

West Suburban Faith-Based Peace Coalition



**Presents
Peace Essay Contest Winners**

**August 27, 2015
The 87th Anniversary of the Kellogg-Briand Pact**

Our Mission Statement:

Promoting peace and justice in public policy
Educating ourselves on legislative issues
Advocating from our faith perspective
Communicating with our legislators
Encouraging others to be involved



Who are we?

We are an initiative of faith-based peacemakers from across Chicago's western suburbs. WSFPC includes clergy, congregations, church staff, lay persons, faith-based peace organizations, peace and justice committees, religious communities, and more, spanning from Oak Park to Elgin and Joliet. WSFPC is committed to sustaining work of peace through activities such as prayer vigils, public witness, peace education, lobbying/legislative initiatives, and interfaith dialogue.

Some of our Member Organizations are: Fellowship of Reconciliation, PAX Christi IL, the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, the Lombard Mennonite Church, the People's Church of Chicago and the York Center Church of the Brethren.

Where and when do we meet?

The **Legislation Workgroup** meets the first Wednesday of every month at the First United Methodist Church of Downers Grove from Noon to 2:00PM in room #202.

The **Servant Leadership Team** meets the second Thursday of every month at the Lombard Mennonite Church from 7:00PM to 8:30PM.

Our **Educational Forums** take place the third Tuesday of every month at the Lombard Mennonite Church from 7:00PM to 9:00PM.

How does one become a member?

Send a check for \$30 (note: no one is turned away for lack of funds) and your name, email address, and telephone number (please print) to

West Suburban Faith-Based Peace Coalition
c/o Nobuko Kudo
590 S La Londe Ave
Lombard, IL 60148

The West Suburban Faith-Based Peace Coalition is a Fellowship of Reconciliation Affiliate. Donations to WSFPC are tax deductible.

West Suburban Faith-Based Peace Coalition

Peace Essay Contest

Award Presentations

August 27, 2015

The 86th Anniversary of the Kellogg-Briand Pact

Peace Essay Judges

Leila Bannon, Villa Park, IL

Amira Boctor, Oak Brook, IL

Dave Karcher, Lombard, IL

Carol Urban, Glen Ellyn, IL

Jacqueline Vasan, Western Springs, IL

Peace Essay Coordinator

Frank Goetz, Wheaton, IL

Keynote Address

David Swanson

Author, Activist, Journalist and Radio Host

2015 Nobel Peace Prize Nominee

Peace Essay Winners

First Place Award

Mary Liston Liepold OFS, Ph.D., Silver Spring, MD

Second Place Award

Dana Holland, Toledo, OH

Third Place Awards

Haroon Atcha, Hanover Park, IL

Barbara Leedom, South Yarmouth, MA

Marsha Montgomery Taylor, Oak Park, IL

Honorable Mention

Montez Diamond, Atlanta, GA

Earl Valentine Fischer, Joliet, IL

Matthew Goetz, Age 17, Mason, OH

Robert Koehler, Oak Park, IL

Swetha Lalit Kumar, Chennai, India

Diego Mares, Age 14, So. Chicago Heights, IL

Rand Aaron Michaels, Syracuse, NY

Prince Onyekwelu, Age 14, Nkpor, Nigeria

Emmaly Read, Santa Barbara, CA

Adam Roufberg, Hatfield, PA

Bill Watkins, Los Angeles, CA

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Presented at Brio Tuscan Grille, Yorktown Center, Lombard, IL

First Place Award

Mary Liston Liepold, OFS, Ph.D.

How Can We Obey the Law Against War?

Teach History AND Alternative Futures

Not many people—and surely not many Americans—know that in 1928, the US and 64 other nations joined in “a frank renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy”: the Kellogg-Briand Pact. This footnote in history deserves to be better known for many reasons. Teachers of history and the other social studies are ideally positioned to make it known.

Teaching about the Pact fits with the Common Core Standards’ ELA emphasis on primary sources. It was a powerful expression of the loss, grief, and dismay that many experienced after World War I and the determination national leaders shared to avoid its future re-enactment.

Yes, World War II happened anyway. Some call it “The Good War,” to distinguish it from later, less popular, authorized but undeclared wars. The war-weariness that many citizens and a few policymakers express today may come close to the mood that led to Kellogg-Briand, almost 90 years ago. The ongoing War on Terror, with its shifting targets and unlimited terrain, has already cost \$2.6 to \$4.4 trillion dollars and 350,000 lives, and displaced some 6.7 million refugees.

Learning and teaching about the Pact is an opportunity for critical thinking about past, present, and future wars and the decision processes that lead up to them. Perhaps most important, though, it can open conversations about the war metaphor that permeates our culture, what we might call the mental habit of war, as a template for other major initiatives, and their very mixed records of success.

- Lyndon Johnson’s *War on Crime*, declared in 1965, has been considerably more durable than the same president’s War on Poverty, essentially derailed by war in Vietnam. The prison-industrial complex is our fastest growing industry, up 700% since 1970, with 1 in 31 adults under correctional control, according to the ACLU. Michelle Alexander calls it “The New Jim Crow.”
- The closely-linked *War on Drugs* was memorably described by CASA Columbia in its two Shoveling Up reports, the most recent from 2009. In 2005, less than 2 cents of every federal dollar spent on drug issues went to prevention and treatment, and only 0.4 to research.
- Richard Nixon declared *War on Cancer* by signing the National Cancer Act in 1971. Millions have since been spent on research and countless cancerous cells have been excised, poisoned, or burned. A 2013 New Yorker article quotes Silvia Formenti, chair of radiation oncology at New York University’s

Langone Medical Center: “We have managed to make cancer a huge business, and a national ‘terror,’ but the progress in reducing mortality is quite questionable.” Experts attribute such progress as has been made to growing understanding of cancer’s many forms and to changed behavior, especially a drop in smoking.

- The *War on Pests* goes back to Eden, but evidence suggests we and our environment may suffer more than the vermin. Some 50 years after *Silent Spring*, and 45 years after the creation of the EPA, pesticides and herbicides abound in our food, water, and air. Children are especially vulnerable to poison residues.

What these wars all have in common is an assumption that the way to deal with a problem is to kill or remove it. They fail, or offer mixed results at best, not only because they vastly underestimate the sophistication of their “enemies” (whether human, microscopic, or as abstract as the term *terror*) but because violent means inevitably hurt the war-makers as well as the enemy. Blowback happens.

The world our students will inhabit as adults needs radically new approaches to new and existing challenges. New approaches are being tested, and they’re showing results.

Examples include:

- People-power revolutions around the world, from the Philippines, Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyztan to the Arab Spring and beyond
- The impact of global cooperation in achieving several of the Millennium Development Goals, plus real progress on others
- The worldwide Restorative Justice movement, replacing retribution with person to person interactions that heal both parties
- Increasing acceptance of the disease model of addiction and Eric Holder’s drug policy reforms
- The endorsement (albeit cautious) of alternative cancer treatments by establishment actors like Mayo Clinic and the National Cancer Institute’s Office on Complementary & Alternative Medicine
- The exponential growth in demand for food grown without pesticides, averaging 16.5% annually from 2000 to 2010, and advances in the regulation of pesticides and the adoption of alternatives at state and local levels

Albert Einstein, the most admired scientist of the 20th century, said that imagination is more important than intelligence. Why not open our students’ imaginations to the possibility of a world without war? This century’s greatest challenges, like environmental degradation, hunger, and pandemic disease, are greatly exacerbated by war. They can only be met by international cooperation.

Response

Dear Frank,

I am writing as a partner with Mary Liston Liepold, Ph.D. in her application for peace competition sponsored by, World Beyond War.

I am a US History teacher at Gonzaga High School in Washington, DC. Gonzaga is a college preparatory school located just blocks from the US Capital. The students are called to by “men for others”. The school is sponsored by the Jesuits and has a long tradition of service and social justice.

I will help to organize an in-house workshop on the Kellogg-Briand pact some time during the 2015 – 2016 academic year. The workshop will be open to students and teachers at Gonzaga and will be a student led initiative. I will find a group of students next fall who will take charge of the workshop. They will spearhead the event and be responsible for all levels of preparation and planning as well as promoting the event to the Gonzaga community. I anticipate a turnout of between 50 – 75 students and teachers to attend.

Thank you for considering the proposal, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Edward L. Donnellan, Jr.
Social Studies Department
Gonzaga High School
19 Eye Street
Washington, DC 20001

Second Place Award

Dana Holland, Toledo, OH

How Can We Obey the Law against War?

A compelling question for sure. Perhaps many will attack this question from a legalist perspective, citing laws. Perhaps human rights and duties to mankind, responsibilities, and the good of all will be mentioned. These ideas and solutions may work, certainly, and are good, honest, and meritorious.

I should like to propose a simpler solution, however:

Be brave, and be kind.

It is simple. It is idealistic. But it would work. Allow me to explain.

Dehumanization is a dangerous and terrible phenomenon. It occurs when one becomes so disconnected from another who is perceived as so incredibly different and wrong -- and perceived is important here -- that the first party is able to rationalize treating the other poorly. The other party stops being human in the eyes of those who are dehumanizing them¹; they become "less than human": cockroaches. Dogs. Pigs. Once the other party stops being human, seemingly "normal" people can do terrible things that they would not normally do.²

This is seen endlessly in war: Japanese generals massacred the Chinese pre-WWII because they thought of the Chinese as "things," the Rwandan Tutsis were nothing more than "insects" and "cockroaches", the WWII Jews were "vermin" and "rats", Americans killed "gooks" in Vietnam and "towel heads" in Iraq... and the list continues.³ But why, exactly, does dehumanization matter, and what does it have to do with obeying the law against war?

Dehumanization is the absence of human connection; it enables war to thrive -- and that is where my proposition comes in. Creating human connection -- particularly in instances of war and hatred -- is bravery and kindness in their strongest forms.

People who are different from us can be scary. After all, they're an unknown. People who are like us -- who are familiar -- are far less scary; they are predictable and safe. There is a concept in social psychology called the "mere exposure effect"⁴ which posits that people develop preferences for things, including people, because they are familiar to them. The inverse, then, seems to logically follow: we are reticent about new things and people. Will fearing new and unknown things always lead to dehumanization? No. But this reticence is the first ingredient necessary in the recipe of dehumanization. As dehumanization can lead to conflict, and conflict can lead to war, it needs to stop before it starts.

¹ This is explained in *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*, by Philip Zimbardo, 2007, page 307.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Read more about the mere exposure effect in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* at <http://sites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic472736.files/Zajonc.pdf>

Being kind to those who are different and seemingly unknowable, being kind to those who have hurt us -- these can be very difficult things. They require the utmost bravery, but it is absolutely possible, and people do it every day.

In 1993 in Minnesota, Mary Johnson's only child -- her son -- was murdered. In her pain, she could have taken out these negative emotions on her son's murderer -- and many would not have blamed her. Instead, she chose to forgive him. The two became close, and she cared for him as a son. She re-humanized him in her mind and heart, and he moved into her duplex just a doorframe away.⁵

Another example: In Kaduna, Nigeria in the 1990s, Christian and Muslim factions were warring against each other. Pastor Wuye, a Christian leader, and Imam Ashafa, a Muslim leader in the same area, led forces against each other and engaged in violent attacks. In their battles, Pastor Wuye lost his hand, and Imam Ashafa's relatives were killed. And yet, somewhere along the way, both the Pastor and the Imam chose a different path. They made the very brave (and initially frightening) decision to foster peaceful connections with each other, and treat each other kindly despite their violent history toward each other. As they did this, they lead their congregations to do the same through their behavior⁶. Though these are just two stories, there are many more remarkable examples of peacebuilding and reconciliation.

What do these examples of bravery and kindness have to do with obeying the law against war, though?

Imagine if world leaders engaged in the brave acts of public kindness and reconciliation instead of war and revenge. Imagine if, instead of cold, impersonal meetings discussing cease-fires and territorial disputes through gritted teeth, state leaders showed vulnerability, pain, kindness, and a genuine desire to heal through peacebuilding dialogue sessions? Imagine if they validated each other's pain, took ownership of their actions... and forgave? And imagine what it would be like if they acknowledged the humanity and suffering of the other? And the general populace who witnessed their leaders engaging in such behaviors -- imagine that! The actions of world leaders resonate across the world. Just as war creates ripples of hatred and conflict, so, too can peace.

It will take bravery. It will take kindness. But it can be done.

Response

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki Moon did not reply.

⁵ Read more at CBS News' website at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/love-thy-neighbor-sons-killer-moves-next-door/>

⁶ The Imam and the Pastor's incredible story can be found at <http://www.iofc.org/imam-pastor>

Third Place Award

Haroon Atcha, Hanover Park, IL

How Can We Obey the Law Against War?

Ms. Wian

As an active participant in your Model United Nations conferences I've always felt humbled by the idealism my fellow delegates possess. In a world where nihilism and pessimism abound, it's refreshing to work with students for whom the problems of the world are not intractable and inevitable but rather, obstacles to overcome through fellowship. It's this idealism that I believe every Model UNer shares; an idealism inherent to the United Nations itself. It is an idealism born not in spite of the world's ills but rather, because of them. It is *because* of disease, tragedy and war that we believe in the power of humans to overcome. And it is that belief that has guided me through my time at your conferences. It has helped me understand the role of cooperation and the necessity of peaceful conflict resolution. I write to you because of that belief in peaceful conflict resolution and because you, more so than many others, are capable of influencing a generation. As I'm sure you know, the United States and many other nations are parties to the Kellogg-Briand pact of 1928. It is a pact disavowing war as a tool of diplomacy. I say this because in that pact I find the same idealism common among Model UN participants and evident in your conferences. It is a document that I find particularly compelling especially when read in the context of the United Nations because I just returned from your conference in Charlotte with my team where we attempted to address the world's most pressing issues through diplomacy and cooperation. In many ways we and most other delegates embodied the ideals of the Kellogg-Briand pact while participating in your conference. We were challenged to arrive at difficult solutions that might otherwise be temporarily addressed with peacekeeping troops. Ultimately, however, the United Nations is an institution of idealism and our actions at your conference reflected that. With this in mind, I write to you with a request. I humbly request you consider a theme for future conferences that revolves around an end to violence and encouraging non-violent solutions to violent situations. It is a theme that may serve to mold a new generation of empathetic human beings for whom war might become obsolete. Ms. Wian, I encourage you to imagine a world in which violent conflict is absent and then draw upon your idealism to make that world a reality for future generations. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Haroon Atcha

Response

Mr Goetz,

attached is the response I received from Mis Liz Wian, director of the SRMUN (Southern Regional Model United Nations) conference. Thank you for your consideration.

Haroon Atcha

On Monday, April 13, 2015 5:22 PM, Liz Kayed <liz.kayed@srmun.org> wrote:

Hi Haroon!

Thank you so much for the kind words; SRMUN Charlotte was definitely one for the record books! I've copied our new Board President, Cortney Moshier, and our Executive Director, Mike Gaspar, to this email so that they can review the suggestion you presented.

Thank you again for your attendance at SRMUN Charlotte and we look forward to seeing you and your team at another SRMUN conference soon!

-Liz

Liz Wian
President Board of Directors
SRMUN Charlotte 2015 | April 9-11, 2015
SRMUN Atlanta 2015 | November 19-21, 2015
liz.wian@srmun.org

Third Place Award

Barbara Leedom, South Yarmouth, MA

A Law Against War? Yes, there is!

To: Edmund Robinson, minister, Unitarian Universalist Meeting House, Chatham, MA

I am asking you to alert your congregation and the ecumenical community of which you are a key part to the Kellogg Briand Pact of 1928. You and I talked about it – you'd never heard of it, and I'd only heard of it when notification of an essay contest appeared in my in-box. I suspect most people you and I know never heard of it. We should have.

Edmund, we're now, as the current cliché goes, plugged in. Things you and I and others can do to promote peace come with a knowledge of the K.P. Pact. Why hadn't we and probably millions of others in the countries which signed the Pact heard about it? The answer is simple: it would not, could not, be enforced. This year, there is a renewed effort to make the world aware of this agreement to end armed conflicts everywhere. This is what our then Secretary of State and French Foreign Minister envisioned.

In this age of instant information, readers can look up the specifics of this noble endeavor for world peace initiated by then U.S. Secretary of State Frank Kellogg and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand. WWI with its awful bloodshed would not be repeated, proponents of peace insisted. The U.S., France and Germany signed the Pact, then 15 other nations followed by 62 more. So why not immediate international peace? There were so many terms and conditions.

I was in my mid 20s when Viet Nam raged. I'll never forget the evening when I saw the video of the naked girl running down a street in Viet Nam after napalm had burned her. She was crying, screaming.

That video led me to get involved in marches and sit-ins and letter writing campaigns to help get U.S. forces out of Nam. We protestors, millions of us, I believe, were instrumental in ending that war. My knees no longer will allow me to participate in sit-ins but that doesn't mean I can't sit and write letters and opinion pieces and keep track of the men and women I voted for who should be accountable to us.

We can promote peaceful solutions to armed conflicts by alerting others to get involved in movements and organizations already established. I'm a member of FOR (Fellowship of Reconciliation), an international movement that brings speakers from abroad to educate others about the plights of enslaved people and what's happening in far-away wars. There are hundreds of national and international peace movements and hundreds of chapters on local levels – students, veterans, physicians and faith-based groups initiate and take part in marches and meetings locally and nationally.

International Day of Peace is always on September 21. It was established in 1981. “The day should be observed as a day of global ceasefire.” Only when more people in the world know of this day and observe such a ceasefire will there truly be at least one day of world peace,” its mission reads.

Communities worldwide participate in World Peace Day in a variety of ways. Children plant trees in honor of peace. There are organized walks, runs and picnics. Artists display their works and musicians play for peace.

Edmund, you can help encourage peace at your church and in your community. You can publicize Peace Day coming next September. Your members can meet and decide what they'd like to do, what they think they can and will do, to help make peace a public event and free to all.

Only when movements start at the grass roots do things happen. Only when two or three or more folks begin some cause does it proliferate and become a series of events. Only when there's dedication and devotion beginning with a few does something transpire that becomes huge.

Think of who has recently started movements to right wrongs, to foster goodness instead of cruelty, to bring peace and human rights to troubled places. No one outside their tight knit communities had heard of Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai, but now they're Nobel Peace prize winners “for their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education. “

Peace starts with education. Children locked in war torn places, unless given free and comprehensive educations, know only constant gunfire and raids and restraints and bombs. Given knowledge, freedom of information from other places, young people like Malala can start peace movements in their villages, cities, countries.

Whatever your parishioners want and will do to promote peace on September 21, 2015, thank you for your participation. Thank you for your friendship. I look forward to your response.

Response

Dear Barbara,

Thank you for your message urging me to alert my congregation to the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, which purports to outlaw war between the signatory nations.

As it happens, we have just concluded a month-long exhibit of a powerful anti-war art installation by local artist and friend of the congregation, Priscilla Smith. Priscilla gave a presentation to our congregation in the exhibition space which enlightened all of us to the meaning and source of her disturbing images. In the presentation she told us that she had been an active protester of the War in Vietnam, bringing her young children to the protests, but later decided that the most effective witness she could make against war was as an artist. I tried to speak for all those in attendance in thanking her for jolting us out of our complacency.

War is terrible; it seldom accomplishes the ends for which it is instituted, and as soon as the first shot is fired, the law of unintended consequences takes over and the original purposes get lost. It not only destroys life and limb and property, it destroys meaning itself. It is an affront to the teachings of Jesus and many other religious figures.

And yet I am not led by my own religious convictions to become an absolute pacifist. The historical questions are complex. I am not a good enough student of history to say with certainty, but I have an abiding feeling that the American colonies were right to fight for their independence from Great Britain in 1776, that the Union was right to fight for its preservation against the secession of the slave states in 1861-65, and that the US was right to oppose the expansionist designs of the Axis powers in 1941-45. These “rights” however, must be set against the backgrounds of the immense historical wrongs done to the Native American population in settling this land in the first place, and to the enslaved Africans and their descendants.

I am the minister of the UU Meeting House in Chatham, but in matters such as this I don’t speak for the congregation or the larger movement. It is characteristic of our non-creedal approach to religion that each UU thinks for him or herself and while there may be common values, there is no official position on most social matters.

After Priscilla’s presentation, I drove to Falmouth and was able to get the near end of a concert of Civil War music in which my wife, Jacqueline, was featured. It brought tears to my eyes. Two weeks earlier, I had celebrated the 150th anniversary of the surrender at Appomattox by ringing a bell on the Chatham Meeting House portico. I am a southerner, the ancestors I have who fought in that war all fought for the so-called Confederacy, yet I have no sympathy for the Confederate cause, and the decades leading up to that war convince me that had the war not occurred, the slave power would have continued to try to add territories and votes to preserve the “Southern Way of Life” and we might be a slave nation today. As terrible as the bloodshed was, and as badly as the African-Americans were treated after the war, I am glad that we are not a slave nation today.

If there are just wars, there are also unjust wars. I was out protesting the Viet Nam war along with Priscilla and hundreds of thousands of my countrymen. I protested the invasion of Iraq, but not the Gulf War or the invasion of Afghanistan.

Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker wrote a book in 2010 titled *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, which argued that, contrary to conventional wisdom, violence has actually declined over the course of human history and prehistory, and the present age is the most peaceful since the human race first evolved. He attributes this decline to the rise of the nation-state and its assumption of a monopoly on violence, a theory proposed by Thomas Hobbes in the 17th century. I find the Pinker-Hobbes thesis persuasive. What it suggests as far as international relations is that there will not be a cessation of international conflict until nations are willing to cede control of their militaries to a super-national entity. That is not likely in the foreseeable future. The unlikeliest nation to voluntarily turn over control is the United States, whose military budget is greater than the next 20 nations combined. The U.S. has scuttled international efforts to control violence from the League of Nations to the International Criminal Court.

The world is in a very different situation today than it was in 1928. Much of the violence being practiced is not by nation-states, but by terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State, for whom violence is a recruiting tool, a way to grow their organization and give it some legitimacy among the other actors on the international scene. Existing mechanisms to deter war between nations don't really work here. A serious question is what does work. We have found out what doesn't.

Focus on the Kellogg-Briand Pact. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* entry calls its attempt to outlaw war "grandiose." Law at any level is only effective as means of controlling behavior if it has sanctions behind it, if a violation of its provisions will bring consequences. The moral code expressed in a law must coincide with the consensus of society, or it will be ineffective.

I was a trial lawyer for thirty years. When I represented a criminal defendant in a jury trial, I'd have to make an assessment about the probable attitude of the jurors toward the crime. If the crime was armed robbery of a liquor store, most jurors wouldn't be able to see themselves in the position of the defendant, and my only hope was to convince them that the police got the wrong person. If the charge was drunk driving, however, the chances were that several individuals on a 12 person jury would at some time in their lives have committed the crime for which my client was standing trial, and maybe inclined to mercy. If I was lucky enough to get pot-smokers on the jury for a marijuana possession trial, I may have gotten an obviously guilty client off scot-free.

The ineffectiveness of the Kellogg-Briand Pact is demonstrated by the fact that most of the signatories were engaged in a Second World War a dozen years after it was signed! It not only had no enforcement mechanism, but the only international organization which could mediate it, the League of Nations, was crippled by the failure of the U.S. to join it. According to that same *Britannica* article, Briand proposed this Pact as a means of getting the U.S. into a system of alliances. But World War I (which I do not include in my list of possibly justified wars) was brought on by just such a system of entangling alliances.

Only in an absolute tyranny is it possible to rule by fiat. In most situations, you can't bring something into existence or destroy it simply by saying so. In Genesis I, God creates the word by speaking it into being, but this feat has not worked for anyone since. We can pass laws against war, poverty, disease, earthquakes, racism, even death, but they will have no more worth than the paper on which they are written.

We know a lot today about techniques for conflict resolution, and in many instances, skilled negotiators and diplomats are able to keep conflicts from escalating into violence. I put a lot more of my hopes in negotiations than I would in a treaty outlawing war.

I am glad to encourage my congregation to continue the discussion started by Priscilla on the horrors of war and realistic steps which we might take in order to promote the beating of swords into plowshares. I expect that the Kellogg-Briand Pact in that discussion would feature only as a dead end, as an example of a tactic to avoid. But I may be surprised.

I am not happy with this answer. I have been singing songs of peace all my life, musical pieces which speak most deeply to my soul. My heart wants to declare my unconditional opposition to the scourge of war. Justifications such as I have given here seem light and abstract when measured against the horrible, concrete and unglamorous suffering and loss which any war brings. The idea of asserting a justification almost seems a dishonor to the victims. And the idea of heroism, noble in itself, is debased when incorporated into the rhetoric of justification of war. I hope that in most instances of national crisis, I would respond by protesting military options and encouraging negotiated resolutions. But if I am honest with myself, I can imagine extreme situations where I would take up arms. If the cause was urgent enough to overcome my visceral abhorrence of violence, the words on a treaty signed in 1928 would not constrain my choices.

Thank you for writing, Barbara. A blessing on your literary endeavors, and I am pleased to call you my friend.

Rev. Edmund Robinson, Minister
Unitarian Universalist Meeting House
819 Main St.
Chatham, MA 02633

Third Place Award

Marsha Montgomery Taylor, Oak Park, IL

How Can We Obey the Law Against War?

While reading an excerpt of *“When the World Outlawed War”*, I discovered that I had no idea that there was a law to outlaw war. According to David Swanson’s book, a highly energized ‘Peace Movement’ in the 1920’s supported by an overwhelming majority of U.S. citizens from every level of society, pushed politicians into drafting a law against war. “David Swanson is on a mission to end war. In his life an important story a time a national peace movement raged across our nation. This movement and members of Congress were active participants in signing a treaty which outlawed war. Sadly today few know about this significant movement in our history but Swanson’s book will help change that” – Bruce K. Gagnon

I struggle with answering the question of how we can obey the law against war because it has been man’s answer since the beginning of time. I would like to start with the war in Heaven. There was a war in Heaven between angels, according to the book of Revelation 12:7. In this book the archangel Michael defeated those led by “the dragon”, which identified with “the devil and Satan”-.”[They were] thrown down to earth. Maybe this is where man gets the idea of war, since the bible states this war began in Heaven. I have a couple of answers for this situation of war; one answer is for people to abstain from all evil thoughts. The crime of war occurs when one lets evil thoughts into their mind, or has been exposed to seeing evil things as a child.

Recently in the news I heard the most disturbing report. About a two year old child who was shopping with his mother at a Walmart store. He found a gun in his mother’s purse aimed it at her shot and killed her. This, to me, is a direct result of how a child has been exposed to weapons of violence, either by watching it on television or by seeing their parents with them in the privacy of their homes. The message that is conveyed to a child is killing someone is the new normal because they see it on television. On cartoons the villains are slain, but in the next episode they are alive. I believe these images strike up a curiosity within a child which can grow into violent acts. This is an archetype of the worse kind for the next generation.

There is a question that truly disturbs me, when does killing people in a war or in the line of duty becomes murder? When I ask someone about this, I get the same answer; murder is a contemplated act with intent to harm someone, whereas killing someone in a war is protecting and serving one’s country. So where does the thin line of murder begin and end? Both my older brother’s, were National Guardsmen. When I asked them what did they learn in boot camp? Their answers were, “we were taught how to kill people”. When I

think of what they told me, I am angered about how they told them that if their own mother gets in their way when protecting and serving their country, “kill her”. While listening to NPR radio, the reporter stated that President Obama does not want to have a nuclear war with any country. Is he obeying the “no war” law? I believe he is. In the bible, man has always asked God to do something about poverty, slavery, sickness, and disease. God’s answer to man was, “I did do something, I created you”. In turn, man began to eliminate people through wars.

I was watching the movie “*Amazing Grace*”, a movie that depicts the life of Wilber Wilberforce. In the movie, a magistrate of parliament asked him this question about slavery; “What is the difference between appeasement and surrender?” Wilberforce answered with, “The difference between appeasement and surrender is that another life will not be wasted in slavery.” War should not be used to bring peace, only trust and love can do that, so more lives will not be wasted.

Wars are caused by fear, and through understanding, we could alleviate fear, which reduces wars. “If fear is cultivated it will become stronger, if faith is cultivated it will achieve mastery” – John Paul Jones

In conclusion, war is still prevalent in today’s world, because we are still engaged in conflict between nations with opposing views. The solution will begin when mankind begins to look within and stop the war that exists inside of him. Only then will we have obedience of the law against war.

Response

April 9, 2015

Frank Goetz
Dominican University

Dear Frank,

Marsha Taylor asked me to respond to her paper, “How Can We Obey the Law Against War?” Essay No. 2022.

Like her, I had not heard of the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928, but was delighted to learn of it. What a fascinating historical footnote. Too bad it’s just a footnote, but perhaps it is a seed that will eventually bear greater fruit.

Marsha learned about the pact while reading the book, “When the World Outlawed War,” by David Swanson. I learned more about it by reading the Kellogg-Briand Pact entry in Wikipedia. Remarkable. And even though it has not ended war (just as the War to End All Wars did not, nor did its successor), I was intrigued to learn that the treaty remains in effect, rendering warfare illegal.

Well, it’s a start.

In her paper, she poses the question, how can we obey this treaty? First of all, I suppose, by learning more about it and spreading the word, which is the goal, presumably, of this assignment. In that sense, she has succeeded.

Marsha suggests that we need to explore the theological underpinning of war: evil thoughts. Abstaining from those thoughts, she hopes, will have a positive effect. That has been the thrust of organized religion's efforts for centuries, of course, with little in the way of observable results. But she does suggest that "warfare" is deeply entrenched in our psychology, going all the way back to combat among the angels in the Bible, and understanding how "hard-wired" we are to see life in terms of "battle" may help us begin to evolve beyond that mindset, both individually and collectively.

Next, she contends that our exposure to violence through the media may also condition us, predisposing us to consider violent solutions to our problems. And in our longstanding reverence for our military, we overlook the fact that they are trained to kill and, in the process, to make a distinction between "killing" (as a justifiable form of self-defense in protecting against one's "enemies") and "murder." Even if one accepts the distinction as necessary in a dangerous world, we all know from past reports that in combat, soldiers have frequently crossed that line and committed atrocities. It is a fine line separating the two.

Marsha is on to something by identifying fear as the root of most of our bad behavior. Fear is natural. It is even necessary. But we can make it a habit, the consequences are terrible, both between people and between nations. She quotes John Paul Jones, a warrior himself, who noted, "If fear is cultivated, it will become stronger. If faith is cultivated, it will achieve mastery." It seems pretty clear which way our warrior nation leans, unfortunately, as do many others.

The reason the Kellogg-Briand Pact didn't work, Marsha rightly notes, is that you can't outlaw war unless you first "stop the war that exists inside."

There are many fine kernels in this essay. It made me eager to hear each of them developed further — just as it would be wonderful to have knowledge of the Kellogg-Briand Pact spread to an ever wider audience so that we can accelerate our evolution from being creatures of conflict to being creatures of conflict resolution.

Thanks for the opportunity to respond,

Ken Trainor
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About the Peace Essay Contest

This project was inspired by David Swanson's book, "When the World Outlawed War" and by Kathy Kelly (thrice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize) who gave the book to Frank Goetz.

The West Suburban Faith-Based Peace Coalition (WSFPC, www.faithpeace.org) regards the multinational agreement to outlaw war 87 years ago a major advancement of civilization. It should not be the world's best kept secret.

The WSPFC established the Peace Essay Contest in 2012 to inform the public, particularly students, about this historic event and promised \$1,000.00 to the author of the best essay. In 2013 we transformed it to an Essay-Response Contest to emphasize the need for essays which have the potential of moving us closer to a world without war. Recently we were pleasantly surprised that news of this contest has spread to many continents and inspired heavy participation (17 essays each) in two elementary schools: Grant School in South Chicago Heights and Winners International School in Nigeria. This would not have happened without the efforts of the school promoters: Concetta Smart and Emmanuel Ugokwe, respectively.

A new category, Honorable Mention, is added this year to acknowledge authors who produced excellent essays and responses and received multiple votes by the judges but not as many as the top five. Among the 11 recipients are two students judged best from the aforementioned schools and one under the name Matthew Johnson to conceal his grandson relationship to the contest coordinator.

The WSPFC appreciates all who participated in this Peace Essay Contest, especially the 59 authors who submitted the essays and the five judges who evaluated them. We would also like to acknowledge all who promoted the Peace Essay Contest, especially Amira Boctor, Nobuko Kudo, Steve Jackson, Karen Jackson and Dave Karcher. International Peace Organizations including Pax-Christi, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Veterans for Peace distributed the WSPFC Contest Rules to its members all over the world. This booklet once again was kindly edited by Marilyn Peretti.

Special thanks go to David Swanson for his keynote address, Kathy Kelly for presenting the awards and Rev. William O'Shea for leading us in prayer, making this Third Annual Awards Luncheon such an inspiring and memorable event. We congratulate the winners! And we invite your comments and suggestions regarding this project.

WSFPC will announce the Rules for the 2016 Peace Essay/Response Contest in September, 2015. No major changes are anticipated. Both the essays submitted and the responses documented will be judged.

For more information contact: coordinator Frank Goetz (frankgoetz@comcast.net).