

## Peacebuilding and Catholicism

### *Affinities, Convergences, Possibilities*

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The war-torn nation of Colombia suffers from a conflict that stretches across time, spanning at least half a century and assuming numerous forms from civil war to common crime, including drug trade-related assassinations, governmental corruption, leftist guerrilla kidnapping and terror, right-wing paramilitary murders, and other human rights abuses. The conflict envelops all sectors of Colombian society in its deadly violence while also entangling transnational actors, hostile as well as friendly states, and the international community.<sup>1</sup>

Peacebuilding, in its contemporary meaning, evolved in response to this particular kind of human misery. It is precisely that mode of conflict transformation that strives to comprehend the *longue durée* of a conflict—its full temporal, trans-generational range—and forge “solutions” commensurate with the deep historical rootedness of the inhumane personal, social, economic, and political relationships fueling the deadly violence. Peacebuilders strive to address all phases of these protracted conflicts, in which pre-violence, violence, and post-violence periods are difficult to differentiate. Accordingly, peacebuilding engages all sectors of society and all the relevant partners—people living in the local communities who perpetrate the violence or who are directly victimized by it; national elites in the government, business, education, religion, and other sectors; and, diplomats, policymakers, scholars, international lawyers, religious leaders, and other professionals who often operate at a geographical remove from the conflict.<sup>2</sup>

This book describes the myriad ways in which the Catholic Church is engaged in peacebuilding activities and operations around the world. In doing so, it explores the distinctive resources, concepts, and practices the church contributes to the process of transforming conflict and building a sustainable peace, and it reflects on the ways in which Catholic participation and leadership is testing, challenging, and renewing the church’s historic

commitment to the work of justice and peace. Already well known is the church's presence in and service to nations and peoples suffering under the burden of poverty, repression, disease, and deadly conflict; less clearly understood is the church's mediation of peace processes, accompaniment of victims of violence, and defining role in the sustaining or rebuilding of political or social institutions that have been destroyed by war or weakened by incompetent or corrupt governance. In dozens of countries and regions the Catholic presence as peacebuilder has increased in frequency and intensity over the past several decades, and it is proving crucial to the prospects for social stability, conflict resolution, and economic development. That presence deserves greater attention, analysis, and reflection. To that purpose this book aims to begin a vigorous conversation about Catholicism, peacebuilding, and the common good.

#### Catholic Participation in Peacebuilding: Current Variations

In reflecting recently on a quarter-century of the Colombian Catholic Church's leadership in the quest for peace and reconciliation, Msgr. Héctor Fabio Henao Gaviria underscored the comprehensive nature of the Conference of Bishops' platform for a National Permanent Peace Policy for Colombia:

The basic concept is the participation of all sectors in the development and implementation of a peace policy. Building peace after decades of confrontation and millions of victims requires a participatory process and pedagogy in all spheres of society. Both the participatory process and the pedagogy that must accompany it have gradually been defined through thousands of encounters and community experiences.

In its efforts to promote citizen participation and a peace pedagogy, the Church recognizes that there are various scenarios for peace building; these are not separate compartments, however, but are closely related. There is the scenario of negotiation of the armed conflict, in which government sectors, organizations outside the law, other institutions and facilitators participate. Another scenario involves the formation and strengthening of organized civil society with a capacity for dialogue in the face of the multiple conflicts affecting society. And at least a third scenario involves building structures that guarantee social justice and peaceful coexistence from the grassroots. People involved in ministry face the challenge of establishing dialogue to transform the way in which the deepest aspects of relationships of coexistence are expressed and symbolized.<sup>3</sup>

While the tragic elements of Colombia's "internal conflict" render it close to the ideal case for students of protracted conflict and comprehensive peacebuilding, other characteristics make some of the lessons learned less

applicable to other settings. Certainly the distinctive and influential role of the Catholic Church is not unique to Colombia; Catholic combatants as well as peacemakers have left their mark on dozens of conflict landscapes around the world. But the pervasiveness of Catholic actors in Colombian society and the influential role of the church are remarkably pronounced. The majority of soldiers, guerrillas, paramilitaries, government officials, and victims hail from a Catholic background; the church plays a central role in conflict transformation through advocacy, education, accompaniment, negotiation, mediation, and ministries of compassion, healing, and reconciliation; and public and popular symbols and rituals are suffused with the Catholic sacramental and incarnational imagination. In his chapter on the Catholic accompaniment of and dialogue with armed actors, John Paul Lederach rightly terms the Catholic role in Colombia "a ubiquitous presence."<sup>4</sup>

Elsewhere, Catholic peace and justice advocates are present and active in societies where the Catholic Church is one among many actors engaging the state, operating within civil society, and/or influencing the realm of religion and culture. The Catholic presence and "clout," which varies widely from society to society and region to region, determine the resources and options available to the church for peacebuilding activities and operations. Constructing a detailed chart or typology of these disparate presences and possibilities is not the purpose of the present volume. But the contributors do draw upon a rich variety of cases that, taken together, represents a range of Catholic peacebuilding practices.

If the Catholic peacemaking presence in Colombia approaches the robust definition of peacebuilding that guides our reflections, in other settings Catholics at present are not in a position to claim that kind of ubiquitous and coordinated impact. (Even in the case of Colombia, the Bishops' Conference has acknowledged that the days of Catholic cultural hegemony, not to mention taken-for-granted political influence, are over.<sup>4</sup>) When Catholics think strategically about building peace, therefore, they do so with a heightened awareness of the importance of creating and sustaining alliances with other religious, ethnic, and civil actors. While developing this and other strategies for maximizing the impact of the Catholic presence, however, they must not lose sight of the internal needs (and relative fragility) of the Catholic community itself.

Across the countries of sub-Saharan Africa the church, while rarely a tiny minority, is by no means the exclusive or even dominant voice in the conversation about development, governance, equality, peace, and conflict. Secular regimes and authoritarian rulers, tribal and ethnic leaders, and densely populated Muslim communities also constitute the patchwork quilt of society and political culture. In such settings the ability of the church to act as peacebuilder in the robust sense is governed by how successfully Catholics think and act strategically in order to leverage their influence. How and where—in which sectors of society—this leveraging occurs varies from state to state, as the examples explored in this volume indicate. In countries suffering under failed or failing states, where governance is compromised by

incompetence or corruption or both, the church can quickly become the alternative to the state for people seeking basic services as well as national political leadership. Archbishop John Onaiyekan of Abuja, Nigeria, a faithful participant in the conferences of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN) whence this volume originated and the author of its foreword, acknowledges the perilous and promising fact that he and other members of the hierarchy frequently find themselves cast in this quasi-political role, despite their reluctance to become embroiled in the affairs of the state. While the practice of statecraft certainly belongs in the peacebuilding portfolio, the bishops who are asked to participate have had to feel their way forward, constantly negotiating the relationship between their vocation as pastors, teachers, and governors of the church, and the nature of their responsibility to the broader society.

Elsewhere, Catholics are most effective acting primarily in the sphere of civil society. William Headley and Reina Neufeldt comment upon the opportunities for developing Catholic peacebuilding in Burundi, an impoverished African state with a recent history of massacres and still teetering on the brink of bankruptcy and anarchy. In this setting, as in many others, the Catholic Church is called upon, as a widely respected nongovernmental interlocutor, to facilitate dialogue among leaders of rebel groups, heads of political parties, and the international community. Working with secular partners in civil society, the church has also disseminated provisions of the Arusha peace accord, Headley and Neufeldt report, and co-sponsored a variety of programs designed to promote reconciliation and dialogue. Internally, the church in Burundi has created centers and commissions at the diocesan and parish level to conduct social analysis, train would-be peacebuilders in the techniques of nonviolence, and promote human rights.

Often the most direct, and perhaps the only, opportunity available for the church to exercise influence along the lines of peacebuilding is afforded by its niche in the religious and cultural landscape of a society. Tom Michel reports on the selective and shrewd peacebuilding presences of the church in Indonesia, for example, where the tiny Catholic presence is dwarfed by a dizzying variety of Muslim and indigenous actors crisscrossing ethnic and religious lines. In response to horrific waves of inter-ethnic and Muslim-Christian violence, the Indonesian Catholic bishops established a crisis center directed by a priest but staffed by Muslims and by Protestant Christians. They also issued pastoral letters analyzing the conflict and prescribing steps toward peace with justice (sometimes referred to as a *just/peace*). While addressed to the Catholic minority in the first instance, the letters, Michel notes, were nonpartisan, inclusive of various religious and ethnic sensibilities, and widely disseminated by the media. Through such strategies the themes of Catholic theology and social ethics, as they apply to transforming conflict, were amplified beyond the institutional church.

One of the greatest advantages Catholics possess in thinking strategically about transforming conflict and building peace is the international and transnational character of the church. If not a ubiquitous presence, exactly,

Roman Catholicism as a worldwide institution and series of networks has the capacity to bolster the peacebuilding presence and efficacy of the church at the local, national, and regional levels, including in contexts where the church might otherwise be limited by population, resources, and negligible cultural, religious, or political influence.

Enhancing Catholic presence and influence is a difficult and delicate business, of course, especially in regions such as the Middle East where the Catholic and larger Christian presence is both at risk and viewed suspiciously by the major religious and political players. In addition, the Catholic Church, belying its reputation in some quarters as a centralized monolith, is in fact diffuse, decentralized, and surpassingly local when left in its natural resting state, so to speak. Concentrated and coordinated effort of no little degree is required to realize the church's enormous potential as a fully vibrant, operationally unified, and responsive transnational actor. In a world where information flows at a lightning pace and populations are increasingly vulnerable to external change agents, whether economic, military, environmental, or religious, it seems fair to ask whether the Church Catholic is keeping up with developments and, if so, whether it is working at peak efficiency to adapt its universal teachings and practices while simultaneously supporting its local churches and helping them keep up to date. This is a tall order, indeed.

Our authors offer a few progress reports, so to speak. Todd Whitmore's searching analysis of war, trauma, deprivation, and crushing poverty in rural Uganda is grounded in Catholic social ethics and appreciative of the growing edge of Catholic peace efforts in the region. But it also includes a pointed critique of what Whitmore sees as the inadequacy of much of Catholic social teaching, which was developed within an industrial, urban, European milieu, the challenges and possibilities of which are worlds away from what confronts refugees, migrants, and victims of war in much of the developing world today. Even visionary popes such as Paul VI and John Paul II, who directly and intelligently addressed a host of issues surrounding "the development of peoples," he argues, failed to develop a lexicon and set of concrete imperatives that could be deployed to liberate literally billions of people from the tri-cornered prison of endemic disease, systemic poverty, and relentless low-intensity warfare. Like Dan Philpott, who calls for a papal encyclical on peacebuilding that would update and extend Catholic social teaching by incorporating the best thinking on pressing matters such as reconciliation and restorative justice, Whitmore urges theologians, ethicists, and the magisterium in a similar direction, with an eye on the specific needs of the rural poor.

The Catholic peacebuilding glass is half full in other accounts. Most uplifting, perhaps, is the progress toward robust, comprehensive peacebuilding that is taking place in the Philippines. In the Mindanao region of that nation, as in Colombia, conflict has deep historical roots, peacebuilding is relatively well established and expressed through an impressive array of activities and programs, and the Catholic bishops play a significant cultural



and political role in a Catholic-majority nation. Even more so than Colombia, however, the church in the more pluralistic setting of Mindanao has spent considerable time and energy leveraging its relative clout in society by forging multiple alliances and partnerships, in this case with Muslims and indigenous peoples, who have become potent political players as a result of centuries of struggle and, more recently, the signing of a peace accord with the Filipino government. Catholics entered the peace process at that point in its unfolding and were challenged to react to "facts in the field" unlike those in Colombia. What the church in Mindanao most needed—a theology and practice of interreligious dialogue and intra-religious education for peace—it was able to develop by adapting the "dialogue of life, dialogue of action" model proposed by the Holy See to the local contexts.

Here transnational Catholicism put its best foot forward. As Headley and Neufeldt relate, a crucial actor in the Mindanao peacebuilding effort was Catholic Relief Services (CRS), which established a Peace and Reconciliation program as a concrete response to the signing of the peace agreement between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the government. This agreement, writes CRS peacebuilder Myla Leguro, capped "a peace process spanning 20 years concerning a set of issues evolving over a period of 430 years." The MNLF represented the struggle of the Bangsamoro and other indigenous people who had long experienced religious bias; economic, political, and social marginalization; human rights violations; militarization; and illegal (and sometimes violent) acquisition of ancestral lands. This painful memory became the context within which Catholic peacebuilders began their work. "We knew as Mindanaons that the problems in the region could not be addressed merely by relief and development work alone—the deeper justice and structural issues among Muslims, Christians and indigenous peoples should be dealt with," Leguro writes. "And it was quite liberating that this became part of CRS' agenda in initiating the peace and reconciliation program in Mindanao."<sup>5</sup>

The Peace and Reconciliation program initially emphasized building right relationships among "the tri-people" (Muslims, Christians, and indigenous peoples) of Mindanao. Although the peace agreement was lauded in some quarters as a historical event, "the reality and mood on the ground was very much different," Leguro notes. The majority of the Christian population was suspicious of the agreement, worrying that the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development (the administrative mechanism created to implement the provision of the peace agreement) would enable Muslims to take control of Mindanao. Yet, many ordinary Catholics did not even know about the peace agreement. This meant that the stakeholders, especially local government, had difficulty figuring out their role in the implementation process. Nonetheless, CRS was able to build a process of dialogue and collaboration based on the openness of other communities and partners who, weary of war, welcomed the peace agreement as providing a window of opportunity "to focus on their livelihood, send their children to school, and take care of their families."<sup>6</sup>

Designed to build "a culture of peace" in Mindanao, the program's agenda was to foster constructive relations among Christians and Muslims by addressing mutual prejudices and biases. While CRS recognized that the Mindanao conflict involved complex political, economic and social dimensions, its religious dimension was "the most noticeable and observable expression of the conflict." Accordingly, interreligious dialogue became a focal strategy, with Muslim and Christian religious leaders recruited as the critical partners in the Culture of Peace (COP) process.<sup>7</sup> Peacebuilding was a new idea at the time, and the nongovernmental organizations operating in Mindanao had no capacity for interreligious dialogue or for peacebuilding more generally; rather, they were expert in human rights and development work. From its own relief and development experience, CRS recognized the role that poverty played in aggravating religious tensions, especially in Muslim and indigenous communities. Thus the COP program was closely linked to development, undertaken through small-scale local initiatives in selected settings described as "post-conflict communities."<sup>8</sup> In these communities, working under the rubric "reconciliation through community action," CRS established capacity-building programs designed to train and provide technical support to key partners in order to enhance their skills in project management, interreligious dialogue, and symbolic community development projects that brought together Muslims and Christians.

In this effort CRS was also able to draw on the pioneering interreligious groundwork of a Catholic bishop, several priests, and a community of religious women who had already begun to reach out to the Muslim communities in the 1970s. Seven NGO partners joined CRS in 1996 to establish the Peace and Reconciliation program, which also cultivated relationships with the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, the National Secretariat for Social Action, and Kalinaw Mindanao, a civil society peace network. It soon became clear, however, that "education for peace" was the missing ingredient in this mix. Accordingly, CRS approached Notre Dame University in Cotabato City, which pioneered a peace education program, and entered into partnership with the Mennonite Central Committee to enhance the training program in peacebuilding.<sup>9</sup>

As in Colombia, expanding the circle of peacebuilding partners was a necessary and important strategy. The need to involve Muslim and other religious leaders in dialogue as well as education and formation for peacebuilding was even more pressing in Mindanao, however. Through its connections with the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process and the National Secretariat for Social Action, the CRS program was able to arrange the historic first meeting of bishops and ulama in Cebu City in 1996. The meeting paved the way for a long-term collaboration between the Catholic and Muslim religious leaders of Mindanao, which took the form of a high-level network. A series of cross-religious workshops and training sessions ensued, integrating participants from NGOs, academe, church-based organizations, civic organizations, and government. The process led to the publication of a COP manual and the mainstreaming of peace

education in Mindanao schools. During this stage CRS also began to incorporate and train MNLF combatants and military officials. One of the significant contributions of CRS to the bishops-ulama forum meetings was the first of several conflict transformation workshops held in 1998.

From these beginnings peacebuilding in Mindanao grew rapidly through the formalization of the NGO partners into a group known as Agong, which CRS used as a platform and mechanism to deliver peacebuilding and organizational management training for partners. "As Agong was involved in mainstreaming the culture of peace workshop/process in their areas and with other groups," Leguro writes, "conflict transformation began to emerge as a paradigm in Mindanao."<sup>10</sup> A Mindanao Week of Peace in 1999 celebrated the progress in building Christian-Muslim networks by bringing Muslim and Christian communities together to commit their energies to subsequent phases of building peace through a wide range of COP activities and programs within local communities, dioceses, and constituencies.

In 2000, the Mindanao peacebuilding program entered its second phase in response to the emergence of barriers to the implementation of the peace agreement (for example, corruption in the MNLF and the government's violations of the agreement) that coincided with the change of administration from Fidel Ramos, the author of the peace accord, to Joseph Estrada. Tensions between the government and the MNLF escalated in 2000 into a war affecting thousands of families in central Mindanao. Frustrated by the fact that the otherwise robust peacebuilding efforts of the Catholic, Muslim, and indigenous communities were still relegated to the periphery, CRS and its partners attempted to harness the changes in the relationships among the tri-people in order to address structural issues (such as governance, poverty, land) and to incorporate new sectors of the Mindanao population into the peacebuilding process.

The onset of a war that impeded progress toward relationship-building in central Mindanao; the lack of access of peacebuilders to political elites and governmental structures, and thus the vulnerability of the peacebuilding process to the caprice of these major power players and to the devastation created by cycles of violence; the need for developing Filipino (local indigenous) leadership and for institutionalizing the gains of the first phase, at the same time that "emergency relief" and "crisis management" served to distract the peacebuilders from their goals; and, the desire to find an appropriate balance between international partners and local actors in faith-based peacebuilding—these developments, while not unique in their broad outlines to the conflict in Mindanao, threatened to sunder the bonds of trust and dialogue that had been established during the first phase of the Peace and Reconciliation program.

CRS, in coalition with its Mennonite partners, responded with the establishment of the Mindanao Peacebuilding Institute, initially a summer institute that attracted more than one hundred peacebuilders from nine countries. "As a prime peacebuilding training initiative in Mindanao," Leguro notes, "MPI was able to train more than 550 peacebuilders from more than

85 international and local organizations during the period from 2000 to 2003."<sup>11</sup> The international success of MPI inspired the program to initiate a training event designed to build the capacities of Mindanao's grassroots leaders. In September 2003, the Grassroots Peace Learning Center was established, with a program that entailed a comprehensive module of six peacebuilding sessions conducted within a period of six months. The program worked with a tri-people advisory committee generating valuable inputs from the group on content, methodology, and overall design.

The Mindanao case is more complicated, of course, than this brief overview suggests. But it offers another model of how Catholics are building alliances and leveraging their presence in an effort to approach and approximate the full measure of peacebuilding. Again, what I wish to underscore in the Mindanao case is the importance of "transnational Catholicism"—in this case, taking the form of CRS, a transnational Catholic NGO—as a lever to enhance the efficacious agency of local Catholic peacebuilders.

### Peacebuilding and the Catholic World View

The use of the term *peacebuilding*, as distinguished from *peacemaking*, *conflict resolution*, and other related but distinct concepts, is of recent vintage. It first came into widespread use beyond the peace community only after 1992, when Boutros Boutros-Ghali, then UN secretary-general, announced his Agenda for Peace.<sup>12</sup> Since then, as Catherine Morris summarizes the situation, *peacebuilding* has become "a broadly used but often ill-defined term connoting activities that go beyond crisis intervention such as longer-term development, and building of governance structures and institutions."<sup>13</sup> Under Kofi Annan's leadership of the United Nations, peacebuilding was construed as post-conflict structural transformation, with a primary focus on institutional reform. In 2005, the United Nations established the Peacebuilding Commission as an intergovernmental advisory body that supports peace efforts in countries emerging from conflict by bringing together all of the relevant actors (such as international donors, the international financial institutions, national governments, troop-contributing countries), marshalling resources, and proposing integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery.<sup>14</sup>

Like most contemporary scholars and practitioners of peace, however, the authors of this volume adopt the more comprehensive or robust definition of *peacebuilding* described at the start of this chapter. It comes largely from the peace practitioner and author John Paul Lederach, one of the contributors to this volume, who drew on his own rich experience in the field of mediation and conciliation over three decades to develop an understanding of peacebuilding as encompassing the range of practices essential to the building of a sustainable and just peace over time.<sup>15</sup> These include *conflict resolution* (which usually refers to negotiation, mediation, conciliation, and other measures designed to bring an end to the violence by addressing its



most proximate causes), *peacekeeping* (which is performed by a different set of actors, usually military or police, and occurs during a particular phase of the conflict cycle), and *postwar social reconstruction* (which includes institution building, trauma healing, truth telling and reconciliation, and other practices of restorative justice that typically occur when societies are emerging from a protracted period of repression and violence, and which are performed by yet another specific set of actors and institutions).<sup>16</sup>

To this array of activities Catholicism brings a distinctive set of teachings, practices, sensibilities, and institutional resources. The church articulates fundamental moral principles, derived from Christian scriptures, tradition, and theology, that guide Catholic social praxis. Specific church teachings on peace and justice, war and the use of force, and the requirements of integral human development apply these fundamental principles. The cornerstones of Catholic social ethics include *the sanctity of human life* and *the inherent dignity of each person*; the commitment to pursue *the common good* without privileging any particular class, race, ethnicity, or religion; and *a preferential option for the poor*. While authoritative for Catholics, these principles and teachings are directed to all people of good will and therefore are cast in second-order (that is, non-theological) language accessible to secular and religious interlocutors alike.

Catholic bishops, clergy, lay, and religious also bring to the field of deadly conflict time-honored social and pastoral practices, such as the education and moral formation of children, teens, and young adults; holistic health care and healing that address psychological and emotional as well as physical wounds; and spiritual disciplines that sustain people who have committed themselves to an often excruciating daily regime of service to victims and reconciliation of perpetrators.

The relevance of such teachings and practices to the work of peacebuilding is widely acknowledged by Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Indeed, while there are some significant divergences and, occasionally, serious differences between the Catholic world view and the values and sensibilities of other peacebuilders, one can observe strong affinities between secular and religious actors, organizations, and international institutions (such as the United Nations), on the one hand, and official Catholic teaching and practice, on the other. (Catholics, of course, have greatly influenced other religions as well as secular peace and justice organizations and institutions.) With regard to certain dimensions of peacebuilding, we can speak of convergences, not merely affinities.

As for the points of convergence, the following chapters document the fact that Catholic actors around the world are practicing the art of peacebuilding, as it is typically understood, at the level of the state (in some settings), in civil society, in the realm of culture, and at the grassroots level. Depending on the setting, Catholics are able to adopt a comprehensive, a near-comprehensive, or a selective and strategic approach to building peace. The chapters are sequenced to reflect these various levels and kinds of Catholic engagement.

As we have seen, however, peacebuilding itself is evolving, both inside and outside the church. At this moment in history, peacebuilding remains an imperfectly realized gift to the world. It is also true that the church has not yet fully developed this gift on its own terms, though there are abundant signs of seeds sprouting and imaginations igniting. In addition to noting areas of convergence in the arena of practice, it may also be useful to explore affinities between the Catholic world view, on the one hand, and the moral imperatives and underlying values of secular and religious peacebuilding, on the other—even though the latter are not always fully articulated, acknowledged, or developed.

The Catholic world view, of course, informs Catholicism's institutional presence at various levels of society and shapes the church's engagement with political leaders, civil society, religion, and culture. By "the Catholic world view" I mean the constellation of doctrines, symbols, rituals, ethical principles, and instantiating practices that constitute an organic, unified vision of the world, of human nature, and of God's plan for bringing both to their proper fulfillment, as anticipated in God's act of creation and revealed definitively in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Evidence of affinities between the Catholic world view and the sometimes unarticulated "doctrines, rituals, symbols, ethical principles, and instantiating practices" that inform current peacebuilding practice, religious as well as secular, is found throughout this volume. Secular human rights advocates, Jews, evangelical Christians, and Catholics share, for example, a moral conviction of the innate dignity of each human person. Each community draws on its own rituals, myths, and "saints" to dramatize and enact its deeply held beliefs. Humanitarian actors and relief and development workers, whatever their religious background, prioritize the alleviation of human suffering and strive to provide nutrition, education, clean water, health care, and equal access to employment. They would readily resonate with articles of Catholic social teaching such as the preferential option for the poor, solidarity, the priority of labor, and stewardship of the environment.

But affinities can run deep, or they can remain superficial. What, for example, is the ultimate source and meaning of human dignity? What are the specific ethical imperatives incumbent upon the defenders of human dignity? What, concretely, does it mean to exercise an option for the poor or to fight for justice? (Lederach notes wryly that some paramilitaries in Colombia use theological terms to justify their violent deeds.) How are healing, repentance, and reconciliation to be understood and measured?

In the concluding chapter Robert Schreifer, synthesizing points or references made in the various chapters, lifts up and reflects upon the elements of the Catholic world view that already influence, or could more fully inform, peacebuilding concepts and practices. These elements work together in a distinctive way in the religious imagination of Catholics, and these workings often carry profound implications for how Catholics understand and pursue peace and justice. The theologically charged sacramental, communal,

and spiritual dimensions of the Catholic imagination, for example, are organically related, complementing and reinforcing one another to provide a dimension of transcendent depth to the Catholic understanding of human dignity and the ethical call to solidarity with the suffering and dispossessed. Belief in eternal life, the sanctifying and redeeming action of the Holy Spirit, and the efficacy of Christ's promise to the church thread through Catholic understandings and approaches to peacebuilding practices such as the accompaniment of victims, the reliance on ritual and prayer in healing and forgiveness, and "education for peace." Features of the Catholic imagination invariably play a role in judgments about what constitutes good governance, a just regime of human rights, and the rule of law.

As Schreier further elaborates, these themes turn up repeatedly in the narratives, studies, and analyses you are about to read. Ken Himes, for example, raises difficult questions posed to Catholics by the nature of contemporary war, such as the relevance of just-war principles when the conflict is intrastate and aggression cannot readily be distinguished from legitimate self-defense. Also writing from an ethicist's perspective, Whitmore, underscoring the moral ambiguity and messiness of protracted wars, challenges conventional distinctions between direct and indirect killing, and between the right to life and the quality of life. Lisa Cahill calls on the church to plumb more deeply the experiences of women in contemporary wars, precisely as a theological and christological resource. Michel and Peter-John Pearson in different ways confront what might be called the priority of race and blood over faith in their respective ruminations on ethnicity, religious violence and apartheid. Peter Phan calls into question the hard-and-fast distinctions Catholics sometimes make between their own religious tradition and its access to insight into the human condition, and the deep wisdom found in other traditions, especially on the meaning of peace and war. These authors write, of course, as insiders attempting to transcend aspects of their own intellectual, moral, and spiritual formation as Catholics for the sake of peacebuilding, even as they remain deeply rooted in and nourished by the Catholic world view.

### Origins, Methods, and Aspirations of This Book

In 1983, the U.S. Bishops' Conference issued "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," a landmark pastoral letter that engaged the debate raging at the time on the proliferation of nuclear arms, called for further work on the development of a theology of peace, and received extensive national and international coverage. In both secular and church circles, as David O'Brien notes in his chapter on the church in the United States, the event triggered a wave of interest in peace, nonviolence and the role of religious communities in advancing the conversation about the common good. On the praxis side, there followed a proliferation of programs that consciously sought to nurture the kinds of peace and justice activities and advocacy in

which the church has long been involved. In the passage from the 1980s to the 1990s, Catholic peacemakers began to adopt the concepts and terminology of peacebuilding, understood as a specific approach to peace and justice in the globalizing post-Cold War world. For example, CRS developed an extensive peacebuilding program, Caritas Internationalis produced successive editions of its widely used training manual on peacebuilding (drafted by Lederach, among others), and a number of major church and academic entities in the United States formed the CPN.

This book grows directly out of the work of the CPN, an affiliation of scholars, practitioners, and institutions that seek to enhance the study and practice of Catholic peace and justice work at a time when religion is widely seen as a source of conflict and division, not a resource for peace and reconciliation. It builds upon previous case studies of the church's peacebuilding role in particular conflicts, but it also offers a series of original analyses and reflections on the theological and ethical insights that can be drawn from, and in turn inform, the church's concrete experience of peacebuilding around the world. While there is a growing literature on the spirituality, theology, and ethics of peace and reconciliation, this literature is not nearly as well developed as the literature on the ethics of war and peace. Moreover, we reasoned, the theological and ethical literature could benefit from a deeper dialogue with those involved in the praxis of peacebuilding, many of whom we consulted in preparing this book, and some of whom are contributors of chapters.

In launching this study we brought certain assumptions to the table. First, as I have indicated, we were (and remain) convinced that the field of peacebuilding, as it has emerged and evolved over the past two decades, is something new under the sun—related to but distinct from peacekeeping, diplomacy, social ethics, humanitarian relief and development, peace studies, conflict resolution, and the like. In addition, having emerged partly through the practices, teaching, and scholarship of Catholics as well as other religious and secular agents of compassion, peacebuilding has presented a new opportunity for the church to deepen its service to the world in the light of the gospel. In our understanding, moreover, the emergent arena of "Catholic peacebuilding"—peacebuilding conducted by Catholics (but always in concert with other actors) and rooted in the Catholic world view—is grounded in, but is not coterminous with, much of what currently constitutes Catholic social teaching.

To put the point directly, and boldly: we are convinced that the emergent peacebuilding theory, practice, and principles embraced by Catholics and others pose a bracing challenge and a rich opportunity for the Catholic Church, as it reflects continually on the gospel and deepens its comprehension and appreciation of the mystery of revelation, a divine gift "ever ancient, ever new." We believe that the church's ongoing peacebuilding activities and operations constitute a growing edge for Catholic social teaching, and we offer this book as a modest starting point in a conversation about this possibility. Some of the topics addressed by the larger Catholic



peacebuilding project and raised at least provisionally in this volume are not well developed in Catholic theology or social ethics (for example, a political ethic of forgiveness). Others are drawn from deep wells of existing Catholic theology and ethics, but need further development for the purpose of adapting them to the praxis of peacebuilding (such as the pastoral theology of reconciliation).

In being bold, let us also be clear: what follows in these pages should not be interpreted as "notes toward a Vatican III," but rather as a modest contribution to the development of the tradition understood as a vital "conversation" about the nature of the good and how best to serve it in a given historical moment.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the imprecision and contestation surrounding the very definition of peacebuilding seems to us a sign that the social tradition stands at a moment of development, "in between" models of self-understanding. This is an exciting moment, indeed, though perhaps less so for those who prefer a stable lexicon and statement of priorities.

A sign of the fluidity of the present situation is the fact that one's starting point, or means of entry into the conversation, is decisive for how "Catholic peacebuilding" is rendered. If one wishes to begin by asking about the role of secular, governmental, nongovernmental, and religious *institutions and agencies*, for example, then Maryann Cusimano Love's chapter on emerging norms of peacebuilding in key political institutions will lead to an emphasis on the requirements of postwar social reconstruction (*ius post bellum*). If the legacy of Catholic social teaching is one's predilection, then begin with Himes's more expansive road map to peacebuilding, which charts multiple entry points along the conflict and peacebuilding cycle—from the meanings of *peace* in Catholic theology, to the proper relationship between peace and justice, to the growing-edge topics of forgiveness and reparation. A concern for the right ordering of international relations, political paths to justice, and global ethics stands behind political scientist Philpott's retrieval of biblical as well as secular resources for the conversation about reconciliation. The theologians ground the conversation about reconciliation in reflections on ritual, memory, and the healing of trauma (Schreier), Christology (Cahill), and interreligious dialogue (Phan).

Different authors use the same terms—*just peace*, *ius post bellum*, *transitional justice*, *restorative justice*, *reconciliation*—with different shadings. Himes writes vividly about what peace scholars call positive peace or the conditions under which human flourishing occurs, while Whitmore focuses his reflections on the necessity for negative peace in war zones such as northern Uganda, where the cessation of deadly violence and torture is the immediate need. All of these voices have been in conversation in the unfolding of this project, and each knows that the conversation has only begun.

Our part of the conversation began in several early meetings and conferences, where the following questions were raised and considered: Which peacebuilding practices (new forms of governance, mediation, post-conflict reconciliation, interreligious collaboration) inform and could benefit from further theological and ethical reflection? Which themes of Catholic theology

and ethics inform the praxis of peacebuilding? To what extent are these themes, norms, and practices distinctively Catholic, and to what extent more broadly shared and affirmed? How would the mission of the Catholic community be affected (for example, Catholic approaches to development, human rights, public policy, pastoral practices) if it were defined more explicitly in terms of a vocation of peacebuilding? What is the significance of a theology and ethics of peacebuilding for the wider search for peace?

Realizing that one volume could only begin the exploration of these issues, we chose to include chapters that collectively would represent a range of Catholic peacebuilding presences in conflict settings. Thus, we included analyses of specific cases from the ground level as grist for an inductive theology "from below": Michel's study of Catholic responses to religious and ethnic violence in Indonesia; Pearson's reflections, from the perspective of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, on the enormous political, cultural, and religious challenges of the transition from apartheid to a fully participatory democracy in South Africa; Whitmore's discussion of the requirements of practicing solidarity with the victims of war and torture, disease, and economic underdevelopment in rural Uganda; and Lederach's journey of accompaniment with soldiers and victims of the armed conflict in Colombia.

The vivid view from the ground is preserved, as well, in Headley and Neufeldt's analysis of CRS' peacebuilding operations undertaken in concert with multiple other religious as well as secular individuals, NGOs, and institutions in Colombia, Burundi, Mindanao, Chad, and Cameroon. From the extensive treatment of NGOs the volume's focus shifts to governmental and intergovernmental organizations in Cusimano Love's detailed analysis of United States government as well as UN initiatives in peacebuilding.

Drawing on these and other empirical accounts and narratives, the second part of the book presents more formal theological and ethical reflections: Himes's excavation of peacebuilding-friendly themes of Catholic social teaching; Cahill's retrieval of rich and suggestive resources in Christology; Phan's meditation on the promise, as well as the ambivalent legacy, of interreligious dialogue; Philpott's treatise on the elements necessary for a political ethic of reconciliation; and Schreier's nuanced treatments of reconciliation, ritual, and sacraments in a practical and pastoral theological mode.

O'Brien's historical essay stands on its own as at once a kind of apology, *mea culpa*, and act of humble self-assertion (a paradox there!) rolled into one, which we editors felt was crucial to include in a volume on Catholic peacebuilding around the world whose authors tend decidedly, if not exclusively, toward the white, male, American demographic. O'Brien narrates the story of the U.S. church's gradual but building realization of the moral responsibility and unique capacity of the United States, and thus of American Catholics, to discern a culturally and ecclesially appropriate way to practice solidarity with communities around the world that are threatened by deadly conflict, and with fellow Catholics who are suffering with and serving these communities.



The contributors themselves have benefited from this U.S. awakening, however partial and incomplete it is, and have learned a great deal in the process of composing their essays from interacting with fellow Catholics working in conflict settings in Burundi, Mindanao, and Colombia, where major CPN meetings were held, as well as in other countries and regions. We understand that our responsibilities include transforming our thinking theologically and ethically in a way that incorporates and reflects the very different realities of the church in these locations.

As for the intended audience, we hope that this volume, which seeks to break new ground in Catholic theology and ethics, will be of interest to scholars engaged in developing a theology and ethic of just peace, and to students seeking to understand the interaction among theology, ethics, and lived Christianity. But unlike some theological texts, this book is not written only by theologians for theologians. Rather, it is intended to be accessible to scholars from other disciplines, as well as Catholic leaders at all levels. Asking how the church can fulfill its mission as peacebuilder, we imagine that our audience includes the Colombian bishop involved in the peace process, the director of the episcopal conference or diocesan peace and justice offices in Rwanda, the Caritas program officer establishing a trauma healing program in northern Uganda, and the staff of a Catholic foundation responsible for funding peacebuilding programs in the Philippines. Given this kind of intended audience, the writing is pitched at a middle ground of abstraction, where the praxis of peacebuilding meets theology.

Our concern is Catholic peacebuilding, but Catholics are not the only ones who might find this book of use. The growing number of scholars and foreign-affairs specialists interested in the political, sociological, anthropological, and historical dimensions of religion in conflict settings would benefit, we believe, from the window these accounts provide into the dynamic relationships among theology, ethics, and peacebuilding praxis of the world's largest organized religious body. Much of the attention given to religion, certainly since 9/11, but even prior to that tragedy, has focused on violence, war, and terrorist acts conducted or legitimated by religious actors. Far less energy has been devoted to the constructive dimensions of religion's agency, especially the peacebuilding potential of faith-based individuals, organizations, and communities. Understanding the dynamics of Catholic peacebuilding is one way to redress that imbalance, not least because the Catholic Church, as is well known, is deeply engaged with economic, social, and cultural matters around the world. Notwithstanding the church's mid-twentieth-century rejection of political intervention, Catholics remain important political players around the world. In many nations it is simply impossible to understand the potential for peace without understanding the beliefs, norms, and institutional and pastoral practices that together give the Catholic community an unusually rich capacity for peacebuilding.

The same can be said of other religious traditions. In order to understand how religious communities, including the Catholic Church, have produced peacebuilders and nonviolent advocates for justice, one must understand the theology, ethics, ritual, and spirituality of faith communities. Standard social-science metrics applied to political or civil-society actors are useful but ultimately insufficient to understand the positive role religion can play in conflict situations. Religious bodies establish and staff peacebuilding programs, but unlike most NGOs, their essential mission and identity are not defined primarily in terms of those issues and programs. Religious traditions such as Catholicism, Islam, and Buddhism count many millions of members, but they are not membership organizations like Amnesty International or MoveOn. Similarly, these traditions boast rich intellectual traditions and sponsor schools, colleges, and universities, but their educational mission is more encompassing and fundamentally different from that of think tanks or secular educational institutions. Indeed, "religious peacebuilding often involves distinctively religious and spiritual resources—such as ritual, prayer, and spiritual healing—that are not part of a secular NGO's peacebuilding portfolio and cannot be analyzed and measured with standard tools of sociology and political science."<sup>18</sup>

In short, the most important distinction between religious and other civil society actors is the mission and self-understanding of religious bodies *qua* religious bodies. Any analysis of religious peacebuilding must go beyond a functionalist approach that focuses primarily on its political efficacy; understanding larger issues of religious identity and mission is crucial.

It is not enough, however, for Catholics to expect secular experts to understand the theology of Catholic peacebuilding. Catholics must provide translation services. O'Brien quotes the Catholic priest and public philosopher J. Bryan Hehir on religious engagement with the public order: "When they talk about public policy, religious communities have to find a way to translate what they hold to be true into the language of reasonable argument so that others can come to share the moral wisdom without accepting necessarily the faith commitment." Headley and Neufeldt show how the peacebuilding programs of CRS, one of the world's largest relief and development agencies, have been enriched by and cannot be understood apart from CRS' faith perspective. Yet, much of CRS' peacebuilding work involves translating distinctively Catholic principles into a second-order bridging discourse that can serve societies "according to need not creed." Cusimano Love shows how evolving principles of Catholic social teaching correspond with and can contribute to new peacebuilding initiatives within the U.S. government and the United Nations. The political ethic of reconciliation advocated by Philpott is firmly grounded in Catholic theology, but he translates distinctively Christian beliefs into an ethic whose validity does not depend upon its theological claims.

Catholics have learned that the translation process goes in both directions, that they need a variety of partners if they are to fulfill their faith

mission of peacebuilding. Headley and Neufeldt are clear that their ten peacebuilding principles are consistent with key themes in Catholic social teaching, but they were developed, in part, from CRS's experience of peacebuilding and also from peacebuilding specialists, such as Lederach, who come from other religious traditions. Similarly, Phan argues that a Catholic theology of interreligious peacebuilding is enriched by dialogue with other religious traditions. In the case of promoting reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa, Pearson traces how the Catholic Church in South Africa learned not just from other religious denominations, but also from secular peacebuilders.

And so we return to the matter of affinities and convergences. I hope that readers of this volume will draw at least two conclusions, based on these accounts of what secular and religious actors are doing, together, in dynamic, innovative, and effective ways, to transform deadly conflict, heal wounds, and build a sustainable peace. First, *peacebuilding* matters. Analyzing challenges and crafting responses through a peacebuilding lens (as opposed, for example, to a purely human rights or development lens) make a difference in what is done, how it is done, and what the outcomes are. Second, *Catholic* peacebuilding matters. While Catholic peacebuilding shares much in common with Menmonite, Muslim, or secular peacebuilding, the Catholic community brings something distinctive to the peacebuilding enterprise, and its capacity to do so could and should be strengthened by grounding Catholic initiatives more deeply in Catholic theology and ethics.

Thus, the affinities and convergences between Catholics and other peacebuilders abound. But may we also dream of future possibilities? Not least, might we hope and even expect that the convergences and affinities might move the world closer to realizing peacebuilding at its most robust?

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Herbert Braun, *Our Guerrillas, Our Sidewalks: A Journey into the Violence of Colombia* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1994); Robin Kirk, *More Terrible than Death: Massacres, Drugs and America's War in Colombia* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller explanation of this comprehensive approach to peacebuilding, see John Paul Lederach and R. Scott Appleby, "Strategic Peacebuilding: An Overview," in *Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World*, ed. Daniel Philpott and Gerard F. Powers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Msgr. Héctor Fabio Henao Gaviria, "The Colombian Church and Peace Building," in *Colombia: Building Peace in a Time of War*. Presented at the Fourth Annual International Catholic Peacebuilding Network Peacebuilding Conference, Conference of Catholic Peacebuilders Network, Bogota, Colombia, July 24–29, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*: "The Church's historical hegemony in Colombia has been replaced by the reality of a more pluralistic country that demands openness and dialogue. The Church has therefore accepted the challenge to invite others to help define its role

in peace building and identify the specific contributions that it can make, as well as to address issues such as 'public order,' 'political negotiation of the armed conflict,' 'democratic security,' etc. The recognition that Colombia is experiencing a complex conflict that requires actions and proposals in accordance with this complexity has led to an emphasis on encounters with diverse, pluralistic stakeholders to reach consensus on various proposals. The complexity addressed in these encounters stems not only from the multiplicity of armed actors, but also from the existence of factors such as drug trafficking, the many different types of conflicts that surround the major conflict, which is the armed conflict, and above all from the inequality and social exclusion that lie at the root of the entire problem."

<sup>5</sup> The following narrative of the origins and development of the CRS Peace and Reconciliation program is adapted from "A Decade of Catholic Peacebuilding in Mindanao," an unpublished manuscript by Myla Leguro that was drafted in 2006 in recognition of the tenth anniversary of the Mindanao program. My thanks to Myla for sharing this text with me.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> See Bishop Antonio J. Ledesma, S.J., *Healing the Past, Building the Future: Soundings from Mindanao* (Quezon City: Jesuit Communications Foundation, 2005), 15–16.

<sup>8</sup> Leguro, "A Decade of Catholic Peacebuilding in Mindanao."

<sup>9</sup> The NDU program in Cotabato City developed a paradigm for peace education based on responses to six kinds of violence ravaging Mindanao: personal spiritual formation in response to domestic violence; education for economic development and microfinance to counter structural violence; education in human rights law to counter political violence; training in intercultural solidarity to counter cultural extremism; nonviolent measures against the violence of militarization; and environmental studies to battle ecological destruction (see Ledesma, *Healing the Past, Building the Future*, 17).

<sup>10</sup> Leguro, "A Decade of Catholic Peacebuilding in Mindanao."

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping*, Document A/47/277–S/241111, June 17, 1992 (New York: Department of Public Information, United Nations, 1992); *idem*, *Supplement to An Agenda for Peace: Position Paper of the Secretary-General on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations*, Document A/50/60–S/1995/1, January 3, 1995 (New York: Department of Public Information, United Nations, 1995). Both documents are available on the [www.un.org](http://www.un.org) website.

<sup>13</sup> Catherine Morris, "What Is Peacebuilding? One Definition" (New York: Peacemakers Trust, 2000), available on the [www.peacemakers.ca](http://www.peacemakers.ca) website.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations General Assembly, 60/180: "The Peacebuilding Commission" (December 30, 2005), 2.

<sup>15</sup> John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997). See also, among others, *Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual* (Vatican City: Caritas Internationalis, 2002); Lisa Schirch, *The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2004); Lisa Schirch, *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> See, among others, Elizabeth Cousens, *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001); Michael Pugh, *Regeneration of War Torn Societies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

<sup>18</sup> Gerard Powers, "Religion and Peacebuilding," in Philpott and Powers, *Strategies of Peace*, 324.

## 2

## The Long Journey Back to Humanity

Catholic Peacebuilding  
with Armed Actors

JOHN PAUL LEDERACH

*I always remind myself that behind that pointed gun is a person, a human being, somebody's son or daughter.*

—PADRE RAFAEL

In a June 2007 meeting with Colombian bishops and participants from the Catholic Peace Network (CPN) workshop in Bogota, I found myself in a small breakout group with about a dozen bishops representing nearly all of the major regions of the country. Our topic focused on how church leadership has responded to and dealt with armed actors. We opened with simple questions: What have your experiences been with armed actors here in Colombia? What works? What should be avoided? Having worked with the Colombian episcopal conference for the past eight years and with some of the bishops in the room at a much greater depth, I knew some had faced this issue extensively in their dioceses over multiple wars raging across five decades in this Andean country. I was not sure how openly or directly they might share about these delicate matters. An hour and a half later every bishop had spoken from the heart. Stories poured out, varied from diocese to diocese, across armed groups, from kidnapping negotiations to community forums, from observation of demobilization to late-night discussions, from innovative use of rituals and Catholic symbols to defuse explosive situations to the delicate confrontation of high-level bush commanders. Lessons learned and pitfalls to avoid were shared. I had two distinct observations as I left the room that afternoon: How extensive and widespread this