

## *Advancing Nonviolence Session 2: Why Nonviolence?*

*pp.17-26, 29-33 (up to 'Seven Stories'); pp.58-66; pp.227-231.*

*pp.238 (from 'Nonviolent Resistance is more effective')-p.240 (up to 'innovating tactically').*

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### Overview of Session

- Why the Church and the world might want to turn towards nonviolence
- What has brought us to nonviolence.

### Personal Reflection

- What has motivated you to journey to nonviolence? Why might you have decided to commit to nonviolence?
- What has your journey looked like?
- Are there any, or have there been any, challenges in this journey?

### *Advancing Nonviolence: Why NV?*

#### *History*

- Signs of the times: Global spread of violence/global spread of NV.
  - Changing nature of violence and war
    - Nuclear weapons/WOMD/developments in military technology (e.g. drones) etc.
    - Increased indiscriminate harming of non-combatants
    - Intra-state vs. inter-state conflict. Non-state actors/terrorism etc.
  - Greater awareness of devastating impacts of conflict - 'physical, economic, psychological, environmental, moral' p.30.
  - Understandings of systematic, institutional, structural violence.
  - Growth of, and success of, popular NV movements e.g. Indian Independence, Civil Rights Movement etc.
    - Huge increase in scholarship over last 40 years.
- = Since VII: Increasing papal/episcopal documents arguing NV at core of Gospel. Emphasis on intertwined nature of peace and justice.
  - Harder to justify just war with changing nature of war/conflict.
  - Increasing growth of Catholic groups practising NV.
  - Growing theological/biblical research on NV.

- Commitment to nonviolence amped up throughout the papacy of Pope Francis. And see language of NV in used in Synthesis Report of Synod – indicates both gaining traction and needs further reflection within Church.

### *Theology*

- Faithfulness to gospel
  - Jesus as proclaiming nonviolence, living nonviolently. [The CNI](#) ‘affirms that active nonviolence is at the heart of the vision and message of Jesus’.
- Belief in God-given dignity of the human person/sacredness of human life. What it means to act in accordance with our true nature – called to love; inherent relationality (model of the Trinity).
- CST: Solidarity; common good; care for creation; option for poor and marginalized; rights and responsibilities – to name a few!

### *Effectivity*

- Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth’s - *Why Civil Resistance Works*:
  - explicitly nonviolent actions are shown to be twice as effective as their violent counterparts
  - much more likely to generate and sustain popular support
  - at least ten times more likely to lead to peaceful, democratic societies.
- Violence as ineffective:
  - Violence hasn’t solved problem of violence – hasn’t led to peace.
  - Creates cycle of violence.
  - Arms race/weapons arsenals not effective at preventing conflict.
  - NV as interrupting violence.
  - NV as challenging/transforming all forms of violence – personal/communal/structural/institutional etc. (Goes beyond what violence/conflict addresses).

### **Why Should the Church Adopt NV?**

- Faithful witness – Kingdom of God
- Powerful example to the world: CNI - ‘will lead the world away from perpetual violence and war by expanding its investment in its intellectual, pastoral, academic, diplomatic and financial resources in developing and promoting nonviolent practices and strategies’.

- Church as global organization – huge reach.
- Produce a Church that is NV/does no harm e.g. dealing with clerical abuse etc.

### Questions

- What do you make of the arguments for opting for NV, both practical and theological?
- Is there a particular argument you find most convincing? How does this resonate with your motivations for NV?
- What about the arguments that the Church should commit to NV?

### Quotations

‘Violence does not end violence’ – p.17, Fr Emmanuel Katongole.

‘This growing shift toward nonviolence is rooted in the call and mission of Jesus. Jesus was nonviolent. He taught his followers to put down the sword, to offer no violent resistance to the one who does evil and to not kill... The paschal mystery of Jesus’s cross and resurrection lay at the heart of Gospel nonviolence’ – p.24.

‘Nonviolent action is a modern way of witnessing to faith, a modern way of evangelising in a secular, pluralistic society’ – Ana Raffai, p.31.

NV ‘is capable of wielding great power even against ruthless rulers and military regimes, because it attacks the most vulnerable characteristic of all hierarchical institutions and governments: dependence on the governed’ – Gene Sharp, p.229.

‘Many people working for peace do not have a deeper knowledge of the practice of nonviolence. The Catholic Church is connected with people all over the world... the Church can be a good channel of active nonviolence’ – p.17, Ms. Elizabeth Kanini Kimau.

‘By explicitly embracing nonviolence, the Church could also take a powerful step towards challenging the moral legitimacy by which all forms of violence are excused and encouraged’ – p.21

‘Such a call to the world would be strengthened if the Church took concrete steps to integrate nonviolence throughout its global community, including by humbly grappling within its own historical and contemporary violence’ –p.25

### Next Session

- Violence and nonviolence in the Hebrew Scriptures - pp.93-113