

Creating a peaceful world



From the First World War to the creation of the now defunct League of Nations, its demise, World War 2 and the creation of the United Nations, the Cold War, the Gulf War and the over one hundred ongoing conflicts in different parts of the globe, greenhouse gases and global warming, increased poverty rate and emerging issues in child abuse, child labour and gender violence, we can say our generation has had her own fair share of violence, both direct, structural and cultural. Despite the fact that the past century has been the most industrialized/developed in the history of humanity, it has been the most turbulent. World leaders are ever engaged in discussions on the best ways to ensure and protect world peace, yet despite the numerous G-20 summits, peace has proven quite elusive. The greatest challenge of the twenty-first century appears to be keeping our world whole. Fears of a possible nuclear war haunt us, fears of global warming clobber our hearts, and the news from Wall Street all but tells us we are dead from economic depression. We are our own worst enemy.

Like highwaymen, the traveller; so we threaten ourselves. Even at that, the tendency of today's governments is to go for socio-political and economic processes that preach survival of the richest. Where a social class robs another social class because of its vantage position, the balance that represents the proviso for the existence of peace becomes absent. The world's best sermon, the whole aim of peace movements is succinctly put thus: love your neighbour as you love yourself. Love, therefore, represents my vision of world peace. Love and mutual understanding that will lay a fecund foundation for a world of development, justice and security.

A world where diamonds buried in the soils of Sierra Leone will not cause the burial of the sons of Freetown in the soils of Sierra Leone. A world where my mother will cease being my father's subordinate, where she will air her opinions publicly without shouts of "woman, sit down!" greeting her every word. A world where my father will be allowed a fair hearing at the courts of character before being labelled, "that stupid, inconsiderate brute."

A world where affirmation of my religion will not call for a suicide bomber, where God will not be the cause of a holy war. A world where my colour will not turn noses up, where my colleague's colour will not guarantee higher pay and improved working conditions. I long to hug my black friend at the square and to hold his white brother on the street without setting off a riot. As a child, I ran naked and bathed as the rain beat down on my world. I want my children to be able to do same without fears of acid rain. With all our innovations and breath-taking inventions, we may be a global village, yet we can never be a global family.

I long to see a world where all men: black and white, young and old; male and female, will discover their places as members of one family; a family with God as Father and all humanity brethren; where the world's resources will benefit all people's of the world. The world- a global family, a community, a brotherhood of all- this is my vision of world peace. Yet this can never be achieved where our primary concern is material wealth acquisition. The earth has humans as its purpose.

Any world-view that places materialism above human welfare and the pursuit of values is detrimental to the institution of a global family. When

material wealth acquisition becomes the over-riding concern of any group, it becomes easy to undermine the interests??™ of conflicting parties by any means possible. An example of this is the case of war profiteering. Certain players in the high corridors of power engender conflicts in different places as a result of their financial stake in firms that sell arms to those involved in the armed conflict. A Xhosa proverb goes thus,?? Ubuntu ungamntu ngabanye abantu??, meaning,?? A person is a person through other people.?? I am human because I belong, because I share and participate.

In the words of Desmond Tutu,?? We all are caught up, inextricably bound to others. We belong to a bundle of life.?? All of life is related and interconnected. This is what Dr. Martin Luther King Jnr meant when he said that none of us is free until all of us are free. We are all in this together. Therefore it is impossible to minimize one group??™s welfare while at the same time maximizing that of another.

The role of youths in creating a peaceful world cannot be over emphasized. This is because the world of tomorrow belongs to youths everywhere. Nothing can be achieved tomorrow without the input of youths. The answer to a peaceful world may seemingly lie in world leaders and their G summits. This is not altogether a facade, but the truth is that whatsoever we wish to achieve today and tomorrow primarily lies in the hands of young people the world over. The most important factor in creating a peaceful world is the choice factor. We choose our own lives, build our own worlds, and make our own destinies. We choose either to be or not to be a vehicle for promoting peace.

Our choices today will determine where our world will be at the end of our own time. Now, let us consider some choices that will guarantee a peaceful world. Peace can not be achieved separate of right living. In order to ensure a peaceful world, we must choose to live right.

We must choose to love our fellow humans. Peace will result when we love and tolerate fellow humans and respect our environment. Other choices we should make include: 1. We as youths must choose to be educated. Though one may not be able to choose whether to be granted access to educational facilities, it lies within everyone's power to choose whether to be educated or not. Education is the weapon every group wields in the fight against poverty and oppression. So youths must be committed to education in general and peace education specifically. 1.

Passive resistance to and civil disobedience of unjust laws or laws that tend to protect a privileged group in society. For example, a law that deprives a cultural group right to basic amenities due to their colour, size or race is threatening to world peace, unjust and should therefore be disobeyed. 1. Respect for the environment and ecosystem. Peace represents a process aimed at increased wholeness or development. A world threatened daily with extinction as a result of pollution is in no way peaceful.

It is commonly said that man exploits nature to satisfy his needs, this notwithstanding; emerging issues on the dangers of pollution have alerted world leaders to rather preach sustainable development. This is exploiting nature while at the same time not limiting her ability to provide for future generations. It is learning not to jeopardize the chances of future generations

to benefit from our world. 1. Respect for fellow humans and their fundamental human rights irrespective of race, gender or religion.

1. Since God created the universe, it makes sense to commit our planet into His hands. We must learn to pray to God for peace on our planet. Nothing of note can be achieved without the God factor. 1. Finally, spread the message! Tell others, especially your peers about the need for peace, your own vision of a peaceful world and how to achieve it.