

## **PACIFIST DOVES AND HUMANITARIAN HAWKS: SHOULD UUs BECOME ACTIVIST PACIFISTS?**

SERMON by Howard Tolley, Jr.

### **Introduction**

Verbose UC professors like me have a minimum of 50 minutes class time to lecture, but I assure you at the outset that this sermon will be well under half that time. Unfortunately, I have nothing on the topics of peace and genocide to say that is remotely amusing.

By way of introduction consider the horrifying litany of statistics presented by Retired UU Minister Ken Phifer, an Army veteran with a son who is a career soldier. In a June 2006 sermon **ISN'T THERE A BETTER WAY?** Phifer noted:

“In the 5,600 years of recorded human history, we have averaged two to three wars every year, more than 14,600 in all.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, our species fought 161 wars. At the start of 2005, there were 22 violent conflicts raging somewhere in the world.

Chris Hedges, who for 20 years and more covered war as a journalist, gives us some cold, hard numbers about the impact of all these wars. In the 1990's alone, he observes, “2 million dead in Afghanistan; 1.5 million dead in the Sudan; some 800,000 butchered in ninety days in Rwanda; a half million dead in Angola; a quarter million dead in Bosnia; 200,000 dead in Guatemala; 150,000 dead in Liberia; a quarter million dead in Burundi; 75,000 dead in Algeria.”

And the numbers rise and rise through other wars in Chechnya, Sierra Leone, Northern Ireland, Kosovo, the Persian Gulf, and elsewhere.”

### **Pacifist Doves and Humanitarian Hawks**

As I understand my coreligionists, some Unitarian Universalists are pacifist doves while others are humanitarian hawks. A dovish friend from the Yellow Springs fellowship was imprisoned in World War II for refusing to perform even non-military service in the war effort. A hawkish friend from First Church in Cincinnati believes that only military force can stop genocide. How can we peacefully conduct a four-year study that invites us to choose between their irreconcilable values?

In recent years peace activism has united the denomination, as most UUs concur that the Iraq war is illegal, immoral, and contrary to the national interest. Last year's UUA General Assembly adopted a militantly dovish 2006 Action of Immediate Witness joining “The Declaration of Peace” campaign by over thirty religious and secular organizations. In addition to calling for withdrawal, prohibiting preemptive war, and paying reparations, the campaign includes escalating protest demonstrations including Gandhian non-violent actions.

A year earlier a more hawkish Action of Immediate Witness on Darfur was adopted, that called for UN peacekeepers to stop genocide and to enforce a no-fly zone. Our UUA President Bill Sinkford was arrested for protest activity outside Sudan's embassy and along with Danny Glover spent five hours in detention. I'm certain that such Gandhian style non-violence will not end the carnage. The no-fly zone enforced by the U.S. over Iraq repeatedly involved the use of lethal force; the UUA action on Darfur calls for a UN approved no fly zone that would involve combat against Sudan's air force. Since there is no peace to keep, UN peacemaking that uses force is required.

When President Clinton ordered the bombing of Serbia to stop genocide in Kosovo, UUA President John Buerens publicly approved that humanitarian intervention. As a board member of the UUSC at the time, I wondered about the lack of a democratic process in his statement of views attributed to UUs. Along with several other Board members, I also questioned the

legality of the US led NATO military action taken without Security Council approval despite our prior, unwavering support for the UN.

During his tenure as President of Amnesty International USA, former UUA President Rev. Bill Schulz advocated humanitarian intervention. In his book *Tainted Legacy*, Schulz writes: “At a minimum, then, when wickedness is in fashion sufficient to shock the conscience of humanity, military intervention may well be justified.”

### **Genocide in Darfur**

Wickedness has clearly become the fashion in Darfur, Sudan, putting Schulz’ thesis to the test. That African country of 40 million, 30% the size of the US, is 52% black, and 40% Arab. By religion 70% are Sunni Muslims, and 5% Christian. The government enforced the Koranic law of Sharia with criminal penalties of amputation for theft and execution by stoning for adultery. A dispute over equitable distribution of growing oil revenues led to civil war with Christians in Southern Sudan whose children were seized and sold as slaves. A UN brokered peace achieved power sharing, until the Southern rebel leader elevated to Vice President was killed in a suspicious plane crash.

For many years Sudan’s military rulers provided a safe haven for Osama Bin Laden. Following an Al Qaeda bombing of two US embassies in East Africa, President Clinton retaliated by destroying a Sudanese chemical plant that may have been producing pharmaceuticals rather than suspect chemical weapons. Based on evidence that Sudan attempted to assassinate President Mubarak of Egypt the US imposed economic sanctions.

Prolonged, repeated drought, famines and war have left 3.5 million dependent on humanitarian food aid while the urban elite prosper on oil exports. As Sudan’s desert spreads, its Arab cattlemen fight African farmers over diminishing grassland – somewhat like the 19<sup>th</sup> Century US range wars. Three distinct groups of black African insurgents demanded political rights and an equitable share of the country’s oil wealth. The government responded to one rebel attack on an airport by enlisting and supplying, camel riding Arab Janjaweed, to burn black African villages, kill, and drive away the farmers by poisoning wells.

An estimated 200 villages have been destroyed, 200,000 to 400,000 have died and 2.5 million have been displaced; some refugees crossed the border exacerbating a civil war in neighboring Chad. Women are systematically raped as an instrument of terror.

Within refugee camps administered by humanitarian relief agencies tribal factions refusing to compromise with the government are now attacking other rebel groups which negotiated a 2006 peace agreement which the government appears to have breached. Aid workers have also been killed. After a recent visit, the UN Secretariat official has forecast an extraordinary loss of life if no political settlement is reached.

Numerous US citizens -- Nick and George Clooney, Bill Richardson and our UUSC -- have beaten the drums on Darfur. President Bush was the first world leader to condemn the killing as genocide; the U.S. has provided generous food aid, supported 7,000 African Union peacekeepers and pressed the Security Council for a larger UN force of 20,000 and more effective UN sanctions. Despite his unrelenting opposition to the new International Criminal Court, the President allowed the Security Council to approve an ICC investigation of Sudan. The prosecutor recently filed evidence that Sudan’s cabinet secretary for “humanitarian affairs” had funded and directed Janjaweed mass killing. Yet the Security Council will do little more. China takes 75% of Sudan’s oil exports, and Russia sells arms to the government, leading both powers to block effective UN action.

### **Just War Principles and Darfur**

Would the good end of saving a half million lives in Darfur justify use of violent means – either a UN sponsored or unilateral US military action? In searching for an answer, I'll apply just war principles dating back to Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas and Augustine. There are six conditions that justify military force, and I believe that no more than these three have been satisfied:

1. Just cause includes self- defense, such as the post 9/11 attack on Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, as well as defense of another nation, such as preventing Iraq's annexation of Kuwait. Humanitarian intervention in Sudan would qualify as such a just cause.

2. Just intention would be satisfied if a predominantly white Christian state such as the US came to the rescue of black African Sunni Muslims subject to extermination by Arabs as long as we had no hidden agenda to acquire Sudan's oil or to establish long term military bases.

3. Proportionality dictates that the forceful response to aggression must not exceed the damage committed by the offending government. The carnage resulting from the Sudanese government's perfidy far exceeds the loss of life that would result from an intervention.

Despite passing those tests, humanitarian intervention would violate three other just war principles:

1, legitimate authority must approve. In my professional judgment, only the UN Security Council has that legal authority, and it will not approve. Bill Schulz nevertheless concludes that unilateral US military action could be legitimate. He writes: "The rule must therefore be something as ambiguous as 'Intervention must be sanctioned by the international community except when, in the case of genocide or ethnic cleansing, that community is not willing to act.'" (*Tainted Legacy* p. 144)

2. Last Resort compels the exhaustion of all other diplomatic and non-military options for securing peace before resorting to force. That condition hasn't yet been met.

3, Reasonable chance of success is absent. The civil war has become three and possibly four sided with different rebel tribes fighting one another as well as the government. The mixed record of prior interventions in Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone reveal that outside forces are unlikely to achieve long term success with a military intervention in Sudan

Even if all six just war principles were satisfied to legitimize deployment of military forces, their conduct would be governed by three additional just war principles likely to be violated.

First, noncombatant immunity has been a problem when our forces attack dual use power plants that serve both military and civilian purposes. Even when noncombatants are not deliberately targeted in order to terrorize, collateral damage civilians are killed en masse

Second, the proportionate means principle was violated by Israel's massive overreaction to the kidnapping of two soldiers that reaked devastation on Southern Lebanon.

Third, attacks on prohibited targets such as places of worship and use of prohibited weapons such as chemical defoliants are war crimes under international law. A student of mine returned from Marine Corps service in Hadditha Iraq where he once discovered electronic wires leading from a Mosque to a roadside explosive device planted to end his life. A lawyer attached to the unit would not allow the US forces to enter the Mosque, although in another situation superior officers called in a helicopter gunship to attack a Mosque garrisoned as a military fortress.

## **Conclusion**

Until recently I viewed the bombing of Kosovo as illegal but morally justified; today I see a potential dark side to the virtue professed by humanitarian hawks. We need more of the

inspiring militant non-violent activism of Gandhi and M.L. King, Jr. Nevertheless, I will not support a UU Statement of Conscience that rejects the use of any and all kinds of violence and war to resolve disputes between peoples and nations.

The UUA has in the past adopted resolutions supporting peace activism by the Quakers, Mennonites and Brethren without adopting their pacifist doctrine. At the same time, many UUs have in local protests following the death of Timothy Thomas joined in the marcher's chant of "No justice, no peace."?

I still believe that political reality, human nature, and moral authority justifies national military defense against an attack such as Pearl Harbor and the 9/11 world trade center crime against humanity. Yet on the other hand I cannot support as legitimate self defense a military retaliation against attack on America's overseas military bases – installations that now span the globe generating the type of resentment that led our nation's founders to take up arms.

I have fashioned a third alternative to the two options identified in the UUA study guide, and I urge you to support my position with a vote for #3. Instead of embracing activist pacifism with a vote for #1 or just war doctrine represented by #2, our Congregation should call for more peace activism by UUs of all persuasions.

Our liberal religious community pitches a broad tent that accommodates both pagans and Christians, both deists and atheists, both humanists and Buddhists. Certainly there is room for both pacifist doves and humanitarian hawks, but not if we choose between them by expressly renouncing violence altogether or by embracing just war doctrine as a UU principle or denominational policy. Thus I urge you when voting begins after reflection on the postlude to support a UU Statement of Conscience that *promotes UU peace activism that is acceptable to our members who renounce all use of violence as well as those who view some wars as just.* -- option #3 on your ballot, the order of service cover.

Even more critically, I urge you at least once this coming week to be a peace activist. Tomorrow at 4:30 to 5:30 you might join the weekly peace vigil "Women and Black" at the corner of Central parkway and Vine. For more than four years, since 2002 before the Iraq war began, my wife Nina, Joyce Cauffield, Mira Rodwan, Judy Cirillo, Emily Hodges, other women and even an occasional male member of our church have born public witness for peace.

Alternately from the comfort of your home, surf to the UUSC web site provided in the order of service insert and enlist in the "Drumbeat for Darfur" campaign to stop genocide. Or you could make a financial contribution to Seeds of Peace a summer camp in Maine for teenagers from areas of conflict around the world. From 46 Israeli, Palestinian and Egyptian teenagers in 1993, the organization still focuses on the Middle East but has expanded its programming to include young leaders from South Asia, Cyprus and the Balkans. Its leadership network now encompasses over 3,000 young people from several conflict regions. There are innumerable other ways you might act for peace, at least once every week in coming months.

Both pacifist doves and humanitarian hawks will support increased UU peace activism. Rather than embark on a divisive quest for consensus on a single doctrine, let's engage one another in finding more non-violent approaches to ending genocide in Darfur and to departing the Iraq conflict with minimal loss of life. Option number three provides common ground for militant, creative UU peace activists, but I retain the greatest respect for UUs that on principle favor either #1 or #2.

A democratic ward heeler in Chicago advised the party faithful to vote early and often. Whatever your ultimate choice in our vote today, please cast only one ballot into the box as you exit.

