Peace is a Verb
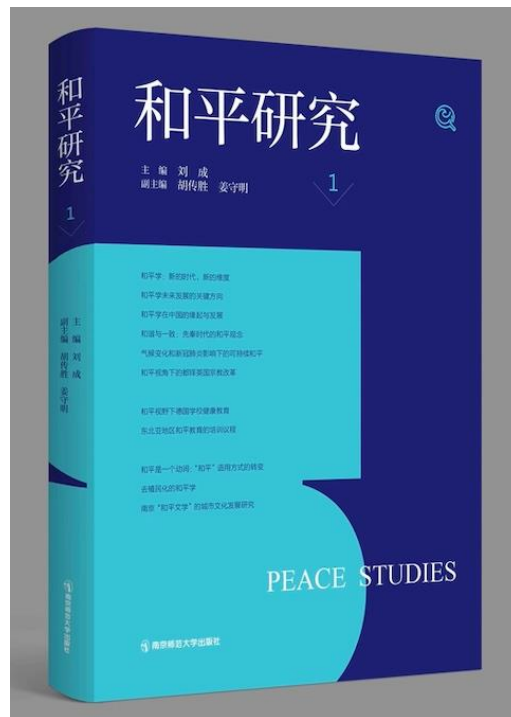
A Linguistic Shift in the Usage of Peace

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As humanity evolves to the next era of civilization, individuals, communities and nations are putting in motion new strategies to help negotiate the historical opportunities and potentially overwhelming effects of future change. The underlying mission of these strategies is to achieve measurable success in terms of accomplishing the archetypal vision of global peace. Yet few words in any language invoke more controversy and confusion than *peace*. To make progress and thrive in the future will require a clear understanding of what we mean by peace through a purposeful reevaluation and transcendence of the word itself.

In 2009, the association of International Cities of Peace was formed out of the ideal of thousands of local communities dedicated to a culture of peace. Whether initiated by proclamation or citizen initiative, the association's members around the globe are tasked with ensuring the prevalence of peace for resident and travelers alike. By invoking the word peace in the organization's essential mission, a difficult question naturally arises within each community: *What do you mean by peace*?

To facilitate the expansion of the Cities of Peace movement, a clear and succinct definition of peace is required. Over a decade ago, during the founding of the association, discussions on the usage of the word peace were extensive in scope and became deeply personal. When one person attempted to direct a definition of the word toward one interpretation, others in the dialogue inevitably opened more avenues of usage. There seemed to be boundless opinions on what peace is, or could be, as expressions of individual and collective hope. There were also general contexts of peace, including but not limited to

cultural, political, social, philosophical and historical traditions.

The diversity of ideas and opinions, consequently, became a confusion of syntax and semantics. Linguistics, defined as the science of language, was of little help in resolving the many ways to describe how the word peace is used. In fact, the prescriptive grammatical rules in all languages can be an impediment to clear usage.

The qualities, characteristics and values often used to define peace becomes a list of what is most important not only to individuals but also to societies and nations. Descriptions such as tranquility, justice, freedom, equity and happiness are used to express the conditions people associate with peace. Phrases such as *harmony among peoples*, *civilized societies*, *absence of war* and *enlightened societies* are just a few of the complex descriptions that are, essentially, beyond measure. Sifting through the qualities and characteristics of what peace means can become, in itself, a source of conflict.

To deconstruct the complexity and distil the essence of peace requires a profound change in approach. Peace is normally defined in the context of a statement or condition with respect to the circumstances or attributes that exist in a person, place or thing. For something to be in a state of peace, according to common usage, is to describe its structure, form, phase or composition.

The word peace is currently held to be a description of the attributes, or a statement of the conditions, within certain frames of reference. An individual, community or nation, depending on the conditions at the time of consideration, might be *at peace* or *not at peace*. The inevitability of constantly changing conditions presents a complexity that is beyond the scope and capability of current usage. Change is not inherent in

the modern lexicon of peace. As if the physics of the world is static or stationary, peace is limited by grammatical usage as fixed in time and space.

In contemporary linguistics, peace is categorized as a noun. Defined as a person, place, thing, state or quality, a noun is the subject to which action is applied. Peace is described in the context of a slice of history within the arrow of time. Yet as physics shows, change is natural and inevitable. Our lives and the world are not static. What is now, or was, or soon will be, will never be again.

Such is the maddening loop in which peacemakers find themselves. "Conflict is inevitable, combat is optional" is a saying particularly cogent to our future desires and hopes.[1] It shows peace as a choice, which is a form of action.

In the context of the Cities of Peace movement, debate and deliberations to define peace at the community level is about an array of choices. Peacemaking is about finding the essential needs of the community in order to put strategies in place and work for the benefit of all.

Instead of the question, *What do you mean by peace*?, the deeper consideration changes to, *What do people in this community absolutely need to have a peaceful life?* Broadly framed: *What would instill a culture of peace between peoples, societies and nations representing diverse cultures and history?*

If a consensus definition of what is meant by peace is to be achieved, the inevitability of changing conditions must be inherent in its usage. The temporary and fragile condition of any particular statement of peace demands a more practical and evolutionary definition.

Peace is a continual quest rather than an end result. Peace is an active pursuit. It is the actions we take to achieve the conditions, or values, we currently associate with the end

result. The reality of achieving and maintaining the values that would result from peacemaking is not static but in constant flux. There will always be conflict, as philosophers and theologians have foretold. "If virtue promises happiness, prosperity and peace," said Epictetus, "then progress in virtue is progress in each of these for to whatever point the perfection of anything brings us, progress is always an approach toward it."[2]

In the context of the grammatical realities of peacemaking, linguistics can be of help. A study of the way languages are constructed provides knowledge about previous and current usage. It also provides insight into how the usage of peace is evolving from being fixed in time to one that allows for change.

As an active pursuit, peace is a verb. Try as we may to declare, affirm or assert peace as being the subject of our pursuit, it is actually in the grammatical predicate that we find consensus. The predicate in a sentence tells what the subject is doing or not doing. Peace as a verb is the essential and activating word in a predicate phrase. Peace describes the actions taken toward the values we associate with a peaceful condition.

The Importance of Action

The debate over whether peace is a noun or a verb, a subject or a predicate, is more than mincing words. Whether peace is a statement or condition of existence, or rather an active pursuit is essential to understanding our history of failures and successes.

A verb is defined as an action, a state of being, or the relation between two things. Working for a better world is a constant endeavor whereby we take continual, positive actions.

In addition to the active class of words that function as elements of predicates, peace can also be used as a *state of being*. Not to be confused with the noun phrase as a statement or condition, a stative verb is fluid in time. In a verb context, a state of being is a description of a situation in which the person, place or thing is still found at the moment. As a state of being verb, peace is an active element of a predicate. It is fluid in time. Peace as a stative verb can be immediate or continue for an indefinite but measurable timeframe. The inevitability of peace being affected by the physics of change will always leads to an eventual end to any action taken toward the values we associate with a better world.

Many supporting statements give insight into the temporary nature of the verb usage of peacemaking. In Buddhism, the concept relates to the idea proposed by Thich Nhat Hanh of "being peace", which is intimately connected to Buddhist mindfulness practice.[3] Historical examples include the oft-used phrase "peace is at hand", which is subject to ridicule as optimistic within changing circumstances. Metaphorically speaking, there will always be the need for mindfulness, or attention to the circumstances that could lead to an unfortunate change in our personal affairs or the affairs of state.

To define peace as a verb rather than a noun inevitably presents opportunities as well as deep challenges. As with any word that evolves linguistically, peace as a verb must be tested by its usage over time. Yet the evolution of peace from noun to verb releases it from many difficulties. Its current imprisonment as a fixed syntax can fall by the wayside, which enables a serious discussion of what peace actually means. It also opens strategic considerations for how peace can be won. As a verb, peace escapes its chains and takes flight as a viable form of evolutionary and practical action.

An important part of peacemaking is to solve the conundrum of how the word peace can evolve from preconceived notions as a statement of conditions toward a word of active pursuit. Indeed, this evolution has generated a small but important lexicon of words and phrases to help in that development. There is the rising use of *peace building* and peace making, which are used in this article. Their word blends, or portmanteau derivatives, are *peacebuilding* and *peacemaking*. Other attempts to solve the active usage problem are fully developed, such as *peacekeeping*.

Dutch peace activist Abraham Johannes Muste identified and attempted to resolve the conundrum with the stated philosophy: "There is no way to peace, peace is the way." Muste uses *the way* as a verb state that requires action within its identification as a verb state of being.[4]

According to the Dalai Lama, "peace is a state of tranquility founded on the deep sense of security that arises from mutual understanding, tolerance of others' point of view, and respect for their rights."[5] He invokes a set of fragile virtues rather than a statement of fact then he switches the declarative structure of his sentence to put the action in the context of *arises*.

Yet there is much work to be done to fully solve the conundrum of current and future usage. Peace as a verb has enjoyed little success in being institutionalized. Indeed, previous attempts have resulted in the apparent victory of the noun. Words that identified peace as a verb included the use of *peaced* and *peacing*, both of which meant to be silent or become silent. These two examples are now linguistically obsolete. A more current usage lies within the informal with the phrase *peace out*, which means variously to chill or become tranquil.

Due to lack of consensus in current usage, such wordplay becomes useless or even ridiculous. Yet there is room for

experimentation. Peace might be a transitive verb, which is a verb that accompanies an object, such as these sentences with prepositional phrases: *Peace to the world. Peace toward justice.* Peace might also be an intransitive verb, which is defined as a verb that indicates a complete action without being accompanied by an object, such as simply: P*eace.* In that context, peace can be defined as an urge or gentle call to action, whether between people, communities or societies.

Now comes the crux of the matter in terms of the grammatical evolution of peace. *If peace is a verb, what becomes of peace as a noun?* The values and virtues of peace are the qualifiers of peacemaking. The actions we take as peacemakers result in a description or condition of the characteristics that we believe will exist in a better world. The subjects of peacemaking evoke specific values. The list of those values is far ranging and includes such nouns as tranquility, justice, freedom, equity, happiness and other conditions as expectations of our actions.

The Values for a Better World

Regarding the conclusion of those discussions in 2009, during the founding of International Cities of Peace, there was an important change in strategy. From defining peace as a noun toward the recognition that a better world is best described as a set of values released the discussion from contention and controversy.

This evolution of strategy freed adherents from a senseless dispute of one value over another. There was no need to agree on which description was more cogent. The state of a more peaceful community became a set of values that embrace many qualities, characteristics and conditions. Defining those values was

inductive rather than deductive, and thereby instructive rather than prescriptive.

What values are essential to ensuring better lives for the individuals and families in a particular community?

Taking into consideration the range of words and phrases that describe the goals of peacemaking, several overarching values rose to core importance. Questioning became about requirements and necessity.

What do people need? What do people want? What do people find essential?

Each community, through collaboration and consensus, might find a set of values that take into consideration the essential needs of its people. With virtues identified, the community can develop a strategic plan of action and implementation along with measurements of success. With such an action plan, communities can avoid the etymological conflicts inherent in peace as a noun. They can escape a fixed description of a temporary end result.

When fixed beliefs in the description of what the world should be is deemed unassailable, one person's description of peace can rise to another person's call to conflict and violence. The release of peace from a competitive description of end results toward a choice of actions allows a community to define its values in terms of moral choices.

Values reflect ethical principles of what is right or wrong behavior. Whereas ethics is a system of moral principles, morality is the actions that reflect a particular system of ethics. The pursuit of values that describe the conditions of a better world is a moral task. The role of peacemakers is to envision an evolving yet stable society where constant attention to actions results in the essential values defined by the community.

For thousands of years, humanity has strived to find fundamental strategies to achieve the values of community and global peacemaking. Many believe humans are inherently violent; others that people are basically good. Those who believe humans are violent have high dependence on peacemaking actions that address violence through *strength*. Only by forceful actions, according to this worldview, can the values of peacemaking be maintained. In nations, the armaments and innovations of war, from incendiary devices to weapons of mass destruction, are intended to tip the balance of power in favor of one side or another. Force entails using power over others who are an impediment to a society achieving the values they need or desire.

For those who believe humanity is basically good, the strategies of maintaining a virtuous world become more about nonviolent actions. These plans of action are less about force. The political strategies of nations, for instance, depend on institutions of law and order. Treaties are signed between parties in potential or current conflict. Common threats reveal common interests, which are used to tip the balance from conflict to conflict prevention, resolution, management or transformation.

Negotiation, statecraft and diplomacy, all the strategies that maintain the values of peaceful societies for nations, have parallels for individuals and communities. Cultural exchange, fair trade, citizen diplomacy, artistic expression, humanitarianism and many other nonviolent strategies work to enhance personal and community values.

Often the root cause of conflict is competition for resources that contribute to better lives for one community or another. The benefits of peacemaking can only be ensured if there are adequate resources for essential needs. Adequate

housing, healthy food, clean water are basic essentials outlined in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. As history shows, when the price of bread goes up, revolution is pending. When drought occurs in one area, there will be refugees. When human rights are abridged there will be the potential for war.

A sustainable world is only possible if humanity sees that each person, community and culture is connected to accessing -- without depleting -- natural resources. The values of peacemaking are tied to sustainability and in building a respectful relationship between people and the earth.

The Values Essential in Peacemaking

In developing the definition of peace for the International City of Peace association, the essential question became about the relationship between the word peace and individual and collective consciousness. *What values are essential to individuals, communities and/or nations?*

The etymological root of the term *value* is in the Latin *valere*, which means *be strong*. From the Latin came the Old French word *valoir*, meaning *be worth* and was associated with several strengths, including worth, price, morality and standing or reputation.

Around 1300 in the Common Era, the word that we know was derived. *Value* was associated with the monetarily worth, a mixture of price and usefulness. Usage of value became the degree to which something is useful or estimable.

Modern usage added the plural word *values,* which are the conditions and characteristics that we consider worthy. Values have come to include dozens of conditions for society as well as worthy traits for individuals. Our traits, another noun, was derived from the Latin *tractus* or to *draw out*, mostly used as a

tract or feature of land. Modern usage dates from the 18th century and has come to mean a distinguishing feature.

In defining peace for International Cities of Peace, the *drawing out* of three overarching values became cogent to a definition of the conditions for a better world. These three essential values are common to all of humanity, no matter whether the discussion entails people in the home, the neighborhood or the nation. The overarching essential values upon which most, if not everyone, agreed were safety, prosperity and quality of life. Safety entails being free from injury or harm. Prosperity at its most basic means freedom to feed ourselves and our family. Quality of life is freedom to have wellbeing and to benefit from a subset of values that enable us to pursue our purposes in life.

The use of freedom is important because with these three values, humans, societies and nations are released from the fear associated with vulnerability, poverty and uncertainty. If everyone in the world has these three freedoms -- safety, prosperity and quality of life -- the active peacemaking that can accomplish these values will succeeded in releasing the world from the struggle for resources that contributes to suffering and humiliation, which cause violence and war.

The Value of Safety

The first value, the freedom to be safe, comes from the Latin *salvus* meaning *uninjured* from the Pre-Indo-European root word *sol*, meaning *whole* or *well-kept*. Today, safety has come from the 14th century Old French *savete* for freedom or immunity from harm or danger; an unharmed or uninjured state or condition".

Safety entails more than simply being safe. Safety is an emotional value, a sense of feeling secure. Protection from harm can be as simple as having a home with solid walls to keep out harsh weather or invasions from animals or those who would do harm. Being safe and feeling safe, the physical and emotional reality, are two conditions that are consensus values that should be ensured.

Though the elimination of all that would do us harm is unrealistic, to work toward reducing risk is a worthy effort. To be safe from physical harm is a priority that ranks above safety of material objects such as houses and material possessions.

Safety has standards that are societal and individual. Societal standards can be codified into law. Individual standards are within the context of personal choice. Perceived safety is a matter of comfort level and the perception of risk. Security standards are a matter of public safety.

Regulations and laws are measures that can be taken to improve safety and reduce risk. On a daily basis, individuals can take precautions and endeavor to improve safety in their communities. "Home is where children find safety and security," said sociologist Matthew Desmond, "where we find our identities, where citizenship starts. It usually starts with believing you're part of a community, and that is essential to having a stable home."[6]

The Value of Prosperity

The second overarching value, prosperity, is essential not only for survival but also to reap the benefits of the human ability to creatively thrive. Prosperity is derived from the Latin *prosperitatem*, which meant to experience good fortune. A derivative came in the 12th century with the Old French

prosprite, which was elevated to flourishing or thriving from success in what is desired or good.

Prosperity to everyone in the world is to prosper, a term of taking action and benefiting from a combination of talent, circumstance and work ethic. To prosper means being able to take good care of yourself, your family and your community. 21st century labor leader Cesar Chavez put the responsibility on all of us when he stated, "We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own."[7]

Unrelated to increased income or wealth, prosperity is also closely tied to the benefits of health, happiness and well being. To flourish and thrive is an emotional as well as material condition. As the current debate on climate change shows, sustainability does not necessarily mean growth. Author Tim Jackson, in the book *Prosperity Without Growth: Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow*, identifies "a different kind of vision for prosperity; one in which it is possible for human beings to flourish, to achieve greater social cohesion, to find higher levels of wellbeing and yet still reduce their material impact on the environment."[8]

To *live well* does not depend entirely upon our outdated view of prosperity as simply material gain. It is a sustainable lifestyle in which everyone on earth can share in the earth's bounty and reap the benefits of innovation.

The Legatum Institute compiles data from 169 nations to document the reality that GDP is no longer an adequate measure of national prosperity. The Institute's 2022 Report alludes to other factors, including social relationships and healthy lifestyle, which are perhaps more closely related to the modern definition of a prosperous community. "The most prosperous

countries in the world have high levels of freedom, safety and security, education, and health."[9]

The Value of Quality of life

The third essential value, quality of life, is the degree to which "a person is healthy and able to participate in or enjoy life events". The Latin *qualitatem* or nominative *qualitus*, which came to indicate a property of something, its nature or condition. The Old French *qualite* meant temperament, disposition or character. The first usage on record of the term *quality of life* dates to around 1943.

Quality of life entails a subset of values and conditions, such as a quality education, an environment with clean water and air, respect and kindness freely given and received, freedom and liberty in the context of community. It claims the values of justness and equity, which are based in rule of law and a civic authority based on the social contract. French biologist Alexis Carrel put it existentially: "The quality of life is more important than life itself."[10]

In discussions on the values of peacemaking, the term justice is often invoked as the way to a better world. Justice entails fairness in relationships between peoples, societies and nations. When justice prevails, people have what they need, whether the need is emotional or material.

Yet there are two sides of the effort toward a just society, one entails reward, the other punishment. The word *justice* is derived from the Latin for righteousness and equity. When people are denied what they deserve, there is a call to justice, which entails the actions of punishment, vindication and, many times, reparations.

New technologies of justice have addressed societal and cultural healing from past violence, where the balance can only be maintained by restorative justice. The complication in achieving justice is that there are diverting views in an issue, which means there might always be contradictory claims that lead to further violence. Ensuring justice for all, for all time, will inevitably fall short. As the world changes, as time moves on, there are natural disasters, human errors, avarice and ambitions. The statement of being for every individual and society is subject to inherent contradictions.

According to Georg Wilhelm Frederick Hegel, the 18th century German philosopher, any reality is subject to its own contradictions. He referred to "the idea of freedom as the absolute and final aim; secondly the means for realizing it (i.e. the subjective side of knowledge and will, with its life, movement, and activity (the thesis and antithesis)."[11] Even a slight experience in reflective thinking will make it apparent that if something has been defined as positive and one moves forward from this basis, then straightway the positive has secretly turned into a negative.

In the end, quality of life is personal. Low quality of life limits the human condition. A high quality of life provides the conditions where each individual can find their purpose. Important in the sustainability of the values of quality of life is how the actions of each person and community is connected to all others. Peacemaking is a relationship between individuals and society. It is how people feel about how they are treated and whether the values they hold are being addressed by the community.

Survey of Leaders of Cities of Peace

The following is a sampling from a survey distributed in March, 2020, that inquired of leaders of Cities of Peace initiatives around the world: *What is most important to your community*.[12] Four questions regarding the three overarching values were asked. Some of the answers from leaders of Cities of Peace are included below (unedited and many times in their second language):

"As you know and mentioned above safety is just means peace and it is the 1st priority to human being. Prosperity is a state of well being to human being and is so meaningful to the human and without prosperity life will be nothing. Quality of life means a lot to the human beings and without it life doesn't matter to the people."
-- Mogadishu, Banidir, Somalia

"Prosperity provides autonomy and improvement of health, livelihood and conditions, environmental, social and economic problems."
-- Kabernet, Baringo, Kenya

"Quality of life is what keeps us drenched in vitality. If we are happy and grateful with what we are achieving and we are prosperous, whether at work, family, general well-being, it makes us move forward with optimism to move forward with our lives and everything that is related to it. In turn, the security of keeping us free to do all this and be able to continue will make us abundant in terms of quality of life. Everything is a sum of actions that make life itself grow in all its fields."
-- Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

"Quality of life because it is over arching. Just like the Gallop well-being index includes five domains: financial well-being, social well-being, physical well-being, sense of community and sense of purpose. I consider safety and prosperity to be included in Quality of Life considerations. "
-- Dayton, Ohio, United States

"I choose security, because everything tie to it. No security nothing is possible and can be achieved."
-- Maiduguri, Borno, Nigeria

"If we can assure people a good enough income to have a place to live and food on their tables, we can reduce the vulnerability of people. I don't believe that we can separate these from each other. But if I had to pick one, it would be safety, because freedom from harm is the most fundamental need."
-- Hancock, Michigan, United States

"Safety is the reason for the nurturing focus of early age peacemakers to reason and uphold healthy values in families and community. Nurturing embraced in our families and communities guarantees prosperity, resulting from Golden Rule principles, peace literacy, peace knowledge and peace reasonability!"
-- Kanoni, Gomba, Uganda

"Quality of life, because without it, safety and prosperity alone are insufficient ingredients for building a self-sustaining culture of peace. There must be overflowing joy."

-- Eugene, Oregon, United States

"It is quality of life that brings happiness and in peace, we say peace starts with a smile. If people in the community are happy and with good health, safety and prosperity comes later."
-- Ntungamo, Western Region, Uganda

"Our community recently did an in-depth survey of all our citizens called 'We Hear You' to allow them to voice their concerns about the quality of life they are living and what our community can do to improve it. This information will be used to assist our city to look at where people are suffering and need assistance and allowed for suggestions on how we can improve their lives."
-- Midland, Michigan, United States

"The quality of life actually involves safety and prosperity and is one of the permanent objectives that we have as negotiators and administrators of conflicts, peace between people and nations. We must attend to our own quality of life and that of others, favor empathy, care for human rights and social inclusion."
-- Sangolqui, Pichincha, Ecuador

"Quality of life: I think that it is impossible to facilitate the construction of a Peaceful Society on the basis of purely individual wishes. For there to be quality of life in a society, there must necessarily be opportunities for everyone (for study, health, work, housing). Only social equity is what will facilitate truly peaceful societies in this century."

-- Mar del Plata, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina

"Quality of life: From the moment that everyone has access
to clean water, sewage, education, food and health, the
world begins to improve. All of this is everyone's right
and an excellent path to the long-awaited World Peace."
Curtiba, Parané, Brazil

"Prosperity for all gives each community member great self
worth, self esteem, and generosity. For my family,
prosperity allows me to support my children and
grandchildren for their standard of living. It enables me
to be more generous in my community supporting causes that
need financial support."
-- Ojai, California, United States

"Prosperity: If you work for prosperity for others, one
hundred percent of you will also Prosper."
-- Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan

"Safety is so important because it's the primary condition
to life and prosperity. Nobody, no animal, no plant could
survive a day if safety is not the foundation. Last 18th
August 2020 traveling from Ekom (English area) to Douala
(French area) where I went to visit my adopted son that I
rescued from the street in 2006, Our vehicle was suddenly
stopped by four armed terrorists and we were seven in the
vehicle. When they stopped us and looked inside the vehicle
I was the unlucky person who was told to get out from the
vehicle and I knew that was my final day on earth. But a
positive wave surrounded and I prayed to God who appointed
the driver to defend my case. I gave myself to the driver

who defended my case and those terrorists released me, asking me to give money in return what I did. Safety indeed is life. No safety no life."

— Refugee who traveled from Zimbabe, Cameroon, Chad, Moambic, then Malawi

"Safety is very important to me because without safety our community will not progress. Prosperity is so important because without prosperity my community will not survive. Without safety and prosperity, quality of life cannot be achieved. Quality of life is important to me and my family because, with it, we can live a healthy and happy life."

— Warrake, Edo, Nigeria

A New Social Contract

For humanity to achieve peaceful coexistence, the values of a better world must be realized for a majority of the people. The work of peace, the activation of the verb, is made more difficult because it entails an evolution of human consciousness. Implementing and institutionalizing the essential values of a better world must be embraced by humanity. All people must be included in its benefits. With the goal to deliver the overarching values of safety, prosperity and quality of life, a new social contract is required to solidify the cooperation and consensus of citizens.

In 1762, French Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau proposed the idea that a *social contract* between government and the individual provided the legitimacy of civic authority. By this *contract*, individuals give their consent to civic authority. In essence, this relationship not only allows for civilized society but it also gives incentive to governments

to evolve in ways that provide increasing benefits to the populace. The social contract is a reciprocal relationship.

In the 1990's, work completed at the United Nations resulted in a new social contract that attempts to correlate the value of peace with eight fundamental principles. In 1999, the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace defined the following principles as essential to the behaviors and beliefs associated with an evolution of culture.

1. Culture of peace through education
2. Sustainable economic and social development
3. Respect for all human rights
4. Equality between women and men
5. Democratic participation
6. Understanding, tolerance and solidarity
7. Participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge
8. International peace and security

As nations in the U.N. General Assembly contemplated this evolving social order based on a culture of peace, a statement within the Resolution became controversial and was struck from the text. The contention that individuals have "a human right to peace" was "vigorously opposed by the Great Powers."[13]

That the "Great Powers" were resistant to the verbiage of a "right to peace" is significant in a consideration of the social contract between individuals and sovereign states. Nations, or nation-states are defined by international law as territories that have permanent populations, civic authority and the ability to enter into relationships with other nations. With authority over a territory, nations represent the interests of their populace. This authority entails diplomatic relations and

treaty-making powers, which enables governments to negotiate the best situation among competing nations.

National governments, many times, put the emphasis on a zero-sum competition for resources. That competition has come to be considered natural due to perceived limitations of resources as a physical property of our planet. However, through innovation, cooperation and other nonviolent means, nations can find ways to live together for the benefit of all concerned. Some consider such cooperation idealistic or foolhardy optimism as the French writer Voltaire concluded with his satirical character Doctor Pangloss who said in *Candide*, "everything in this world happens for the best."

Yet if peacemaking between and among nations becomes a priority due to mutual existential threats such as climate change and weapons of mass destruction, another question arises: *What would be the essential reasoning for a continuation of nations if the virtues of a better world are achieved?*

There is a strong reasoning for nations beyond the competition for resources. Just as nations were originally created among family units, the family would still be integral to the purpose of nations as well as municipalities. To preserve and encourage culture would become the essential national mission because culture has a larger footprint than localities in the geography of human expansion.

Peacemaking within nations would be to ensure the values that fulfill the highest promise of historical and traditional cultures. Racism, bigotry, discrimination, segregation and unfairness would be antonyms for the values activated by peacemaking. Understanding, embracing, accepting, tolerating, respect and encouragement are virtues for which nations would be responsible. As Mother Teresa said, "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."[14]

Municipalities, on the other hand, are governments of neighborhoods, communities, and families. Cities, towns and villages are defined within the jurisdictions of each nation. Municipal governments are the closest official governments to the people. As such they are tasked with ensuring that those who live and work within their jurisdictions are considered in all of their actions. Officials in cities, towns and villages are tasked with providing basic needs, including transportation, sanitary services, policing and other necessities for the safety, prosperity and quality of life for all.

Dr. David Adams, former director on the Culture of Peace at UNESCO, emphasizes that the municipal level provides the "base for a new world order that is free from the culture of war." In his book "World Peace Through the Town Hall: A strategy for the global movement for a culture of peace", he states, "One finds that policies in most of these areas are much less aligned with the culture of war than their equivalents at the national level, and instead one finds considerable evidence of the culture of peace."[15]

Municipalities are the engines of peace as a verb. In cities, there is constant attention to the effective functionality that provides increasing benefits to those that live within their jurisdictions. The idea that the highest form of community would be to provide for the values of peacemaking must go back to prehistory, when small units of the world's population held survival as their preeminent task.

A Social Contract for Municipalities

The ancient origin of the ideal of a City of Peace is lost to history but usage of this phrase can be tracked for several millenniums. The cities of Mythorod in the Ukraine and Jerusalem

in Israel both, literally, mean city of peace. Madinat al-Salam, which provided the basis for Baghdad, Iraq, and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania use the Arabic for peace.

However, the City of Peace movement, proposed by the association of International Cities of Peace, is not dependent on purity or pervasiveness of the values of peacemaking. A community can make the *intention* to endeavor toward and benefitting from the values inherent in peacemaking.

Modern examples of peace cities are Hiroshima, Japan and the Ciudad de la Paz, Equatorial Guinea. Other examples include Oslo, Norway and Dayton, Ohio where peace treaties were signed. The ideal of peace cities gives honor to places where famous peacemakers were born, such as Atlanta in the United States for Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King; and Rotterdam in The Netherlands for the Renaissance scholar Erasmus.

To date, the foremost scholarly paper on peace cities, "Idee und Geschichte der neuzeitlichen Friedensstadt," was written by scholar and original board member of Cities of Peace, Inc., Peter van den Dungen. Originally published in German, the paper was translated to English and is posted on the website of International Cities of Peace. The paper offers major categories of Cities of Peace, including those that experienced the ravages of war and choose cultural healing as well as other cities with international institutions focused on peace.[16]

Through the work of International Cities of Peace there are now hundreds of self-established member Cities of Peace that were formed with the specific intention of working toward a culture of peace. The criteria for acceptance into the association includes the consensus values of safety, prosperity, and quality of life for all. With this broad mission of peacemaking, communities can focus on addressing local needs,

developing plans and programs, then taking action on providing
increasing value through constant building of a peace culture.

The association emphasizes that every community has a
legacy of peace, "whether it is by a historical event or by
local peace heroes or groups who have contributed to their
citizens' safety, prosperity and quality of life." In line with
the idea that peace is a verb and that no city is fully a city
of peace, the emphasis of the City of Peace movement is on
becoming rather than a statement of being. Each community
"recognizes past achievements, encourages current initiatives,
and inspires future generations for practical peace building."[17]

The Ancient Ethic of Peacemaking

"*acts of love and service are much more common in this
world than conflicts and quarrels.*"[18] -- Mohandas Gandhi

Importantly, to address potential contention between
religious and spiritual cultures, the association of
International Cities of Peace refers to the Golden Rule as a
common ethic of philosophies and religions. The Golden Rule has
been embraced by the organization not as a prescriptive criteria
but as a common ethical standard useful in fostering a peace
culture.

The Golden Rule, variously described as "Do for others as
you would have them do for you", provides the ethical principle
for individual, societal and government behavior. The Golden
Rule can be distilled to the word *consideration*. Each person's
behavior is the result of a moral choice, a moral action.

In essence, the Golden Rule is a powerful social contract
for individuals and societies. Moral governments arise out of a
firm understanding of this ethical standard. "Do for others as

you would have them do for you" is the active motive for providing all in a community with the benefits of safety, prosperity and quality of life. In Cities of Peace, individuals and families, neighborhoods and communities all work together in coordination and cooperation with local governments for the goal of a peace culture.

"As the ethical prime of human conduct," I write in my book *The Economics of Peace: Freedom, the Golden Rule and the Broadening of Prosperity*, "the Golden Rule provides an ancient, genetically-encoded or meme-transferred moral foundation to meet our challenges in the future. It is the dynamic energy, a conscious decision-making mechanism that when applied to our economic, political and social systems, results in fairness and sustainability. With depthless, yet understandable dimensions of mind, body and spirit, the Golden Rule is the principle that guides us from self-centered and bordered consciousness toward the expansive love that lifts the wings of our evolution."[19]

Peace as Compassionate Action

For a municipality to fully understand the needs and take action on behalf of community members, there is a process that is in some ways intuitive, in other ways learned. The Golden Rule requires thought and training to be of greatest value to a community endeavoring to fully establish a peace culture. To put into effect a community ethic based on the Golden Rule ethic, four processes become apparent, including:

1. **Empathy:** Those in a City of Peace become aware of others in need. Awareness comes from observation of the other's circumstances. From initial awareness, community members use experience and intuition to form a greater understanding of

needs, allowing community members to sympathize, or have a deep empathy, whereby the needs of others becomes like a mirror that exposes opportunities to work for peace.

2. Compassion: Community members move from empathy to a stronger identification with the other's circumstances as if they were their own. The root of compassion is to "suffer with" the other, which generates a range of emotions from feeling distress or pity to ingesting the pain of other's misfortune. With a deeper feeling of "suffering with" the other, community members begin to have a strong desire to mitigate and alleviate the other's circumstance.

3. Engagement: Community members, from individuals to groups to civic government, move from a compassionate desire to help toward the development of a plan of action. Concerned members of the community become bound to all others by concern and duty, just as we are bound to the desire to treat ourselves with respect and provide for our needs.

4. Unity: From compassionate action and engagement, the community unifies in its desire to work toward greater safety, prosperity and quality of life for all in the community.

Through the Golden Rule ethic as applied to community, the municipality begins to lose the separation and divisions that plague a culture of service. There is a growing understanding that what happens to one, happens to all. Through positive and productive engagement, the community transcends divisions and fully embraces the interconnectedness not only the community, but also to the world.

FOUR PROCESSES FOR MASTERY OF THE GOLDEN RULE

1. EMPATHY: WE BECOME AWARE OF THE OTHER.

2. COMPASSION: WE MOVE FROM EMPATHY TO A STRONGER IDENTIFICATION WITH THE OTHER'S FEELINGS AND CIRCUMSTANCES AS IF THEY WERE OUR OWN.

3. ENGAGEMENT: FROM A COMPASSIONATE DESIRE TO HELP THE OTHER WE MOVE TO THE RECIPROCAL ENGAGEMENT OF RIGHT ACTION.

4. UNITY: FROM COMPASSIONATE ENGAGEMENT WE BEGIN TO LOSE THE SEPARATION WE FELT FOR THE OTHER AND EXPERIENCE A DEEPER FEELING TOWARD THE HUMANITY OF TRANSCENDENT LOVE.

THE GOLDEN RULE
INSTITUTE
THE RECIPROCAL HEARTBEAT OF ETHICS

20

In effect, the community emerges from separation to connection. An understanding that disunity leads to increased conflict, and that disengagement leads to harm, become a community consciousness. Members experience a sense of concord and harmony not only for their community but for all of humanity. This transcendent morality, as expressed in the Golden Rule ethic, has potential to encourage the transcendent love that is, in its most basic form, the activating principle of peacebuilding.

Peacemaking as Global Consciousness

As humanity's long surviving moral compass of peacebuilding, the Golden Rule has come to our aid regardless of culture and national boundary. The Rule provides the basis for natural law, or right action derived from an understanding of nature. The essential rationale for the Golden Rule provides the reasoning for human rights and is the basis of the social contract and constitutions. Fairness and equity come from a reciprocal and mutual exchange in the context not only self interest but also of right action based on our sense of mutuality and humanity.

Inherent in the Golden Rule process is course correction, which limits and prevents the ravages of human error due to misunderstandings. The English philosopher Arthur T. Codoux said, "Unless, therefore, the Golden Rule, when we are willing to act upon it, modifies our own desires and therefore the standard by which we act, it affords no guidance. And since its guidance lies in this modification, it is ere that the good sought by the Rule will be manifest."[21]

As a human moral imperative of peacemaking, the Golden Rule compels us, urges us and directs us toward action. It is an imperative that is so strong in a person's mind that going against the reasoning is seen to be self-defeating. For the individual to be in touch with the universal is a fundamental mode of survival, the tribal consciousness linked directly to a sustainable global consciousness. As Kant put it, "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law."[22]

A reasonable definition of global consciousness is from an essay entitled *Nurturing Global Consciousness* from the United World College in Changsu, China: "the capacity and disposition to understand and act upon issues of global significance. It is

the ability and willingness to understand oneself and others within the broader matrix of our contemporary world."[23]

According to the organization Teaching Education and Changing History (TEACH), "An ability to understand, respect and work well with people from diverse cultures is increasingly important for social and academic success in an interconnected world. The idea behind global awareness is to create global citizens who are open to those raised in different countries, cultures and religious settings."[24]

If humanity can alter the linguistic impediment to peace being mischaracterized as a noun instead of a verb, we can begin to work in ways that bring consensus to our strategies for making a better world. Peace as a noun contributes to unnecessary debate and conflict as well as potential violence. Peace as a verb entails action toward consensus values and a common human dream of a safer, more prosperous world with a sustainable quality of life for all.

The word peacemaking has been used throughout this article due to our incomplete shift of peace from a noun to a verb. Hopefully in the future, peace will take its rightful and logical place as the actions that provide value. With an understanding of the essential values we associate with the intended result of our peacemaking, "the way" becomes a source of consensus, and by consensus we find "the way" forward for all.

> "We travel together, passengers on a little spaceship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil, all committed, for our safety, to its security and peace. Preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work and the love we give our fragile craft."[25] -- Adlai Stevenson

End

End Notes

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