

 

A Missional Response with Communities in Conflict

Integral Mission Forum
30th September 2015





Reality Check

- The Church as an agent of healing and reconciliation
 - How can the church be a people of peace if they themselves are not at peace!?
- Examples of concern:
 - Kenya: 83% Christian / 28th most corrupt nation
 - Rwanda: 89% Christian – 2004 genocide
 - United Kingdom: 59% Christian
 - Middle East



Example of Peace Initiatives

- If I call for peace as an **outsider** and tell those who are oppressed and exploited, those who face danger and fear daily, to respond peacefully – they may say:
 - I am speaking to the wrong people?
 - That is easy for me to say this when I don't face their pain
 - Who benefits from the peace - surely the status quo and those in power benefit?



Various Understandings of Peace

- Peace is often understood to mean **avoidance of physical violence**
 - Pacifist:
 - believing that war and violence are unjustifiable
 - opposed to war or violence as a means to resolving a dispute
 - an attitude or policy of non resistance
 - Abstaining from physical or lethal violence
 - Standing against anyone who uses violence as a means to an end.
 - No violence to change social and economic injustices?

"Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent" - pacifist



What kind of peace are we looking for?

- Shalom (Hebrew word in OT):
- Eirene (Greek word in NT)
- What does Biblical Peace look like?
- What does Biblical Justice look like?
- What does Biblical Truth look like?



Becoming a Person of Peace

- Source of peace
- Source of life
- Source of light
- Source of Good News
- Source of hope
- Source of justice
- Source of truth
- Source of compassion
- Source of healing
- Source of reconciliation



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Understanding Shalom

What does peace look like through the eyes of others?

Gospel is a Gift of Shalom

Jesus is the Prince of Peace
Jesus is our Peace (Eph 2:14)
Each encounter with God – the start is **Peace be with you**

God's Mission – a Mission of Shalom

We have been given a ministry of reconciliation
2 Cor 5:18

Kingdom Of God

What does this look like?

- Soldiers
- Civilians
- Orphans
- Abused / Exploited
- Refugee
- Migrant

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Shalom: how things should be

1. Well being:
 - Physical
 - Mental
 - Emotional
 - Spiritual
2. Justice:
 - Peace
 - Safety and security
 - Truth
 - Reconciliation
 - Restoration
 - Equality
 - Right relationships / right relatedness
3. Integrity:
 - Honesty
 - Fairness
 - Being a blessing
 - Rightness

Only transformation of all aspects will lead to Shalom

- Knowledge and practice
- Structures, laws and policies that promote this.

Prosperity: only that which comes with moral integrity and includes well being for all (Shalom) is the one that gives life

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1. Shalom: material well being

- Gen 37:14 – Joseph is asked by Jacob to check on the “**Shalom**” of his brothers and of the cattle
 - Jacob wants to know if they are **alright physically**
- Shalom is being used to describe **physical well being**
- Reflected in OT greetings:
 - How are you doing – are you well are you Shalom
 - Reply is they have Shalom (Gen 43:27,28)
- Are you ok? Are things all right? Is everything ok? Is anything that matter? Is everything as it should be?
- **Shalom = a state of well being, all rightness, being ok.**



2. Shalom: a blessing

- High priest blessings (Numbers 6:26) “may God give you Shalom.”
 - May you prosper
 - May you succeed



3. Shalom: as safe and secure

- Physical danger
 - Jer 14:13 – not see war or disease
- The absence of danger

Peace making – avoids conflict, enforces peace

Shalom making is striving for something where all needs are met in safety and people are blessed to be a blessing.



Two sides of a coin

- Shalom: physical well being and the **absence** of threats:
 - War
 - Disease
 - Hunger, Thirst, Shelter
- Shalom: physical well being and the **presence** of:
 - Safety and security
 - Health
 - Sufficient food, water, shelter

 **4. Shalom as Justice**

- Social wellbeing:
 - Good relationships between:
 - Nations / groups of people (1 Kings 5:12; Judges 4:17)
 - E.g: from a treaty
 - God and people: covenant (Is 54:10)
 - Friendships: people to people (Jer 20:10)
- War marks the absence of Shalom between nations
- Injustice marks the absence of Shalom in society
 - Is 60:17-18 – when God restores a nation justice will be practiced.
 - Is 54:13-14 - Shalom and righteousness come with the removal of oppression
 - Is 32:16-17 – Shalom is shown as the fruit of righteousness
 - Ps 35:27 – pairing of Shalom and righteousness
- **With justice comes Shalom**
- Shalom describes the ways things should be

 **5. Shalom as Straightforwardness**

- Shalom and morality and ethics
 - Opposite of deceit (Ps 34:14-15)
 - A person of integrity (Ps 37:37)
 - Fair judgement (Zac 8:16)
 - To be blameless or innocent (without guilt)
 - No hypocrisy

 **6. Shalom as God's Will**

- God's ultimate purpose and mission
 - Is 2:2-4 – gives an image of Shalom
- People recognise the rule of God
- People hunger for the Word of God
- People learn the way of God
- People are obedient to God

 **7. Shalom as Good News**

- God of Peace (Rom 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor 13:11)
- Peace of God (John 14:27; Phil 4:7; Col 3:15)
- Gospel of Peace (Eph 6:15; Acts 10:36)
- Good News for all
- Jesus makes this Shalom possible through the Cross and resurrection:
 - Jesus brings peace between God and us (justification – Jesus makes things right)
 - Jesus brings peace between people (Reconciliation)
 - NB: order: Eph 2:14-17 / Matt 5:23-24 – **as we reconcile to one another we reconcile to God**
 - Galatians 3:28
 - Jesus brings peace between us and creation (Colossians) (Ecological wholeness)

 **Points to Note**

1. Becoming a person / a people of peace
 - Understanding and Experiencing God’s heart
 - Living in Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit
 - Seeing with the eyes of the Holy Spirit
2. Ministry of Reconciliation
 - Isaiah 11: 1-9: reconciliation depth (lion and lamb)
3. Dealing with prejudices and hates
 - **pre-conceived opinion** likely to be harmful to another person or his/her rights
 - Prejudice often generalises
 - Where do we get our prejudices from?
4. Redeemed identity – holy nation, royal priesthood
5. God of love in the midst of suffering and injustice
 - Deuteronomy 32:4
