Peace Psychology and Mormonism: A Broader Vision for Peace

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PSYCHOLOGISTS HAVE LONG BEEN INTERESTED in peace and conflicts, and have made important contributions to society's understandings of war and peace. A small but growing number of psychologists has become involved in the peace movement in many ways, ranging from educational efforts to acts of civil disobedience. In this article I describe points of intersection between peace psychology and Mormon culture and thought. While there are significant areas of consonance between peace psychologists and Latter-day Saints, the two are at opposite ends of the socio-political spectrum. Furthermore, the psychologist's assumption of relativism conflicts with the devout Mormon's assumption of ultimate truth found through God's true church, resulting in a series of conflicting positions on issues regarding peace. These fundamental differences illus-

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trate the broader context in which psychology and contemporary society may be at odds with LDS perspectives.[1]

For individual Mormons who seek consonance among various aspects of their lives, these differences can lead to dissonance. For the Church, these conflicts represent points of institutional choice in its assimilation with a broader culture increasingly steeped in humanistic values.[2]

Peace is often defined in terms of what it is not: Peace is the absence of war. Psychologists, however, are more likely to define peace in terms of what it is: Peace is the "presence of qualities, values and approaches in human relationships that build greater harmony."[3] By defining peace positively (what peace is) rather than negatively (what peace is not), we begin to see the basic assumption underlying psychology's approach to human welfare: Psychologists work to improve human conditions and to facilitate growth and development. Although some aspects of psychology focus on "basic" research with no immediate application to the world, psychologists generally strive to find areas in which basic findings can be applied to improve society. Indeed, the American Psychological Association (APA) bylaws state that psychologists have an obligation to promote human welfare.[4] To this end the APA and the American Psychological Society, the two largest organizations of psychologists in the United States, each devote substantial resources to projects such as child welfare, the treatment of disaster victims, and educating the public in matters of psychological science. In their stance on social issues, psychologists as a group reflect the more liberal portion of the ideological spectrum. Nowhere is this truer

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1. For other recent examples, see Michael R. Ash, "The Mormon Myth of Evil Evolution," DIALOGUE 35, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 19–38; and Devyn M. Smith, "The Human Genome Project, Modern Biology, and Mormonism: A Viable Marriage?" DIALOGUE 35, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 61–71.

2. Although Mormonism and humanism are compatible in many ways, the Church's conservatism does much to counteract this trend. For a discussion of humanistic tendencies in Mormonism, see Sterling M. McMurrin, *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965).

3. Steve Handwerker, n.d., "Peace Initiatives: A Preventive Approach," retrieved in October 2003 from http://www.aaets.org/arts/art81.htm.

4. APA Bylaws I.1, retrieved in October 2003 from http://www.apa.org/about/mission.html.

than in terms of peace psychology, which has working groups dedicated to such issues as feminism and peace, as well as environmental justice and protection.

Peace psychologists assume that it is difficult to justify settling conflicts by assault and that we must consider multiple levels of analysis to understand, remedy, and prevent war or other conflicts. Although they are not necessarily pacifists,[5] peace psychologists advocate nonviolence and conflict resolution in many forms, and they point to successful implementation of these practices in a variety of settings ranging from interpersonal conflicts to wars. Indeed, peace psychologists and others note that societies develop highly elaborate customs and laws for settling such disputes, usually without resorting to individual assault. Likewise, many ethicists find it difficult to justify interstate war on moral grounds; nevertheless, states use war in order to achieve their economic and political ends.[6] This fact points to the need to consider the multi-layered nature of society, which is more than a simple sum of its parts. To understand peace and conflict, we must examine them at both the level of the individual and at the broader societal level.

HISTORY OF PEACE PSYCHOLOGY

The move to establish peace psychology as a formal subdiscipline within psychology occurred in the 1980s, when the Cold War with the Soviet Union was at a high point.[7] Its roots actually extend several decades earlier, paralleling U.S. military involvement in wars as well as social movements throughout the century. Nearly a century ago, William James decried people's tendency to rally around the flag when war clouds darken the horizon.[8] He considered it a basic human tendency to seek security and affiliation and urged societies to create constructive ways to fill this need. Despite James's immense stature in the field, psy-

5. Daniel Christie, "Div[ison] 48 Question," e-mail, October 7, 2003.

6. David P. Barash and Charles P. Webel, *Peace and Conflict Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002).

7. C. Yatani and D. Bramel, "Trends and Patterns in Americans' Attitudes toward the Soviet Union," *Journal of Social Issues* 45, no. 2 (1989): 13–32.

8. William James, "The Moral Equivalent of War," originally published in 1910, reprinted in *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 1 (1995): 17–26.

chologists largely ignored his plea and threw themselves headlong in U.S. war efforts.

During World War I, psychologists developed intelligence tests intended to select and classify new recruits so that the army could best meet its needs with qualified personnel. This type of effort expanded during World War II, with psychologists from many different areas of the discipline lending their expertise to the war.[9] In addition to assisting with personnel selection and assignment, psychologists also began to treat soldiers suffering psychological effects from battlefield trauma. Other psychologists assisted in diverse ways, ranging from the creation of propaganda to the design of equipment that would operate more efficiently. In one of psychology's more curious forays, experimental psychologists joined the effort by training animals to guide weapons to targets. Before laser-guided weaponry was a reality, B. F. Skinner and others taught pigeons to peck at keys to direct missiles to their targets.[10] Although these weapons were not implemented in the war, they illustrate most psychologists' enthusiastic support of the war, which they considered morally defensible.

Following World War II, the presence of psychologists in the military increased, but the Cold War brought significant changes. Many of these changes were attributable to *realpolitik*, the belief that, at its simplest, politics consists of keeping, increasing, and demonstrating power.[11] *Realpolitik* has been cited as a dominant theme in politics over the past several centuries. This belief affected Cold War policies, resulting in the arms race that ultimately helped bankrupt the Soviet Union. During the 1950s, a small number of psychologists became convinced that the power of nu-

9. Daniel J. Christie, Richard V. Wagner, and Deborah Du Nann Winter, *Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology for the 21st Century* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), 2.

10. For more information about this interesting history, see E. Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

11. Perhaps no example of the brazen force of power is clearer than the Athenian attack on Melos. Athens issued an ultimatum to either be destroyed or to accept enslavement. Melos protested that its citizens had given Athens no reason to be violent against them and that the choice was unfair. Athens responded: "Right only comes into question when there is a balance of power, while it is Might that determines what the strong extort and the weak concede." The conflict ended when all Melian males were killed and all women and children enslaved. Barash and Webel, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 407.

clear weapons to destroy the world necessitated a different political strategy. Not surprisingly, psychologists failed to persuade government officials in questions of foreign policy, but they planted the seed of interest in peace psychology.

During the 1960s, sufficient interest in the psychological community led to the development of the *Journal of Social Issues*, which included a special issue critical of the U.S. nuclear policy of deterrence through strength.[12] Psychologists also published books with titles such as *Preventing World War III: Some Proposals*,[13] illustrating increasing interest among psychologists regarding peace issues. Perhaps the most important development during this time was Osgood's "GRIT" strategy for reducing tension in international relations, which some analysts suggest was used in U.S. and Soviet talks on nuclear arms during the Kennedy era.[14]

More recently, we have seen peace psychology formally established as one of fifty-two "divisions" of the American Psychological Association, making it a subdiscipline within psychology. Its goals are threefold.[15] The division encourages research on the causes and effects of peace by sponsoring research symposia and by publishing *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* to disseminate the best of that research. It educates other psychologists and the public about peace and facilitates communication among researchers, teachers, and practitioners working on peace issues. Finally, it encourages the active practice and application of nonviolent methods of conflict resolution, reconciliation, and the prevention of war or other forms of conflict. As a new area within psychology, peace psychology is relatively small when compared to subdisciplines such as developmental or clinical psychology. Nevertheless, it is a vibrant part of psychology, as evidenced by criteria such as journal circulation and the

12. R. W. Russell, ed., "Psychology and Policy in a Nuclear Age," special issue, *Journal of Social Issues* 17 (1961).

13. Q. Wright, W. M. Evan, and M. Deutsch, *Preventing World War III: Some Proposals* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962).

14. Charles E. Osgood, *An Alternative to War or Surrender* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962). For a discussion of this work, see A. Etzioni, "The Kennedy Experiment," *Western Political Quarterly* 20 (1967): 361–80.

15. For more information, see http://gsep.pepperdine.edu/~mstimac/Peace-Psychology.htm.

increasing number of programs.[16] For example, several universities offer a master's degree in peace psychology or peace studies, and the University of Massachusetts has now established the first doctoral program in peace psychology.[17] Graduates of these programs not only learn about peace but are also actively involved in applying their knowledge and skills to real-world situations.

DIMENSIONS OF PEACE PSYCHOLOGY

Following the Cold War era, peace psychology has broadened from merely preventing nuclear annihilation to smaller-scale concerns. In an influential book, Daniel J. Christie, Richard V. Wagner, and Deborah Du Nann Winter point out that the activities of peace psychologists have become worldwide in scope but focus on local as well as global issues.[18] They divide peace psychology into four general areas: direct violence, structural violence, peacemaking, and peacebuilding.

Direct Violence

Direct violence has been the classic concern of peace psychologists. It includes acts of war between nations, civil war, and genocide but also extends to acts occurring between two individuals. Direct violence occurs quickly and kills people directly; it is typically intentional and dramatic. It does not need a social structure to occur; it merely requires contact between individuals, groups, or nations. Psychologically, direct violence is often rooted in people's ethnic identities or other identities based on social groups, including religion. Groups to which one belongs (in-groups) are favored, at least in part because they bolster one's sense of well-being. When the in-group is sufficiently threatened by an out-group, however, the group members may react violently to protect the group's integrity. This type of process has been found in violence ranging from hate crimes

16. For instance, the number of subscriptions to *Peace and Conflict* compare favorably to several other journals that have been part of APA for a much longer time. "Summary Report of Division Journal Operations, 2002," *American Psychologist* 58 (2003): 664. Furthermore, judging by the percentage of manuscripts accepted for publication, it is more difficult to publish research in *Peace and Conflict* than in many other psychological journals. See "Summary Report of Journal Operations, 2002," *American Psychologist* 58 (2003): 663.

17. See http://www.umass.edu/peacepsychology/ brief_statement.html.

18. Christie, Wagner, and *Winter, Peace, Conflict, and Violence*, 1–13.

to ethnic violence to genocide.[19] When the in-groups and out-groups are religious in nature, the result has prompted observers such as Pascal to conclude, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."[20]

It is important to distinguish between conflict and direct violence. Conflict is a psychological concept in which different concepts or ideals are at odds with one another. When conflict occurs, one may work with the opposing party to achieve some compromise, acquiesce to the other party, or use violence to achieve one's aims. Violence is more likely to be considered if one party emphasizes its own goals over those of the other and if violence is expected to succeed or weapons are present.[21]

The classic example of direct violence is war, but war and peace are more than a matter of interstate violence. The majority of wars occurs within the state,[22] and civil wars result in tremendous numbers of casualties to civilians. Renner states that the Sudanese civil war resulted in some 1,500,000 casualties, 97 percent of whom were civilians.[23] Direct violence ranges from large-scale wars such as these, to ethnic violence, "hate crimes" against homosexuals or other groups, and domestic violence.

Three themes should be kept in mind when considering the broad scope of acts constituting direct violence.[24] First, it is often too simplistic to transfer the motives and experiences of a conflict involving two individuals to a conflict involving two groups or nations. Although some common features may exist, for example, between hate crimes and genocide, significant differences should caution us against assuming that the same factors are at work in the two types of violence. Second, cultural context provides the background for the actions and, in many ways, sets the tone for violence to occur. Strident nationalism can stimulate war between nations, and strict gender role expectations can provide the setting for violence against people who deviate from their prescribed role. Third, the

19. Wagner, "Direct Violence," in ibid., 15–18.

20. Quoted in Barash and Webel, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 413.

21. Wagner, "Direct Violence," 15; Leonard Berkowitz, *Aggression: Its Causes, Consequences and Control* (San Francisco: McGraw-Hill, 1993).

22. Deborah Du Nann Winter, Daniel J. Christie, Richard V. Wagner, and Laura B. Boston, "Conclusion: Peace Psychology for the Twenty-First Century," in Christie, Wagner, and Winter, *Peace, Conflict, and Violence*, 363.

23. Quoted in ibid., 364.

24. Wagner, "Direct Violence," 16–17.

need to protect one's identity is an important theme in direct violence. Basic psychological forces create biases in favor of groups to which we belong and against groups to which we do not belong. When our in-groups are threatened, we are threatened; a common response to this threat is violence. This occurs in a wide variety of cases ranging from violence against homosexuals to violence between groups or nations.[25]

Structural Violence

Structural violence refers to aspects of society that limit people's ability to reach their potential. Economic stratification, which occurs when one segment of society has difficulty finding adequate shelter or food while other segments of society do not, is an important factor in structural violence. When there are great differences in the educational facilities available to students in different locales, based on funding formulas and other socio-economic structures, structural violence has been committed. Because it is interwoven with the society's economic system, structural violence is seen as a normal part of living in society, an inadvertent consequence of "the way things are." Thus, features of an economic or political system that limit human potential for some while enhancing life for others are considered structural violence.[26] In contrast to direct violence, structural violence kills slowly, unintentionally, and indirectly.[27] It shortens people's lives by chronic exposure to difficult living conditions rather than by a specific, direct act. Globalization adds to structural violence because it fuels tremendous differences among people in terms of their wealth and resources, making some suffer at the expense of others. For example, when economic sanctions are placed on a country, the effect on the leadership of that country is slight relative to that experienced by the general populace.

If we define peace in terms of what it is—"the presence of qualities, values and approaches in human relationships that build greater har-

25. Bianca Cody Murphy, "Anti-Gay/Lesbian Violence in the United States," in Christie, Wagner, and Winter, *Peace, Conflict, and Violence,* 28–38; Ulrike Niens and Ed Cairns, "Intrastate Violence," in ibid., 39–48, and Daniel Druckman, "Nationalism and War: A Social-Psychological Perspective," in ibid., 49–65.

26. J. Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research," *Journal of Peace Research* 3 (1969): 176–91.

27. J. Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: Sage, 1996).

mony"—rather than what it is not—the lack of war or conflict—then the scope of peace broadens substantially.[28] At least two things are gained by doing this. First, if we are truly concerned about peace and the prevention of violence, we must address its root causes. Some causes, such as anti-social personality disorder, greed, and lust for power, are classically "psychological" and reside within the individual. Others are broader, systemic conditions that lie outside the scope of the individual but which nevertheless affect his or her actions.[29] To lessen war, violence, and conflict effectively, we must recognize and use multiple levels of analysis and not limit our efforts simply to individuals, groups, or societies. By improving oppressive living conditions, we may reduce the likelihood of direct violence and improve people's quality of life.[30]

A second benefit from using a broader, more positive definition of peace is moral consistency. It seems inconsistent to claim to seek peace, while at the same time endorsing practices that harm children and others particularly affected by structural violence.[31] A morality that opposes direct violence while supporting structural violence would be inhumane at best. From an LDS perspective, charitable concern and action on behalf of others are inextricably linked to peace (D&C 88:125). From the perspective of psychology, an interesting question regarding structural violence is how people who aspire to live good, moral lives, can do so while ignoring social ills and the problems of structural violence.[32] They appear to do this by limiting their scope of justice so that it applies only to certain people, drawing some people within and leaving others outside their circle of justice.[33] We care for members of our own groups, disregarding the welfare of others. Although societies often have laws and religious prohibitions against direct violence, structural violence is less likely to result in punish-

28. Handwerker, "Peace Initiatives."

29. Robert J. Sampson, "The Community," in *Crime*, eds. James Q. Wilson and Joan Petersilia (San Francisco: ICS Press, 1995), 193–216.

30. M. Clinard and D. Abbott, *Crime in Developing Countries* (New York: Wiley, 1973); S. L. Kirmeyer, "Urban Density and Pathology: A Review of Research," *Environment and Behavior* 10 (1978): 247–69.

31. Dyan Mazurana and Susan McKay, "Women, Girls, and Structural Violence: A Global Analysis," in Christie, Wagner, and Winter, *Peace, Conflict, and Violence*, 130–38.

32. Christie, Wagner, and Winter, *Peace, Conflict, and Violence*, 1–13.

33. Susan Opotow, "Social Injustice," in ibid., 102–109.

ment. Indeed, even "Good Samaritan" laws designed to encourage citizens to intervene in emergencies remain a controversial form of legislation.

Because the targets of structural violence are people with less power in society, children, women, and minority group members are disproportionately represented. Structural violence toward children manifests itself in many ways. Social policies punish children for their parents' actions; more subtly, children being raised under conditions of economic distress have lower levels of cognitive development due to their parents' limited time and resources to give them cognitive and linguistic stimulation.[34] Structural violence also disproportionately affects mothers worldwide through a systematic denial of access to health care and other resources and even by denying women legal status and rights of citizenship.[35] Similar problems affect minority groups throughout the world.

Peacemaking

Efforts to reduce, eliminate, and prevent direct and structural violence are called peacemaking and peacebuilding, respectively. Peacemaking can take many different forms which share several characteristics: they emphasize nonviolent means of reducing direct violence; they are reactive; they occur in a specific, defined time and place; and they typically maintain the status quo, not disrupting the current power structure.

Related to peacemaking is peacekeeping, which also exists to reduce direct violence but which does so by keeping the parties separate from one another. Peacekeeping does not typically address conflicting motives but only the violence that occurs between the parties. Peacekeeping is sometimes called a negative peace because it is more limited; its basic strategy is to keep the parties apart from one another by the direct intervention of a third party.[36] The two sides of the dispute must desire a resolution for the violence to end. If they do not, the peacekeeping force must remain in place indefinitely, as in the case of the U.N. peacekeepers in Cyprus, who have been there since 1964 to maintain peace between the Greek and

34. Kathleen Kostelny and James Garbarino, "The War Close to Home: Children and Violence in the United States," in ibid., 110–19.

35. Mazurana and McKay, "Women, Girls, and Structural Violence."

36. Richard V. Wagner, "Peacemaking," in Christie, Wagner, and Winter, *Peace, Conflict, and Violence*, 169–72. See also Richard V. Wagner, "Distinguishing between Positive and Negative Approaches to Peace," *Journal of Social Issues* 44, no. 2 (1988): 1–15.

Turk Cypriots. On an interpersonal level, peacekeeping is akin to a restraining order mandating that individuals not contact one another. Although such practices may reduce the violence, there is no expectation that the underlying conflict be addressed.

Peacemaking, sometimes called positive peace, is more flexible than peacekeeping in the number of alternatives available for reducing violence. It can help resolve conflicts rather than simply stopping violence. Moving beyond peacekeeping to peacemaking requires some level of awareness regarding cultural differences. Attempts to apply Western approaches, such as mediation, to non-Western contexts can be ineffective because of cultural differences in interpersonal relations. Mediation, conflict resolution, and other Western approaches to peacemaking may be effective in some situations, but non-Western approaches can also be useful. One example is the Hawaiian custom of *Ho'oponopono*, which focuses on regaining lost family and group harmony, trust, and cooperation, as well as emphasizing spirituality and interpersonal connections.[37]

While several models or techniques for peacemaking exist, successful peacemaking takes place at multiple levels, treating the two parties as a system and addressing underlying conflicts as well as the violence that exists between the parties.[38] Peacemaking must also address the aftermath of the violence to reduce its effects on the populace and to decrease the likelihood that residual effects will later spawn direct violence. Thus, efforts to reduce the traumatic effects of war include not only treating victims of post-traumatic stress disorder following wars, but also forming effective communication patterns among the disputants.[39] Clinical and counseling psychologists regularly volunteer their expertise in assisting victims following calamities ranging from the recent spate of school shootings to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on New York and Washington DC.

37. Paul B. Pedersen, "The Cultural Context of Peacemaking," in Christie, Wagner, and Winter, *Peace, Conflict, and Violence*, 183–92.

38. Peter Coleman and Morton Deutsch, "Introducing Cooperation and Conflict Resolution into Schools: A Systems Approach," in ibid., 223–39.

39. Inger Agger, "Reducing Trauma During Ethno-Political Conflict: A Personal Account of Psycho-social Work under War Conditions in Bosnia," in ibid., 240–50; Cheryl de la Rey, "Reconciliation in Divided Societies," in ibid., 251–61.

Peacebuilding

Like others involved in the peace movement, peace psychologists are devoting increasing efforts to reducing structural violence by peacebuilding—work designed to reduce the adverse impact society has on its most defenseless and disenfranchised members. At its most essential, peacebuilding focuses on reducing hierarchies within and between societies, because the privileges enjoyed by those at the top of the hierarchy come at the expense of those at the bottom.[40] Peacebuilding emphasizes human interdependence rather than isolation. It seeks to be proactive rather than reactive, is not limited to a specific time and place, and threatens the current socio-economic and political status quo.[41]

Although the hazards of intervening in direct violence are obvious, peacebuilding often entails much higher levels of tension and conflict. It too can result not only in psychological discomfort, but also in pain or death.[42] Such effects result from the amount of effort required to address fundamental assumptions and conflicts between parties at different levels in the social hierarchy. People do not easily give up their systems of power, and such revolutionary acts are not undertaken lightly or without risk. The advocate of peace uses peaceful means to seek change—pacifism, negotiation, and mediation—and is left highly exposed should those means fail.

Peacebuilding efforts may focus on either structural transformation or on cultural transformation.[43] Structural transformations alter features of the society such as its economic system so that more effective health care services can be delivered to children, thus reducing mortality rates among the society's youngest members. Cultural transformations address issues such as perceptions that the world is a just place and therefore that people earn their places in the social hierarchy or that people at the bottom of the hierarchy are there because of their laziness, poor choices, or

40. Daniel J. Christie, "Peacebuilding: Approaches to Social Justice," in ibid., 277–81.

41. Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means.*

42. Christina Jayme Montiel, "Toward a Psychology of Structural Peacebuilding," in Christie, Wagner, and Winter, *Peace, Conflict, and Violence,* 282–94.

43. Ibid.

even evil nature, while people who are virtuous, hard-working, and "good" earn their place at the top of the hierarchy.[44]

A central aspect of peacebuilding involves changing how people at the bottom of the social hierarchy perceive themselves and are perceived by other segments of society.[45] Empowering individuals at lower levels of a hierarchy gives them greater control over their destiny.[46] One of the most notable examples of peacebuilding is Gandhi's use of nonviolent means to transform Indian society.[47] Conventional wisdom held that change resulted only from the power to commit acts of direct violence. Gandhi demonstrated that nonviolent acts can also generate change in society; his experiment was used in other countries, including the United States during the civil rights era.

SYSTEMS OF VIOLENCE AND PEACE

A systems approach to understanding direct and structural violence is important since the relationship between them is circular. For example, the ethnic conflicts in Rwanda that led to the killing of some 700,000 people were based not only on old racial hatreds but also on a colonialism that had established policies favoring the Tutsis over the Hutus. This environment set the stage for violence, which erupted under conditions of severe poverty and economic emergencies.[48] When people feel unable to improve their living conditions, they sometimes resort to violence, and society responds with more stringent limitations on their living conditions to quell the violence.

Even the tragic 1999 killings at Columbine High School can be under-

44. Melvin J. Lerner, *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion* (New York: Plenum, 1980).

45. Christie, "Peacebuilding."

46. Linda Webster and Douglas B. Perkins, "Redressing Structural Violence against Children: Empowerment-based Interventions and Research," in Christie, Wagner, and Winter, *Peace, Conflict, and Violence*, 330–40.

47. Susan McKay and Dyan Mazurana, "Gendering Peacebuilding," in ibid., 341–49.

48. V. M. Mays, M. Bullock, M. R. Rosenzweig, and M. Wessels, "Ethnic Conflict: Global Challenges and Psychological Perspectives," *American Psychologist* 53 (1998): 737–42.

stood in terms of systems of violence.[49] Much attention was focused on the boys who killed twelve classmates and a teacher, but we must also consider the system that gave rise to great differences in status and popularity among students, elevating some while others became social outcasts. When feeling sufficiently threatened, social outcasts with ready access to weapons will strike back, sometimes with dramatic and devastating effect. We must recognize the interconnected nature of structural and direct violence.

RECONCILING PEACE PSYCHOLOGY AND LDS BELIEF

How does peace psychology intersect with LDS belief and practice? There are several areas of compatibility as well as some basic conflicts in assumptions. The following examples illustrate areas of intersection between peace psychology and LDS life.

Compatibility

The LDS Church's stance against the MX missile plan is an unusually clear example of the Church's taking a position consistent with peace psychology's early interest in reducing the risk of nuclear war. In 1981 the Reagan administration proposed an MX missile program that would give the United States added security should the Soviet Union attack us directly. According to the plan, an immense system of missile silos would be built in the western states with missiles moving among the silos. Their changing locations and the sheer number of missiles would make it impossible for the Soviets to successfully destroy all the weapons in a first strike, and the Reagan administration believed that the threat of retaliation would deter the Soviets from an attack. Public debate regarding the plan was intense, particularly in Utah and Nevada where the missiles would be housed.

In this context, the Church issued a clear and thoughtful statement against the MX missile plan.[50] The statement offered a reasoned, point-by-point discussion of the plan, discussing issues ranging from the impact of construction crews on the environment and economy of the area to the arms race itself. The plan was defeated, largely because of weak public support for it.

For some insight regarding other forms of direct conflict, we can

49. Winter et al., "Conclusion," 368.

50. "News of the Church," *Ensign*, June 1981, 76.

look to statements from Church leaders. For example, David O. McKay wrote, "We see that war is incompatible with Christ's teachings. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of peace. War is the antithesis and produces hate. It is vain to attempt to reconcile war with true Christianity."[51] President McKay saw little use for war as a tool, as did an earlier Church president, Heber J. Grant (1918–45). During his presidency, Grant and his counselors issued several statements denouncing war and urging Church members and the world to choose peace instead of violence.

One of the more interesting public statements against war was a letter written by Hugh Nibley to the BYU *Daily Universe* regarding a film titled *No Substitute for Victory*, starring John Wayne.[52] The film was intended to stir support for the war in Vietnam. In his letter, Nibley quoted Doctrine and Covenants: 98:15–17: "Renounce war and proclaim peace . . . lest I come and smite the whole earth with a curse, and all flesh be consumed before me." Nibley then wrote, "'Renounce' is a strong word: we are not to try to win peace by war, or merely to call a truce, but to renounce war itself, to disclaim it as a policy while proclaiming (that means not just announcing, but preaching) peace without reservation." After reminding readers of the destructive power of nuclear weapons, Nibley continued:

> Thus we have the mandate to renounce military action, the order to substitute something very different in its place, and the terrible penalty for failure to do both. A few years ago such an extreme proposition sounded quite fantastic; the consuming of all flesh belonged to the category of wild apocalyptic nightmares. Today however the best scientists all over the world are repeating the same alternatives with ominous urgency and insistence: It is to be either no more war or mutual annihilation. Those two verses of the D&C, revealed almost 140 years ago, are standing alone enough to prove Joseph Smith a true prophet.

Nibley was not the only prominent Mormon with an opinion on the

51. David O. McKay, "Gospel Ideals," reprinted in *War, Conscription, Conscience and Mormonism*, ed. Gordon C. Thomasson (Santa Barbara, CA: Mormon Heritage, 1972), 277–89.

52. Hugh Nibley, "Renounce War!" reprinted in Thomasson, *War, Conscription, Conscience and Mormonism*, 24–25.

film; Apostle Ezra Taft Benson's remarks supporting the war effort were included in the film itself.

Lesser-known Mormons have taken positions against the direct violence of war. One group worked together to publish a small book to help LDS men who objected to the selective service draft during the Vietnam War. Among them was Robert Keeler, whose reading of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:21–22, 44) and other passages from the New Testament (Matt. 26:52) and Book of Mormon (Alma 24:24–25; Hel. 15:9) suggested to him that Christians should not engage in direct violence.[53] Keeler concluded that there are occasions when God justifies war, but they are unusual and come only after successive attempts to make peace with the aggressor (D&C 98:33–36).

The classic Book of Mormon story of pacifism that Keeler cites (Alma 24) demonstrates an underlying goal of peacebuilding. After killing hundreds of their opponents with no resistance whatsoever, the Lamanites experienced a change of heart. They repented and threw down their weapons, vowing never to fight again. This narrative illustrates peacebuilding's goal of reducing conflict, not merely violence.

Thoughtful readers of the Book of Mormon often find mixed messages regarding war. Equally mixed are the perspectives of contemporary Church leaders.[54] Although Heber J. Grant and David O. McKay stated their opposition against war,[55] President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke in the April 2003 conference about the U.S. invasion of Iraq, announcing that there are times when nations and people are not only justified but have an obligation to fight. In his view, "God will not hold men and women in uniform responsible as agents of their government in carrying

53. Robert B. Keeler, "A Plea for Tolerance," in Thomasson, *War, Conscription, Conscience and Mormonism*, 10–16.

54. For compilations of relevant scriptures and statements from Church authorities, see Thomasson, *War, Conscription, Conscience and Mormonism*, ii-viii. 106-16, Also see keywords "war" and "peace" combined with "obligation," "duty," "authority," "fight," and "duty," "fight," and "freedom" in the *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM: A Comprehensive Resource Library* (Salt Lake City: Smith Research Associates, 1998).

55. See, for example, James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 5:164; also see Heber J. Grant, J. Reuben Clark, and David O. McKay, "Bravely and Heroically Choose a Better Course of Life," reprinted in *Sunstone*, December 2002, 80.

forward that which they are legally obligated to do."[56] As with many religious questions, the person who searches for a single, unequivocal answer to this question may be disappointed.

LDS Church leaders have addressed other forms of direct violence, typically condemning it strongly. For example, following Christ's injunction to let the children come to him, concern about child abuse led President Hinckley to say, "We cannot tolerate [child abuse]. We will not tolerate it. Anyone who abuses a child may expect Church discipline as well as possible legal action. Child abuse is an affront toward God. Jesus spoke of the beauty and innocence of children. To anyone who has an inclination that could lead to the abuse of children, I say in the strongest language of which I am capable, discipline yourself. Seek help before you do injury to a child and bring ruin upon yourself."[57] Taking a proactive step, the Church recently released to local leaders a videotape of instructions for detecting signs of child abuse.[58] While critics of the Church might see this act merely as a minimization of legal liability, such efforts are all too rare in the broader religious community.[59]

Increasingly important to peacebuilding efforts are nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), which empower people who formerly had no voice.[60] The Church's Perpetual Education Fund represents an effort in this direction. By addressing the educational needs of some of its most disadvantaged members, the fund represents an excellent opportunity to approach issues of empowerment and peacebuilding.

The classic question, "Who is my neighbor?" highlights one of the problems we face when we confront structural violence. The basic human tendency to care for members of our own group rather than members of other groups makes the question a relevant and enduring one for human-

56. Gordon B. Hinckley, "War and Peace," *Ensign,* May 2003, 80.

57. Gordon B. Hinckley, "To the Men of the Priesthood," *Ensign,* November 2002, 59.

58. *Protect the Child,* videotape (Salt Lake City: Corporation of the President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003).

59. Michael E. Nielsen, "Appalling Acts in God's Name," *Society* 40, no. 3 (March/April 2003): 16–19.

60. Winter et al., "Conclusion," 371.

ity.[61] LDS welfare efforts began as a response to assist members of the Church but now extend to countries and regions well beyond its base. The growth of the Church as well as improved communications and transportation abilities have made this possible; but even with such technological changes, humanitarian efforts would not be possible without a desire on the part of the organization to assist others in need.

From a peace psychology perspective, one can also see effort among the Mormons regarding another facet of peace: cultural transformation. A cultural transformation in the Church may be underway in members' attitudes toward Africans. Once seen as deserving their earthly fate because of having been less valiant before coming to earth, Africans are now increasingly accorded a full equality.[62]

Incompatibility

At a very basic level, peacebuilding requires a relativistic context in which parties are open to the idea that other cultural or ideological perspectives must be considered, while one's own perspective may need to yield to another's views regarding the best way to address a problem. This relativistic point of view makes peacebuilding somewhat problematic for Latter-day Saints because it might conflict with the Church's stand on issues deemed religious or moral in nature. Needs that are highly valued in one area of the world may not be equally valued in another.[63]

For a current example, consider that while political freedom is valued in the United States, it may be less highly valued elsewhere than social control of a populace. LDS efforts to engage China might be seen in this light. Despite highly publicized political and even religious oppression occurring in China, LDS-Chinese relations appear to be improving with periodic exchanges and visits to Salt Lake City by Chinese officials. The Church apparently sees in this case an opportunity to gain a foothold

61. Opotow, "Social Injustice."

62. The idea is expressed in several speeches and books by LDS General Authorities, for example, Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1931), esp. chaps. 7, 15, and 16. For a more recent "classic" analysis, see Lester E. Bush Jr. and Armand L. Mauss, eds., *Neither White nor Black: Mormon Scholars Confront the Race Issue in a Universal Church* (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1984).

63. Andy Dawes, "Psychologies for Liberation: Views from Elsewhere," in Christie, Wagner, and Winter, *Peace, Conflict, and Violence*, 295-306.

in a vast part of the world; Chinese officials see a religion that values obedience to the laws of the land, a characteristic regarded very highly in light of recent disputes with both Falun Dafa and the Roman Catholic Church. In another context, LDS missionaries may not baptize men who are married to more than one wife even if polygamy is an accepted practice in that culture.[64] Here we see contrasting cases in which relativism appears to work for the Church (as in China) or does not (as in polygamous West Africa).

Race relations in the Church show more compatibility now than in the past. High-profile African Americans such as Gladys Knight and Thurl Bailey have joined the Church and have been welcomed. Gladys Knight loosened up the typically quiet and staid Temple Square when she directed a gospel choir singing new renditions of Mormon hymns and other songs in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1978 revelation granting priesthood ordination for all worthy males. Still, a gap exists. For example, middle-class blacks are most likely to join the Church in the United States.[65] African Americans at the bottom of the social structure are less likely to join, perhaps because they feel unwelcome or because they are less likely to encounter the Church through its missionary efforts. If peacebuilding involves empowering a society's lower classes, such empowerment has yet to occur among African Americans in general. Although data exist suggesting that African Americans who join the Church do feel some degree of empowerment, we must keep in mind that they are likely to be middle class.[66] Moreover, although Mormons may view themselves as mainstream citizens, evidence exists that the rest of America does not share this perception.[67]

In no part of LDS life does a basic assumption of peace psychology conflict more noticeably than in gender roles. Peace psychologists are committed to promoting social equality, and they measure this type of

64. Eugene England, "On Fidelity, Polygamy, and Celestial Marriage," DIALOGUE 20 (Winter 1987): 138–54.

65. Cardell K. Jacobson, Tim B. Heaton, E. Dale LeBaron, and Trina Louise Hope, "Black Mormon Converts in the United States and Africa: Social Characteristics and Perceived Acceptance," in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives*, ed. Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 344.

66. Ibid, 330–35.

67. Ibid., 334.

progress in terms such as economic parity, access to health care, opportunity in political and other social spheres, and control over one's own resources. In this regard, LDS culture presents a sort of "separate but equal" state of affairs in which women are considered equal but with different roles. Policies, however, suggest otherwise. For example, today—over a century since the Manifesto was issued ending polygamy—a man may be sealed to more than one woman, but a woman may not be sealed to more than one man. From a peace psychology perspective, this indicates that, at some level, LDS culture does not treat women and men equally. This situation warrants a closer examination of gender issues in the Church.

Family-centered themes are becoming increasingly important in LDS rhetoric,[68] including the idea that mothers in particular should spend the time necessary for the development of children while fathers work to provide for the family.[69] LDS culture and language place priesthood and motherhood as equal but distinct roles for men and women. Observers note, however, that priesthood in this sense has both familial and institutional connotations, whereas motherhood's scope is limited to the family.[70] Indeed, although the Relief Society historically had considerable autonomy, it falls now strictly under the purview of priesthood leadership as part of the "correlation" effort to restructure Church auxiliary organizations. Cornwall suggests that women's roles in the institutional church did change during the 1980s when women began speaking regularly in general conference meetings; changes in the temple ritual were also seen by some as a response to women's concerns.[71] Nevertheless, in the context of simple numbers, two of the twenty-eight speakers during the general sessions of the April 2003 conference were female; the remaining twenty-six were male. Likewise, service as an apostle is for life, while women's auxiliary presidencies serve for five years. Differentials

68. Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed: Themes in the Development of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984).

69. Ezra Taft Benson, *To the Mothers of Zion*, pamphlet (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987).

70. Marie Cornwall, "The Institutional Role of Mormon Women," in Cornwall, Heaton, and Young, *Contemporary Mormonism*, 239–64.

71. Ibid., 260.

such as these will lead most peace psychologists to conclude that only limited progress has been made in giving women a voice.

Indeed, in terms of women's roles, the patriarchal nature of the Church appears to make it difficult for women to achieve the level of autonomy and independence necessary to escape some form of structural violence. Strict gender roles are incompatible with that goal. Research finds that Mormons follow more traditional gender roles in their homes, yet no significant difference exists between the number of Mormon and non-Mormon women who are employed. In their analysis of such data, Heaton, Goodman, and Holman conclude that heightened cultural expectations regarding motherhood lead Mormon women to feel more than others that homemaking is unappreciated, lonely, overwhelming, and poorly done.[72]

Finally, the Church's dealings with feminists illustrates the contentious nature of structural violence as well as the fact that efforts to mitigate its effects threaten the status quo. By asserting gender to be an eternal characteristic, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" illustrates the extent to which the institutional structure is in place and the status quo is being reinforced. Whether this is desirable or undesirable depends on one's vantage point.

Relativism also is highly unlikely in the area of sexual orientation, another subject of concern to psychologists interested in peacebuilding. In 1999, newspapers reported Church lobbying efforts in California against same-sex marriage.[73] During October general conference that year, President Hinckley stated:

> Nevertheless, and I emphasize this, I wish to say that our opposition to attempts to legalize same-sex marriage should never be interpreted as justification for hatred, intolerance, or abuse of those who profess homosexual tendencies, either individually or as a group. As I said from this pulpit one year ago, our hearts reach out to those who refer to themselves as gays and lesbians. We love and honor them as sons and daughters of God. They are welcome in the Church. It is expected, however, that they

72. Tim B. Heaton, Kristen L. Goodman, and Thomas B. Holman, "In Search of a Peculiar People: Are Mormon Families Really Different?" in Cornwall, Heaton, and Young, *Perspectives on Mormonism*, 87–117.

73. "LDS Urged to Back Ban on Gay Marriage," *Deseret News*, July 5, 1999, A-2.

> follow the same God-given rules of conduct that apply to everyone else, whether single or married.[74]

While this statement decries attacks against homosexuals, there is clearly no wavering in the Church's commitment to the status quo regarding sexual orientation. As with gender roles, this is an area of disharmony between peace psychology and the Church.

Moving beyond the question of war, we see differences in priorities between LDS leaders and peace psychologists, both in terms of how each construes morality and in the underlying issue of relativism. LDS rhetoric on morality tends to emphasize sexuality. Chastity before marriage, sexual fidelity during marriage, masturbation, and the temptations posed by pornography are generally the focus in Mormon discussions of morality. In contrast, peace psychologists are likely to discuss sexuality only as it relates to sexual assault or other forms of intimate violence, and to discuss morality in terms of structural violence, including problems created by the distribution of resources or the exploitation of one person or group by another, more powerful person or group. These kinds of themes receive very little attention in LDS general conference addresses, particularly when compared to matters of sexual morality.[75]

CONCLUSION

In his classic analysis, Sterling McMurrin describes the LDS religion as an interesting and unusual blend of social conservatism and liberal theology.[76] Nowhere does this mix of forces show itself more noticeably than in matters dealing with peace and violence, with periodic denunciations of war contrasting with relative silence regarding more subtle forms of violence. The result is a tension between Church and society as the Church attempts to find a balance in its engagement with the broader culture.

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74. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Why We Do Some of the Things We Do," *Ensign*, November 1999, 52–54.

75. In their study of conference themes, Shepherd and Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed*, found that economic matters were discussed only minimally, during the 1860–89 and 1920–49 periods. "Secular Justice" received some attention during 1830–59 and "Divine Justice" during 1890–1919, but otherwise they were not addressed regularly. In contrast, sexual morality was found to be a more enduring theme, whose visibility has increased markedly during recent years.

76. McMurrin, *Theological Foundations*.

From a sociological perspective, this state of affairs is common to religions, which manage their assimilation with the dominant culture by taking particular stands on social issues.[77]

The implications of this tension are important, both for individual members and for the institution. For members, incompatibility between Church and secular cultures can generate tremendous cognitive dissonance, resulting in dissatisfaction with either the institutional church or the other social institutions with which members affiliate. In such cases, the member sometimes becomes disaffected with the Church to the point of lapsing into inactivity or discontinuing membership.[78] For the Church, the tension indicates its engagement with the broader culture. A religious institution claiming prophetic revelation has a degree of flexibility, but only to the extent that its leadership utilizes revelation that is accepted by adherents and observers. As the case of the 1978 priesthood revelation illustrates, some see this flexibility as "additional light and knowledge," while others see it as a response to external pressure and an example of the institution's movement toward the dominant culture.

The issue of war and peace brings such tensions to the forefront. War and other forms of violence treat people as a means to an end, with both combatants and victims serving as a way for socio-political groups to achieve their goals. Underlying this idea is the assumption that people are valued for what they can help the state or group accomplish. This contrasts strongly with the classic LDS ideal that God values individuals for their inherent worth, that they are created in his divine image, and that he grieved when one third of the host of heaven was lost following the war in heaven. However, Elder Russell M. Nelson's recent *Ensign* article may signal a change in LDS views on this point since he argues that God may find greater value in people who are more obedient to God's and the

77. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 190–91.

78. For illustrations, see James W. Ure, *Leaving the Fold: Candid Conversations with Inactive Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999). Others can be found in the "Why We Left" portion of www.exmormon.org. Many of these stories illustrate the strain experienced by some individuals when their church and secular values collide.

Church's laws.[79] If the institutional church promotes God as loving some more than others, then the gap between the Church and peace psychology—as well as other areas of study influenced by humanistic ideals—will undoubtedly widen, because a basic ideal within humanism is that all individuals are worth respect.[80] To the extent that humanistic values for individuals have become part of modern life, we may expect more conflict between the institutional church and the rest of society.

The potential for conflict in matters of peace is reflected by David Barash and Charles Webel in their discussion of religious pacifism. Referring to A. J. Muste's calls for noncompliance to the military draft, which he described as acts of "holy disobedience," Barash and Webel conclude, "It is interesting to note that in Western religious traditions, disobedience is widely considered to be the primary human sin (witness Satan's disobedience to God, or Adam and Eve's alleged transgressions in the Garden of Eden). And yet a case can be made that throughout human history, far more harm has been done by obedience to authority than by disobedience."[81]

79. Russell M. Nelson, "Divine Love," *Ensign*, February 2003, 20–25. A search of the Church's online publication database (http://library.lds.org) offered over one hundred uses of the term "unconditional love," either as describing God's love or as a means by which people can improve relations with family members or others.

80. Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961).

81. Barash and Webel, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 421.