Uprooting Violence, Cultivating Peace: Education for an Engaged Spirituality

by

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Multi Faith Centre

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SUMMARY OF PROFESSORIAL LECTURE

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Worldwide, the pervasive realities of violence in all its forms and levels of life, from global to global, have catalyzed individuals and movements to build a culture of peace, conceptualized as a multi-dimensional framework of six inter-related themes; *dismantling the culture of war; living with justice and compassion; promoting human rights and responsibilities; building cultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity; living in harmony with the Earth; and cultivating inner peace.* In this urgent work of uprooting violence and cultivating peace, the role of education is increasingly recognized as indispensable. Policies and strategies to transcend all kinds of violence need complementary educational processes at all levels of society (formal, non-formal, informal) to cultivate values, attitudes and worldviews that are internalized by individuals, institutions and conflicting parties. There is an emergent consensus that education for a culture of peace seeks to raise critical awareness and understanding of the root causes of all forms of conflicts and violence from micro to macro-levels of life. Based on this understanding and on appropriate values, learners feel empowered to take action for transformation, to change their and the world's realities from a culture of violence to a culture of peace. Furthermore, peace education needs to be grounded on appropriate pedagogical principles, such as holism, dialogue, critical empowerment, and values formation, since *how* we educate for peace is just as important as knowledge *about* violence and building peace.

This lecture seeks to share some insights, lessons, signposts and questions flowing from my personal journey in peace education through various South and North contexts. Through critical reflection on and analysis of these personal and social experiences gained as part of a wider educational and peacebuilding community, notably in the Philippines but also in Australia, Canada and other global networks, I hope to present a meaningful case for what may be called education for an engaged spirituality. Spiritual growth cannot be a self-centred goal and process divorced from social and political realities, but rather needs to be expressed in action and practices that transform the everyday lives of individuals, communities, nations and the world community toward a culture of peace. Using exemplars from my journey and inspired by other peace educators who have shared paths in trying to uproot violence and cultivate peace, this talk will explore the complexities, challenges and hopes of educating for an engaged spirituality.

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Introduction*

At the beginning of this century, the United Nations declared 2000 as the International Year for a Culture of Peace and 2001-2010 as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World (Adams, 2000). In the view of UNESCO (1995), a culture of peace:

… consists of values, attitudes and behaviors that reflect and inspire social interaction and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, all human rights, tolerance and solidarity; that reject violence, endeavour to prevent conflict by tackling the root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation; and that guarantees the full exercise of all rights and the means to participate fully in the development process of their society.

Both Declarations clearly signal a historic appeal by and for all nations and peoples to transcend violence and the destructive conflicts of the past century, which have caused tremendous pain and suffering for humankind. Most importantly, they affirm and recognize the efforts of countless individuals, communities, and movements worldwide in their struggles to build a culture of peace. Amidst the scourge of violence in all its forms, the Declarations echo a global yearning for a non-violent, just, sustainable and compassionate world. Just as innumerable founders, prophets, sages, saints and wise elders of diverse faiths, cultures and civilizations have taught their peoples, these Declarations challenge us to uproot violence and cultivate peace.

May I express my humble and heartfelt appreciation for the opportunity provided by this Griffith University Professorial Lecture to share some critical reflections on the work and challenges of education in building a culture of peace. I am also deeply grateful to the communities and individuals who have played significant and inspirational roles in my own small journey, which in essence is an accumulation of shared struggles in many sites and levels of life. It is above all a journey in nurturing an engaged spirituality that continues to challenge me to manifest my spiritual growth in action and practices for peace.

The Scourge of Violence

Nowadays, the manifestation of various forms of violence weighs heavily on everyday consciousness. In this age of mass media, we wake up daily to the horrors, destruction, and tragedy of violence and armed conflicts in many corners of the world, killing some 3.6 million people and creating 22 million refugees during the decade of the 90s (UNDP, 2002). Ongoing wars have overflowed into the new century, which also ushered in new battlegrounds, notably after the 9/11 attacks, in Afghanistan and Iraq. The current “war on terrorism” has tragically sown more anger and hatred, fueling an endless cycle of violence and counter-violence with ever more innocent civilians caught in the deadly crossfires. But physical violence is found not only in wars and armed conflicts. We also hear grim reports of thousands of victims battered or even killed in all kinds of domestic violence and violence against women and minorities, or in some countries, student-perpetrated shootings or homicide in schools.

Once in a while, we are reminded by the United Nations and other aid agencies of the suffering of billions mired in global poverty, while a minority of the world’s peoples and nations enjoy unprecedented affluence and technological advancement. The UN Human Development Report (2003) has noted that 1.2 billion human beings live on less than $1 a day. More than 30,000 children die daily from preventable causes; one billion people have no access to safe drinking water;

another billion live in inadequate housing and millions are homeless worldwide. In the area of health, apart from continual and alarming rise of preventable diseases, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has afflicted millions of human beings with tragic long-term social legacies. In contrast, though not as well publicized, the wealthy North world has been able and willing to spend $18 billion on makeup, $17 billion on pet food (US & Europe), $14 billion on ocean cruises, and $11 billion on ice cream (Europe) (WorldWatch Institute, 2004).

After fifty years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, while there has been progress in protecting the rights of citizens in some societies, sadly we are still confronted daily by the grim reality of violations of the rights of millions of men, women, and children. The Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (United Nations, 1993) reaffirmed the validity of the Universal Declaration, but its complex deliberations demonstrated the ongoing challenges to build a world that fully upholds basic human rights and freedoms. Advances have been achieved by marginalized groups in asserting their rights, but some nation-states continue to dispute the universality of human rights invoking their prerogative for cultural specificity or relativism.

We live today on the verge of an ecological crisis. The mounting evidence of pollution, depletion of fisheries, deforestation, global warming and other environmental problems confirm that the crisis, unless resolved, will yield very serious consequences threatening the survival of humanity and planet earth. Yet, the forces of maximum economic growth only escalate the destruction of the world's forests, lands, oceans and air and the delicate balance of our ecosystems.

For several decades we have been horrified and saddened by episodes of "inter-cultural" violence in virtually all regions, from Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Chechnya, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Indonesia to Nigeria, India, Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia. Racism and discrimination also persist or intensified, even where multiculturalism is promoted. Increasingly, we are also becoming more aware of the over 200 million indigenous or aboriginal peoples in the world speaking out for their rights. For them, reconciliation with truth and justice remains an uphill challenge. We are thus reminded that relationships between different cultural and ethnic groups can result in deep divisions and even violence.

A Yearning for Peace

Confronted by such daily episodes of conflicts, violence, and suffering, it can be easy to feel pessimistic and overwhelmed. The good news, however, is that there is a growing number of peoples worldwide who refuse to feel hopeless and despair in the face of these realities. As individuals and members of families, communities, organizations and networks, they remain hopeful that they can learn to build a peaceful humanity and a peaceful world. Some governments and official agencies too have been more willing to play constructive roles. There is also a growing consensus that an expanding civil society - comprising communities, nongovernment organizations, individual committed citizens, some sectors of business, social institutions and regional and international networks - has been vital in catalyzing and sustaining a culture of peacebuilding in all levels (European Centre for Conflict Prevention, 1999; Garcia, 1994).

As this work of peacebuilding expands and intensifies, the role of education is increasingly recognized as indispensable. The work of educators at all levels and modes of schooling may not always be as visible as participating in peace rallies, peace negotiations and other forms of nonviolent action. Nevertheless, to be effective, such peacebuilding actions have always been accompanied and sustained by education. Policies and strategies to transcend all kinds of violence need complementary educational processes at all levels of society to cultivate values,

attitudes and worldviews that are internalized by individuals, institutions and conflicting parties (Burns & Aspeslagh, 1996; Toh, 2001a). While peace accords may be negotiated and signed, or schools may declare violence prevention policies, they cannot be effective and sustainable if citizens, leaders, students, teachers, and parents are not engaged in a critically transformative process of peace education.

My journey in peace education has flowed from diverse roots yielding many inspiring lessons, both in South as well as North contexts. I would like, on this occasion, to share and explore some signposts and moments in this educational journey. My "education" in peace education and related movements and projects has not been limited to mainstream conceptions of education. My experiences have shown the urgent need for a paradigm of education that complements a mind-based understanding with an understanding by the heart and spirit that touches the inner being to engage in transformation at all levels of life. As earlier noted, my journey has been and needs to be, as earlier noted, an education for an engaged spirituality.

A Journey Begins

Along a journey of trying to weave a culture of peace, there have been both painful and hopeful, as well as both negative and positive lessons. I find myself continually having to make sense of early life experiences, some of which were symptoms and roots of violence based on a distorted practice of Confucianism and that needed processes of healing and reconciliation. But I was also impressed by an Eastern version of "liberation theology" from the Daoist/Buddhist legends and stories that spoke of "heroes," both women and men, who dedicated themselves to overcoming injustices in solidarity with the oppressed, although often through the force of martial arts.

I recall my formal schooling days in Malaysia, where I received a colonial and then neo-colonial citizenship identity, including a mis-education about realities of history and life in the west, now referred to as North. A steady diet of Western media entertainment cultivated stereotypes about "cowboys" and "Indians." It needed much re-education later on to see the racism and genocide perpetrated on aboriginal and indigenous peoples through the colonial project. Unfortunately, this mis-education largely hid from me the good aspects and the peaceful dimensions in Western and Northern civilizations – it took more years of journeying and searching to appreciate the humanity and "wholeness" of the West/North - from the social justice and civil rights movements, to the wisdom of indigenous peoples, and the creativity of diverse cultural knowledge and practices.

Although I began my undergraduate studies in LaTrobe University in the year the referendum accorded indigenous peoples their long-overdue rights, my formal education focused on the sciences and I learned virtually nothing about the painful realities of Australian history. But the informal teach-ins of the anti-Vietnam War movement helped to raise my critical awareness of the suffering, destruction, injustice and folly of an unequal war waged by a superpower in the name of democracy and anti-Communism.

I remember well my graduate student days in the 70s in Alberta, Canada, when my friends and I patiently stood outside Canadian stores, persuading customers not to buy South African products, in solidarity with the anti-apartheid movement. It was an initial exercise in awakening compassion and solidarity. Many of us had never been to South Africa, but we felt it important to respond to the call for support from South African peoples struggling for justice and human rights. Urging supermarket or liquor shop customers to boycott South African products in solidarity with the peoples' movement for freedom thousands of miles away, was challenging in the face of indifference or the threats of annoyed customers as we handed out leaflets during some of the coldest winters in Alberta. That was in the mid-70s. We

remained hopeful that change would come, but we never imagined apartheid would be dismantled less than two decades later. Herein lies another vital thread in weaving a culture of peace – no matter the obstacles or powerful forces resisting transformation, hope is a potent and indispensable tool for peacebuilding. It was therefore with much joy that I was able to make several visits, from 1994 to 2000, to a new South Africa free of the chains of apartheid. No doubt, the struggle for justice continues today but at least the peoples' efforts are now facilitated within a framework of democracy, truth, and reconciliation.

My return journey to Australia in 1980 to begin my work as an academic has also helped immensely in illuminating the multiple interconnections of my earlier focus on development education with issues of militarization, human rights, environment, and intercultural understanding. Working with colleagues in the Australian Peace Education and Research Association and other international education networks, as well as visiting United Kingdom peace and global educators, I began to appreciate that peace is necessarily a holistic concept. Furthermore, when neo-conservative groups began to mount vociferous campaigns against peace education, it reminded us that peace-building is never a smooth journey (Toh, 1988a).

Signposts in the Philippines

A Land Divided

But many of the most significant moments and signposts in my journey in educating for peace have been found in the Philippines, where I have collaborated with many Filipino colleagues and friends especially in the southern island of Mindanao. Though named "the island of promise," Mindanao has tragically suffered from multiple conflicts including internal armed violence, cultural divisions, social injustices, human rights violations, and environmental plunder. Although massively resource rich, it has remained the poorest region as its wealth flowed to the politically dominant northern and central islands.

I will always remember the first time I set eyes on Dole's agribusiness plantation in Mindanao, where in every direction towards the distant horizon, there was nothing but pineapples that would end up mostly on North supermarket shelves. I also recall the beaches where at dawn, a huge catch of tuna is brought ashore by fleets controlled by local elites and middlemen, talking on mobile phones to the fish markets overseas to set prices. Yet, ironically, many Filipinos increasingly find fish too costly to eat in a country of more than 7000 islands surrounded by some of the richest marine resource zones in the Pacific. Over the years, the poor majorities of Mindanao also have benefited little from the extraction of vast mineral and forest resources by transnational corporations and local elites, even as they suffer the effects of ecological destruction and displacement.

I was not surprised though, on my first visit, to encounter these realities of rich-poor disparities and the continuing symptoms of militarization, human rights violations, and intercultural conflicts. The Australian priest, Fr. Brian Gore, one of the two famous clergy imprisoned and then deported by the Marcos regime for their grassroots work among poor peasants and landless laborers, had already educated me about the structural violence and other dimensions of conflicts in a South society like the Philippines. But Fr. Gore also spoke of the need to be directly involved in the South, to see and to learn for myself the realities of suffering and repression. As he indicated, walking with the people is an indispensable way to strengthen commitment, solidarity, and relevant praxis for transformation.

A Holistic Framework

It was in 1986, shortly after the historic non-violent people power "EDSA" revolution ending decades of repression, that my participation in Philippine peace education began. The post-martial law era, opened up critical democratic spaces for civil society to emerge from years of suppression. Unlike during the time of Fr Gore or Fr. O'Brien in the Philippines, outsiders like myself could participate in solidarity work without necessarily facing harassment or deportation.

On that first visit, more by chance, I was asked to stand in for the Secretary of Education of the newly-installed Corazon Aquino Government, to speak at a conference launching the first Peace Studies Centre in the Philippines at a Jesuit school, Xavier University. In collaboration with Virginia Cawagas, a framework for peace education was developed for presentation at the conference. In summary, we agreed that peace education has two major goals. First, it seeks to raise critical awareness and understanding of the root causes of all forms of conflicts and violence from micro to macro-levels of life. Second, based on this understanding and on appropriate values, we feel empowered to take action for transformation, to change our realities from a culture of violence to a culture of peace. Furthermore, the framework would need to be holistic and relevant to understanding the complex realities and root causes of violence and conflicts in the Philippines (Toh & Floresca-Cawagas, 1987).

In essence, this framework identified six inter-related dimensions and themes of issues and problems that underpin violence and conflicts. First is *militarization,* whether expressed in wars, armed conflicts or domestic and community violence, that needs to be dismantled through active non-violence. A second theme is *structural violence* rooted in unjust national/global structures and relationships, which calls for social/economic justice locally, nationally and globally. A third theme is *human rights*, whose continued violations deprive peoples of their freedoms and dignities, and whose promotion remains urgent, fifty years after the Universal Declaration. Fourth involves the need for *cultural solidarity* to overcome injustices and conflicts between diverse cultures and build understanding and harmony. Fifth, *environmental care* is necessary to stop the ecological destruction deepened by unsustainable development paradigms. A sixth theme focuses on *personal peace* necessary to recover peaceful values and other dimensions of spirituality in an increasingly competitive and consumer-centered world.

In presenting this multi-thematic holistic framework for peace education, we acknowledged at the outset that each of the six themes or dimensions has a long and rich history of development and advocacy within educational circles. Thus, especially since the Hiroshima/Nagasaki A-bombing, disarmament education has expanded to include not just education against war, but also education against domestic violence and for non-violent conflict resolution. From the sixties, the campaigns of people-centred aid NGOs to transform local and global economic inequalities and overcome structural violence have led to what is called "development education." Likewise for the other themes, there is a growing body of teaching, research and social action in human rights education, multicultural or intercultural education, environmental education and education for inner peace. As peace educators Burns and Aspeslagh (1996) noted in their anthology of peace education over three decades, the concept is necessarily complex and brings together complementary and overlapping fields of educational approaches and movements.

But education for peace is not just educating *about* these issues. *How* we educate for peace is equally important. Indispensable are teaching-learning processes based on critical thinking, a holistic multi-dimensional concept of peace, understanding alternative perspectives, dialogue, critical empowerment, an explicit

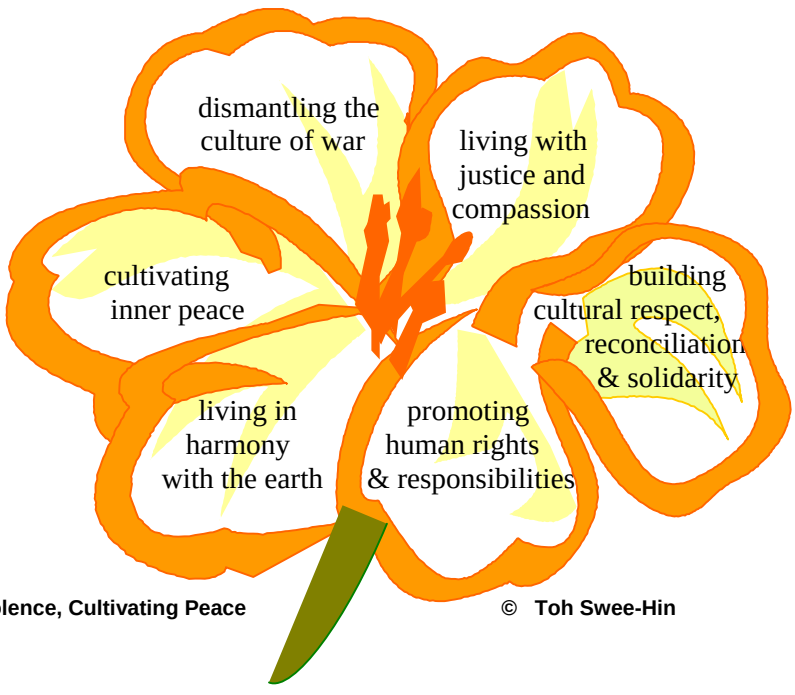
formation of values and a participatory learning environment that rejects passive banking of knowledge (Toh & Floresca-Cawagas, 1990). As the influential Brazilian adult educator, Freire (1985), emphasized, peace education needs to move learners to articulate and nurture their own critical consciousness in the context of wider life realities. In sum, educating for peace requires some key pedagogical principles, namely holism, dialogue, critical empowerment and values formation.

At that initial conference in Mindanao, I was anxious to see if our holistic framework would be considered relevant to grassroots representatives. So I posed the question after my talk, and the first response came from Bishop Capalla who was then (and continues to be) one of the consistently outspoken priests committed to peace and justice in the Philippines. The Bishop firmly stated that all these issues of *militarization, structural violence, human rights, cultural solidarity, environmental care, personal peace*, were indeed very relevant. It was a joyful moment of affirmation. Since those early days, these six themes in the holistic framework of educating for a culture of peace have been renamed as shown by the organic metaphor of a flower with six petals below*: dismantling the culture of war; living with justice and compassion; promoting human rights and responsibilities; building cultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity; living in harmony with the Earth; cultivating inner peace.*

Growing Roots in Cotabato

My Philippine journey in peace education then took a most significant and long-term turn at Notre Dame University (NDU) in Cotabato City, Mindanao. This is a Catholic university enjoying the trust of many Muslim students in a region that has been the center of long-standing bitter armed conflicts between national/local governments and movements seeking secession or autonomy for the Muslim Moro peoples. Several leaders and members of the major Moro liberation groups have studied in NDU programs. Sharing mostly voluntary resources, my NDU colleagues and I developed the first graduate program in peace and development education in the Philippines, with strong support of the Oblate administrators, President Fr. Ante and Vice President Fr. Carino. Apart from introducing students to the basic peace education framework, the program systematically provided courses on each of the specific issues from disarmament, social justice and development to human rights, environmental care and cultural solidarity

A Holistic Framework of Educating for a Culture of Peace



Infusing pedagogy with dialogue and critical empowerment, the NDU courses also connected the students with grassroots realities through field exposures and most importantly in solidarity activities such as lobbying government and other agencies on issues of human rights violations, and social justice campaigns. We sent petitions to Government when hungry peasants, together with a priest and other justice advocates, were arrested in the midst of a drought, for non-violently opening up the locked government warehouses and distributing the grain on a registered loan basis. In one course, we invited two street children to be the guest lecturers on the realities of their daily marginalization and struggle to survive. This interconnecting between formal education and grassroots spaces constitute a basic signpost for peace education, for the learnings can be mutual, and the actions for change stronger when the poor and non-poor join hands and hearts.

Together with the first generation of NDU peace educators, including Ofelia Durante, Fr. Alfonso Carino, and Jose Bulao, Virginia Cawagas and I also co-established a pioneering Peace Education Centre at NDU. Consistent with the pedagogical principle of holism, the vision and mission of peace education could not be confined to the university. It was crucial to reach out, through the Centre, to as many sectors as possible in the wider Philippine society.

I happily recall the many participatory and creative workshops with schoolteachers who courageously took on the challenge of integrating peaceful theory and practice into their curricula and ways of teaching and learning. This engagement with teachers affirmed more than ever the need for a pedagogy of peace education that is dialogical, empowering and conscientizing. Despite their own difficult personal and professional circumstances, the teachers unselfishly committed their energies to building peace through education. In the workshops, we could also see the challenges faced by the teachers to rethink their socialization in modes of training and worldviews that reduce education to passive banking of knowledge, skills and unchallenged values.

Spreading the Branches

The NDU programs also sought partnerships exchanging learning experiences with the growing civil society movement for peace and justice, especially the NGOs and citizen networks in Mindanao. I will always cherish the exemplars of peace education and action like the people-centered zones of peace organized in collaboration with the Coalition of Peace led by inspirational peace advocates Ging Deles and Risa Hontiveros. Rather than languishing in overcrowded refugee camps, the refugees (internally displaced persons), who had fled from zones of armed conflict, decided to courageously negotiate and reconstitute a zone of peace that all armed parties would agree to leave alone. Fr. Ronnie Villanueva, the priest who played a leadership role in forming the zones of peace recounted, noted he was now performing joyful baptisms and marriage ceremonies in the zone instead of funeral rites for victims of crossfires.

I am continually inspired by numerous exemplars of community-based efforts in grassroots development that serve the basic needs of the people first. In these projects, ordinary citizens rely on their own energies and commitment and use their own resources in creative and self-reliant ways to improve their livelihood. They also feel empowered to assert their rights and demand that political leaders and civil servants be accountable for implementing equitable economic and social policies. Such grassroots development exemplars provide meaningful lessons for peace education. Likewise, in my Philippine journey, I have learned much from the contributions of women and indigenous peoples to the building of a culture of peace.

In our peace education work, it was also crucial to develop commitment and skills for a culture of peace among the ranks of government agencies. Hence we

worked with civil servants as well as the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP). On a few occasions, we were able to conduct peace education workshops with the Armed Forces of the Philippines. One workshop unexpectedly happened during the seventh attempted coup to overthrow then President Corazon Aquino. The general, who had earlier consented for the workshop to be held in his brigade camp, decided that despite the coup attempt in progress in Manila, the "training" should nevertheless proceed.

Arriving on a state of double red alert, the 80 or so participating soldiers needed gentle persuasion at the outset to put aside their fully-loaded armalites so that the weapons would not get in the way of workshop activities! This experience enabled us to see that battle-hardened soldiers are also human beings who can be moved by a participatory educational process to reflect on the root causes of peacelessness in which their lives are intertwined. Quite a few soldiers visibly expressed empathy upon hearing stories of the centuries of oppression endured by aboriginal and indigenous peoples worldwide. As our team of facilitators (Virginia Cawagas, Ofelia Durante, Jose Bulao, and myself) left the soldiers' camp after three days living and work shopping with them, I remember vividly the collective sign of joy that we breathed out! Such Philippine experiences show that as peace educators, we surely need to seek opportunities for peace education in the full spectrum of societal spaces, among the non-poor and powerful as well as the marginalized (Toh, Floresca-Cawagas, & Durante, 1993).

Compassion and Solidarity, Patience and Hope

Our thoughts and actions in peace education in the Philippines were clearly underpinned by several values. There is the powerful value of compassion, which is not a mere feeling for the suffering of others. Compassion also means a strong awareness of justice and human rights, a dedicated willingness to build relationships and systems that are just and equitable. Compassion calls on us to deeply respect differences and diversity. We need to feel compassion for our mother earth and all its creation. In the midst of a culture of violence and materialism, we surely need to feel compassion for our own spirit and soul, so that it can be nurtured towards growth, tranquility, and enlightenment.

Another essential value in peace education is solidarity. We care deeply enough for others in suffering so that we are willing to dedicate our times, energies, and resources to their struggles for peace, justice and sustainability. Last but not least, we are strongly guided by the principles and values of active non-violence upheld by so many spiritual leaders and indigenous traditions, and by modern inspiring advocates such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and numerous others (Gandhi, 1999).

In this regard, I have been much inspired by so many Filipino peace educators, whose lives deeply reflect an engaged spirituality. Their stories, which will shortly be gathered in a "biographical" collection, show the capacities of human beings to develop a deep sense of compassion for the marginalized; to question and transcend their own places of "privilege;" to courageously take risks in the face and midst of conflicts and even war zones; and to be committed to active non-violence in waging peace as an alternative to militarized responses to problems.

Among them is an Italian priest, Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra, PIME, who decided, early in his stay in Mindanao during the wars between the Marcos military and the Muslim-Moro armed groups fighting for secession, to visit and stay with the Moro community so as to more deeply understand their Islamic faith and the root causes of the conflict. He was then harassed by some intolerant Christians and the military as being "on the side" of the Muslims. Since then, he has dauntlessly started one of the most active Muslim-Christian inter-faith dialogue movements in the

region despite encountering opposition from both Christians and Muslims with extremist interpretations of their faiths, and surviving a number of assassination attempts.

Then there is Karen Tanada, a woman born in an upper middle-class family in Manila, who chose to join the ranks of social activists for peace, human rights and social justice. A combination of family role-models (her grandfather marched for democracy and faced the water cannons of President Marcos's military, while her father was a prominent human rights lawyer defending victims abused under the Marcos dictatorship and now a representative in the Philippine Congress) and critical educational influences in a Maryknoll Sisters school and college, inspired her to take risks in organizing for democracy, human rights and social justice during the long years of Marcos repression. Her story reminds us that individuals can reach out from their advantaged social background to be in solidarity with the poor and oppressed.

Another peace educator from Mindanao, "Arminda," recounted the continuing deep pain she feels about her own father's record as an anti-Muslim Christian paramilitary leader, and how she recoiled at the constant sight of guns lying around the house, ready for use against Muslims. As her awareness of local and national injustices deepened, she became involved in underground anti-Marcos political organizing while her father continued his "war" against the Muslims. She is now recognized as a leading peace educator in Mindanao who, in recent years, also contributed to post-independent community healing and development in the Southeast Asian region.

These stories and those of other Filipino peace educators (e.g. Virginia Cawagas, Ofelia Durante, Risa Hontiveros, Ging Deles, Jose Bulao, Loreta Castro, Sr. Sol Perpinan, Indai Sajor, and Rene Romero) demonstrate that there is no simple formula for education that cultivates a commitment to peacebuilding. However, in all their stories, there is clearly an underpinning sense of engaged spirituality, whether the source comes from a faith or other philosophical and ethical tradition.

My journey in peace education in the Philippines and other regions, including participation in the anti-apartheid movement during the 70s, has convinced me that the quest is necessarily slow, demanding much patience and perseverance. Education is inevitably a gradual process, and often not as spectacular as some actions for peacebuilding. It is a process of sowing seeds not just in the younger generation that hopefully will mature as peaceful human beings, but definitely in today's adults whose decision-making and actions have decisive impact on shaping the world that our youth will inherit.

The patience needed in peace education is evident in our experiences at NDU where my journey began 17 years ago. There is now a core course in peace education for every college undergraduate. Then, in 1996, the Government signed its historic peace accord with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). This catalyzed governmental support for peace education and research as a new specialization in tertiary institutions. NDU was designated the key institution in a consortium of five Mindanao universities to expand graduate programs in peace education and research. Once more, I appreciated the opportunity to contribute as a curriculum consultant and visiting professor of the Mindanao program. To date, nearly 40 MA and 20 Ph.D. candidates have successfully graduated, and many are now developing peace education programs in their home institutions. This account does not, however, imply that long-term success has been assured. It will be useful to conduct a comprehensive study on the degree to which and how peace education may have been sustainably institutionalized in those other Mindanao universities. Similarly, the recent integration of education for a culture of peace in the CIDA-supported Local Government Support Program, in which I served as a resource person and module writer (Philippine-Canada Local Government Support Program,

2003), will need research to assess how local government units may be building peaceful communities more effectively.

From the mid-90s, the NDU Peace Education Center helped to facilitate and monitor peace-talks between Government and the groups fighting for Moro self-determination, Following the 1996 Government-MNLF peace accord, the Center contributed to post-conflict management efforts. Tragically, renewed armed conflict during 2000 between the Government of former President Estrada who ordered an "all-out war" policy and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front resulted in immense suffering of hundreds of thousands of refugees. More than ever, peace education is much needed to heal the deepening distrust between Muslims and Christians as the conflicting parties re-engage in peace negotiations. In April 2000, NDU continued to promote peace education by organizing the First Mindanao Congress for Peace Educators (2000). The resulting Cotabato Declaration on Education for a Culture reaffirmed the vital role of education in the peace process to resolve militarization, injustices, environmental destruction, and intercultural conflicts.

Reflecting on the NDU experience in peace education some seven years after the project commenced, a number of key lessons were learned, namely: the need to authentically practice collaboration and horizontality so that both North and South partners equitably share knowledge, skills, creative energies, and risks in a spirit of mutual respect and avoid the "I am more expert" syndrome contrary to peaceful pedagogy; the importance of constructive and non-ideological communication, understandable to all stakeholders and keeping minds and hearts open to the message of peace-building; an active linking of academic programs and learning with community contexts and realities; a facilitative institutional leadership at the most senior levels; the indispensability of a holistic concept of peace; and the supportive values of assertiveness, hopefulness, patience, and perseverance (Toh, Floresca-Cawagas, & Durante, 1993).

Today, NDU stands at a crossroad in its role as one of the institutional pioneers of peace education. Since the mid-90s, changes in administrative leadership led to a marked shift from peace education to the tasks of peace-building advocacy (e.g., monitoring peace agreements; hosting peace-talks). This diminished focus on peace education was also accompanied by the retirement or departure of the first generation of NDU peace educators like Ofelia Durante, Jose Bulao, and Virginia Cawagas. In recent times, under a new university administration, a renewal process of the peace education program is being attempted. It will be meaningful to see how the process unfolds. But however it turns out, my colleagues and I are joyful that a small seed planted in Cotabato some 17 years ago has gently borne flowers, fruits and more seeds across Mindanao universities, schools and grassroots communities. In recognition of the pioneering work of NDU in peace education, the Peace Education Center was given an Aurora Aragon Peace Award in 1989, the national peace award established to honor individuals and institutions that have advanced in a significant way the cause of peace in the country (Almario & Maramba, 1995).

From the Periphery to the Centre

During my visits to Mindanao over 17 years, there were also opportunities to contribute to the development of peace education in other regions and islands. Slowly word of the NDU peace education program had reached universities, schools and professional associations and various government departments. It was significant that an idea, which had taken root in the marginalized periphery of a nation, was being acknowledged as relevant to the policies and programs of institutions in the centre of political, economic, and social life. The Mindanao peace education experience provided some lessons for centers and programs for peace

education in several institutions and professional associations in Manila such as Miriam College Center for Peace Education, Philippine Normal University, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction (WCCI)-Philippines Chapter, and the Religious of the Assumption school network, among others.

Together with Virginia and Ofelia Durante, we responded to invitations to hold workshops especially for schoolteachers, colleges, and universities. The Assumption Sisters, for example, embarked on a program to integrate peace education through their schools throughout the country. At one workshop, the Mother Superior, after the introductory session, became so interested that she decided to participate in the entire workshop.

At Miriam College, we also contributed to staff professional development workshops hosted by the Center for Peace Education, whose founder, Loreta Castro, is now coordinator of the Hague Appeal for Peace Education for the region. The College' experience demonstrated the value of a total school approach to the implementation of peace education that brings together the curriculum, teaching-learning process, administration and the social life dimension s of an institution. It is encouraging to see Miriam College, despite being a private college with students from middle class and affluent families, taking on the challenge of transformation towards building a more just and sustainable Philippines.

The Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), established by then President Aquino, opened its doors for us to orient their staff to the holistic framework and participatory processes of peace education. In 1995, OPAPP invited me to serve as an UNESCO expert at the 2nd UNESCO International Forum on a Culture of Peace attended by several hundred delegates from governments and UNESCO agencies as well as NGOs (OPAPP, 1995; Toh, 1995). It was motivating to see government representatives engage in dialogue with members of civil society who challenged dominant policies of development and political orders that increased militarized conflicts and marginalization of poor communities. As rapporteur, I presented to President Ramos of the Philippines, the Forum's recommendations calling for UNESCO, member-states, and all peoples to continue the task of building a culture of peace. In this regard, it is a hopeful sign that the Philippine official peace agency OPAPP has been actively facilitating peace education initiatives throughout the country (Halabaso, 2003).

It was also important to influence curriculum development to facilitate the integration of peace values and ideas into schools. Through WCCI Philippines, series of national conferences focusing on peace education themes were attended by hundreds of teachers and school administrators from all over the country. The seeds of peace education were slowly germinating in classrooms and campuses in the metropolis as well as in some distant places. Again in a clear acknowledgment of its efforts in promoting peace education, WCCI was given the prestigious Aurora Aragon Peace Award (Almario & Maramba, 1995).

We wrote resource books, modules and textbooks for classrooms, especially for the private schools. This effort has continued to the present. A grade 1-6 textbook series designed for the subject area of civics and culture for use in Philippine schools has just been recently published (Floresca-Cawagas & Toh, 2004). In contrast to existing textbooks, this new series in elementary social studies systematically integrates values and principles of peace education in both content and pedagogy.

Early in my journey to the Philippines, the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) sent a delegation of senior officers to participate in a weeklong workshop we organized and funded by the Canadian Peace Fund. DEC's plan was for the officers to commence a peace education unit based on their orientation in the workshop. Regrettably, while initial plans were made, the unit never took off due to

financial and other bureaucratic constraints. It was a reminder that the project of peace education would not be easy within large educational bureaucracies underpinned by values and practices often anti-thetical to a culture of peace.

In one workshop we conducted in a very low-income region and zone of continuous fighting between the Philippines Armed Forces and the insurgent New Peoples Army, one participant was intensely interested in finding out if I had "links" with any political organization motivating me to conduct such workshops. On the formerly sugar-rich land of Negros, Central Philippines, one teacher was visibly upset when I raised the issue of land reform to redress rural poverty on the island. In the soldiers' workshops, we were also vigorously challenged for raising issues of human rights violations. They asked: "Why is only the military accused of human rights violations? What about the violations committed by the rebel groups?" In response, we reminded them that violations of human rights committed by anyone or any group need to be critiqued and challenged.

This kind of concern has surfaced continually through our work to uproot violence and cultivate peace in the Philippines. On the one hand, the commitment to active nonviolence in resolving conflicts, including those rooted in injustices, has been perceived by those opting for armed struggle as a tool manipulated by elites to continue the unjust structures by weakening the will of the marginalized to resist. On the other hand, the military elites and government officials and the elite sector of society are often resistant or even hostile to ideas that critique or challenge structural violence, militarization, and human rights violations. As our framework includes critical analysis of injustices and other themes of conflicts, we can be suspected as "fronts" for furthering the cause of the "revolutionary left". Peace education in a conflict and war context invariably generates resistance to and mistrust of our motives and agenda from all sides. Our experiences show that there is no simple answer. We can only patiently and assertively continue the work in a mode of transparency making clear that we are not acting on behalf of any conflicting party and that the same holistic paradigm of peace education based on active nonviolence is consistently presented to all audiences.

Seeds in the North

Although I was raised in Malaysia and continue to deepen my roots in South contexts, my commitment to peace education has also been nurtured in North regions, including Australia, Canada, Japan, South Korea and other industrialized countries (Toh, 1991). I deeply appreciate the collaboration and solidarity of North-based peace educators, including Betty Reardon, Robert Zuber, Estela Matriano, Jen Burnley, Chris Fox, John Fien, Robin Burns, Ralph Summy, Ian Harris, Linda Bull, John Synott, Kevin Clements, Stella Cornelius, Ake Bjerstedt, Lennart Vriens, Abelardo Brenes and numerous others. It soon became clear that a holistic framework of peace education developed for the Philippines was equally relevant to North societies and their role in the world order impacting so heavily on violence and conflicts within the South and at international levels.

Dismantling the Culture of War

While North societies fill the top ranks of the United Nations Human Development Index, they continue to face problems of physical violence such as domestic abuse, violent crimes, and in some contexts, even shootings in schools. North nations are heavily involved in militarization in regional and international spaces, in wars, armed interventions, the deadly arms trade and for some, in enhancing their arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. Given my commitment to principles of active nonviolence, since the days of the Vietnam war protests, I found it imperative to play an active role in campaigns and movements that challenge policies of

militarization (Caldicott, 2002, Chomsky, 2003; Johnson, 2004) and the use of physical violence or wars to "resolve" conflicts or grievances (e.g., Saddam's invasion of Kuwait followed by Gulf War I; 9/11 and the Western response in the war on Afghanistan; the war on Iraq; suicide bombings), and the UN sanctions on Iraq that are estimated to have taken the lives of over one million Iraqis, 60 percent of whom were children under five years of age (US Catholic Bishops, 1998).

I wrote letters and signed petitions to the Canadian Government leadership, marched on the streets, and joined prayer vigils to reject the US-led coalition case for "pre-emptive" (more accurately "preventive") war . Likewise, I have supported efforts to abolish the lucrative but deadly arms trade yielding profits to the powerful nations and even middle powers like Canada or Australia. Not to speak out against war and the weapons-military industrial complex is, in my worldview, being complicit in the suffering, pain and destruction in our world caused by militarized violence. Not to help demystify the psychology of "fear" and 'hysteria" propagated by powerful states and leaders against "enemies" belonging to a construct labeled "the axis of evil" would be to lend weight to the cycles of violence and counter-violence (Summy, 2002; Toh, 2001b). The obstacles to dismantling the culture of war are no doubt powerful, but we need to feel encouraged by small steps forward, such as the treaty to ban landmines, the formation of a global nonviolent peace force to intervene in zones of wars and conflicts, the many millions who marched against the war in Iraq, and the increased implementation of policies to protect women and children from domestic violence.

As a peace educator, I have therefore sought diverse opportunities to raise critical consciousness on the root causes of war and other forms of physical violence, including competition for power, and protecting or advancing strategic interests. But consistent with the pedagogical principle of dialogue, alternative perspectives in education for disarmament and non-violence need to be presented (Booth & Dunne, 2002). I recall intense workshops with schoolteachers and students held after 9/11 simulating a TV talk show in which the US-led coalition rationale for waging war on Afghanistan was contrasted by the peace movement's arguments and even with the Taliban. Regularly, in peace education workshops, we hold a simulation on the arms trade, so that arms sellers and buyers can justify their roles when confronted by NGOs to abolish the trade in armaments (Floresca-Cawagas, 2004).

The challenge of education for non-violence lies in being able to create an educational environment when, even those who favour war and physical violence as 'solutions" to conflicts or those who claim that violence is a part of "human nature," feel safe in voicing their views. It is by facilitating critical thinking about alternative worldviews that learners can freely and authentically choose their positions. Hence, peace education cannot be charged with indoctrination. In this regard, I have also encouraged learners to develop critical literacy about the media and the Internet that have also become very important spaces to uproot violence and grow peace. Becoming aware of alternative sources of news and analysis is imperative for making informed views on violence and conflict. Over the last decade, my peace education work has also promoted education for conflict resolution for schools and communities. There is now a growing body of research confirming the positive outcomes of conflict resolution programs, including peer mediation, preventing bullying, and the idea of safe and caring schools (Lantieri & Patti, 1996; Harris, Hlowinski, & Perleberg, 2004; LaMarsh Centre for Research, 2004).

Living with Justice and Compassion

In the North, we also witness the pain of structural violence in the realities of poor and homeless peoples and the struggles of life in inner cities. Structural violence refers to the unequal and unjust distribution of economic power and resources so that some people or sectors in a society and across the world suffer from lack of basic needs. Furthermore, some root causes of global poverty are linked to the North's powerful role in the world economy via transnational corporations, the international financial and aid agencies, the debt crisis, and other manifestations of contemporary globalization, despite some benefits to a relatively few citizens. I passionately believe that uprooting violence and cultivating peace calls on all peoples, including those in the North, to promote *living with justice and compassion.*

In my teaching, research, and advocacy, I have therefore continually focused on the limitations of the dominant paradigm of "development," initially referred to as modernization but nowadays labeled globalization or more accurately, "globalization from above" (Toh, 1987; 1988b). Modernization believes that all countries in the world must have rapid economic growth; that the private sector is the best engine for growth, producing wealth that will "trickle down" to all citizens; and that the North can help the South catch up through aid, trade and investments which integrate South countries in the global economy and in turn, the order of "democratic" nations. In recent years, these modernization themes have been boosted vigorously by the forces of globalization and liberalization controlled by powerful nation-states, transnational corporations, and international agencies or regimes (e.g., IMF, World Bank, WTO, APEC, and NAFTA).

However, as the countless voices of ordinary peoples in marginalized contexts worldwide have passionately revealed, such modernization and "globalization from above" have often increased structural violence against the poor majorities (Anderson, 2000; Brecher, Costelo, & Smith, 2002; Korten, 1999; Bello, 2004). These structures and relationships of internal inequities within the South (and increasingly in the North as well) are interconnected simultaneously with international and global injustices where the North disproportionately benefits from patterns of trade, investment, and debt. The income gap between the richest 20 percent and the poorest 20 percent of the world's population has widened from 30:1 in 1960; 45:1 in 1980; and 74:1 in 1997 (Elwood, 2001: 101). Over 1980-2000, the total debt of the South nations grew from US$567 billion to over $2070 billion; yet in that same period, these same nations repaid $3450 billion in principal and interest rates (Jubilee South, 2001).

In facing the challenges of world poverty, peace education therefore recognizes that the major root causes are inequalities and injustices. As the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan stated: "true peace is far more than the absence of war. It is a phenomenon that encompasses economic development and social justice." Respected religious leaders like Pope John Paul and the Dalai Lama have constantly reminded the world that there is no peace without justice. Speaking at the World Economic Forum, an annual meeting of the world's most powerful political and corporate leaders, former South African President Nelson Mandela (1999) also questioned globalization for catering primarily to the needs of the rich, thus increasing global poverty and inequalities. More recently, the ILO sponsored the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization (2004: 9-10), which noted that: "while wealth is being created … too many countries and people are not sharing in its benefits." The Commission therefore calls for globalization that is "fair, inclusive, democratically governed, and provides opportunities and tangible benefits for all countries and peoples."

Promoting education for a culture of peace is clearly a part of the "globalization from below" movement in which ordinary peoples, NGOs, people's organizations (POs), social institutions (e.g., religions and education), global networks, and some governmental representatives have questioned "globalization from above" (Brecher et al, 2002; International Forum on Globalization, 2002; Fisher & Ponniah, 2003). They have been educating and mobilizing for an alternative framework of development that has a central priority of meeting the basic needs of all citizens. There are now many inspiring examples of ordinary citizens working for transformation based on social justice and people-centered models of development, whether among poor rural farmers, fisherfolk, urban poor, indigenous peoples, marginalized women, child laborers and street children. Central to this alternative development paradigm is the role of critical education in empowering the marginalized as well as the "non-poor" to overcome the inequalities of structural violence. It is also crucial at this stage to rethink the dominant vision of progress exemplified by high consumerist technologically advanced societies and to reject the entrapment of a "logo" or "brand" consciousness (Klein, 2001).

Since the 80s, I have expressed my vision of engaged spirituality in participating actively in aid and development NGOs such as Community Aid Abroad in Australia and Change for Children and Philippine Development Assistance Program in Canada. Such NGOs have grown over the decades to promote links of solidarity with South peoples, NGOs, and POs engaged in grassroots development to advocate for alternative aid, trade, and other foreign policies of their Governments and global organizations (e.g., WTO, IMF, etc.) that would redress North-South inequities. Such involvement means being willing to spend my weekends, evenings, and "leisure" times in hosting workshops, film shows, and visiting speakers especially from South contexts, attending vigils, rallies or organizing petitions to send to corporations, aid agencies, and Foreign Affairs officials or political leaders.

Translating this commitment into the classrooms constituted a major focus in my peace education courses and programs - fostering critical consciousness of North peoples about their responsibilities and accountabilities in world poverty and underdevelopment, including rethinking unsustainable consumerist lifestyles. I have complemented this development education responsibility with the urgent task of re-thinking and re-designing curricula and resources (e.g., writing textbooks) so that values, knowledge, and critical analyses about development paradigms and alternative just and compassionate futures are integrated into school and university programs (Toh & Floresca-Cawagas, 2003; 2000; 1996).

Based on my experiences over the past three decades, I am convinced about the great need for education which develops a spirit of compassion and justice among the affluent peoples and sectors in both North and South nations. But I acknowledge that the way forward will not be speedy, given the powerful forces of consumerism and self-centred comfort zones that insulate or make us immune from developing deep compassion for marginalized peoples worldwide. Yet there is also the hopeful role model demonstrated by for example, a middle-class Canadian high-school student, Craig Keilburger (1999), who sparked wide public and official concern and advocacy for exploited child laborers worldwide. Rather than invoking pity, peace education builds solidarity for justice as modeled by Keilburger's NGO, *Free the Children*. Through *Free the Children*, North schools have partnered with South schools and NGOs to provide dignified alternatives for children and their families to meet their basic needs without the trap of exploitative child labor.

Promoting Human Rights and Responsibilities

Notwithstanding considerable progress in promoting human rights, North societies continue to be challenged to improve their record in various areas, including gender, indigenous self-determination, migrant workers, refugees, and sexual orientation. As part of my journey in uprooting violence and cultivating peace, I have, for example, spent considerable energies in cooperating with other Canadians to campaign for the rights of Leticia Cables, a Filipino live-in caregiver, who had been unfairly threatened with deportation after being accused of violating the employment terms of her migrant-worker contract in Canada. Convinced that her difficulties were due primarily to unethical conduct by her employer-family, we challenged the Canadian Immigration authorities to reconsider their position. We arranged for Leticia to forestall deportation by seeking sanctuary in the basement of a Catholic Church, and raised funds to support her, as well as her family back in the Philippines. After a yearlong campaign using media, educational forums, and petitions to Ministers, members of Parliament and religious and civic leaders, a settlement was reached with Immigration for her to temporarily return to the Philippines and then re-accepted back to Canada as a caregiver. Today, Leticia has happily reunited with her family and settled into a new life in Canada.

This success story in challenging a bureaucratic and political system that had favoured the advantaged over one hard-working underpaid domestic worker, instructed us that promoting human rights is an ongoing struggle, even within liberal democracies. Back now in Australia, I consider it a serious responsibility to participate in the growing public critique of our official policies on refugees and asylum seekers. How can Australia claim to endorse human rights principles and conventions when refugees are subject to intolerable detention and inhumane treatment (Brennan, 2003)?

Leticia's story is also part of the overall problem of fulfilling women's human rights in the world. I recall early lessons in gender equity when my mother insisted that her sons equally performed domestic chores as much as her daughter. Throughout my journey in South and North contexts, I have learned much from the women who are not only asserting their rights but also tirelessly and courageously taking risks in building a culture of peace.

Serious questions have also been raised about the problematic relationships between human rights and trade, investments, and national security interests. For example, in a peoples' summit called G6B (Group of 6 Billion), held at the same time as the G8 Summit meeting in Alberta, Canada, I was deeply humbled as I walked side by side with diverse spokespersons of South communities whose rights have been violated by transnational corporations and the forces of unequal world trading and financial systems.

The very recent outrage worldwide over abuses and torture of Iraqi prisoners by the US and UK coalition forces demonstrate that powerful nations claiming to be beacons of democracy and human rights can also fall far short of professed ideals. Closing the gap between the innumerable human rights conventions and laws that most states have ratified remains a major challenge. In this regard, it needs to be also recognized that the North and other powerful states have, in pursuing strategic interests, for a long time supported and aided allies, like Pinochet, Mobutu and Saddam Hussein, with atrocious records of human rights abuses, including torture (Herman, 2004). As I continually emphasise in my peace education courses and workshops for North citizens, we need to demand of our governments and leaders that human rights standards be consistently applied. Our fingers cannot point only to governments or rulers who are not our "allies" or those who happen to be "out of favour." It is imperative to be also self-critical and accountable in our complicity when governments that we are aiding and supporting for political/economic strategic

reasons are committing human rights violations at home or abroad (e.g., Marcos, Saddam Hussein, Suharto, Pinochet, etc.). The recent establishment of the International Criminal Court is clearly a significant step forward in holding leaders and individuals accountable for war crimes and other crimes of humanity.

Within a holistic framework of peace education, *promoting human rights and responsibilities* is therefore an essential theme. While individuals have inalienable human rights, which states and governments have the duty to uphold, we need to simultaneously exercise our responsibilities to respect the rights of others. Stressing one's rights (e.g. earning income via business activities) without affirming accompanying responsibilities (e.g. protecting workers' rights; challenging repressive regimes to improve their human rights record) will mean that we are ourselves directly or indirectly engaging in the violations of rights. Likewise, the rights of students to a safe and caring school environment requires of them to act responsibly and thereby uphold the rights of others, whether peers or teachers or the wider community.

Building Cultural Respect, Reconciliation, and Solidarity

I have now spent in total one-third of my life journey in Australia, and another one-third in Canada, and I am grateful for the numerous opportunities and spaces that both societies and their peoples and institutions have provided for me to contribute to another important theme in peace education, namely building cultural respect, solidarity and reconciliation.

Both countries, as multicultural societies, have taken some positive steps in promoting cultural policies based on mutual respect, understanding, non-discrimination, non-racism, diversity and harmony. But we need to acknowledge that problems of racism, prejudice and intolerance persist and in some contexts, even increasing with the growth of neo-fascist movements. Not surprisingly, as a "visible minority," I have personally experienced discrimination and racism, which needed assertive responses, and where possible, tried to educate the "offenders." In a study of "visible minority" students (which included a number of non-white international students) at the University of Alberta, we listened to many indignant and painful stories of prejudiced or racist practices and relationships in academic and non-academic situations (Toh & Floresca-Cawagas, 1995).

In the wider society, immigrants, notably from South regions, often face not just personal but also systemic or structural racism. Anti-Semitism is also on the rise worldwide. Increasingly, as recent official policies of Australia demonstrate, asylum seekers and refugees are facing rejection and violations of their rights to safety and humane care. One marked negative outcome of 9/11 and the "war on terrorism" is, of course, the heightened discrimination and racist profiling of peoples of Muslim or Arab background (ACLU, 2004). At a global level, there is a dangerous shift of official policies and popular attitudes to seeing the conflict as a "clash of civilizations," a view that seriously needs demystification (Huntington, 1996). This simplistic argument overlooks the complexities of "civilizations" and also pits one civilization or culture against another despite numerous historical evidence of co-operation and solidarity even when conflicts or wars have occurred. Peace education needs to move citizens to challenge such growing tendencies towards racism, intolerance and conflicts, and my work with teachers and students convinces me of the urgency of this task.

In my journey through Australian and Canadian educational institutions, a central focus has understandably been the integration of principles, values and strategies of intercultural and multicultural education into teaching, learning, and the overall school culture. This means that when we look at the history of a nation, it must be inclusive of the histories of all groups and cultures that deserve to receive

equitable respect and non-discrimination. We need to raise our consciousness of and sensitivity to different cultures and develop skills to reconcile existing intercultural conflicts nonviolently.

As I constantly remind my students and other peace education workshop participants, it is vital to be critical of versions of multicultural education that merely "celebrate" cultural differences in superficial ways without promoting critical understanding of the root causes of intercultural conflicts and violence (Toh, 2001c). From a holistic peace education framework, conflict resolution cannot focus only on processes and skills. It needs to address local and global injustice, human rights violations, racism, and sexism that underpin the conflicts (Sefa-Dei, 1997). In both Australia and Canada, despite decades of multiculturalism and multicultural education, I have been challenged by my encounters with some students who personally still espouse attitudes and views marked by intolerance, prejudices, discrimination or even racism or who deny such realities.

But at the same time, I also encourage my students to seek within their professed cultural identity (which include faith and spirituality traditions), core values and virtues that obviously reject discrimination, racism, hatred, intolerance, ethnocentrism and the terrible acts of inter-religious wars, ethnic cleansing and genocide. In one exercise, students are invited to each think and share stories when they have been not only victims of discrimination, but perhaps also perpetrators. Such self-reflective and self-critical processes are helpful since, in my view, critical thinking properly includes an ethical space, a challenge for each learner and teacher to look into one's own theory and practice, and perhaps opt to transform oneself towards cultural respect and reconciliation. This transformation also implies a responsibility of diverse cultures to be self-critical and to be willing to change values and practices if these may contradict standards and norms (e.g. human rights) in multicultural societies.

It was also during my journey within Australia and Canada that I came to understand the past and continuing suffering, trauma, and human rights violations of indigenous and aboriginal peoples in North contexts (Bull, 2000; Broome, 2002). I recall a visit I made to Aboriginal communities in Central Australia, flying to remote settlements on a flying doctor's plane. It was a moving experience to become directly aware of the problems of ill health, addictions, and the continuing struggle of indigenous peoples to heal from legacies of colonialism and contemporary marginalization. Likewise, I continue to experience the pain when I witnessed parallel problems faced by the First Nations peoples in Canada and by the *Lumads* or indigenous peoples in the Philippines and other South contexts, who are portrayed as standing in the way of "progress" as forests are logged, energy infrastructure constructed, mineral resources mined, and agri-businesses expanded into the hinterlands (Bodley, 1988).

In Australia and Canada, and in other lands where indigenous peoples live, government and citizen's opposition to aboriginal self-determination still pose major obstacles for overcoming those legacies. Much more application of justice, healing, and reconciliation are needed, as is slowly but fruitfully happening, although Australia regrettably has been lagging behind in implementing reconciliation based on principles of forgiveness, truth, justice, and reparations (Read, Connop & Bond, 2004).

In my educational work, I have also continually encountered non-indigenous students and other learners who question the need for policies of healing, justice, and self-determination for indigenous peoples in their societies. I understand that much patience is needed to overcome such attitudinal barriers and lack of compassion. In this regard, when educating for a culture of peace, building cultural understanding and respect will not suffice. Also vital is cultural solidarity. This is

because in situations of unequal power relations and injustices, cultural groups that are already economically and politically advantaged have a social responsibility to be in solidarity with marginalized groups and communities, especially indigenous peoples, as they struggle for meaningful political and other societal changes.

But the compelling issue is not merely a question of justice. As many peace educators and other social commentators have noted, we are in solidarity with our indigenous sisters and brothers because their spirituality traditions, spanning many thousands of years, have wisdom to offer non-indigenous systems and societies that are steeped in advanced technologies, industrialized "progress" and the logic of ultra-consumerism (Suzuki, 1992; Graveline, 1996). The ongoing loss to humanity of such wisdom was emphasized to me once while I was going up Mt. Apo, the sacred ancestral land of the lumads or indigenous peoples in Mindanao. Perched on top of a swaying jeepney sliding on a muddy road carved out of pristine rain forest to reach the Government's geothermal wells built over the protests of the lumads, church and environmental NGOs, I had the privilege of sitting beside a Manobo elder. With sadness, she lamented that her children, after going to school, were no longer interested in Manobo traditions and culture. The geothermal project will surely hasten this process of indigenous marginalization.

Living in Harmony with the Earth

It has also been initially in North contexts that I deepened my understanding of the work of environmentalists and educators to promote ecologically sustainable societies, although as my journeys to the South expanded, similar inspirational learning was also gained. There are many exemplars of such campaigns: environmentalists or ordinary villagers stopping or trying to prevent further destructive logging of forests with their non-violent protests; Greenpeace and other environmental movements challenging whaling ships, dumping toxic wastes in the ocean, nuclear testing in the Pacific; inspirational lectures and films of Canadian environmental advocate and documentary producer David Suzuki; the pioneering curriculum and teaching-learning resources developed by John Fien (2001), Debbie Heck and other environmental educators; indigenous and aboriginal peoples sharing their wisdom on sustainable use of the land and other resources of mother earth – all these helped me to appreciate that cultivating peace is also about *living in harmony with the earth*. If we continue to commit violence to the planet, humanity will only reap the consequences that will seriously undermine the very basis of life for this and future generations. It will also need a holistic paradigm of environmentalism that transcends technological fixes within an unchanged system of domination and exploitation of resources and peoples (Ruether, 1992; The Earth Charter Initiative, 2001)

While we need to promote recycling and conservation, on their own, these efforts will not resolve the ecological crisis unless we reconstruct our lifestyle and consumption priorities in this very unequal world order. Under the theme of *living in harmony with the earth*, peace education therefore seeks to motivate learners to acknowledge that unsustainable lifestyles as well as many policies and practices of corporate and official agencies are aggravating the ecological crisis within South and global contexts. Driven by the logic of unlimited growth and ultra-consumerism of "globalization from above," the ecological footprints of the North and elite sectors within the South remain unsustainably heavy (Wackernagel & Rees, 1996). The heavy ecological footprints of North peoples and nations need to be considerably lightened if we are to play a credible and responsible role model for building a sustainable future. In asking "how much is enough," McKibben (2000) identified the environmental movement as a pivot point in human history.

In this regard, like many others in North contexts, there have also been personal challenges in moving towards voluntary simplicity (Burch, 2000), including asking oneself: what size and furnishings in dwelling are really needed? how many and what kind of consumer items to acquire? what level of resources do we share in acts of solidarity and compassion (not pity)? and so on. As the prophets, saints, sages, and buddhas have advised, educating for peace needs to encompass awareness of one's own self and a willingness to overcome personal contradictions. In the wise counsel of the Tao Te Ching, when we know enough is enough, we will have enough. Very recently, WorldWatch Institute's (2004) State of the World focused directly on the unsustainability of the dominant model of consumerism and argues that the "good life" should not be oriented to heavy consumption but around well-being in terms of basic needs, freedom, health, security, and opportunity to fulfill satisfying social roles.

Furthermore, living in harmony with the earth requires a commitment to engage in social action to stop ecological destruction in the name of "growth" and "progress." But a paradigm of environmentalism that cares only about the well-being of one's own backyard is not going to be sustainable. Hence, for instance, I joined many Canadians and Filipinos in a campaign to challenge a huge Canadian transnational mining corporation over its environmental record in the Philippines. The corporation's copper mining operations had left behind an island and its surrounding seas severely polluted, leading to massive negative impacts on the livelihoods and health of villages and communities (Coumans, 2000). Despite intense lobbying and media campaign, the corporation would not acknowledge full responsibility and refused to make adequate compensation for the legacy of pollution. The Canadian Government's response was to indicate that current legislation does not allow that kind of government intervention in the investment activities of Canadian business overseas.

Clearly, the barriers encountered in this campaign for ecological justice is a message to North societies and citizens to hold their business organizations and shareholders accountable for upholding ethical standards of environmental care wherever they operate in the world (Bruno, 2002). If North peoples truly believe in the principle of sustainability, we must be prepared to recognize that we are directly or indirectly part of the problem of unsustainable economic conduct of powerful organizations and systems (e.g., toxic wastes shipped to South regions for disposal). The slogan "not in my backyard" voiced by many North communities against pollution and destruction in their local spaces needs to be universalized to "not in our one world." Similarly, dismantling the culture of war will also help to save the earth from the negative environmental consequences of militarization and armed conflicts.

Cultivating Inner Peace

Last but not least, my journeys in North societies as well as South elite sectors have educated me on the vital need for a sixth but not least theme of uprooting violence and cultivating peace, namely cultivating inner peace. After over three decades living in the industrialized world, I an convinced that a culture of ultra-consumerism and wealth-seeking, underpinned by aggressive individualistic competition for power in all its forms do not necessarily yield deep happiness and inner peace. Rather, worrying symptoms of inner peacelessness and turmoil - alienation, anxiety, stress, addiction; loss of meaning - are discernible, in part reflected by rising suicide rates and an accelerating reliance on anti-depressant pharmaceuticals.

In the furious pace of modern and post-modern existence, time for and interest in spiritual growth seems to be significantly lacking. As Thurmann (1998: 183) asks, "how can we overcome our addiction to this prevailing competitiveness that allows us no rest, no ease, no contentment?" Over 50 years ago, the German

Christian theologian who was imprisoned and executed for his resistance against the Nazis, Bonhoeffer (1948: 22) reminded us that "earthly possessions dazzle our eyes and delude us into thinking that they can provide security and freedom from anxiety. Yet all the time they are the very source of all anxiety. If our hearts are set on them, our reward is an anxiety whose burden is intolerable." Thich Nhat Hanh (1991) and other teachers from diverse traditions have shown that meditation can help to cultivate inner calm and equilibrium, and heal us from despair, anger and other unpeaceful attachments.

Within our holistic framework of educating for a culture of peace, Virginia and I, together with colleagues in many countries and regions, have therefore emphasised that inner peace cannot be ignored or diminished in importance. Even in so-called secular systems, spirituality is equally appropriate, since what are now referred as "secular" have their roots and foundations in values and ethical principles that underpin all spirituality traditions, whether faith-based or not. But at the same time, education for inner peace needs a very important caveat.

Inner peace cannot be divorced from outer or social peace. The eco-feminist Ruether (1992: 4) has, for example, cautioned that "we must be wary of new found privatized intrapsychic activity divorced from social systems of power. Rather we must see the work of ecojustice and the work of spirituality as interrelated, the inner and outer aspects of one process of conversion and transformation." Kornfield (1993: 315) in "A Path with Heart" calls for an integrated sense of spirituality which understands that if we are to bring light and compassion into the world, we must begin with our own lives."

The theme of inner peace encourages each of us to discover and nurture (e.g., through contemplation, meditation, prayer, etc.) our innermost values and vision of transcendence. But, as I continually challenge learners, can we feel an authentic sense of satisfaction that we have attained inner peace, while around us, much outer peacelessness exist, and yet we are not moved to act to build a culture of peace? In a class exercise, it is significant that almost all students view inner peace not merely in self-centred terms but invariably also frame inner peace within relationships to others and to the earth. As elaborated later, cultivating inner peace is a necessary but not sufficient component of nurturing an engaged spirituality.

In sum, although a substantive component of my journey in peace education has been in South contexts like the Philippines, I have been and remain equally challenged by the need and possibilities for uprooting violence and cultivating peace within North societies as well as in the site of North-South relationships in our "one world."

From Students to Teachers

Just as in the South, my journey in peace education in the North has similarly engaged with diverse societal sectors. Together with teachers, student teachers, and graduate students, we explored how a holistic understanding of conflicts and peace can be infused within all areas of curricula, teaching-learning strategies and institutional life within schools. My graduate students from Canada, Australia, Africa and Asia pursued research investigations in topics relating peace, human rights, and global perspectives to formal and informal sites of education. Though responsibility for research procedures and outcomes lie with the students, the process was a shared journey of mutual learning and critical research for a deeper understanding of the world. Pedagogically it was also a dialogue as I continually challenged them to integrate peace-oriented values and principles into their studies, and to research in solidarity, rather than as "experts" who dispassionately extract data from their research "subjects". In turn I was challenged to widen my knowledge and understanding, as I was also renewed in spirit.

For many years, Virginia and I have organized or served as resource persons in numerous youth conferences, workshops and summits that have facilitated a process of critical reflection and empowerment. Hopefully, we have contributed a bit to the formation of a future generation of peace-oriented adult citizens from professionals and business leaders to politicians and ordinary citizens. In one of these workshops, sponsored by the Canadian Mahatma Gandhi Foundation for World Peace, it was encouraging to see and hear the youth dialogue critically on issues of violence and conflict, and explore active non-violent strategies of transformation. In 2000, a coalition of NGOs including Change for Children and the Learning Network hosted a Peace Summit for Canadian and Central American youth. Their clear vision and commitment to building a peaceful world was profoundly witnessed in the peace murals painted by Canadian youth in solidarity with their Central American counterparts.

Peace education with youth needs to nurture a spirit of hopefulness, thereby moving beyond the "gloom" and "outrage" of critique to the empowerment rooted in envisioning peaceful alternative futures. Similarly, as educators like Joanna Macy (1998) have emphasized, it is important to surface and heal deeply felt despair and transform it into a capacity to envision and enact alternative possibilities for personal and societal peace. As I have on more than one occasion experienced, when barriers or indifference begin to exhaust one's patience, despair can easily set in which then requires considerable will and mindfulness to transcend.

In the North, my journey in peace education is centrally engaged with teachers who, as one professional group, hold a major route to alternative critical global citizenship formation. As children and youth go to their classrooms, teachers can make a difference by developing skills in critical thinking, re-interpreting or rewriting textbooks, pushing the boundaries of or redesigning official curriculum and cultivating non-violent relationships within the school community. The role of organized teachers groups like associations, unions, and subject area councils can be very facilitative. For example, the Australian Teachers Federation and the Australian Geography Teachers Association (Fien & Gerber, 1986) were leaders in supporting peace education projects and in extending solidarity to South teachers organizing against repression. Likewise, in Canada through the 90s, the Global Education Project, coordinated by provincial teachers associations have helped to infuse curricula and pedagogy with values and knowledge for a culture of peace. During summer institutes, some held in the sacred Canadian Rockies, dedicated teachers took time from their vacation to encourage and learn from each other creative ways to enhance their peace education commitment.

At a regional level, numerous teachers, administrators and teacher educators in the Asia-Pacific region, have participated in training workshops in Fiji and South Korea, held by the UNESCO-affiliated Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU), where education for international understanding is a synonym for a holistic framework of educating for a culture of peace (Kim, 2002; Toh & Floresca-Cawagas, 2003). Together with co-facilitators Virginia Cawagas, Ofelia Durante, Loreta Castro, Lawrence Surendra and APCEIU's Director, Samuel Lee, we have been inspired by the enthusiasm and openness of the participants to the framework in spite of the expected barriers and difficulties they face in over-competitive and often authoritarian educational systems. While initial feedback from participants reflect a positive response and expressed commitment to implementing their knowledge and skills in their home contexts, more systematic research is needed to assess the outcomes of such teacher development workshops, as well as a teachers' resource book containing 48 lessons for teaching and learning about education for international understanding toward a culture of peace (Floresca-Cawagas, 2004).

In higher education where I have been active for three decades, peace education has grown roots worldwide, roots that need nurturing. Teachers and educators in all levels of schooling undoubtedly constitute a vital link in the web of building a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world. As my own work in Faculties of Education since the mid-70s and the experiences of peace educators worldwide have shown, numerous challenges continue to face teachers committed to creating peaceful schooling environments. For example, a holistic peace education framework requires integration into curriculum areas in terms of content (knowledge and texts) and pedagogies (participatory and cooperative). Classroom management skills also need to endorse non-violence principles and practices of conflict resolution. Educating for active citizenship that empowers learners to challenge injustices, human rights violations, ecological destruction and other themes of peace building needs to be included in the teacher education program (Toh, 2002). Finally, it is important to develop a sense of professional autonomy and empowerment among members of the teaching profession, including a responsibility to challenge system policies and forces, including globalization from above (Toh & Floresca-Cawagas, 2002) that can reduce or undermine spaces for educational peace-building (e.g., curriculum narrowing, excessive testing, and authoritarian discipline).

On the campuses, there is a new generation of youth speaking out against violence and promoting movements for local and global justice, human rights and sustainability. They are bringing renewed energies and enthusiasm to challenge top-down globalization. For me, graduate students have been major catalysts for dialogue and mutual transformation. As emphasized by Freire and other critical educators, teachers and learners need to humbly learn from each other. Furthermore, academics must also be prepared to take a stand on issues and provide spaces within which students can empower themselves toward transformation.

A cardinal signpost for living a culture of peace within institutions like universities is to be mindful about gaps between theory and practice. Hence, as universities worldwide join the race for internationalization and globalization, we need to ask whether our institutional policies at home and abroad promote or violate a culture of peace, human rights and democracy? What is the level of support for programs in conflict resolution, inter-faith dialogue, multicultural, anti-racist, indigenous, environmental, human rights, peace, and development education? How conscious and assertive is the infusion of a culture of peace and peace education into curricula across faculties and departments? Are commercial initiatives of institutions like business partnerships subject to ethical and human rights investment principles? Are university souvenirs from T-shirts to decoration items produced under sweatshop labor conditions? These are serious questions for all of those journeying in formal tertiary education spaces.

North-South Solidarity

My experiences suggest that one of the greatest challenges facing peace education in the North is the awakening of compassion and solidarity among North citizens for marginalized peoples and societies worldwide. To quote Nelson Mandela when he movingly asked the 1999 World Economic Forum at Davos:

> *Is globalization only to benefit the powerful…? Does it offer nothing to men, women, and children who are ravaged by the violence of poverty? To answer 'Yes' to these questions is to re-create the conditions for conflict and instability. However, if the answer is 'No' then we can begin to build a better life for all humanity.*

As the inspirational peace-builder Mahatma Gandhi has affirmed, “the world is our family” and so we need to live with an ethic of universal caring. The Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh (1991) has likewise called on us to recognize that we are “inter-being,” all deeply inter-connected in the web of human and planetary existence. Hence we have to exercise a deep sense of accountability for all our actions near and far, even towards peoples and places we may never personally meet or visit.

Over the past decade, spaces for North-South collaboration in the formal context have been, however, less visible. But they do exist and part of my journey has been to seek opportunities, where possible, within international educational exchanges. For example, my participation in several aid projects in educational development in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean has also yielded opportunities to promote peace education. One venue was through curriculum development and in-service workshops for teachers in Uganda, Jamaica, and South Africa. Another opportunity occurred when the South scholars encountered peace education ideas during their studies with me in Australia or Canada, and then initiated parallel programs and activities on return to their home countries. In a number of cases, these North-South institutional linkage projects needed to provide democratic spaces in which their scholars could explore alternative worldviews and commitment that were not necessarily shared by senior administrators in their home institutions. On a few occasions, as a Canadian project director, it was necessary for me to visibly assert support for the initiatives of the scholars in the face of objections from my South counterpart directors. North-South partnership is, in my view, a critical space for solidarity, not an unequal relationship masking self-centred motivations (Toh, 1996).

In both South and North societies, as I have earlier narrated, my journey in peace education has convinced me of the vital role of civil society in awakening their citizens and governments to address international or global issues of violence, injustices, human rights and ecological destruction. From movements for disarmament, conflict mediation/transformation, and human rights to a more just global/local economic order and environmental sustainability, I have been inspired by the widening circle of advocates for globalization from below, as peoples from all regions share their minds, hearts and spirit to educate and act for peaceful transformation. No longer can the powerful conduct world summits and policy formulation events without parallel people’s gatherings to critique dominant worldviews and pose alternative ways of planetary economics and politics.

In Australia and other countries, many NGOs and projects have likewise helped to raise the consciousness of youth and adults to the realities of structural violence, and to play active citizenship roles in promoting North-South people-to-people grassroots aid projects and in advocating for more compassionate and just foreign policies of their nations. There are also now constructive efforts to engage the business sector on issues like corporate social responsibility, ethical investments, and fair trade and sweatshop labor. It is also hopeful to witness a willingness, albeit slow, of some agencies and governments to engage in dialogue with civil society advocating people-centered globalization. But it is also very disturbing to see an increasing fortress reaction of state authorities resorting to militarized force, from pepper spray to barb wire, in an effort to contain the voices and stirrings of globalization from below.

Fruits of Networking

Valuable sharing of cross-national/cultural lessons, knowledge and coordinated advocacy in peace education have been promoted by networks including the International Institute on Peace Education, the Peace Education Commission of

IPRA (International Peace Research Association), Teachers for Peace, the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction, UNESCO's Culture of Peace Program, UNICEF, the Hague Appeal's Global Campaign for Peace Education, Asia-Pacific Network for International Education & Values Education, and the World Congress on Comparative Education Societies.

The opportunities to participate in many of these professional networks and transformation communities have yielded priceless sharings on the theory and practice of educating for a culture for peace. I am also grateful for the renewal of energies through my networking and participation in the gatherings of the Peace Education Commission and the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction (WCCI), It was especially inspiring when I was able to join over 7000 peace-builders at the Hague Appeal for Peace in May 1998, meet and learn from hundreds of NGOs and other civil society movements sharing their success stories and difficulties as well. The Hague Appeal confirmed the global consensus that peace is multi-dimensional and that all these dimensions need to be inter-related in peacebuilding. I am also looking forward to a future opportunity to be no less inspired by the World Social Forum, an annual global gathering of some 100,000 peoples from all sectors and communities of civil society to share ideas, skills and success stories in building alternative futures based on principles of active non violence, local/global justice, human rights, cultural solidarity and sustainability.

At the inter-governmental level, the commitment of UNESCO educators to promote a culture of peace has also provided me invaluable learning and action spaces to engage with government leaders, civil servants and civil society representatives. From my participation as a resource person in the UNESCO Culture of Peace Forums in Manila (Philippines), Maputo (Mozambique) and Sintra (Portugal), and as the feasibility researcher and facilitator in the establishment of the UNESCO-affiliated Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding, I have seen how dialogue among all levels of society and across nations is a vital tool for deepening the peace education project (Toh & Gundara, 1998; Toh, 2002; 2003). In my view, opportunities for constructive engagement with government and inter-governmental agencies need to be explored, provided the process is infused with critical values, principles and understandings. In Canada, Australia, South Korea, Fiji, the Philippines, and other member states, the National UNESCO Commissions clearly play an important role in bringing the vision of a Culture of Peace into domestic contexts.

Other peace-related bodies, such as UN and National Commissions on Human Rights, have also provided meaningful spaces for networking to promote human rights education in India and South Korea (Toh, 1999). In one Asian Regional Human tights Education Workshop, I remember the Chinese delegate who was reluctant to consider including a reference in the recommendations to promoting the human rights of "prisoners", but quickly agreed when another representative asked him if he would prefer substituting "prisoners" with "detainees". In sum, I believe that transformation from within systems is an essential dimension of peacebuilding, albeit it is vital to be mindful of the possible dangers of co-optation.

Over the decades, the International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE) pioneered by Betty Reardon has yielded memorable moments of sharing and learning from peace educators in diverse regions. I recall the IIPE in El Salvador, where villagers, still holding vivid memories of fleeing from the crossfires of bloody armed conflict, were quietly determined to rebuild communities based on justice and human rights. We asked them the question, "after peace-talks and peace accords, how can real transformation be assured?" It reminded me of Mindanao, where seven years after the Government-MNLF accord, some of the poorest communities still feel

they have not significantly benefited from post-war reconstruction as promised in official plans.

In Japan, I dialogued with more traditional peace educators on the merits of focusing almost solely on the Hiroshima A-bomb experience, but I also increasingly met a new generation of educators who were concerned with Japan's accountability for structural violence, human rights violations, and environmental destruction in the global economy. In Manila, Hawaii and Alberta, the IIPEs helped to cultivate my spirit of solidarity with the struggles of indigenous peoples for cultural survival and social peace. The IIPE in Alberta in 1999 was inspired by Linda Bull, a Cree elder from the Goodfish Lake First Nation, who gathered participants in the sacred mountain of Morley. There we shared in ceremonies of indigenous peoples' spirituality and learned from elders and educators how indigenous knowledge and wisdom can contribute to building a culture of peace in the new millennium. These IIPEs have provided me a global space to learn from others, to share my own experiences, and to be renewed for the next step of the journey.

Engaged Spirituality

May I end these reflections by highlighting a very significant signpost in my journey, namely the signpost of spirituality, which the Christian *sannyasi* Bro. Teasdale (1999: 17) has described as "a way of life that affects every moment of existence at once a contemplative attitude, a disposition to a life of depth, and the search for ultimate meaning, direction and belonging." From my earliest upbringing in the multi-ethnic society of Malaysia, I have learned much from the wisdom of diverse religions and spiritual beliefs, including Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Islam, and Hinduism. I also understood in practice that it is possible for different faiths to live in harmony with and respect for each other. In this regard, my childhood experiences resonate with the recent findings of Hart (2003) revealing that children do experience a "secret spiritual world" which needs to be nurtured and guided. My Philippine experiences deepened my understanding of the teachings of Christianity, Islam and indigenous peoples. Insights from aboriginal or First Nations spirituality were also gained from living in Australia and Canada. Spirituality, of course, need not be found only within organized faiths. I have come across many peace-builders whose humanist values are likewise sources of spiritual inspiration for their commitment to a peaceful world. In essence, the cultivation of values and principles of inner peace, including compassion, justice, sharing, mercy, love, *ahimsa,* hope, forgiveness, reconciliation and respect, must help to guide and catalyze our societal peace-building.

Education for inner peace is also essential in rethinking centuries old attachments to materialism and other trappings of power. It provides values and tools for transforming alienation and despair in our age of unlimited consumerism and competition. It is necessary to relate the principle of justice with the ethics of compassion. In many civilizations and faiths, compassion is an ethical principle for guiding all inter-relationships from micro to macro levels of life (Chin Kung, 1999; Dalai Lama, 1999; Fox, 1991; Hsing Yun, 1998; Ikeda & Tehranian, 2003; Thich Nat Hanh, 1991; Tobias, Jane & Gray, 1995). Compassion means being able to express authentic feelings for the suffering of others and then being moved by one's conscience and spirituality to help transform the conditions that lead to such suffering, such as unjust relationships and structures. Compassion therefore cannot be equated with pity, since in pity, the dignity of those being aided is not upheld. Also, in acting on the basis of pity, "givers" avoid looking self-critically at themselves and asking if they may be directly or indirectly responsible for the suffering of the recipients. In contrast, compassion requires a willingness to acknowledge any responsibility for conditions of structural violence (e.g., corporate

and state policies of one's nation) and to express solidarity with the marginalized through personal and social actions for local/global justice.

Compassion leads us to contemplate voluntary simplicity and how to live in active harmony with all beings and parts of planet Earth. It nurtures the growth of our spirits and our roots of wisdom. In recent times, this process has been referred to as engaged spirituality, which emphasizes that spirituality, if it is to be authentic, needs to be expressed in action and practices that transform the everyday lives of individuals, communities, nation and the world community (Kotler, 1996). Engaged spirituality reminds us that spiritual growth cannot be a self-centred goal and process. It cannot be divorced from social and political action, but rather must help to build alternative relationships, structures and systems that yield conditions for all people to cultivate spiritual growth while simultaneously fulfilling their basic rights, dignities and freedoms.

Over the years of participating in building a culture of peace through education in the Philippines and other societies, I have also been inspired by the capacity of peoples of deep faith and spirituality to promote and practice reconciliation even in the most violent conflicts. One Filipino priest, Fr. Bert Layson, awardee of the Pax Christi Peace Prize 2003, recounted how, in caring for Muslim refugees displaced by the military's all-out war on the Moro combatants in 2000, he was initially criticized by his parishioners for allowing Muslim refugees and volunteers to pray in his residence. But he patiently persisted in educating the Christian villagers on the values of forgiveness, reconciliation and compassion for the Muslim refugees, until eventually a spirit of Christian-Muslim understanding, respect and cooperative action was cultivated. Earlier, I spoke of the inspiring role model of Fr. D'Ambra, who persisted despite assassination attempts (one which killed a brother priest) to build the Silsilah Christian-Muslim dialogue movement. At a more macro level, the Bishops-Ulama Forum has laid a basis for Christians, Muslims and indigenous peoples in Mindanao to cooperate in advocacy against continuing armed conflicts and for negotiations for a just and sustainable peace (LaRousse, 2001). Drawing on spiritual values from their traditions, local Christian-Muslim communities have been able to establish zones or spaces for peace, free from guns and armed conflicts and committed to grassroots development projects that benefit everyone regardless of culture or faith (Gardiola, 2003).

Furthermore, peace education necessarily calls on every faith to engage in self-criticism of contradictions between belief and practice. Some religious institutions, leaders and followers have, in the "name" of their faith, also committed atrocities, wars, and human rights violations. In this regard, inter-faith dialogue also needs to be accompanied by *intra-faith* dialogue on areas within their doctrines that may be barriers to the building of a culture of peace, such as issues of social justice, human rights or the use of violence in various versions of the "just war" (Ucko, 2003; Smith-Christopher, 1998). Care has to be taken to avoid the pitfalls of what Thomas Moore (2002) calls "spiritual anger," a tendency to self-destructive righteousness that can lead people to commit violence and abuse. My experiences over the years have taught me of the need to exercise humility in uprooting violence and building peace, and to avoid claims to being an "all-knowing expert", for that would immediately disrupt the dialogue and possibilities to mutual learning and sharing of wisdom.

A Continuing Journey

Just over a year ago, I was given the opportunity to translate the vision and mission of the Multi-Faith Center of Griffith University into programs and initiatives. Within the context of my journey of educating for a culture of peace, I see this challenging work of the Multi-Faith Center as being most relevant and timely. Worldwide, representatives of diverse faiths, religions and spiritual traditions have been

increasingly meeting to promote inter-faith, inter-religious or ecumenical dialogue so pivotal in developing greater active harmony of peoples within and across societies (Braybrooke, 1998; Tobias, Morrison & Gray, 1995; Race, 2001). From dialogue and respect can come a process of reconciliation and healing of distrust, bitterness, and enmity. At local, national and international levels, faith and inter-faith organizations and networks such as the Interfaith Multicultural Forum of Brisbane, Queensland Churches Together, Pure Land Learning College, Fo Guang Shan Chung Tian Temple, Catholic Commission on Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs, Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care, Catholic Commission for Justice & Peace, National Australian Christian-Muslim-Jewish Dialogue, Soka Gakkai International, Baha'i Faith, Temple of Understanding, World Conference on Religions and Peace, United Religions Initiative, and the Parliament of the World's Religions are providing educational and empowering spaces for diverse faith leaders and followers to work for nonviolent and just interfaith and intercultural relationships.

Inter-faith dialogue does not, however, only endeavour to raise awareness of each participant of the faith of others, which undoubtedly contributes to greater harmony and goodwill. Through inter-faith dialogue, members of diverse faiths are recognizing that they all have many common values and ethical principles for guiding relationships among all peoples and cultures. One exemplary vision that the World Parliament of Religions and other advocates have fruitfully promoted is that of a "global ethic" (Swidler, 1998). Based on the principle of engaged spirituality, this common ethical ground among diverse faiths should in turn hopefully lead to collaborative action among all faiths to resolve common societal and global problems including wars, militarization, inter-cultural conflicts, racism, poverty, North-South inequalities, WTO, freedom from debt, human rights, racism, refugees, and ecological destruction (Johnston & Sampson, 1994; World Council of Churches, 2003; Raiser, 2003; Jubilee South, 2001).

Over the last year, the Multi-Faith Centre has brought together many faiths and inter-faith communities and social institutions or agencies to critically reflect on different themes that concern all Australians of whatever faith or culture, such as peace, inter-cultural harmony, human rights, refugees, health, reconciliation with indigenous peoples, policing and other issues. It is my hope that these inter-faith dialogues will lead various faith communities and social and cultural sectors to join their minds, hearts and spirit in common social action to build a more peaceful, just, compassionate and sustainable Australia and world.

In the recent Asia-Pacific Youth Inter-Faith Dialogue Conference organized by the Multi-Faith Centre, over 20 Australian youth and another 19 youth from 10 other countries spent five days together, sharing and learning from the wisdom of each other's diverse cultures and faiths. Specific activities also involved the youth in dialogues with Queeensland faith and inter-faith networks and communities. The youth are now engaging in forming local and regional networks to continue to learn from each other's success stories and challenges. Project proposals are being developed to enable the youth to put into practice values and principles of inter-faith dialogue toward a culture of peace, such as the formation of inter-faith teams to educate peers from diverse faiths and cultures on the urgent need to overcome racism and discrimination in a multicultural Australia.

The Multi-Faith Centre, while located in Australia, also seeks to link with related institutions and networks in the Asia-Pacific region and across the world. To date, such linkages such as those undertaken in collaboration with Venerable Master Chin Kung at the Pure Land Learning College, have involved key universities with programs in faith and inter-faith dialogue studies, as well as inter-faith dialogue NGOs and networks. Through collaborative projects, such partnerships will contribute to the strengthening of relationships within and across societies built on

the values and principles of active non-violence, respect, justice, compassion and sustainability.

It is premature at this moment to give a definitive prognosis on the long-term and sustainable success and future of the Multi-Faith Centre. As the vision and programs of the Center unfold, opportunities to conduct participatory action research will be explored so that all partners involved in projects and initiatives can cooperate to critically reflect on the goals, processes and outcomes of inter-faith dialogue and draw lessons for enhancing the success of these inter-faith dialogue efforts. My deep hope and prayer is that the responsibilities and challenges of uprooting violence and cultivating peace through an engaged spirituality will be infused through ever widening circles of individuals, communities, institutions, nations and global networks. To remain hopeful is a vital dimension in education for an engaged spirituality, given substantive obstacles and powerful structures and systems for uprooting violence.

In my journey, I am infinitely grateful to all those who have constantly renewed my hope as we shared both joys and pain in common struggles, and whose tireless partnership and solidarity are affirmed by the UNESCO Prize of Peace Education I humbly received in 2000. As Lederach (2003: 37), the well-known peacebuilder from Eastern Mennonite University, wisely noted, "hope is kept alive by people who understand the depth of suffering and know the cost of keeping a horizon of change as a possibility for their children and grandchildren." The eco-feminist, Ruether, says we need neither optimism nor pessimism but "committed love," whereby "we remain committed to a vision and to concrete communities of life … to be renewed season after season" (1992: 273).

Hope is stirred deep within me whenever I recall the simple words of the toiling Filipino farmers of Sitio Kantomanyog as they addressed the 2nd UNESCO International Forum on a Culture of Peace: "We never gave up hope that we could set up a zone of peace in a land of war." My appeal to the educators and educational systems of the world is that we must not only help in the process of transforming minds. We need to also touch and move the hearts and spirit of learners, including ourselves, to act, to build and to weave a personal and global culture of peace.

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