

## Overcoming International Violence Study Reflection Materials



### *Some general questions*

What struck you positively in this story?

What did you find challenging, or difficult?

What can we learn from this story to apply to our own situation and journey towards peace?

### *Some further questions arising from the stories in the International circle of peacemaking*

Which overseas country, or countries, consumed by violence concerns you most at the moment?

What do you see as the underlying tensions?

Where do you see any 'seeds of peace' and hope?

Which overseas person, or persons, inspires you most as a 'Seed of Peace'?  
Why?

In what ways have you been involved in helping victims of violence overseas?  
(share activities, groups, information channels, gifts and prayers)

In what situations have you, or would you, put your life on the line for others in the face of violence?

Donna Mulhearn participated in the war in Iraq through active non-violence. What do you think about this approach?

Is active non-violence 'one way' or 'the way' to bring about lasting peace in situations such as Iraq?

If you were to create a logo, diagram or picture which speaks of what might lead to peace in a particular country (eg Palestine-Israel, Iraq, Sudan) what elements would it contain?

### *Some further thoughts for reflection and discussion*

Do you think war with Iraq was...

- a. morally justified
- b. justified by the supposed threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction
- c. justified because of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship?
- d. avoidable through diplomatic means?

If Jesus were interviewed on the 6pm News, how would *he* answer?

(from 'What would Jesus do?' – Raff Ellis)

## SEEDS OF PEACE

### **International Order**

National Council of Churches in Australia briefing  
(for the Australian Federal Election 2004)

Positive contributions to international order develop positive relationships between peoples and nations. Nations working together can find constructive alternatives to war and injustice. In situations of conflict and the prevention of conflict the churches support actions that enable peace, support human rights and exercise humanitarian compassion. Australia has a long history of positive contributions to international peacemaking, human rights and diplomacy through the UN and similar institutions. However in recent years there has been a tendency to hold back from widely agreed international conventions and to follow independent or unilateral paths modelled by the USA. For the NCCA, and the worldwide ecumenical movement, this is of considerable concern, since the development of genuine internationalism is a vital requirement in the face of the pressures of globalisation. As the NCCA expressed this in the build-up of war with Iraq:

**‘The NCCA is currently promoting the *Decade to Overcome Violence*, a call to transcend the 'logic' of violence and find constructive alternatives to war and injustice. The way to peace does not lie through war, but through transforming structures of injustice and the politics of exclusion.’**

The NCCA has continued to stress its belief that Australia should act in situations such as Iraq only under UN resolution, not unilaterally, and it has reaffirmed the need for a deeper commitment to working through international channels to resolve the problems of the world.

#### **Contemporary Christian thinking about peace and reconciliation emphases:**

- unease about the juxtaposition of ‘humanitarian’ and ‘intervention’, as in practice humanitarian compassion is too often contradicted by the use of lethal military force – preference is for ‘the protection of endangered populations in situations of armed violence’ (World Council of Churches)
- the need for renewed commitment to multilateral action, the UN and international decision-making
- taking of earlier preventive actions in response to early warnings of crisis
- far greater international priority to
  - conflict-prevention;
  - the rehabilitation and renewal of the physical, political and civil infrastructures of suffering nations (including the relief of poor nations debt and fair trade);
  - peace-building, conflict-resolution and reconciliation mechanisms
- promotion of active non-violence strategies and practice at all levels as part of the UN/WCC/NCCA commitments to ‘cultivating a culture of peace’.

**Among specific pressing international issues**, Australian Christians are called to urge political backing for Australia’s full participation in:

- the Kyoto Protocol on global warming
- the International Court of Justice
- the Optional Protocol to the Convention on Torture
- the draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- reviewing East Timor’s claims to a fair receipt of oil and gas from the Timor Sea