>st</sup> century global economic situations any different? While unemployment rates skyrocket in many countries, a few transnational corporations, out of human greed, impose on those countries structural adjustment programs that destroy the local economy and create a scarcity of basic human provisions.

Currently we live in a world best described by the term ‘globalization.’ Globalization refers to increasing global connectivity, integration and

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<sup>2</sup> John Wesley, “Thoughts: The Present Scarcity of Provisions,” in *Wesley’s Works*, Vol. II, Jackson Edition , 53-59.



interdependence in the economic, social, technological, cultural, political and ecological spheres.<sup>3</sup> Debates abound whether globalization is good or bad.<sup>4</sup>

Globalization brings the increasingly rapid, massive, and international movements of money, people, goods, and information throughout the world.

While there may be positive effects, however, globalization, particularly in the economic sphere, also creates a growing divide between the powerful few and the impoverished, excluded many.<sup>5</sup>

“Just as the nation state characterized the frame of reference for organizing political and economic relations (as well as many denominations) in much of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in today’s context of globalization the corporation serves as the basic reference point for structuring institutions and relations throughout society. Indeed, Fortune 500 companies now have larger operating budgets than the gross domestic product of most developing nations. Of the 100 largest economies in the world today, 52 are corporations and 48 are governments.”<sup>6</sup>

In this project, the term globalization primarily refers to the globalization of the capitalist economy which is primarily led by international financial markets and multinational corporations such as the World Bank, The World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund.

The globalization of the capitalist economy increasingly concerns both religious groups and civil society groups including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), grassroots and community based organizations, trade unions, indigenous people, etc. Increase in the volume of communication and travel helps us see what is really happening to the lives of women and men, children, youth and the elderly

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<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>; Internet; accessed July, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> One example is YaleGlobal Online: [http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/globalization/?gclid=CK3M1NyGm40CFRA\\_YaodlBmFzw](http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/globalization/?gclid=CK3M1NyGm40CFRA_YaodlBmFzw); Internet; accessed July, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> General Board of Global Ministries, *The Context of Mission 2005-2008*.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

facing globalization of the free-market economy. For instance, in Tanzania, I saw refugees rejected in attempts to return home because of the local government's fear of losing the economic revenues that these refugees brought to the local government and townspeople. I saw small mom and pop shops going bankrupt in the face of the opening of Walmart stores in Puerto Rico. In Budapest, Hungary, there is a Burger King in the most historic-looking building in downtown. People in India may lose their access to the Neem tree that they have used to make toothbrushes for centuries as patent laws are applied and enforced. Patent laws are destroying the subsistence agriculture that feed over one-half of the world's people.<sup>7</sup>

China is another typical example of how globalization affects one's economy. While they maintain the socialist system politically, China's economic system seems to be widely open to capitalism and immersed in its spirit. Main streets or department stores in Beijing are just like those of Seoul or New York. I have heard local people in Beijing exclaim, "Each morning you wake up, you see a new building going up, and it will be a hotel or a commercial building." What is most striking is the Coca Cola stand in the middle of a courtyard of the Forbidden City in Beijing. It is more than shocking to see such an "American" pop stand being allowed to do business in the most private section of the Palace. This particular palace- formerly a home for kings and their families- is supposed to be the most private place in the Forbidden City. Coca Cola's presence not only destroys the beauty of the Palace but invades the history of this special place.

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<sup>7</sup> Therese J. Wolfwood, "Seattle: A Convergence of Globalization and Militarization," in *There is an Alternative: Subsistence and Worldwide Resistance to Corporate Globalization*, ed. Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, Nicholas Faraclas, and Claudia Von Werlhof (London-New York, Zed- Books, 2001).

Even in North Korea, supposedly one of the most isolated and secluded countries on earth, there is a capitalist economy. According to a recent article in *The Economist*, “It seems that massive adjustments of wages and prices began on July 1<sup>st</sup>.... North Korean officials are rethinking the way they run their economy”<sup>8</sup> Truly there seem to be no boundaries or walls that global free trade cannot penetrate.

The tragedy is that in the name of free trade, injustice has been imposed on many people. The global market enslaves us. The national interest of super powers enslaves people and endangers peace or breaks the peace process.

Globalization promotes self-centered existence and excludes many people. To exclude the other is to deprive him or her of the right to live- that is, truly to live, rather than merely to survive in an inhumane manner.<sup>9</sup> If freedom is to be truly human with dignity given by God, then globalization subjects people to servitude, not freedom.

Thus, globalization acts as a big stumbling block to human communities in living lives of freedom and of peace. There are voices that we need to hear from those who suffer from globalization- the landless, women, children and youth, immigrants and refugees. It is an imperative that we as Christians hear the voices of the marginalized in a world where almost one-half of the world’s population (2.8 billion) earn less than \$2 per day.

Most alarming is that globalization and militarization are inseparable. Siliva Federici, in her article on war, globalization and reproduction, critically examines the

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<sup>8</sup> “Stitch by stitch to a different world,” *The Economist* (July 31, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> Elsa Tamez, “Hagar and Sarah in Galatians; A Case Study in Freedom,” *Word and World* 20, No.3 (Summer 2000), 27.

connection between war and the economic processes of globalization in the developing world, especially in Africa. She argues, “the destruction of subsistence economics is one of the main reasons behind the proliferation of conflicts in Africa, Asia and Latin America...that structural adjustment generates war, and war, in turn, completes the work of structural adjustments.”<sup>10</sup>

In this context of generalized economic bankruptcy, violent rivalries have exploded everywhere among different factions. Ethnic violence and war forces people to leave their home villages to become dislocated persons. Consequently the social fabric is torn. The struggle for survival lays the groundwork for the manipulation of local antagonism and recruitment of the unemployed, especially youth, by warring parties. In the background of the appearance of child soldiers in the 1980s and 1990s are these “torn” extended families, undermined by financial hardships. Many “tribal and religious conflicts in Africa have been rooted in these processes.”<sup>11</sup>

Certainly the ethics of the globalization market lead many people to servitude. As Elsa Tamez claims, the free market has its theology and we might call it “the other gospel”<sup>12</sup> that Paul names and urgently repudiates in the Letter to Galatians. In current global contexts we see two “gospels” confronting one another, i.e., the gospel of freedom and the other gospel; the gospel of the law and the gospel of exclusion. One leads to life, freedom, and peace, while the other leads to poverty, servitude and

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<sup>10</sup> Silvia Federici, “War, Globalization and Reproduction,” *There is an Alternative: Subsistence and Worldwide Resistance to Corporate Globalization*, ed. By Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, Nicholas Faraclas, and Claudia Von Werlhof (London- New York, Zed- Books, 2001), 133-134.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 135-136.

<sup>12</sup> Elsa Tamez, “Three Biblical Reflections for Our Time,” *Hope and Justice for All in the Americas, Discerning God's mission*, ed. By Oscar L. Bolioli (Friendship Press, New York, 1998), 13.

violence. Here lies the theological basis for joining forces with other religions in opposing the negative effects of globalization.

I believe it was a learning experience on the students' part that even the challenging consequences of globalization create mission opportunities for churches to work together for a more humane, just, and environmentally sustainable global market. This learning became evident in the students' country reports, which was one of three assignments for the course. Each student was asked to do an independent research on a particular country in relationship to contemporary contexts of mission and global issues and to present their report during the class. One student chose Argentina, relating in his report Argentina's economic crisis of 2001. The situation in Argentina was indeed one of the worst economic collapses brought by the process of economic globalization and which involved the International Monetary Fund. Cable Network News (CNN) reported the crisis as follows:

“Argentina had South America's second largest economy after Brazil, but it had been faltering after a four-year recession that has led to 20 percent unemployment. The government owed around \$132 billion, mostly to bond holders, and economists said without international help it had little hope of avoiding history's worst debt default by a sovereign nation. The International Monetary Fund had refused to release a \$1.3 billion loan payment, saying the country failed to balance its budget despite the plan.”<sup>13</sup>

As this student rightly pointed out, however, the economic crisis in Argentina created new mission opportunities. I recall Bishop Nelie Rich, the first woman Bishop in the Argentina Methodist Church, visiting the GBGM to discuss mission opportunities in partnership with GBGM to minister to the unemployed- who became

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<sup>13</sup> CNN, “2001 Argentina teeters on possible economic collapse “ (December 21, 2001), <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/americas/12/20/argentina/index.html>: Internet; accessed July, 2007

a violent force in Argentina. Consequently, the GBGM and Methodist Church of Argentina worked together to reach out to the poor and the distressed. As the student concluded in his report, “Even in the midst of the economic crisis, Argentina could still contribute to the world mission. Mission starts with a concern with social justice and a desire to make changes.”

### **A Multi-faith World**

*“Interdependence is a fact of our global life.” (Diana Eck)*

The context of a multi-faith world was another building block for the class. This, along with globalization and conflict and war (examined in the next section), formed the foundation of the ultimate purpose for the class- peacemaking as mission.<sup>14</sup> The class was keenly interested in the discussion of mission in a multi-faith world. One student wrote her term paper on the significance of interfaith perspectives in working with seniors.

Against the backdrop of the complex and ambiguous phenomenon of globalization, religious forces are continually being "trans-positioned (re-positioned)," especially since the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. Both Islam and Christianity are undergoing a significant repositioning in that many Muslims and Christians identify their God with their own national or ethnic group's purposes.

Defining “to transpose” as “to put each of two or more things in the place of the other or others, to interchange,” Martin Marty gives the following illustration:

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<sup>14</sup> The notion of building blocks was borrowed from Father Mark J. Connell's D.Min project on *A synthesis of service learning for Mount Saint Mary College: Dominican spirituality and faithful citizenship, May 2005.*

“Spiritually speaking, West complements East. Spatially, Islam abuts Christendom. Maps locate Southern Baptists and Canadian Anglicans, while Utah is a Mormon domain. Displaced European Jews repositioned their Judaism in Israel or in urban America.”<sup>15</sup>

American or world religious forces and movements continuously undergo significant repositioning, bringing us ever closer to a true multi-faith world. Our reality is we encounter people in and from other religious traditions all the time. The question then is how we engage ourselves in relation to people of other faith traditions and how we conduct Christian mission in this multi-faith world.

Today’s missiologists talk about four options in understanding pluralism: exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism and transformationism.

In exclusivism, our encounter with God and our understanding of reality is the one and only truth, excluding all others. From the Christian exclusivist point of view, it is only through Jesus Christ that salvific truth (special revelation) comes. When using a common “climbing the mountain image,” Jesus is the only way or savior. No other savior, no other religion, saves at all. There is only one way to the top of the mountain of salvation.

Inclusivism says, “there are indeed, many communities, traditions, and truths, but our own way of seeing things is the culmination of the others, superior to the others, or at least wide enough to include the others under our universal canopy and in our own terms.”<sup>16</sup> For Christian inclusivists, Jesus is the salvation in all its fullness; the salvation offered in other religions is not contrary but included in what Jesus

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<sup>15</sup> Martin Marty, *Religion and Republic: The American Circumstance* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 329-343.

<sup>16</sup> Diana L. Eck, *Encountering God* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), 168.

brings. All the roads up the mountain are in some basic sense Jesus ways. The way that calls him by name illuminates best what the other ways are all about.

The next response is pluralism, of which there are two types. The first could be called “Pluralism of Tolerance.” All individuals and religious traditions must be protected by the same right of non-interference. Rather than acceptance of the value and meaning of other individuals or groups, this understanding of religious pluralism tolerates the other, because if we did not tolerate them, they might not tolerate us. Jesus is one way up the mountain, but there are many routes going up, and they all get you to the same summit.

Another type of pluralism is transformationism or the pluralism of interdependence. Diana Eck, known for the Pluralism Project at Harvard, comes close to what might be called the pluralism of interdependence. Pluralism of interdependence is not simply to tolerate, but to be open to opportunities of transformation through the active process of participation- encounters, dialogue and interaction.<sup>17</sup> Transformationism maintains that the greatness and goodness of other religious traditions are recognized, but does not presume their truths are identical to those of Christianity. Not all religions are climbing the same mountain. There are many different mountains of salvation. Jesus is the way to the top of the Christian mountain. Buddhists are climbing a different mountain and Hindus and Muslims others. Donald Messer says, “Listening to others and witnessing to them are not in

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<sup>17</sup> Diana L. Eck, *The Pluralism Project at Harvard University*, 1991-2000, <http://www.pluralism.org/>; Internet; accessed May 2007



conflict. In fact, as we are transformed by what we learn from others, our witnessing may become far more convincing to them.”<sup>18</sup>

This thesis advocates the fourth perspective. The transformationism option or the pluralism of interdependence is the best fit for both the integrity of the Gospel and the reality of a pluralistic world. The transformationist does not fear persons of other faiths, but seeks to learn from them as well as witness to them. It is very important not to be satisfied with the pluralism of tolerance assumption. At a European Regional Gathering sponsored by the GBGM, in Budapest, Hungary in January 2002, I heard a woman state that she did not believe in conversion, or in the preaching of the Gospel since we need to respect other religions. She believed that the mission of the Christian church is fulfilled just by reaching out to those in need. However, if we don't believe in the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which includes proclamation, service and fellowship, then we limit the very meaning of being Christian.

We are reminded of Wilfred Cantwell Smith who said, “the present need was to take seriously God's mission in all religious tradition and it was both intellectually and morally wrong to fail to do so or more than simply wrong theologically. One may say that it is blasphemous. The recognition of God-given faith in other religions was the crossing of the Rubicon for modern theologians, a necessary commitment to the future.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Donald Messer, Class on Mission and Evangelism in Contemporary Contexts, Iliff School of Theology (Spring, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge and New York: C.U.P., 1994), 237.

## Conflict and War

In Mark Twain's humorous novel, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck and Jim have an accident with their raft on the Mississippi River. After Huck is taken in by the Grangerford family, he finds out about the feud between the Grangerfords and the Sheperdson.

"What's a feud?" "Why, where was you raised? Don't you know what a feud is?" "Never heard of it before...tell me about it." "Well," says Buck, "a feud is this way; A man has a quarrel with another man, and kills him; then that other man's brother kills him; then the other brothers, on both sides, goes for one another; then the cousins chip in-and by and by everybody's killed off, and there ain't no more feud. But, it is kind of slow, and takes a long time." (Dennis Blyer)

This section describes some of the conflict and war that the 21<sup>st</sup> century world is experiencing. In particular, the conflict zones of North Korea, Palestine and Israel, and Iraq were discussed in the class as a way of exploring and reviewing various global mission contexts for peacemaking (See Syllabus- Attachment B). During the classroom discussion, the lecturers attempted to present both positions of just war and pacifism while we made it clear that we were against the war. I am aware that my position as expressed in the classroom and in this thesis may be viewed as "prejudiced" on the issue of war and peace, particularly by those who think there are times "when God says war is right."<sup>20</sup> The following discussion of conflict zones, therefore, may be perceived as one-sided. However, I firmly believe that God is for peace, not for war, and that war is incompatible with the teachings and examples of Christ.<sup>21</sup> I believe that we must try to resolve conflict by peaceful means wherever possible and whenever possible. I felt encouraged that this position was affirmed by the students in the class.

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<sup>20</sup> This phrase is borrowed from the title of the book by Darrell Cole, *When God Says War is Right* (Colorado Springs, Waterbook Press, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> The United Methodist Church, "The Social Principles," *The Book of Discipline*, (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2004), paragraph 165, 124.

The world is currently in havoc with violence, conflict and war. As Samuel Wesley Ariarajah said, “Violence diminishes us and makes us less human. Violence is a cancer. It eats from within.” Ariarajah denounced war as “the most obvious form of violence.”<sup>22</sup> Many men and women are currently losing life or limb in the wars with Iraq and Afghanistan, and conflict zones such as Palestine, Israel, Sudan and North Korea.

In March, 2003, when the United States invaded Iraq, many supported the war. Many protested too, casting doubts and questioning. Those who were against the war suspected that the United States went to war against Iraq largely driven by oil and empire-expanding U.S. military and economic power.<sup>23</sup> Phyllis Bennis observed,

“As these goals primarily benefit oil companies and the already rich and powerful, the Bush administration played on fear to mobilize public support for war among ordinary Americans by linking Iraq falsely with the very real threat of terrorism and through rhetoric like “axis of evil.” Bush also plays on Americans’ genuine concern about human rights to gain support.”<sup>24</sup>

Through the centuries, Christians have been divided on the issue of war. Some have maintained a pacifist view while others claim God says war can be used in the prevention of evil. The war with Iraq is not an exception. Christians are now divided into two camps concerning whether we should continue to engage in the war with Iraq. When the Iraq war was discussed in the class, however, it was very clear that all students found this war wrong.

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<sup>22</sup> S. Wesley Ariarajah, *Axis of Peace: Christian Faith in Times of Violence and War* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2004), 4.

<sup>23</sup> Phyllis Bennis, *Understanding the U.S.-Iraq Crisis: A Primer* (Washington D.C.: The Institute for Policy Studies, 2002), 3.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

This war is indeed wrong for many reasons.<sup>25</sup> First, the human costs of war in Iraq are immense. More than half of Iraq's population is under 18 years of age and most of the soldiers on all sides are but a few years older. The human costs of war are always catastrophic. Children and pregnant women are most at risk from water-borne disease in cities that lack safe drinking water or adequate sanitation.<sup>26</sup>

Second, the war in Iraq raises troubling issues in terms of international law. As United Methodists we have long affirmed the importance of the United Nations (U.N.) and international law as "the best instruments now in existence to achieve a world of justice and law."<sup>27</sup> Without U.N. Security Council approval or a direct attack by Iraq on the U.S., many have criticized the war as violating the principles of international law. Under international law in the U.N. charter, war must be a last resort and waged only in defense of an immediate attack and/or with the support of the international community. In Iraq, many in the International community saw Bush Administration efforts in diplomacy as a "charade" especially in light of U.S. actions to limit U.N. weapons inspectors in the time required to perform their jobs. A pre-emptive war,<sup>28</sup> as this one was, goes against international law and sets a dangerous precedent in international relations.

Finally, there is a growing concern about the impact of war in Iraq on the peoples of Palestine and Israel. Since September 2000 the cycle of violence between

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<sup>25</sup> This section is based on the discussion of the Mission Contexts and Relationships Unit of which I was part at the General Board of Global Ministries. I am indebted to staff who made valuable contribution in both verbal discussion and in writing.

<sup>26</sup> The Center for Economic & Social Rights, *The Human Costs of War in Iraq*. The CESR has done humanitarian assessments in Iraq since immediately after the 1991 Gulf War.

<sup>27</sup> *The Book of Discipline 2004*, Para. 165D.

<sup>28</sup> "Pre-emption" presumes something to preempt. Given no WMD capabilities were ever discovered in Iraq, this war could be termed as preventive.

Palestinians and Israelis has escalated tragically, yet it is the longstanding illegal occupation of Palestinian territory that fuels this bloodshed. With the Iraq War, there are growing fears among people in the region that the Israeli military may escalate violence in the occupied territories against Palestinians.

Now, problems seem to be mounting as America is four years into the war in Iraq. There is a growing concern that the war with Iraq is becoming a silent war. That is, it is felt mostly by the low-income families whose sons and daughters are fighting in Iraq, therefore, the middle class Americans are rather silent about the catastrophe of the war although more than 3,200 troops have died in the war.<sup>29</sup> One soldier is quoted saying, “One day I’m here could be the day I die.”

Another ongoing conflict zone that calls for the peace process is North Korea. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea) has been at the center of the world political scene since October 2000, when it disclosed it was pursuing an active nuclear weapons program. North Korea occupies a strategic location in northeast Asia, bordering China, South Korea, and Russia. The uncertain political situation on the Korean peninsula influences the future for all nations involved in the region and has serious international implications. However, when the North Korea issue was discussed, it was evident that students did not seem to have much knowledge of North Korea except for one student who was from Korea. It is not uncommon that people in the United States are not well informed on Asian regional issues.

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<sup>29</sup> “The Iraq War in the Words of American’s Dead,” *Special Issue on Voices of the Fallen, Newsweek*, Volume CLIX, No.14 (April 2, 2007).

The current crisis on the Korean peninsula is not unrelated to its tragic history of Japanese colonization (1909-1945), the subsequent division of north and south in 1948, and the Korean War, which lasted from 1950 to 1953. In order to understand the present situation in North Korea and the region, therefore, careful attention must be paid to centuries of brutal power struggles over the Korean Peninsula. Each neighboring country – South Korea, Japan, China and Russia– has a different role and different interests, as does the United States. All of the players insist that they are on the same page, calling for stability and a peaceful settlement on the peninsula. However, it is telling that just as every country’s interests differ, their strategies do as well. According to the New York Times, “In short, each of North Korea’s neighbors sees the crisis through its own prism.”<sup>30</sup>

The Bush administration’s confrontational approach toward Pyongyang has conflicted with the preferences of U.S. allies in the region. To defuse the crisis, the United States has been called upon to abandon the failing policy of confronting and isolating North Korea and instead pursue a negotiated settlement. North Korea has indicated that it might be prepared to abandon the nuclear program, accept United Nations inspections, and rejoin the non-proliferation pact, but only if its security is guaranteed. The United States has indicated it is prepared for a multilateral, comprehensive, peaceful settlement that includes economic aid packages. However, an agreement has not been reached because of the legacy of hostility left by the 50-year history of Korea’s division. A deep sense of enmity remains. A state of war still

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<sup>30</sup> James Brooke, “Threats and Responses: Korean Peninsula: South Koreans Divided on North Korean Atom Threat, *The New York Times* (December 29, 2002).

exists on the Korean peninsula, as a peace agreement to formally end the war was never concluded.

Most recently, a breakthrough was reached in the Six Party Talks regarding North Korea's nuclear disarmament.<sup>31</sup> In a "landmark international accord," the DPRK promised to close down and seal its lone nuclear reactor within 60 days in return for 50,000 tons of fuel oil as a first step in abandoning all nuclear weapons and research programs. In return for taking those further steps, the accord said, the DPRK would receive additional "economic, energy and humanitarian assistance up to the equivalent of one million tons of heavy fuel oil." Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill, the chief U.S. nuclear negotiator, qualified the first-step accord as "a very solid step forward."

For its part, the United States reiterated an earlier promise to discuss normalizing relations with the Pyongyang government, a longstanding goal of North Korea. Stephan Haggard, however, sums up the situation, "While we welcome the February 13 agreement, ongoing conflicts over implementation underline that it was a first step only. We are still far from either resolving the North Korea's chronic food emergency or successfully denuclearizing of the Korean peninsula."<sup>32</sup>

In summary, the Korean people aspire for peace and reunification. I witnessed it in summer of 2002 when I visited North Korea as part of a seven-member delegation of the General Board of Global Ministries. I wept over the division when I went to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) from North Korea. I heard

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<sup>31</sup> "No. Korea agrees to nuclear disarmament," *Washington Post* (February 13, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Stephan Haggard and Marcus Noland, "Famine in North Korea: Markets, Aid and Reform," *Nautilus*, (April 26, 2007).

people- both civilian and military- expressing desire for peaceful reunification. Peace advocacy was affirmed through the 2002 GBGM delegation to the Korean Christian Federation in North Korea. It was meaningful that the delegation stated that United Methodists want to expand relations with North Korean Christians, affirming the federation's role as a "primary mission partner." During the GBGM delegation's visit, the Korean Christian Federation urgently requested our support in advocating for a closer relationship between North Korea and the United States.

In responding to this desire for reconciliation, a peaceful engagement by principal countries, especially the United States, is urged for the resolution of the current crisis. The United States should be engaged in direct negotiations with North Korea on all issues of concern, including the dismantling of North Korea's nuclear weapons capabilities, its food and energy needs, and the full normalization of political and economic relations.

The Palestine-Israeli conflict is one of the most complex issues in the current global context, and most students were familiar with the issue. During the course, the Israel/Palestine conflict was discussed in the context of peace making in a multi-faith context. More than any other regional problem, the Palestine and Israel conflict is intertwined with faith issues involving Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

The dispute in the region is between Jewish Israelis and Arab Palestinians who both claim the right to sovereignty over the land of Israel/Palestine. The current conflict dates back to the 1947-1948 war, after which the new state of Israel was created in 78 percent of what had been British mandate Palestine under the League of Nations since 1922. The 22 percent made up of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and



Arab East Jerusalem was taken over by Israel in the 1967 War. These areas are now identified as the occupied territories.<sup>33</sup>

The current violence began in 2000 when Ariel Sharon, a hard-line Israeli opposition leader, made a controversial tour of the Al-Aqsa mosque. Due to this provocative visit, Palestinians and Israeli police clashed in the worst violence in several years at the compound around Al-Aqsa, Jerusalem's holiest site. This visit exemplifies a vicious cycle in the violation of faith in peacemaking, which results in disengagement and violence. For instance, one month after a cease-fire jointly declared by the Palestinian Chairman Mahmoud Abbas and then Israeli Prime Minister Sharon, the Israelis, according to the Haaretz News Service, still planned for the building of new homes in the occupied West Bank.

The Palestinian reality is that Israeli bulldozers destroy homes and olive fields daily. It was in this context that Rachel Corrie, an American peace activist working with the International Solidarity Movement, died in March, 2003. Corrie was killed as she attempted to stop an Israeli bulldozer from destroying a Palestinian home in Rafah, Gaza.

I saw that wall building was proceeding almost unimpeded when I visited Palestine in December 2003. It was tragic to see the bulldozers and road machines in Bethlehem carving out a path for the wall. Despite a U.N. declaration that the wall is illegal, and despite its location on occupied Palestinian territory, the wall and/or razor-sharp wire fences will soon encircle nearly every Palestinian town and city. Palestinians face ever more limited access to each other, Jerusalem, and Israeli towns.

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<sup>33</sup> Phyllis Bennis, *Understanding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict* (Lowell: Trans-Arab Research Institute, Inc., 2003), 7.

It is the bantustanization of Palestine. I observed that the hearts of Palestinians break each day as they went in and out of the checkpoints in what was another almost irrevocable action for which the Israelis get by. Bethlehem was like a ghost town. I was allowed to pass through checkpoints in Bethlehem only because I was a foreigner. Even the ancient Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem had been declared a closed military zone, and the established celebrations of the Christmas season, faithfully observed through the centuries, are under threat.

While Palestine violence is primarily the violence of resistance,<sup>34</sup> Israeli violence is primarily related to the need of maintaining Israel's military occupation.<sup>35</sup> Israeli basically maintains the occupied territories through military force which harms both Palestinian militants and civilians. Palestinians experience daily humiliations. Many suffer from mental illness such as psychosomatic symptoms, sleep walk, and depression. It is no wonder I felt emotionally drained during my short visit given Palestinians' life of horror and trauma under occupation. Children in particular have lost their sense of security and are showing signs of psychological disorders. Delegation members heard that ninety percent of Palestinian children are reported to have symptoms of trauma such as nightmares, bed-wetting, increased aggressiveness, hyperactivity, decreased attention span and lessened ability to concentrate.

The Israel-Palestine conflict has become a chief cause of the growing rift and tension between Muslim and Western Christian societies.<sup>36</sup> Now, a conflict that has

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<sup>34</sup> It is recognized that there are also other factors involved in Palestinian violence, including conflicts between the Fatah and Hamas.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*.2.

<sup>36</sup> United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, *Report of the High-level Group* (November 2006), 13. [www.unAoC.org](http://www.unAoC.org); Internet: accessed March, 2007. In November, 2006, the twenty-member High

existed for centuries is only becoming worse. Peace talks are being held in different forms by different parties including Palestine, Israel and the United States. Not many Palestinians are hopeful about the prospect for success in these peace talks. Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, Pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church and General Director of the International Center of Bethlehem, observed.

“In our Palestinian context, "peace talk" is often a good recipe for managing the conflict rather than resolving it. As the world continues to talk peace, Israel continues to build the wall and while Christians continue singing "O little town of Bethlehem", Israel makes sure that this town stays as little as possible. As little as two square miles, surrounded with walls, fences and trenches with no future expansion possibilities whatsoever.”<sup>37</sup>

In the quest to help bring peace to the land of Palestine and Israel, it is absolutely necessary that we work with mission partners to reaffirm our United Methodist, ecumenical, and interfaith solidarity, and to strengthen our effort in education, advocacy, and material/financial support for the ongoing humanitarian crisis among Palestinian communities in the occupied territories.

Again, these three global contexts of mission- globalization, multi-faith world and conflict and war- were the three building blocks for the class that dealt with “Peacemaking and Interfaith Dialogue.” These three global contexts formed the foundation for the purpose of the class- peacemaking as mission.

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Level Group (HLG) of the Alliance of Civilizations released their final report calling for urgent efforts to heal the growing divide between Muslim and Western societies.

<sup>37</sup> Mitri Raheb, *Christmas Letter* (December 23, 2003). Rev. Raheb is pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church, General Director of the International Center of Bethlehem, Bethlehem.

## CHAPTER 6

### IMPLEMENTING PEACEMAKING IN THE MULTI-FAITH CONTEXT

After a theological, historical and practical overview of mission and contemporary context of global mission, the course culminated with a discussion of the main point of the class: peace-building and interfaith dialogue. This topic took one whole day- the last day of the five-day intensive course.

#### Creating a Culture of Peace

*Peace is a never-ending process, the work of many decisions by many people in many countries. It is an attitude, a way of life, a way of solving problems and resolving conflicts. It cannot be forced on the smallest nation or enforced by the largest. It cannot ignore our differences or overlook our common interests. It requires us to work and live together. -- Oscar Arias Sanchez*

*Pacifism simply is not a matter of calm looking on; it is work, hard work.  
-- Kathe Kollwitz*

*If you don't like the way to the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time. -- Marian Wright Edelman*

*As Jesus came nearer and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace." (Luke 19:41)*

*"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27)*

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)*

Peacemaking is creating a culture of peace. Peace is indeed God's gift, but at the same time it is our task. The gift of peace given by Christ (John 14:27) is not

something that simply falls from heaven. It is not simply a feel of detached contentment or joy in the midst of grim realities. Rather it is a commitment and a passion for God's mission of bringing about shalom, well-being, fullness of life- i.e., peace with justice. When Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness John 10:10," he told people how to do this through what he actually did:<sup>1</sup>

*"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19, Isaiah 61:1, 2)*

To receive God's gift demands action on our part. Bringing peace with justice is our task.

Thus we as peacemakers are called to seek ways to transform ourselves and our culture of violence. Henri Nouwen believed that the life of faith includes the struggle for justice and peace. According to Nouwen, peacemaking is not peripheral to being a Christian. Peacemaking is a life commitment. Peacemaking is a mandate. It is a vocation. It is a fulltime vocation that involves every member of God's people. Nouwen asks an important question, "What would the world be like if every Christian is for peace?"<sup>2</sup> Indeed, what would happen to this world filled with violence and wars if every Christian is for peace?

Peacemaking is building a culture of peace. It is to empower ourselves to practice active peacemaking in our daily lives. Working for peace not only means a campaign to stop the war or set aside one's own weapons or for opposing groups to decide not to attack each other any longer. Yes, peacemaking is to oppose the war.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.11.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Nouwen, "Peace, a Gift We Receive in Prayer," *The Road to Peace*, ed by John Dear (Mary Knoll, New York, Orbis Books, 2002), 3-25.

But, it also means working for a change of mentality, “a transformation of conflict.” It is to bring about a paradigm change and create the foundations for a culture of peace.

A culture of violence is a human creation. For many years we were bred on a philosophy and belief in the conflicts that exist in humanity. We developed mechanisms within our societies to justify our own position in a conflict vis-a-vis the other side. Therefore, when a society experiences civil war or social violence for a long period of time, the mind-set of the social fabric also becomes violent. In other words, a culture of violence is created. Billie Mitchell at the Local Initiatives for Needy Communities (LINC) Resource Center in North Belfast, says, “There is a culture of violence in our society. Actions are carried out that damage the social fabric-like street fights or beatings. But many of the things that strengthen this culture of violence have to do with the frustration created by the lack of response to social needs.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the LINC Resource Center, in order to help create a culture of peace, offers basic work training to former prisoners and others as an alternative to a culture of violence.

The Alliance of Civilizations emphasizes the same effort of building a culture of peace through partnership among different sectors. It urges “member states and multilateral organizations such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union to work together to implement educational efforts to build capacity for intercultural tolerance and respect, civic participation and social engagement.”<sup>4</sup> A

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<sup>3</sup> Dafne Plou, *Peace in Troubled Cities: Creative Models of Building Community Amidst Violence* (Geneva, Risk Book Series, WCC Publications, 1998), 33-41.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, *Ibid.*

big part of these efforts is peace education such as UNESCO distributing materials on the threshold of peace and cultures of peace.

If international and national organizations strive to work toward building the cultures of peace, religious communities should also be engaged in the same effort. The first step for religious communities to building peace is in opening their hearts to becoming peace-makers. According to Denise and John Carmody, becoming peacemakers is a matter of dialectical interplay between what we are and what we do.<sup>5</sup> As a virtue, being peaceful and just is an expression of one's core goodness. One does not become a peace-maker or peace activist without being a person of prayer, without loving God, and without being good to one's children. Therefore, justice and peace requires the conversions of mind and heart. People whose hearts are open to God and to people in need become peace-makers and agents of justice.

However, peace-making and working for peace takes more than the opening of hearts. It takes understanding as well as action. As Dr. Christine Loh said, we have a responsibility to know what is happening- especially conflicts- not only in corners of our own country but in other countries. At the same time we have a responsibility to take time to think and understand more integrally and more systematically as to why there are problems and then inquire into the ways, tools and methods to solve these problems.<sup>6</sup> It takes judgment in concrete circumstances- judging how they may fight the evils twisting their own lives, the lives of those they love, and the lives of brothers and sister around the globe.

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<sup>5</sup> Denise Lardner Carmody and John Tully Carmody, *Peace and Justice in the Scriptures of the world Religions* (New York/Mahwah, Paulist Press,), 50.

<sup>6</sup> Christine Loh, the founder and CEO of Civic Exchange , a Hong Kong based non profit thinktank, spoke at the Conference of Asia General Assembly, the third speaker for the D.T. Niles Lectures (April 3, 2005).

So, what are the things that make for peace? How do we as Christians learn to build a culture of peace in the face of this brutal reality of violence, conflict and war? S. Wesley Ariarajah calls those things that make for peace the “axis of peace” as opposed to the axis of evil.<sup>7</sup> Allison Stokes lists four things as the keys to achieving a world culture of peace: embracing diversity, working for equality and justice, practicing forgiveness and reconciliation, and engaging in interfaith dialogue and cooperation.<sup>8</sup>

In the same vein, I list five things that make for peace.

1. Respecting human dignity
2. Practicing an attitude of forgiveness and reconciliation
3. Advocacy for equality, civil rights and diversity
4. Peace education and training/community development
5. Engaging in interfaith dialogue and cooperation

### **Peacemaking through Interfaith Dialogue**

In this section the nature of dialogue and its importance are discussed, while concrete examples of interfaith dialogue are provided in the next section advocating action. Finally, two case studies are offered as models of peace-making through interfaith dialogue.

When conflicts arise in many places, the only road we may reasonably travel, the only way forward, and the only viable option is to work together among different faiths. How else may we achieve peace and justice among us? If persons of faith do not come together, who will? In fact, the faiths of our neighbors share a mutual

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<sup>7</sup> S. Wesley Ariarajah, *Axis of Peace* (Geneva, The World Council of Churches, 2004), 110-137.

<sup>8</sup> Allison Stokes, *Shalom, Salaam, Peace: Reflections on Interfaith Peacemaking* (New York: Women’s Division, General Board of Global Ministries, 2005), Chapters 8-11.



concern for peace and justice among humanity. It is my belief that by engaging in dialogue with interfaith communities we come one step closer to overcoming hostilities, bringing peace and reconciliation and making this world a better place to live.

Abraham Joshua Heschel once lamented that while cooperation existed in all other sections, “only religions were not on speaking terms.”<sup>9</sup> However, we now see an increasing number of inter-religious communities gathering to worship and share mutual interests in social actions. The desire to learn and relate to other faiths is becoming so strong, for many, that people of other faiths are now global neighbors for many. Clearly there is a movement among differing faiths to promote mutual cooperation for justice and peace.

I firmly believe that dialogue is one of the best ways to resolve human problems. Dialogue may take a long time, however. Human history tells us that the very fundamental experience of resolving problems through talking to each other has proven to be the best way. This is where interfaith dialogue comes in. The process of talking to each other to find solutions comes from the very deep core of values, principles and beliefs that we uphold. Since churches and temples play an important role in peacemaking, these common, core religious values and beliefs held by different faiths become the basis for interfaith dialogue and action for peace building.

Dialogue does not occur in vacuum. Trust needs to be built so that people may enter into a dialogue with people of different faiths. Effective dialogue does not

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<sup>9</sup> Abraham Joshua Heschel, “No Religion is an Island,” in Harold Kasimow and Byron L. Sheriwn, eds., *No Religion is an Island: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Interreligious Dialogue*, in Diana Eck, *Encountering God* (Maryknoll, N.Y. Orbis Books, 1991), 213.

occur until people of different faiths feel they are fully equal in their humanity and so all have things to teach and learn. The only way to build either of these foundations is "to reveal where one really lives, how one actually suffers, what one's faith in fact means for making it through the day and being able to bless the Master of the Universe or the wisdom that has Gone Beyond."<sup>10</sup>

I witnessed the building of such a foundation of trust. I saw Christian and Muslim students from Bethlehem and from all over the West Bank study and live side-by-side at the Hope School in Bethlehem. As these students studied and lived together, their families built trust and shared how they really lived and how they suffered. And as they did so, they realized they are fully equal in their humanity. They were engaged in a dialogue as life, which is to be friends and neighbors with persons of other faiths in the midst of daily lives.<sup>11</sup> Hope Secondary School, founded by the Mennonite community in 1961, helps create a culture of peace in the multi-faith community of Bethlehem by serving students from the poorer families in the community regardless of their faith. Hope School provides education, relief and compassion to disadvantaged young peoples.

Many faiths speak of the love of God, the love of people and the love of life, and Christians share this longing and vision for peace with people of other faith traditions. One assumption for inter-religious dialogue is that there is a sameness of

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<sup>10</sup> Carmody and Carmody, 8.

<sup>11</sup> This dialogue of life will be discussed more in detail in the next section, "Talking Together-Dialgue as Life."

human needs and human hopes and the equality of people in their hunger for justice and peace.<sup>12</sup>

If Christian faith speaks for peace for humanity, it is legitimate to ask what other religions have to say about people's suffering caused by injustice and how they speak for peace and justice. Buddhism advocates and preaches non-violence and peace as its universal message. I grew up in a pluralistic society where many of my neighbors were Buddhists. I know from my experience that Buddhism does not approve of any kind of violence or destruction of life. In Buddhism there is no concept of "just war" or, more exactly speaking, it does not approve of just war. Buddhism asks, "who determines what is just or unjust? Is it not that 'the mighty and victorious' are just and the weak and defeated are 'unjust'?"<sup>13</sup> Part of the basic teaching of Buddhism is the importance of compassion for suffering humanity. The Buddha believed that compassion for humanity or "a selfless life would introduce men and women to *Nibbana*,"<sup>14</sup> which brings enlightenment and liberation from pain (*dukkha*). I wonder if *Nibbana* or enlightenment from pain is an ultimate state of peace for all humanity.

In Islam, an understanding of peace is related to judgment. On Judgment day, the blessed would hear the customary greeting- Peace! The Muslim view of peace is rather eschatological as seen in the section of Judgment and Peace in the Qur'an.<sup>15</sup>

"When that which is coming comes-and no soul shall then deny its coming-some shall be abased and others exalted...There they shall hear no idle talk, no sinful

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.11.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Karen Armstrong, *Buddha* (New York: A Lipper/Viking Book, 2001),115.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.164-165.

speech, but only the greeting, ‘Peace! Peace!’” (Judgment and Peace, Qur’an 56:1,3/108)

However, fighting in defense is allowed in Islamic teaching, and Muslims are allowed to take up the sword only as a measure of self-defense.<sup>16</sup> According to Maulana Muhammad Ali, “Fighting for the propagation of the faith is not once mentioned in the whole of the Qur’an. In fact, the Qur’an asserts ‘there is no compulsion in religion (2:256).’”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the claim that Islam advocates jihad is not an accurate view. Muslim friends who serve with me on the Religious Advisory Council at the University of Denver assert that most Muslims advocate peace, not violence.

A Bahai friend of mine says, “The Bahai religion advocates peace.” In the section called “Humanity” of the Bahai Book of Prayer that this friend gave me, Bahai people pray as follows:

“O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.  
O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind,  
O God Establish the Most Great Peace.”<sup>18</sup>

It is encouraging to see an increasing interest in interfaith realities and subsequent attention to interfaith dialogue. This is seen not only in religious leaders but other sectors of society such as political leaders, education, global healthcare, and business. However, although an inter-religious movement for peace-making is gaining in strength, it still seems to remain fragmented. Therefore, it is all the more important to pull together the national and international initiatives already in

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<sup>16</sup> Stokes, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Abdu’l-Baha, *Humanity, Bahai Prayers*, 114.

existence. Conflict and war are truly global problems that affect all of humanity. As Thangaraj claims, “Global problems need to be addressed by the global community, not simply by one branch of it. This means that Christians will be increasingly drawn into interaction and conversation with other religious communities in or mission to serve humanity”<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, inter-religious dialogue is a way to be a neighbor and to be a witness. Interfaith dialogue is a way to create a culture of peace. However, while dialogue is important, we should move beyond it. Dialogue as action is more fully discussed in the next section.

### **Dialogue as Action**

At the WCC inter-religious event held in June, 2005, some 130 participants from ten world religions affirmed the need of dialogue as action. We should shift the emphasis of inter-religious relations from dialogue to common action, including new education and training programs and exchanges which foster a culture of dialogue.

While interfaith dialogue has contributed to overcoming some human suffering and helped combat fundamentalism, more action-oriented dialogue through grass-roots participation is needed, especially of women and youth, and concrete cooperation should be its main goal. So, it is important to create interfaith community from the grassroots- i.e., individuals and churches, synagogues and local communities, as well as building inter-religious community at the national and international levels.

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<sup>19</sup> Thangaraj, 23.

Taking some practical suggestions for “Creating Interfaith Community” from Marston Speight and Wesley Ariarajah,<sup>20</sup> I suggest the following three mechanisms as ways of creating a culture of peace- talking together, praying together and serving together.

***Talking Together –Dialogue as life***

Talking together is a dialogue as life. It is to be friends and neighbors with persons of other faiths in the midst of daily lives. I witnessed such dialogue as life occurring in multi-faith communities in Pakistan, Palestine and other Asian countries. When I visited Mar Elias School in Galilee, which provides education for both Christians and Muslims, students told me that they would not even think about what religion their friends or classmates are. I grew up in a country, Korea, where Christianity is a relatively new religious tradition, and I witnessed Buddhists and Christians living as next-door neighbors. Buddhism and Confucianism are deeply embedded in the culture of many Asian societies alongside the Christian faith. Christians visit Buddhist temples and Buddhists become friends with Christians.

Now that the United States has become a multi-faith society, more and more dialogue at this level occurs here, especially since the terrorist attacks in 2001. Certainly, the tragic event of September 11 played a critical role in encouraging people of different faiths to get together as a group. This level of dialogue occurs not only through one-to-one encounters but through organized occasions for discussion.

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<sup>20</sup> R. Marston Speight, *Creating Interfaith Community* (New York, General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, 2003), 56.

Such dialogue as talking together is the best way to “promote” peace by engaging in conversations with trust in and respect for each other.

***Praying Together- Dialogue as prayer and worship***

Praying together is a dialogue as prayer and worship. Interfaith prayer and worship is a more formalized dialogue than is talking together. It is to join in prayer together, when there is a crisis-sickness, death, accident or natural disasters, regardless of ones’ particular religion or faith. This form of dialogue is often seen in the form of interfaith services for Thanksgiving, Maundy Thursday service, or peace prayer.

Again, tragic events often call upon persons of different faiths to come together and hold interfaith services. I recall attending and participating in interfaith services immediately after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attack. The war in Iraq has also seen many interfaith groups gather to hold peace vigils or worship services throughout the nation.

On January 27, 2003, for instance, the Riverside Church held an interfaith service called "Neighborhood Vigil for Peace," on the eve of the invasion of Iraq. As the U.N. Weapons Inspectors were reporting to the U.N. on January 27th, some thought it important to have institutions and persons committing to seeking non-violent alternatives to this rush to war gather. I was one of the speakers at this Peace Vigil and spoke on the theme of “An alternative to war is not only possible, but imperative.”

On March 20, 2005, an interfaith service on the occasion of the second anniversary of Iraq war was held at Riverside Church. This service was also the

Founding Gathering for Clergy and Laity Concerned about Iraq. The service, entitled *When We All Get Together: An Interfaith Service of Remembrance, Reverence, Resistance, and Renewal*, was to be the culmination of a weekend of reverence and resistance against the war in Iraq. In the past several years, those opposed to the war in Iraq, including communities of faith, have gathered throughout the March 18-20 weekend to express their moral outrage at the U.S. war and occupation of Iraq. People from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist communities have gathered to worship, share opposition to the war with Iraq and renewal of commitment to justice and peace. In 2006 and 2007, interfaith worship services, coordinated by Peace and Justice Committee of the Rocky Mountain Conference, also occurred on Sunday around the anniversary of Iraq war.

### ***Serving Together –Dialogue as action***

Service is a basic foundation of all major religions. It is emphasized as a core responsibility for persons of faith. In the interfaith context, therefore, mission can be meaningfully referred as “mission as *common* witness.” In his book, *Transforming Mission*, David Bosch sees mission as a multi-faceted ministry and offers a list of mission’s many aspects, e.g., including “mission as witness,” mission as service, and mission as justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation and peace. Mission as common witness is living and working faith together to bring justice. Our common witness in interfaith context is the mutual coordination of mission through participating in mission of mutual interest –peace, harmony and justice. One important note should be made here. We embrace the ecumenical missionary paradigm or the interfaith



missionary paradigm of justice not simply because the world or the context of mission is religiously plural but rather because the Christian Scripture- as well as the Qur'an- encourages us together to struggle against injustice and for the creation of a world where people of God are freed from enslavement to other human beings and a world where they may worship God freely.<sup>21</sup>

Serving together as an interfaith community is a meaningful response to a question of how Christians may do Christian mission with confidence in a community where other faiths exist side-by-side. So, it is no wonder we see many models of interfaith community working together for peace building, justice and social change. This requires constant engagement in mutual dialogue and reformulation of one's own faith and beliefs. In particular the ever-increasing conflicts and violence requires a commitment to mutual coordination of mission through participating in mission of mutual interest- peace, love and justice. Engagement in such projects of mutual interest is a dialogue of life and a dialogue of action.

Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) affirms "action" as one of the four steps for the interfaith working groups. EAA follows the following four steps in its interfaith advocacy work.<sup>22</sup>

- Engage: Engage a broad interfaith network for coordinated global advocacy on peace, global trade issues.
- Challenge: Think more strategically about how to change policies at a global level

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<sup>21</sup> Farid Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation & Pluralism*, (Oxford: One World Publications, 1997), 180.

<sup>22</sup> The World Council of Churches, *My Neighbour's Faith -- and Mine*, vii.

- Voice out for peace and reconciliation: Strengthen the voice and impact of interfaith witness on the crucial social, political, and economic issues of the day
- Act/Advocate

Therefore, interfaith dialogue has to do with seeking common ground for God's purpose in history and with engaging neighbors of other faith traditions in a common cause to serve justice and righteousness. Thus, a meaningful interfaith dialogue of action would include inter-religious solidarity against violence and wars and socio-economic injustice brought by the global capitalist economy.

There are many examples of interfaith community working together under the common purpose. These common causes range from good will actions to global peace and reconciliation. For instance, interfaith coalitions work together to

- Send out messages of greeting and good will on the occasion of religious and cultural festivals celebrated by our interfaith partners
- Render service when our partners experience accidents, fires, and floods.
- Rent or lend church premises to other faith groups for their communal gatherings. Temporary use of church building will facilitate dialogue and common actions.
- Join like-minded believers in coalitions and other associations to achieve common political and economic goals-peace and reconciliation.
- Make a commitment to strengthening the collective life of diverse faith communities through interfaith advocacy: witness on political, economic, cultural, and social issues.

### **Case Studies**

This section illustrates two examples of interfaith working groups engaged in action and advocacy for peace building. The first case study of Muslim Christian

Federation International was used in the class as a model. The second case study of Religious Advisory Council is offered here as an illustration of what I would present if I were to teach a class on mission again.

***Muslim Christian Federation International (MCFI) in Lahore, Pakistan***

The Muslim Christian Federation is an interfaith group based in Lahore, Pakistan, which promotes interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims through various events and publications. I met with MCFI twice when I visited Lahore in November, 2002 and October, 2004, respectively. This organization works to help create a society where tolerance, harmony and respect for the other would be of priority value.<sup>23</sup>

MCFI started with a clear recognition that Muslim-Christian interfaith dialogue is essential in the Pakistani context. Christians in Pakistan face an increasing threat of violence caused by religious conflicts. Five other church leaders and I visited the cities of Karachi and Lahore of Pakistan as part of a WCC delegation to express solidarity with churches and Christians, learn about the challenges they face, and hear how the war in Afghanistan was then affecting Pakistan. The situation in Pakistan, where Christians account for less than three percent of the country's population, was- and remains- grave. Since the terrorist attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup> the political situation in Pakistan has worsened. Christians in Pakistan are associated with the West, as in other Islamic countries. While Pakistani Christians had

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<sup>23</sup> *Voice of Peace*, monthly published by Muslim Christian Federation International (Lahore, Pakistan, October, 2005).

previously been persecuted, it was mostly at the personal or family level. The latest attacks are taking place at schools, churches or workplaces.

The Idara incident is one of the best known of many. Seven Pakistanis who worked for Idara-e-Amn-o-Insaf (Committee for Justice and Peace), a Christian charity in Karachi, were shot to death by two gunmen in their office on Sept. 25, 2002. A former officer of Pakistan's air force told the delegation the Karachi attack was "an extreme kind of terrorism never witnessed before - an execution carried out by professionals."

I will not forget the delegation's emotional meeting with widows and family members of those who had been killed at Idara-e-Amn-o-Insaf and the "extreme fear" I saw on their faces. In addition to losing loved ones, the families have been tainted by false rumors that Idara had converted 6,000 Muslims to Christianity. "They fear for their future and for their lives," I noted in an interview with the United Methodist News.

The tragedy is it is not just Pakistani Christians but Muslims who face similar problems of persecution and violence. Karachi, the largest city in Pakistan, is known as a center of terrorism. The terrorism affects both Christians and Muslims alike. During my visit to Pakistan, we saw Islam mosques heavily guarded by security personnel. It was the norm that people worshipped at church with security guards with guns in their hands. Given the gravity of tension among religious communities, delegation members tried to balance concerns over Christian persecution by considering Muslim problems.

Delegations were very impressed by the participation of both Christians and Muslims in the recently formed Muslim-Christian International Federation. During a meeting with the group, the delegation members heard complaints from Muslim leaders about discrimination against Muslims in Western countries through racial profiling, arbitrary arrests and other methods.

MCFI continues to monitor the situation of Christians in Pakistan and to support the churches there. They urge Christians in the West to help by advocating for a "fair and just" foreign policy from their governments and opposing military action in Iraq, which would bring further threats to Christians in Pakistan. Continuing Christian-Muslim dialogues also are essential.

***Religious Advisory Council to the University of Denver, Denver, Colorado***

The Religious Advisory Council (RAC) in Denver, Colorado, serves as a community forum for interfaith community. RAC is connected to and funded by the University of Denver (DU). It has maintained its size at about 35 members, who consist of both clergy and laity. I have been part of this Council since I returned to Denver, Colorado in the fall of 2005.

The RAC is committed to religious diversity and values. It has been a role model for an interfaith community working together for common causes such as peace building. It also has provided community forums by connecting communities of faith to the University of Denver. In particular it played a key role in responding to the 9/11 event in dealing with terrorism/war and peace. The RAC helps build trusting relationship among religious leaders through monthly lunch forums designed

for sharing religious traditions. Members of the RAC are intentional about being with people who are different than themselves.

The Religious Advisory Council upholds the following values:

- Investing time in relationship with one another
- Understanding and acceptance
- Providing healing
- Education/communication
- Enlarging worldviews and faith perspectives
- Establishing a “community of communities”
- Seeking religious diversity within unity
- Hermeneutics of diversity
- Supporting other religions and religious leaders
- Openness to change
- Commitment to the common good.

In order to live out its values, the RAC held a three-day retreat in February, 2007, which brought members closer to one another and provided a space and time to envision the future directions. The retreat also provided a forum for participants from different faiths to share their narrative stories, and to respond to questions of faith like, “why our concern for interfaith?” Questions of relationship with the University of Denver were also dealt with. In addition, this retreat allowed for the sharing of worship experiences from different faith traditions.

The RAC is mindful of scriptural mandates for interfaith engagement. The scriptural mandates upheld by the RAC include:

- Command to dialogue with people of “The Book”
- “We created you from a male & female, made you into nations & tribes to know one another.”
- Humans created in the image of God
- In My Father’s House are Many Rooms
- Isaiah 25 – banquet for all God’s people
- Every person is an aspect of God. Therefore all are needed for God to be complete.

- Mirrors reflecting attributes of God

The RAC intentionally asks the question, “What has the RAC not been?” Its self-critique includes lack of diversity. The Council does not have people from evangelical or Catholic circles. It also needs to recruit more people of color. Another weakness is that although most clergy members are active in participating in RAC activities, they have not been good at involving their congregants in this interfaith movement.

Currently the RAC has six “Points of Contact,” including Chancellor/Provost of the University of Denver, D.U. Bridges planning committee, D.U. Special Programs Department, D.U. Campus Chaplain, Iliff School of Theology, and Forum for Religion and Society. Of these six points of contact, the Forum for Religion and Society is worth noting.<sup>24</sup> The purpose of the Forum for the religious practicing community is to bring together persons who are strongly committed to their particular faith but who are also willing to affirm that God/the Sacred are larger than their particular understanding and experience. The participants of the Forum come together in various settings to explore and articulate what it means to be faithful in the 21st Century with an interfaith appreciation.

The Forum’s broad target audience is three: the academic community, the religious practicing community, and a third "society". Within the academic community, the priority is addressing the students, although the involvement of faculty and staff will be surely crucial. The purpose of the Forum is to allow students

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<sup>24</sup> The following description of the Forum is based on the statement prepared by Rev. Paul Kottke, Chair of the RAC, and Senior Pastor of University Park United Methodist Church, Denver, Colorado.

to engage in religious exploration in a safe and neutral environment. The Forum also expects to have an engagement with society. By this we mean not a study of society, but rather an awareness toward addressing current issues and needs within a local community or regional community. Business leaders, civic leaders and government officials often view the religious community as irrelevant at best or, even worse, destructive. Along with other RAC members, I am hopeful that “via the Forum, where religious practitioners are modeling a very different engagement of religion and begin to establish credibility, various governmental officials and civic leaders will begin to interface with the work of the Forum.”<sup>25</sup> To bring together the three targeted audiences is a unique aspect of the Forum, which purports to offer an exciting alternative to the antagonistic atmosphere we currently are experience.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



## **CHAPTER 7**

### **EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT**

This chapter presents an evaluation of the impact of the project in various aspects. It was critical that evaluation be done by multiple parties including students, the Lay Advisory committee, faculty on-site visit to the GBGM, and the presenter.

#### **Students' Feedback**

Students filled out both Evaluation Forms of Instruction (Appendix G and H) provided by the School and the faculty. Overall, student evaluations were very positive and they made constructive suggestions for the course. Students indicated that the class greatly changed their view of mission. One person mentioned “a complete, 180 degree turn-over.” Students said in their evaluations that the class made a great impact on their understanding of Christian mission and peace-building as mission. Some mentioned that the course on Christian mission should be made a mandatory course for all theological students.

Evaluations indicated that students' understanding of Christian mission was significantly enhanced through the course. Most students in the class indicated that their understanding of mission had been limited, if not negative, before they took the course. Students especially expressed their appreciation that peacemaking is a part of mission. They greatly appreciated the reading materials given on models of building a culture of peace through non-violence. In that sense, it could be said that the second

goal of this project- i.e., developing a teaching model for bringing an understanding of mission and the practice of peacemaking in an interfaith world to Christian leaders and pastors- was achieved. Throughout the course, the understanding of mission was examined not only from a western context but also from Asian Pacific, African and Latin American/Caribbean perspectives. Many illustrations from a variety of mission contexts were made for relevant class topics.

Students appreciated the on-site tour and direct interaction with the GBGM staff who are directly engaged in the mission work of the United Methodist Church. The session on interfaith/peacemaking seemed to be especially helpful for students. It seemed that the GBGM staff and their presentations made a great impression on them. The only drawback about the on-site visit was the distance of the GBGM from Drew Theological Seminary. The field trip forced students to travel an extra distance versus travel demands for ordinary course work.

Most students indicated that the reading load was too heavy for a one-week intensive course. As mentioned above, despite the advanced distribution of required reading materials, it was still difficult for students to fulfill the reading requirements. In order to lessen reading demands, we could have implemented reading assignments differently. For instance, we could have asked students to take a section of the book by David Bosch and share its summary with other students, instead of assigning everyone to read the whole book. Also, students indicated that the scope of the course was too broad.

**Evaluation of the Lay Advisory Committee:**

The Advisory Committee had been closely involved from the beginning. When the Committee first met to review the prospectus, it made a helpful observation that the scope of the project might be too broad to achieve through a one-week class.

The committee also met on February 4, 2004 to reflect on the implementation of the project. The need of an on-site visit by a faculty member was discussed and some dates for the visit were suggested. The on-site visit by Dr. Terry Todd, Drew University advisor, was scheduled for March 29, 2004. The summary letter from Michael Rivas on the February meeting of the Advisory Committee is found as Appendix I. Jerald Scott, Edith Gleaves, and S.T. Kimbrough also provided their feedback in writing.

Here is a part of Dr. Rivas' letter as reference to the February evaluation session:

“There was a clear sense that several of the issues you set out to research were in fact realized in the project. I refer to such issues as the variety of understandings of “mission” that may be held among students (and perhaps faculty), the significant impact that taking a well prepared and resourced course will have on those students, and the need for a consistent approach to bringing mission into the life of the seminaries. In every case we know much more now about the issues and how to address them. The course was organized and structured to address those issues, and the results speak for themselves as noticed in the student evaluation comments, as well as in the observations of your colleagues in this committee, including those who were able to participate in the one-day session here at the Board. We were also appreciative of the fact that you did adjust the contents and structure of the course in response to your committee’s observations during our first session.”

Members of the Advisory Committee were equally clear that the content of the course was indeed larger than what could be accommodated in the time period allotted.

Students' evaluations confirmed that assessment. Part of the problem related to the

way the course was scheduled. As the seminary set the schedule, the one-week time frame was a limitation over which we had no control. Since concurrent reading and written reflections on the subject was such a critical component in the process of reaching the course's objectives, it was suggested that future offerings be held over three weeks, or that the course contents be pared down significantly.

The Lay Advisory Committee consisted of the seven Board Program Cabinet members of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church:

- Deborah Bass, Deputy General Secretary, Administration, GBGM
- Paul Dirdak, Deputy General Secretary, Health and Relief, Volunteers in Mission
- Sam Dixson, Deputy General Secretary, Evangelization and Church Growth
- Edith Gleaves, Deputy General Secretary, Mission Personnel
- S.T. Kimbrough, Associate General Secretary, Mission Evangelism
- Michael Rivas, Deputy General Secretary, Planning and Research (Convener)
- Jerald Scott, Associate General Secretary, Communities and Institutional Ministries

### **Faculty On-Site Visit Feedback**

The faculty on-site visit was conducted on March 29, 2004 by Professor J. Terry Todd, Assistant Professor, American Religious Studies, Drew University. Professor Todd expressed appreciation for “the hard work of the Lay Advisory Committee that went into advising Youngsook during the preparing of this project.”<sup>1</sup> Not all committee members were present, but those in absentia sent their comments in writing. Todd commented, “Your committee seemed most enthusiastic about your project, and most supportive of your efforts.” He noted the helpful support from Dr.

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<sup>1</sup> This is from Professor Terry Todd's feedback in writing.

Michael Rivas, the chair of the Committee, in reading drafts of my project prospectus and helping find a focus on peacemaking as mission.

Todd pointed out that the field day at GBGM seemed to “be a very important component of the curriculum,” affirming the feedback received from both the students and the GBGM staff who participated in the field trip. He also affirmed the feedback from students that they were very enthusiastic about the course in general.

I greatly appreciated Dr. Todd’s comment that my work “has been exemplary.” Dr. Todd had been extremely supportive of my Doctor of Ministry work from the beginning. He was gracious enough to work with me as Advisor even after a two-year gap due to the relocation of my ministry from the GBGM to a position as District Superintendent in the Rocky Mountain Conference.

### **Candidate’s Self-assessment**

I feel that the problem identified- many seminary graduates enter professional ministry settings not appropriately equipped with knowledge or training in Christian mission- was on target. The students’ feedback on their changed understanding of mission confirmed the effect of mission education at seminaries. In other words, the project confirmed the importance for seminaries to meet this great demand to equip competent and effective pastoral leaders to proclaim the Gospel in every place, nurture and care for the church, and reach out in creative ways to do justice and show mercy in the contemporary world

Much of the planning of the project consisted of the development of the syllabus and the curriculum. It was a challenge to have a tight timetable in preparation for a course that was to be implemented one month from the time of the

approval of the prospectus. It was also a challenge to prepare for a one-week intensive course that met six hours per day as this required a different organization of the class and materials. Efforts were made to meet the challenge of an intensive course. The syllabus, which included the reading list, was mailed to students a few weeks prior to class time. In addition, a packet of course materials was prepared and mailed to students in advance so that they had sufficient time to secure and read course materials before the start of class.

In line with the syllabus and the curriculum, major areas of research were biblical and theological developments that involved contemporary missions and contextual themes such as globalization, religious diversity, and conflict and peacemaking.

Co-leading the proposed course was an excellent experience. That Dr. Randolph Nugent and I had worked together in a global mission setting for over a decade helped our teamwork and collaboration in the course of preparation and teaching.

In my view, part of my accomplishment was a strengthened theological and biblical understanding of global mission. In particular, this project gave me an opportunity to structure the perspectives on peace and interfaith dialogue that I have gained through my GBGM involvement. It gave me an opportunity to theologically reflect on what it means to be a Christian in a culturally and religiously pluralistic world. To be a person of Christian faith in a multi-faith world is an invitation and a challenge to affirm one's "own holy ground even while sojourning in the holy lands

of other faith traditions."<sup>2</sup> This project also gave me a tremendous opportunity to reflect on peace building as a part of mission. But, most importantly, the project confirmed the need of more curriculum development in mission at United Methodist seminaries.

### **Overall Achievement of the Project**

Did the project come close to achieving the stated goals and objectives?

Overall, most course goals and objectives were met, especially the second goal- that of developing a teaching model for bringing an understanding of mission and the practice of peacemaking in an interfaith world to Christian leaders and pastors.

Various ways of interaction and conversation with other religious communities were explored and discussed in our mission to bring peace, love and justice to humanity.

Most students mentioned that not only their understanding of Christian mission was enhanced but that their eyes were opened to working with persons of other faith traditions. Another goal of the project was to expose students to various mission contexts, not just from a western perspective, but from Asian Pacific, African and Latin American points of view. Students seemed to be most appreciative of learning contexts other than those of the United States or Western Europe. Through the project of country reports, which was one of the three class assignments, students had an opportunity to do an in-depth study of a country of their choosing. The countries that students chose ranged from the continents of South America to Africa to Asia to North America.

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<sup>2</sup> Eck, 11.

One benefit of this project to the GBGM was to gain media for disseminating mission education concepts and practices to the future pastors of the church, a significant local constituency for enabling mission interest in congregations and for the future leaders who will be positioned in various places within the church.



## CONCLUSION

Like life, a zeal for mission is planted, grows and flourishes through the process of birthing and maturing. We often plant a seed and then wait for growth, but not patiently. We cannot rush growth.<sup>143</sup> If we expect pastors and church leaders to passionately engage in mission, a seed of mission mindedness should be planted in their hearts at some point in their preparation period for ministry. I claim that for pastoral leaders, seminary is one of the best times to plant the seed of missionary zeal and to start letting it grow, for growth takes time. Mission education at seminaries provides excellent learning opportunities for students who are in preparation for ministries.

Therefore, my thesis premise was that it is essential to provide appropriate mission education at United Methodist seminaries in order to meet a great need to equip competent and effective pastoral leaders who may proclaim the Gospel in every place, nurture and care for the church, seek justice, build peace, and show love in the world. In this vein, the project focused on the development of a course on global mission with special emphasis on peace-building at Drew University.

The result of this study confirmed the premise of the project, i.e., seminary students lack an appropriate understanding of Christian mission. This study demonstrated that it is partly because of the lack of effectiveness of United Methodist seminaries in providing an emphasis in education for mission. Many seminary

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<sup>143</sup> Brueggemann, 186-187.

graduates enter professional ministry settings not appropriately equipped with knowledge or training in Christian mission. The importance of mission education cannot be overemphasized because mission education and practice are in interactive relationships in significant ways. Carlos F. Cardoza-Orlandi states that theologies and practices of mission are always in the making. He continues, “Just as missiology is born out of the practices of mission, theology of mission is a critical source to help Christian communities be introspective, critical, and transformative in their mission practices. One without the other runs the risk of losing sight of the *missio Dei*.”<sup>2</sup>

I argue that systematic changes are required in order to enhance mission education at seminaries. Therefore, this study<sup>3</sup> offers the following recommendations for policy changes related to mission education or missiology at United Methodist seminaries:

1. Establish Missiology as a required theological discipline at seminaries for both ordination and graduation with a clear set of guidelines for mission training including what is involved in taking mission courses.<sup>4</sup> Such action will help offer courses in depth on the historical, theological and biblical and practical dimensions of mission.<sup>5</sup> This will require reclaiming the centeredness of missiology in the global context of the church of Jesus Christ, not “missiology as a theological minor, a dispensable extra, a special field of study exclusively for those who plan to do mission work in Third World Countries.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Carlos F. Cardoza-Orlandi, *Mission: The Essential Guide* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2002), 109.

<sup>3</sup> These recommendations are also based upon the result of research and questionnaire.

<sup>4</sup> Bob Kohler stated at the UM Professors of Mission, in June, 2007, “Currently there is a requirement for UM pastors-in-training to take a course in mission; but there are no guidelines for what that means, no norms for what is included, no statement of goals or outcome.

<sup>5</sup> Currently many United Methodist seminaries have professors of evangelism, who mainly focus on mission as evangelism, not necessarily teaching comprehensive aspects of mission.

<sup>6</sup> Bosch, 244-245.

2. Offer seminary students mission intern opportunities in churches, mission agencies, mission events and cross-cultural ministry settings. Create those projects of action/reflection by which faculty and students together are involved in mission in their local contexts as well as in a global context.
3. Urge the trustees and faculty at United Methodist seminaries to make mission education a financial priority. This will require the commitment of the presidents, faculty and trustees of the theological schools to making special effort at fund-raising and “working through” the academic culture that often or sometimes tends to devalue the teaching of Christian mission.<sup>7</sup>
4. Urge action and funding of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in changing attitudes and practices of the United Methodist seminaries regarding mission education. This kind of action will require support from the GBGM and the GBHEM. Such action from the General Conference will “let the seminaries and their faculties know that the United Methodist church wants mission studies to be part of pastoral training.”<sup>8</sup>
5. Continue to encourage the GBGM to help engage seminaries and professors of mission in a conversation about how United Methodist seminaries can provide appropriate mission training to students and pastors.
6. Urge the GBGM and the UMC to treat missionaries as equal participants in the ongoing process of understanding mission theologically, and accept the work of academic missiologists in developing its own self-understanding.

I believe these types of policy changes at the denominational level- as well as seminaries- will help move missiology or mission education from the periphery to the very center of the theological curriculum.

### **My Final Word**

The project was derived from my passion and love for mission and my commitment to peace and reconciliation. Throughout the thesis I attempted to present some of the ways of creating a culture of peace, and of achieving God’s vision of peace and harmony through interfaith dialogue.

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<sup>7</sup> Donald Messer, from his response to the Questionnaire.

<sup>8</sup> Messer’s Response.

As I began the thesis with a belief that God is a missionary God, I conclude the paper with a conviction that the church is at its best when it is in mission. God is a God of peace and harmony. We, as passionate Christians, understand our participation in the struggle for peace and justice to be part of our Christian mission.

I also conclude this thesis with deep trust in the power of dialogue, especially with our neighbors of different faiths. Truly, our neighbors of different religious traditions are our allies, not our enemies, in working toward freedom and justice. Earlier I claimed that God's new creation aims toward justice, freedom and peace. Inter-religious solidarity will bring power in working against globalization, war and conflict, and for calling for actions to build a better world. This thesis claimed that interfaith dialogue has to do with seeking common ground for God's purpose in history and to work with neighbors of other faith traditions in a common cause to serve justice and righteousness. Thus, a meaningful and courageous interfaith dialogue of action would help build or create a culture of peace in the cities, countries and regions where the air of violence is currently breathed. Creating interfaith communities is an important way for Christians to witness to the love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Realizing peace and justice for the humanity is, after all, realizing the reign of God- that is, bringing the kingdom of God among us.

I also end the thesis with a recognition of the importance of prayer for our journey toward peace. In this paper, various problems in the global world were discussed as the problems needing to be solved, and various ways of interfaith dialogue and cooperation were discussed. However, I cannot agree more with Eugene Peterson that "the inner action of prayer takes precedence over the outer

action of proclamation.”<sup>9</sup> The action for justice and peace “begins in prayer.” Prayer means that we deal first with God and then with the world. Prayer means that we experience the world first not as a problem to be solved but as a reality in which God is acting.” Building community of peace for all is a process, a continuing search and engagement, of which the first step is prayer. It is a journey that stretches out to an unending horizon. That is why it is important that we be prayerfully and actively engaged in striving for peace and reconciliation.

Lastly, I end in hope. We often may feel like those prophets who sounded the warning against the violence and injustice of their time. Indeed the prophets sounded critique and judgment. Jim Wallis observed, “The prophets begin with critique and judgment, but they always end in hope. It is that hope, grounded in faith, that will lead to action for change and bring the things that make for peace.”<sup>10</sup> Even in the midst of the current crisis, therefore, we still express hope for a peaceful resolution of the situation. For God is a God of hope and God’s mandate for humanity is to live in harmony and peace. The human family is God’s family. Despite the long histories of conflict, persecution and suffering, I argue that we remain hopeful as we hear about both religious and non-religious people entering into a dialogue and collaboration process. I believe that we need to continue to search for and create mission opportunities, such as interfaith cooperation on globalization and peacemaking, that are in line with our mission understanding of God’s purpose in humanity and in history. After all, God’s purpose in history is peace, harmony, and love.

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<sup>9</sup> Eugene H. Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 40.

<sup>10</sup> Jim Wallis, “The Things that Make for Peace,” *Sojourners Magazine* (July-August, 2003).

## APPENDIX A

Letter to Dean of Drew University for Course Proposal

YOUNGSOOK CHARLENE KANG  
DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY  
MISSION CONTEXT & RELATIONSHIPS/MISSION EDUCATION  
ROOM 1316  
TEL: 212/870-3771; FAX: 212/870-3686  
EMAIL: [YKANG@GBGM-UMC.ORG](mailto:YKANG@GBGM-UMC.ORG)

July 24, 2003

Dr. Maxine Clarke Beach  
Vice President and Dean  
The Theological School  
Drew University  
Madison, New Jersey 07940

Dear Maxine:

Greetings!

This letter is directed to you from both Randolph Nugent and Youngsook Kang as a follow-up to the separate discussions and conversations which each has held with you. Unfortunately, we have not been with you to be able for the three of us to discuss the following together. Therefore, we pray that this letter will provide sufficient groundwork for a positive forward movement on the matter being proposed.

On the one hand it is our understanding that Drew University School of Theology is willing to offer a course(s) during the semester of 2004 whose instructor is Randolph Nugent. On the other hand Youngsook Kang will be a candidate for the Doctor of Ministry Degree in the Doctor of Ministry Program at Drew.

The proposal is that Rev. Kang joins Randy Nugent as co-instructor in the Spring Semester to teach the proposed course.

We have worked closely in various areas of mission for the last seven years as General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary, and even before this, during the time in which Youngsook served as a Director of the Board of Global Ministries.

We hope that you will be open to this idea which was initially shared with you by Youngsook at Ocean Grove, New Jersey.

Attached is the proposed course description. Would you please review it and see if it is in the direction of your thinking as well as with regard to its appropriateness. The title of the course being suggested is as follows: "Christian Global Mission in Today's World – Interfaith, Secular, and Economically Integrated". Our aim is to explore with students the meaning and the significance of Christian Mission in a contemporary context, especially in the context of its religious pluralism. There will be an attempt to come to an understanding of the ways in which Christian Mission has been present in various historical times and situations. This will be a participatory class in which students will be invited to share their understandings of mission and diversity in faith and to increase their passion and interest in Christian Mission in a multi-faith world. In addition there will be readings and other material required.

Should this proposal be acceptable to you, Youngsook, who is a candidate in the Doctor of Ministry Program, will proceed to utilize the development of the curriculum as her D. Min. thesis/project.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to global mission and ministry. Your openness to the proposal is much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Randolph Nugent

Youngsook C. Kang

Enclosure

## APPENDIX A (Continued)

**Proposed Course Description**

Drew University:  
Spring 2004

**Course Title:**

“Global Mission in the Contemporary World: Peacemaking and Interfaith Dialogue”

**Course Description:**

The course will explore the meaning and the significance of Christian Mission in a contemporary context with a special perspective on peace-building. There will be an opportunity to review the understanding of mission from a western context as well as from a variety of contexts lived in by Christians of other regions such as Asia Pacific, Africa and Latin America/Caribbean. In a world in which the Christian faith has a variety of expressions there will be an exploration of the meaning of Christian mission, as it is confronted by other expanding missionary faiths.

What can we learn about mission and the Christian gospel in a world of diversity of peoples and cultures, as well as a world of many faiths? The class will highlight aspects of Christian faith, which in their fullness and in their exclusivity, help us understand our relationship with other faiths and point to the openness and inclusiveness about our faith. The class will also explore ways of interaction and conversation with other religious communities in our mission to bring peace, love and justice to humanity. There will be an attempt to come to an understanding of the ways in which Christian mission has been present in various historical times and situations. This will be a participatory class in which students will be invited to share their understanding of mission and diversity in faith perspective through class discussion, journal, and papers.

Instructors: Dr. Randolph Nugent and Rev. Youngsook Charlene Kang

Class Schedule: Spring 2004



## APPENDIX B

Syllabus-(Course No. PAS-TH574)

**GLOBAL MISSION IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD:  
*Peacemaking and Interfaith Dialogue*****Randolph Nugent & Youngsook C. Kang****JANUARY 19-24, 2004****Description**

The course will explore the meaning and the significance of Christian Mission in a contemporary context, especially in contexts of religious diversity, with a special emphasis on peace-building. It will seek to bring an understanding of mission and the practice of peacemaking in an interfaith world to Christian leaders and pastors. The class will explore ways of interaction and conversation with other religious communities in our mission to bring peace, love and justice to humanity. A critical exploration of issues such as contextualization, globalization, religious pluralism, partner churches, etc., will be encouraged. Various traditions and perspectives will be highlighted with opportunities for students to focus on key topics relating to their understanding of Christian mission..

**Aims and Objectives**

The course seeks to introduce students to:

1. A brief historical and critical survey of the church's understanding of mission.
2. An examination of basic biblical and theological understandings of mission.
3. The pluralistic religious and global perspectives contributing to contemporary mission.
4. The contextualization of Christian mission.
5. The challenge of selected new ecclesial and societal issues to the church's mission such as globalization and conflicts.
6. Review of the understanding of mission from a western context as well as from Asian Pacific, African and Latin American/Caribbean perspectives.

**Schedule**

**(Monday, January 19-Friday, January 24, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)**

**Monday, January 19****Morning:**Introduction:

Review of syllabus & requirements  
 “Contemporary Challenges of Mission”

Paradigms of Mission in the Bible

Bosch, pp. 1-178,  
 Messer, pp.27-44

**Afternoon:**Paradigms of Mission and Historical Memory

Roman Catholic/Protestant Reformation and Enlightenment Paradigms  
 View film: “The Mission”  
 Bosch, pp. 181-189, 214-345

**Tuesday, January 20****Morning:**Emerging Ecumenical Paradigms of Mission

Postmodern and Ecumenical Paradigms  
 Bosch, 349-447

Students Class Presentations on Country Report**Afternoon:**Globalization and Mission

Siliva Federici, “War, Globalization and Reproduction,” pp.133-145  
 Elsa Tamez, “Three Biblical Reflections for Our Time,” pp 134-151

Mission and Poverty: Whose Mission is it anyway

Geopolitics and Mission paradigm: Pakistan  
 Implications of Globalization on Mission: Bolivia

Students Class Presentations on Country Report**Wednesday, January 21**

Field trip to the General Board of Global Ministries, the United Methodist Church, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115, 212-87-3600,  
[http://gbgm-umc.org/home\\_page/index](http://gbgm-umc.org/home_page/index).

There will be presentations by staff members on global mission and a time of discussion. Transportation and lunch will be provided.

### **Thursday, January 22**

#### **Morning:**

Encountering God in a Religiously Diverse World

Eck, Preface 2003, Preface 1993, pp.1-44, 166-231

Ariarajah, pp.1-25, 100-129

Interfaith Response to Globalization

#### **Afternoon:**

Students Class Presentations: Country Report

Threats to Peace from a Missionary Perspective

### **Friday, January 23**

#### **Morning:**

Peace-making in a Multi-faith World: Israel/Palestine

Plou, pp.1-133

Bennis, pp.1-20, 69-76

Peace ministry

Buttry, pp.81-102, 195-204

#### **Afternoon:**

Interfaith Response to Peace-building

Students Presentations:

Summary Statement on a Contemporary Issue of Global Mission

### **Conclusion**

### **Written Assignments**

1. Students are required to prepare a reflection paper (5 to 7 pages in length) on their understanding of Christian mission and what they think of the current missionary situation of own denomination. This essay should include critical and constructive responses to the topics presented via required readings and

class presentations, with a focus on the implications for a student's own theological perspective on mission.

2. Students are required to choose one contemporary issue in mission and prepare a 3 to 4 page paper, presenting the key challenges involved and outlining its significance to the church. Students will be invited to share in class a summary statement in order to engage the class in discussion about its importance to the church's mission and ministry. Class presentations will be arranged with the students for the last session on January 23.
3. Country Report (Class presentations: 15-20 minutes per person): Contemporary Mission & global issues:

During this course, an effort will be made to look specifically at certain contemporary contexts of mission and global issues. In particular, the instructors are thinking of possibly focusing on the United States, Israel/Palestine, Pakistan, Russia, Cambodia, Mozambique, Cuba, Bolivia, and Honduras. Each student will be asked to do some independent research on a particular country and to share those findings in class. The report should include a mission profile, the potential for mission, either positive or negative. Please comment upon the religious communities in the country.

### **Texts:**

### **Required:**

Ariarajah, S. Wesley, *Not Without My Neighbour: Issues in Interfaith Relations*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1999.

Bosch, David J, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991.

Eck, Diana, *Encountering God, A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993, 2003.

Plou, Dafne, *Peace in Troubled Cities: Creative Models of Building Community Amidst Violence*, Risk Book Series, WCC Publications, Geneva, 1998.

A packet of articles: A free copy will be mailed to students at the address indicated.

Bennis, Phyllis, *A Primer: Understanding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict*,  
Trans-  
Arab Research Institute, Inc., A TARI Publication, 2003

Buttry, Daniel, *Peace Ministry*, Judson Press Valley Forge, 1995, pp. 81-102, 195-204

Federici, Silvia “War, Globalization and Reproduction,” *There is an Alternative: Subsistence and Worldwide Resistance to Corporate Globalization*, ed. By Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, Nicholas Faraclas, and Claudia Von Werlhof, Zed- Books, 200, pp.133-134

Tamez, Elsa (1998), “Three Biblical Reflections for Our Time,” *Hope and Justice for All in the Americas, Discerning God’s mission*, ed. By Oscar L. Bolioli, Frenship Press, New York , pp.134-151

Weber, Theodore R., *Politics in the Order of Salvation: New Directions in Wesleyan Political Ethics*, pp. 353-466

### **Recommended:**

Messer, Donald E. *A Conspiracy of Goodness: Contemporary Images of Christian Ministry*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992

On Reserve:

Ariarajah, S. Wesley, *Not Without My Neighbour: Issues in Interfaith Relations* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1999).

Bosch, David J, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991).

Cracknell, Kenneth, *Towards a New Relationship: Christians and People of Other Faith* (London: Epworth Press, 1986)

Messer, Donald E. *A Conspiracy of Goodness: Contemporary Images of Christian Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992),

*Missiology: An International Review*—

### **Evaluations—Mid-term and Final**

Formal written evaluations by students will be offered by the middle of the week and at the end of the course. Mid-term evaluations will assist the professor in making appropriate adjustments in teaching the course this quarter.

## APPENDIX C

Seminar at  
 The General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM)  
 The United Methodist Church  
 475 Riverside Dr  
 New York, NY 10115

**GLOBAL MISSION IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD:  
*Peacemaking and Interfaith Dialogue*  
 Randolph Nugent & Youngsook C. Kang**

**Drew Theological Seminary  
 January 21, 2004**

9:20 a.m.	Arrival at the Interchurch Building at 475 Riverside Drive
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Presentation by the Board Cabinet members of the GBGM
10:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m.	Discussion on Global Mission with the Staff Team
12:30 p.m. -1:30 p.m	Lunch
1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Interfaith/Peace-building Lois Dauway
2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Music and Global Mission Jorge Lockward
3:30 p.m.	Departure

## APPENDIX D

**Letter to Professors of Mission at United Methodist Seminaries**

April 5, 2007

Dear Professor:

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ!

This letter is to seek your assistance in getting information on “the present status of mission education at United Methodist seminaries.” I am currently writing a Doctor of Ministry thesis at Drew Theological Seminary under the advisement of Professor Jesse Terry Todd. This thesis is based upon my project which involved teaching a class on Christian mission at Drew. The project was developed while I was working with the General Board of Global Ministries as Deputy General Secretary, overseeing the two program units of Mission Contexts & Relationships and Mission Education. I currently serve on the Cabinet of the Rocky Mountain Conference as District Superintendent for the Metropolitan District.

This project is part of the effort of facilitating opportunities of providing academic courses on mission with a special emphasis on peace-building. A focus of the project is assessment of the need of preparing seminaries for Christian mission. I would expect that you would agree that:

- many seminary graduates enter professional ministry settings, not appropriately equipped with knowledge or training in Christian mission.
- it is essential to meet this great need to equip competent and effective pastoral leaders to proclaim the Gospel in every place, nurture and care for the church, and reach out to do justice, build peace and show love in the world.

As a professor of mission, you are one of the best persons to assess the situation related to mission education at seminaries. I know how precious your time is. However, may I ask you to take a little time and give me a paragraph or so on each of the questions in the attached paper and send it to be by email at [youngsook@RMCUMC.com](mailto:youngsook@RMCUMC.com) or mail it in the return envelope.

In advance let me thank you for sharing your time and insight.

Grace and Peace,

Youngsook C. Kang

## APPENDIX E

**Letter to Professors of Mission at United Methodist Seminaries**

Dear Friends:

I know you share my distress at the low priority United Methodism has given to funding professorships in missiology at our United Methodist seminaries. Those who are teaching are often beleaguered and feel they should be ranked among the denomination's endangered species!

A very beloved colleague of mine in ministry, Rev. Youngsook Kang, is completing a D.Min. at Drew University Theological School. Her project explores the state of teaching mission in United Methodist seminaries. In particular, she focuses on an understanding of the peacemaking movement in a multi-faith world, in which the global church must face ethical and theological challenges posed by globalization and various conflicts. Youngsook has a heart for mission and ministry and has used her status as a leader at General Conference and previously at the General Board of Global Ministries to advance mission education and strategies.

It would be extremely helpful to her, and hopefully to the concerns we share, if you could respond to the questions she is posing as a part of her D.Min. Project.

Like you, I know how limited time is and the necessity of prioritizing good demands upon your schedule, but if you could respond, I would be deeply appreciative.

Warm Regards,

Donald E. Messer  
Executive Director  
Center for the Church and Global AIDS  
303 770 5809  
dmesser@iliff.edu

P.S. Officially, I'm "retired" from Iliff, but I'm still teaching mission and evangelism, as well as courses on the "church and Global AIDS." I have two courses this quarter at Iliff, and spent two weeks at Drew University this past January teaching a course on AIDS. The experience at Drew was terrific, and I am open to other short-term teaching assignments at other seminaries. I travel and speak considerably, as the Center for the Church and Global AIDS has projects in various places around the world. I was in India and Cambodia recently and look forward to being in Africa this summer.





## APPENDIX G

Drew Theological School  
Theological Student Evaluation of Instruction A

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructors: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your year of study? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your program? \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate your instructors on items according to the scale defined below.

1-never 2-rarely 3-occasionally 4-frequently 5- nearly always 6-always 7 – not applicable

\_\_\_\_\_ The instructor made a clear presentation of the objectives, scope and requirements of the course at the beginning of the course

\_\_\_\_\_ The instructors were well prepared and organized.

\_\_\_\_\_ The instructors facilitated discussion effectively.

\_\_\_\_\_ The classes were planned and led in a way that facilitated my learning.

\_\_\_\_\_ The required texts and recommended reading material were pertinent to the subject.

\_\_\_\_\_ The precepts were planned and led in a way that facilitated my learning.

\_\_\_\_\_ The instructors stimulated me to think creatively and critically.

\_\_\_\_\_ The instructors made students feel free to ask questions, disagree and express their ideas.

\_\_\_\_\_ The instructors were attentive to the issues of cultural and theological diversity.

Comment on the relevance of this course to your self-understanding, spiritual growth, knowledge of the subject, and preparation for ministry.

Describe the class composition and the affect of this on you learning in this class.

How helpful did you find the experience of visiting the General Board of Global Ministries on Wednesday, January 21?

Any suggestions for a future visit:

Why would you or why would you not take another course with these instructors?

Additional comments.

## APPENDIX H

**Drew Theological School  
Theological Student Evaluation of Instruction B**

(Course No. PAS-TH574)

**GLOBAL MISSION IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD:  
*Peacemaking and Interfaith Dialogue***

**Randolph Nugent & Youngsook C. Kang**

**JANUARY 19-24, 2004**

Below is a list of the aims and objectives of the class. Rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not achieved, 5 = highly achieved), the degree to which you believe each goal has been achieved.

Aims and Objectives

1. A brief historical and critical survey of the church's understanding of mission. \_\_\_\_\_
2. An examination of basic biblical and theological understandings of mission. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The pluralistic religious and global perspectives contributing to contemporary mission. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The contextualization of Christian mission. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The challenge of selected new ecclesial and societal issues to the church's mission such as globalization and conflicts. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Review of the understanding of mission from a western context as well as from Asian Pacific, African and Latin American/Caribbean perspectives. \_\_\_\_\_

**Please comment on the following:**

1. Did this course enhance your understanding of Christian mission in the global context? If so, how?
  
2. Did this course enhance your understanding of peacemaking in the contemporary world where so many countries and regions are plagued with conflicts? If so, how?
  
3. Did this course enhance your understanding of interfaith dialogue contributing to contemporary mission? If so, how?
  
4. What suggestions would you make in developing a curriculum on global mission in the future?

APPENDIX I  
Letter from Dr. Michael Rivas, Convener of Lay Advisory Committee

February 12, 2004

The Reverend Youngsook C. Kang  
General Board of Global Ministries

Dear Youngsook:

This is to provide feedback to you on the evaluation session held last Wednesday by your Lay Advisory Committee here at GBGM.

There was a clear sense that several of the issues you set out to research were in fact realized in the project. I refer to such issues as the variety of understandings of “mission” that may be held among students (and perhaps faculty), the significant impact that taking a well prepared and resourced course will have on those students, and the need for a consistent approach to bringing mission into the life of the seminaries. In every case we know much more now about the issues and how to address them. The course was organized and structured to address those issues, and the results speak for themselves as noticed in the student evaluation comments, as well as in the observations of your colleagues in this committee, including those who were able to participate in the one-day session here at the Board. We were also appreciative of the fact that you did adjust the contents and structure of the course in response to your committee’s observations during our first session.

Members of the Advisory Committee were equally clear that the content of the course was indeed larger than could be accommodated in the time period allotted to it. The students’ evaluation confirmed that assessment also. Some of the problem, of course, relates to the way in which the course is scheduled over just one week, and we understand that is something over which you had no control as the seminary sets those schedules. Since concurrent reading and written reflections on the subject by the students is such a critical component in the process of reaching this particular course’s objectives, we suggest that future offering should be over three weeks, or that the contents be pared down significantly.

We hope this has been a good experience for you as it clearly was for the students. We in your GBGM Lay Advisory Committee have appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with you and Drew on this project. It has produced some important learnings for us which strengthen and document some of the perspectives we already had about the current state of mission study in our seminaries.

Blessings to you in completing this important project.

Michael Rivas  
Convener, Lay Advisory Committee

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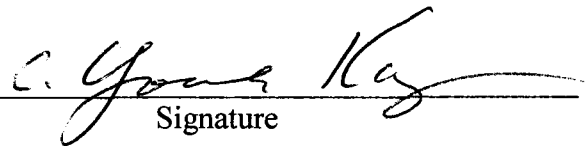
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