

Active Non- violence



In South Sudan an introduction



South Sudan
Council of Churches

PAX

Foreword

Our beloved nation of South Sudan has known war and violence for almost seventy years since the Torit Mutiny of 1955. During that whole period, our Church worked tirelessly for peace and justice. In 1965, the Sudan Council of Churches was formed, recognizing that no single Church could stand alone. In 1972, the Church mediated the Addis Ababa Agreement, ending the first civil war.

During the second civil war from 1983 to 2005, the Church worked for peace both within the south (including the Kajiko meeting, the People-to-People Peace Process, the Sudan Ecumenical Forum, and many other initiatives) and at the national and international levels. During the Interim Period from 2005-2011, the Church successfully carried out civic education for elections and advocated for the referendum to take place on schedule. On 9th July 2011, the Church joyfully celebrated Independence with the nation and thanked God. When a senseless civil war broke out again in December 2013, Church leaders met within 48 hours and appealed for peace, but the warring parties did not heed their plea. In 2015, a Church leaders' retreat in Kigali issued a statement of intent to continue working for peace and initiated the Action Plan for Peace (APP). Until today, the Church has continued to implement and update the APP and accompany the nation in various local, national, regional, and international peace processes.

Our work for peace has become part of our very being, part of who we are, based on our faith in Jesus Christ and our Gospel values. The Church can never step aside from its struggle for peace and justice, and we have continued to pray and reflect on how to continue moving forward. This discernment has led us to embrace the

language and practice of non-violence and just peace, which is so well articulated in this booklet, prepared at our request following a decision by Church leaders gathered in LuKenya in 2022 to incorporate non-violence into our APP and an orientation workshop on Non-violence in Juba in 2023. We were particularly encouraged by the Ecumenical Peace Pilgrimage in February 2023, during which our three global Church leaders, Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, encouraged us to follow the path of the Gospel of Non-violence. We draw courage and inspiration from their solidarity and statements and Pope Francis' 2017 World Day of Peace message entitled "Non-violence: a Style of Politics for Peace".

We commend this booklet to your attention. It is not just for reading but for implementation! Non-violence is not passive but is active, and it needs all of us, all of you, to take action. We humbly urge bishops, moderators and senior Church leaders to embrace it as Church policy. We urge priests, pastors, and women clergy to preach about it and encourage their congregations to put it into practice. We urge our laity, particularly the youth, to use active non-violence in their daily lives and work. We urge members of other faith groups, traditional religions, and cultures to join us as they explore

non-violence in their traditions. We urge all those who practice violence, whether in the military, the security services, the other armed groups, militias, youth groups, or armed civilians, to turn away from the negativity and destruction of violence and to work in solidarity for a better future for all our people, especially our children and grandchildren.

We, the heads of the member Churches of the South Sudan Council of Churches, pray that peace and justice may come to our nation through active non-violence, and we offer you our blessing as we issue this appeal in the name of God our Loving Father, Jesus Christ his Son who experienced the violence of detention, torture and execution, and the Holy Spirit of peace.

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**NON VIOLENCE RADIATES
HUMAN LIFE**

Background

In April 2022, ecumenical church leaders came together in LuKenya to reaffirm the unity of the Church in South Sudan, calling *“for a new culture and lifestyle of non-violence throughout our society, our government, our political and military factions, in our communities, in our homes and in our hearts”*, as they recommitted to the 2015 Kigali statement of intent and ecumenical Action Plan for Peace in South Sudan. A follow-up meeting of church leaders in March 2023 in Kit, South Sudan, reaffirmed the need to develop a concept of an introduction to Non-violence for South Sudan. During this meeting, church leaders reviewed the vital call for non-violence in the high-level ecumenical pilgrimage of Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland Iain Greenshields to South Sudan a month earlier in February 2023. Discussions focused on Gospel Non-violence in South Sudan and strategies for promoting non-violence in the region. One of the key outcomes was the formal request to PAX to develop an introductory resource on non-violence for the people of South Sudan as part of broader efforts to re-invigorate and disseminate the principles of non-violence. They recognized that *“peace and justice cannot come through technical and political mechanisms alone but through transformation of the hearts of all our leaders and our people”*.

This booklet serves as a foundational introduction to the concept of non-violence. It is important to clarify that the intention was not to provide an exhaustive overview, given the multifaceted nature of the non-violence domain. Nevertheless, we aspire for it to stimulate discussions, prayer, contemplation, further study, training and *action* on non-violence, contributing to the collective endeavours to foster a Just Peace in South Sudan and benefiting its citizens.

The use of non-violent actions to build a Just Peace has historical roots, with various societies employing diverse mechanisms, approaches, and structures to achieve enduring harmony. Faith-based leaders in South Sudan advocate for non-violent methods rooted in principles for peacefully transforming conflicts during disputes.

Within this booklet, we examine non-violence from faith-based and secular perspectives. We discuss various principles of non-violence and offer practical insights into different methods of non-violence. The book also provides examples of successful non-violent leadership and initiatives from Africa.

How to use this book

This book is a basic introduction to the concept of non-violence. It is made for you to read, study, reflect, discuss and act.

Each chapter concludes with questions. You can use these questions to think and reflect by yourself, but we encourage you to invite others to come together and use the questions to kickstart dialogue.



“Indeed, there are also stories of Jesus getting angry, but that anger was not aimed to harm but to heal. Anger solves nothing, but if you can transform it into a determination to fight, into energy to strive for peace, to care for what is good, it becomes a tremendous force.”

Bsp emeritus Paride Taban

Understanding Non-violence

Important role models such as Rev Martin Luther King Jr, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bishop Paride Taban and Pope Francis all regard non-violence as a matter of faith and principle, emphasizing non-violence as a moral requirement opposing hostility, subjugation, and exploitation. They see non-violence as a religious belief, a value, and a principle for transforming hearts and minds through love and commitment to truth and justice.

We can define their views of nonviolence as “Principled non-violence” as it advocates non-violent resistance for religious, moral, ethical or philosophical reasons. It stands opposite of violence as violence inflicts unnecessary suffering and focuses only on short-term and partial solutions to problems. Essentially, non-violence encompasses a philosophy, a spirituality, a way of life and a set of principles founded on rejecting physical or emotional force, harm, or coercion to achieve personal or societal goals.

Those seeking peace and justice can also see non-violence as a tool. This approach uses non-violence as a tactic. When people turn to non-violence with this in mind, they often look at political power and how to change a system for the better. As we will see in this book, it can indeed be a useful tool.

Although many people would prefer non-violence, not everyone believes that non-violence can successfully counter violence. However, a groundbreaking evidence-based study, “Why Civil Resistance Works” by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan, found that non-violent resistance succeeds twice as often as a violent struggle. Moreover, non-violence is far more likely to produce a peaceful, stable, democratic, human rights-respecting post-struggle “Just Peace” society than a violent liberation struggle.

Non-violence overthrew a brutal military dictatorship in Sudan in 2019, and although the military eventually launched a fresh coup d’etat followed by a new violent conflict, the non-violent struggle continues. South Sudan, on the other hand, attained its Independence in 2011 after a violent 22-year civil war, but unfortunately, this did

not produce a just and stable society, and a mere two years later, the new country relapsed into a fresh conflict among brothers and sisters. Many African countries have experienced violent liberation struggles, whether from the evil of colonialism or the excesses of military regimes, as well as ethnic and religious conflicts. There is an increasing awareness that responding to violence with violence does not bring peace; violence begets more violence in an endless cycle which needs to be broken.

Non-violence extends beyond resisting violence, injustice, and oppression in society; it also involves working for a just and peaceful society, supporting human rights, government reforms, good and participative governance, and development while establishing and fostering model non-violent and peace communities.

It is important to note that non-violence is not passive; it is not accepting things as they are. Instead, it often involves active engagement in efforts to bring about positive change. Non-violent activists employ many strategies and tactics to address issues and injustices without resorting to violence. Non-violence directs us to use dialogue, negotiation, and non-violent communication to address conflicts and disputes. It strongly emphasizes finding mutually agreeable solutions and fostering understanding among conflicting parties.



Non-violence, as a moral and practical choice, breaks the cycle of violence, protects human rights, encourages constructive dialogue, and offers lasting solutions. It is a strategy that unites people, gains international support, challenges oppression, empowers the oppressed, and inspires hope for positive change despite severe repression.

In short: Nonviolence is against violence without violence

Guiding questions to facilitate a group discussion or for personal reflection:

1. Do you personally support the idea of non-violence? Why or why not?
2. Can you identify any non-violent leaders or movements from history or your culture that inspired you? What qualities or methods of these figures or movements are most impressive?
3. Does your religion, culture or personal belief promote non-violence? If so, how?
4. How can religious and spiritual leaders help spread the message of non-violence in today's world?
5. Are there projects or events you can join with others to spread awareness of non-violent solutions?
6. How can your group work together to encourage non-violence in our community?
7. Do you have any ideas for group activities to help people understand the benefits of non-violent solutions?



Non-violence and Human Nature

The initial encounter with the concept of non-violence often leads many to believe that violence is inherent in human nature while non-violence is not. In exploring this dynamic, it is crucial to recognize the complexity of human nature, which can exhibit a spectrum of behaviours influenced by biological, social, cultural, and environmental factors.

Let's start with the beginning. We find that individuals are not born violent or non-violent. Babies are neutral, and their behaviours develop based on environmental influences and upbringing. Children learn and repeat behaviours and values from their families, communities, and societies. Observing adult and peer behaviour shapes their understanding of norms.

Cultural norms and societal expectations significantly shape behaviour. Some cultures emphasize non-violence and conflict resolution, while others may lean towards more aggressive norms, including revenge killings, poisoning, gender-based violence, etc. So, we learn from our environment.

The environment we grow up in has a direct impact: exposure to violence, poverty, or discrimination can contribute to aggressive behaviour. For instance beating school children can have the opposite effect. Exposure to trauma, chronic stress, or adverse childhood experiences may increase the likelihood of violent behaviour, whereas a nurturing and non-violent environment fosters peaceful attitudes.

Therefore, education is crucial. Teaching empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution skills can promote non-violent behaviour. The socio-economic, cultural and political conditions impact our behaviour. The way forward is to improve these issues and conditions to reduce tendencies towards violence.

In summary, human beings are not inherently born violent, and many factors shape their behaviour. Promoting non-violence, conflict resolution, and creating nurturing environments are essential in developing non-violent tendencies and attitudes. Recognizing the potential for positive change and actively working towards a more peaceful and just society is crucial.

Guiding questions to facilitate a group discussion or for personal reflection:

1. How do our surroundings shape our behaviour?
 - Do you think people are born good or bad, or do they become that way due to their environment?
2. What influences our values and actions?
 - How do families and communities teach us what is right and wrong?
 - Can you think of any rules or customs from different places that show how culture affects behaviour?
3. Why do people sometimes act violently?
 - What makes people behave aggressively, especially when they experience violence or poverty?
 - How can we make our States, Counties, Payams, etc, safer and more peaceful?
4. What's the role of education in behaviour change?
 - How can schools help us learn to be kind and solve problems without violence?
 - What important things should we learn in school to be better, good and civilized people?
5. How can we help those who have experienced trauma?
 - Why do some people become more violent after bad experiences?
 - What can we do to support those who have had tough times?
6. Who are the people that inspire us to be better?
7.
 - Can you think of someone who is an excellent example of behaving well?
 - How can we encourage more people to be role models for others?
8. How can we make South Sudan a more peaceful place?
 - What can we do to make South Sudan safer and fairer?
 - What ideas do you have for making society less violent?

Non-violence Across Religious Beliefs and Traditions

Religion holds a central role in the lives of millions, impacting how individuals think, act, and view the world. It is a significant human resource that influences personal beliefs and cuts across cultures and societal structures. Moreover, religion plays a crucial part in shaping global affairs, with major world religions promoting sacred teachings, values, and practices that promote non-violence. It is worth noting that while non-violence is common in various religious traditions, it presents itself in secular forms

Non-violence within the traditions shows the way to the fullest possibilities of humanity—to becoming people of universal love, universal compassion, universal solidarity, universal peace, and, indeed, total non-violence.

For many, non-violence is much more than the absence of violence and is never passive. It is a spirituality, a constructive force, a method for social transformation, and a powerful way of life committed to the well-being of all.

Non-violence also calls for forms of restorative justice, which is found in many African cultures, including the Acholi *Mato Oput* rituals, the South Sudanese custom

of making peace through slaughtering a white bull- *Mabior*, Rwanda's *gacaca* courts – used to hear trial cases of the Rwandan genocide, and even South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We recognize a clear connection with the principles of Justice and Righteousness: Pursuing justice and righteousness, central to many faiths, aligns with non-violence. It advocates for peaceful means to correct wrongs and address injustices without resorting to violence. Non-violence upholds the principle of respecting and protecting human rights and the dignity of the human person. It is deeply committed to ensuring that individuals' rights and dignity are respected, fostering an environment of equality and fairness.

Prominent leaders of non-violent campaigns, such as Mahatma Gandhi (an Indian Hindu), Rev Martin Luther King Jr. (a US Baptist Christian Minister), Sheikh Musa Khalil (a Ugandan Muslim Imam), Archbishop John Baptist Odama (a Ugandan Catholic bishop), Bishop Paride Taban (a South Sudanese Catholic bishop) and many others, drew inspiration from their religious resources and holy books in their non-violent struggles. Through their lives, beliefs, and teachings, these leaders have inspired millions to participate actively in non-violent actions throughout history. Buddhism, illustrated by figures like the Dalai Lama, emphasizes non-violent responses to conflicts. Sheikh Abdul Jaffar Khan, a Muslim from Pakistan,



even trained over 100,000 “soldiers of peace and non-violence.” Several Christian denominations, such as the Society of Friends (Quakers) and Mennonites, are known as “peace churches”.

In conclusion, non-violence is a recurring theme across various religious beliefs and traditions. While rooted in sacred teachings, it also extends to secular forms. The historical success of non-violent campaigns often hinges on a religious foundation, emphasizing non-violence’s moral and ethical superiority. Leaders from different religious backgrounds have effectively utilized their faith to mobilize followers, fostering non-violent actions and influencing positive change worldwide.

Biblical Teachings and Principles of Non-violence: A Spiritual Foundation

Numerous spiritual and biblical teachings emphasize non-violence, offering profound insights into guiding principles for fostering peace, justice, and reconciliation. Non-violence is a core value of the Gospel, in which Jesus combined an unmistakable rejection of violence with the power of love and truth in action for justice and peace. At its core, non-violence is firmly rooted in positive values such as love, compassion, empathy, and respect for all human beings' inherent worth and dignity. It seeks to uplift and affirm the dignity of every individual, fostering a sense of interconnectedness among people.

Below, we examine several stories and teachings from the Holy Bible that reveal non-violent principles that form the foundation of a compassionate and just society. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pronounced, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9). This verse highlights the significance of actively working toward non-violence, peace and reconciliation, recognizing peacemakers as bearers of a divine calling.

Working for peace embodies respect for the sanctity of life, encapsulated in the commandment “Thou shall not kill” (Exodus 20:13). Non-violence extends this respect to all human beings, striving to protect and preserve life. It encompasses refraining from physically harming others and consciously avoiding behaviours or language that inflict emotional or mental harm.

However, if there is one occasion in the Gospels when we might think that violence could be justified, it is the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane to be tortured and killed. Peter draws his sword to defend Jesus, but Jesus’ response is, “Put away your sword!” (Matthew 26:52). In this story, we can see that a violent response might be an option, but Jesus shows us to use non-violence to act.

Likewise, the teaching of “turning the other cheek” is well known. Matthew 5:38-42 effectively promotes the acceptance of suffering rather than responding to Violence with Violence. It encourages a peaceful approach even in the face of aggression, embodying the essence of non-violence. Non-violent activists often demonstrate immense courage and resilience in the face of adversity. They are willing to endure hardship and make personal sacrifices to pursue their principles and convictions. There will be casualties – detention, beatings, rape, torture and even death. Some say that Christians should be prepared to die for their beliefs but not to kill for them!

These acts of non-violence are based on the principles of love and compassion. Jesus’ teachings, including loving one’s neighbours and enemies, form the foundation for treating others with kindness and seeking reconciliation rather than resorting to violence.

We find this principle in other texts and traditions, known as “The Golden Rule: This rule prompts individuals to treat others as they wish to be treated. The Christian faith expresses it as “Love your neighbour as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39, Mark 12:31). This principle fosters empathy and forms the essence of non-violent actions.

Non-violence aspires to be inclusive, inviting individuals from diverse backgrounds and perspectives to unite in common causes for peace and justice. It values the strength that diversity brings to the table. The aim to be as inclusive as possible also allows more people to participate, as women, children, the elderly, the sick, the weak, and different tribes, creeds and nationalities can all play a significant role, unlike a violent campaign, which is limited mainly to strong and fit young men.

Next to Love, Compassion and Unity, many religious texts, not only the Bible, emphasize forgiveness as essential for maintaining healthy relationships and resolving conflicts. In Matthew 18:22 when Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother, Jesus says up to seventy seven times - emphasizing the

need for continuous forgiveness. Non-violence often involves the act of forgiving those who have wronged us, choosing reconciliation over retaliation. The story of salvation in the Bible is God's masterpiece of healing and reconciliation, symbolizing the divine desire to restore the relationship between God and humanity. Non-violence involves healing wounds, reconciling conflicts, and mending broken relationships.

Within the Judeo-Christian tradition, the prophetic tradition calls for speaking truth to power and championing justice. This tradition emphasizes non-violent resistance to oppression and the promotion of social justice. The tradition sometimes leads to Civil Disobedience and Creative Resistance; as seen in the Book of Exodus 1:15-19, Egyptian midwives defied King Pharaoh's order to kill Hebrew boys, showcasing civil disobedience and creative resistance. Their act of disobeying unjust orders demonstrated the power of non-violent action against oppressive authority. Non-violence can manifest as active resistance to injustice and oppression. This resistance may take various forms, including civil disobedience, boycotts, and protests, to challenge unjust systems and policies perpetuating harm and violence. Non-violence has historically proven to be a potent tool for bringing about social, economic, cultural and political change. Movements that employ non-violent strategies have played pivotal roles in advancing civil rights, democracy, and social justice across the globe.

These spiritual and biblical principles provide a robust foundation for non-violence, embraced by many dedicated individuals committed to the well-being of others. The conviction that violence has no place in resolving human issues is a powerful message derived from these teachings, guiding those who seek a more compassionate and just society.

Guiding Questions for Group or Personal Reflection:

1. What role do Love and Compassion Play in Non-violence?
2. Can you think of real-life examples where people applied these principles to manage or resolve conflicts peacefully?
3. How does the principle of forgiveness contribute to maintaining healthy relationships and resolving conflicts?
4. Can you share personal experiences or stories that illustrate forgiveness' effectiveness in non-violent approaches to conflict?
5. How can the concept of "turning the other cheek," as presented in the text, be applied to contemporary conflicts and challenges?
6. What are the potential benefits of responding to aggression with non-violence, and what challenges might one face?
7. What does the text convey about the significance of being a peacemaker and its divine recognition in religious traditions?

Strategies of Non-violence

For non-violent efforts to be successful, faith-based groups and activists must establish a well-thought-out and effective strategy. To develop effective strategies, activists should first identify prevalent forms of violence, injustice, or the issues at stake. By doing this, activists start a form of context analysis. This analysis is crucial as it will help you understand the origins of the problems and have a vision of what you want to see instead. Imagining a better tomorrow together is essential as it gives hope and direction. It will make clear where you are now, where you want to go, and why you want to go there. It is like mapping out your journey to a better future.

If you know what you want to achieve in the end, you can set objectives and collectively devise a plan to achieve these objectives. Planning is about how, when, who and where.

Methods of non-violence

So, what can you do if you want to use non-violence actively? For this question, we turn to Professor Gene Sharp, one of the best-known scholars of non-violent action. He identified 198 methods of non-violence. The list of non-violent methods is not exhaustive, as people across the globe are constantly inventing new methods. However, it is a good starting point for understanding the various non-violent options for action. This book classifies the methods into three broad categories: non-violent protest and persuasion, non-cooperation (social, economic, and political), and non-violent intervention.

Protest and Persuasion

In the first category of non-violent protest and persuasion, protesters name what they think is wrong, point fingers at it and try to help others understand. This

category would include such tactics as writing petitions, demonstrating, and lobbying. They can be formal, like public speeches or declarations, but they can also be aimed at communicating to a broader audience.

We can look at the South Sudan Council of Churches in 2017 as an example of both ways of working and how different tactics can strengthen each other. During a retreat in Kigali, Rwanda, the heads of churches issued a statement of intent calling the civil war that began in July 2016 senseless and appealed for an immediate end to violence, initiating an Action Plan for Peace (APP) to empower faith-based communities in their quest for lasting peace. The SSCC National Women Desk had already begun organizing regular monthly peaceful marches. The group erected billboards displaying the message “STOP WAR—Women Strive for Peace” throughout Juba. Their movement building efforts reinforced the efforts of other women and civil society actors in pushing the warring parties to the peace negotiating table.

These are primarily symbolic acts of peaceful opposition or trying to convince others. Sometimes, they are actions AGAINST something, like peaceful marches or demonstrations. But they can also be FOR something, like a letter to Parliament, asking for a policy change. In this class of actions, we also see the use of cultural expressions, like poems and songs, dance and other art forms.



A particularly effective example of using dance comes from Southern Africa, where *toyi-toyi*, a local dance, is used in political protests. It could begin with rhythmic swaying and the loud stomping of feet with spontaneous chanting and include political slogans or songs. As one South African anti-apartheid activist put it, “The *toyi-toyi* was our weapon. We did not have the technology of warfare, the tear gas and tanks, but we had this weapon.”

We can also see the combination of protests asking for something. As an example, we can look at August 2013, when hundreds of residents in Juba took to the streets of the capital and protested against the catastrophic effects of gun violence and the deteriorating security situation, including targeted killings by armed robbers. The demonstrators, who included the angry relatives of the deceased, concerned citizens and non-violent activists from various civil society organizations, marched to the National parliament while carrying the bodies of two slain brothers. Protesters called on the state government to protect its people and improve security for the residents. These calls led to increased patrols by police and somewhat improved security.

Security, especially for women, is also an issue that often takes prominence. In the year 2000, women in Moundou, Chad, faced increasing attacks from street criminals and bandits. Marketwomen, especially, were robbed and molested. The Women’s Union for Peace organized a women’s appeal against the increase in street violence and banditry. All the local women’s associations, including Muslim and Christian women’s groups, signed the appeal, which outlined the situation, called for more protection from the police and local authorities, and stated that women would take action themselves unless a response were forthcoming. The women sent copies of the appeal to all local government authorities, the police and the military. Impressed by the women’s stand, the local radio station read the appeal for free. As a result of the appeal, the local prefect called a meeting of all officials and set up a security committee. Violence decreased. The appeal organizer, Rebecca Ganbe, said this initiative directly resulted from her participation in a consultation of African women peacemakers. Listening to their experiences inspired her. “Before the consultation, I would tremble if I saw a man in uniform,” she said. “But now, because of the consultation, we are writing petitions to the Prime Minister and sending telegrams to the warlords.”

Next to ordinary citizens, (outside) institutions can also take a non-violent stance. In 2019, the Pope, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the Church of Scotland hosted a spiritual retreat in Rome for the President of South Sudan and his five vice presidents. The Pope famously kissed their feet, a moving, non-violent gesture of love and humility. In February 2023, the three global ecumenical leaders visited South Sudan for an Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace, during which they all emphasized the message of non-violence.

In June 2003, Archbishop John Baptist Odama and his inter-faith colleagues of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative slept on the ground in a bus park in Gulu for four nights in solidarity with tens of thousands of children who sought safety in the town every night to avoid being abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army. A missionary priest who accompanied the religious leaders reflects: "I have been involved in a number of initiatives for peace, but never in my life have I seen a clearer example of the active non-violence preached by Gandhi put into practice. We were not doing anything illegal. Our action had not the slightest spark of aggressiveness, offence or violence. Yet it was strongly provocative". Due to their action, the "forgotten" conflict in northern Uganda gained international attention, and the seeds were sown for a peace process to begin.

Non-cooperation

The second category is non-violent non-cooperation. By these actions, people say that we deliberately fold our hands and turn our backs, refusing to participate in the wrong we have named. These actions are ways of NOT doing something. For example, people can stop working and call for a strike. By not going to work, school or university, people can make their point known without going to the streets or being directly in harm's way.



Another example is a boycott, where people decide not to buy certain goods or use certain services. It might even be not to accept money as Archbishop Lukudu did when he publicly refused to accept a donation from a government minister from Khartoum, stating that the money had better be used to pay the salaries of the civil servants.

A recent example of how international bodies can interfere non-violently is the suspension of Sudan by the African Union Peace and Security Council because of a lack of progress towards establishing a civilian-led Transitional Authority following the coup d'etat of 11th April 2019.

The third category is non-violent intervention.

With these actions, we face the wrong we have named, the wrong we have refused to support, and we step into the way, interfere, and block. This category includes such tactics as physical obstruction, blockades, civil disobedience, and sit-ins.

An internationally well-known example was the sit-ins by African Americans that challenged the segregation laws in the 1960s. They would enter segregated locations such as lunch counters, movie theatres, parks and other public places and sit peacefully and patiently. The goal was to disrupt business activity and demonstrate that segregated businesses profited from white and black customers



equally. The Greensboro sit-in became national news with heavy television coverage, and consequently, other cities started imitating this non-violent resistance protest. Six months later, all lunchrooms opened to all races.

In Nigeria's Delta State in August 2002, six hundred women held seven hundred western oil workers hostage without a single threat of harm. Despite facing police and soldiers with assault rifles, they shut down the Chevron Texaco oil facility in Escravos by threatening to use a traditional shaming strategy. Unless the oil officials agreed to their demands to fund local development by hiring more local men, installing electricity and water, and building schools and clinics in the surrounding villages, the women were going to stand naked before them. Women non-violently occupied the oil facility's airstrip and oil terminal and conducted negotiations for ten long days before officials agreed to hire local people, install water and electrical systems in the villages, and build schools and a town hall. Non-violence succeeded where violence could not. Local men, armed with machetes and guns, had threatened the oil executives with kidnapping and sabotage many times before—their violent attempts to win jobs met with counter-violence from Nigerian security forces. The women were well-organized and practical. They brought food with them and a clear strategy. "I was the leader of the airstrip team," said Anunu Uwawah. "If any plane came, I would drive my people there, and we circled it." After the successful action, women from other villages occupied four other Chevron Texaco oil facilities in southeastern Nigeria. Uwawah offered this tip to others: "I give one piece of advice to all women in all countries: they shouldn't let any company cheat them."

One of the initiatives in South Sudan is unarmed civilian protection under the auspices of the Non-violent Peace Force. Trained civilians openly accompany vulnerable South Sudanese, particularly women who are afraid to venture out to fetch water and firewood due to the threat of being raped, and the very presence of the trained civilians often acts as a deterrent to misbehaviour by armed men. Unarmed civilian protection is not a new concept. During the 22 years of civil war and as of today, the presence of Church personnel in an area often moderated the actions of armed groups through the just-peace-ethic category of breaking cycles of violence and the just-peace norm of humanization, cultivating key virtues for communities to engage conflict more constructively including empathy, humility, active non-violence, solidarity, hospitality, justice and courage.

Constructive Alternatives

This tactic was made famous by the work of the non-violent movement in India. A person can practice non-violence by showing a different way to improve the quality of life. A famous example from India is the Salt March. Here, people marched to the coast to win salt against the rule forbidding natives from manufacturing or selling salt. Again, this is an example of non-violence aimed against a colonial rule.

“Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open where it can be seen and dealt with.”

Dr Martin Luther King Jr

Another example of such defiance is starting alternative institutions. For example, during the senseless conflict between Generals Burhan and Dagalo and their military supporters in 2024, the non-violent “resistance committees” transformed themselves into “emergency rooms” providing humanitarian and other support to the suffering civilian population.

In the South Eastern borderlands of South Sudan, Kuron Peace Village established “peace committees” at the village level to coordinate with security actors, kraal cattle leaders and youth warriors, maintaining a system of (cross-border) conflict monitoring, early warning, rapid response and foremost the promotion of active non-violence. This happens in a large geographical area that features - cycles of intercommunal conflicts; - presence of small arms and availability of ammunition; - absence of state protection and response; and - absence of concrete economic programmes or opportunities offered by the state.

The Church in South Sudan has been engaging in forms of accompaniment and building relations through divides, as illustrated by the late Bishop Paride Taban (+1 Nov 2023). He founded Kuron Peace Village and created it as a beacon of hope, love and peace in a troubled South Sudan, where communities previously in conflict now work together and gain new experiences. Bishop Paride Taban and his team cultivated norms like peace-making communities, a more robust civil society, economic justice, relationality, arms control/ integral disarmament, responsibility for harm and conflict transformation, and identifying human needs and trauma healing. An example is how Bishop Taban turned a burglar in his compound into the best guard of the peace village since the burglar knew the weak spots.

Leadership in Non-violent Movements

In non-violence and peace movements, leadership is crucial for guiding actions and finding solutions to problems. Leaders, whether individuals or groups, play a key role in communicating movement objectives and strategies and mobilizing members toward achieving common goals. While figures like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr were influential, their success in non-violent movements was not solely due to charisma; instead, it stemmed from their ability to inspire, support, and organize members effectively.

Leadership in non-violent movements requires essential skills such as charisma, intellect, quick decision-making, discipline, and providing clear strategic directions. These qualities are vital for achieving objectives and ensuring the movement’s

success. Non-violent methods can bring about positive social, political, and environmental changes, contributing to more just and peaceful societies.

Their legacies inspire future generations, demonstrating that peaceful resistance, diplomacy, and activism can bring about enduring positive change, social justice, and lasting peace.

Some examples of non-violent leadership:

- Mahatma Gandhi, a leader in the Indian independence movement, used non-violence, civil disobedience, and fasting as a means of challenging British colonial rule. His approach inspired others worldwide and paved the way for India's Independence in 1947.
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a key figure in the American Civil Rights Movement. He promoted non-violent resistance to racial segregation and injustice. His leadership led to significant changes in civil rights laws and an improved quality of life for African Americans.
- Nelson Mandela's long struggle against apartheid in South Africa was marked mainly by non-violence, reconciliation, and forgiveness. He became South Africa's first black president in 1994 and helped to transition the country to a more inclusive and democratic post-apartheid society.
- Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a prominent figure in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. He used non-violent means to challenge apartheid and promote reconciliation.
- Wangari Maathai, a Nobel laureate from Kenya, founded the Green Belt Movement, which focused on environmental conservation and women's rights. Her work demonstrates how non-violence can lead to sustainable development and empowerment.
- Bishop Paride Taban, an internationally recognized South Sudanese Catholic Bishop, founded Holy Trinity Peace Village Kuron, where former conflicting communities could live, attend school, and work together in a model peace village. He dedicated his life to serving others and spreading messages of love, peace, compassion and faith. The Holy Bible inspired Paride Taban, the life of Christ and his youthful experiences in the village where people of all tribes lived and worked alongside each other, and later on his encounter with "Neve Shalom", a place where Jews and Palestinians lived together peacefully

in the Holy Land. The bishop was arrested and jailed by both sides in the Sudanese conflict for his non-violent activism. He lived and breathed non-violence, peace and reconciliation and is remembered for his “eight words” of non-violence, which he prayed every day and encouraged others to do the same: “I love you; I miss you; thank you; I forgive; we forget; together; I am wrong; I am sorry.”

- Pope Francis is a strong proponent of non-violence, especially since his 2017 World Day of Peace message entitled “Non-violence: A Style of Politics for Peace”. He has described the current situation with wars in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan and elsewhere as “a third world war waged in instalments” and said, “I believe it is time to rethink the concept of a ‘just war.’ A war may be just; there is the right to defend oneself. However, we need to rethink how the concept is used nowadays. Every war leaves our world worse than it was before. War is a failure of politics and humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil. War is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment. If we want true integral human development for all, we must work tirelessly to avoid war between nations and peoples.” In February 2024, while praying for peace in Sudan, Mozambique, Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, he said, “Wherever there is fighting populations are exhausted, they are tired of war, which is always useless, inconclusive and will only bring death and destruction and will never lead to a solution to the problem.”

Guiding questions to foster more in-depth discussions about non-violence in your community

1. What does non-violence mean to you?
 - Can you share personal experiences or examples reflecting your understanding of non-violence?
 - How has your cultural or religious background influenced your perspective on non-violence?
2. Can you think of examples where non-violence has led to positive change?
 - What specific movements or actions come to mind when you think of successful non-violent change?
 - In what ways have non-violent actions made a difference in your community, country or globally?

3. What challenges does our community face regarding the use of non-violent actions?
 - How do these challenges affect different groups or individuals within the community?
4. How could non-violent actions help address these challenges?
 - What are some non-violent strategies or methods you think could be effective in our community or country?
 - How can we adapt non-violent actions to address our specific challenges?
5. What concerns do community members have about non-violent action?
 - Do community members have fears or hesitations about engaging in non-violent actions?
 - How can we address and alleviate these concerns to ensure community participation?
6. How can we create safe spaces for discussion?
 - What specific measures or practices can we implement to ensure confidentiality and safety in our discussions?
 - Who can be responsible for maintaining the security of our community gatherings?
7. What are our next steps for building a more non-violent community?
 - What immediate actions can we take to start our journey toward a more non-violent community?
 - How can we ensure accountability and track our progress in implementing non-violent actions?

Non-violence in Africa

While stories of violence dominate the public discourse in Sub-Saharan Africa, community and faith-based groups, civil society organizations and grassroots peace movements directly affected by violence, conflicts and wars have developed and used creative life-affirming ways to prevent violence, resolve conflicts and build peace. Active non-violence is increasingly taking centre stage in the struggle for liberation among vulnerable and oppressed peoples in the region and worldwide. Many successful non-violent actions have brought about positive socio-economic and political change on the African continent, even in the most repressive contexts. During colonization and the struggles for Independence, leaders in Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa, and Ghana cited Gandhi's non-violent strategies as an inspiration. Since then, strategic non-violent action has been credited with reducing, preventing or ending violent conflict in Burundi, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Movements in these contexts were successful because they embraced strategic planning, coordinated across disparate groups, had strong movement cohesion, and practised clear communication and messaging.

In this book, we want to emphasize the experience of Sudan and South Sudan.

Sudan During the Condominium Period

In the early 1900s, during the colonial Condominium period, Chief Girima Lorola of Lanyi protested against the British District Commissioner (DC) of Amadi for forced recruitment, exploitation and poor working conditions of those engaged in farming and the mining industries. He walked from Amadi to Mangalla and complained to the governor of the Equatoria region. He particularly emphasized death due to hunger, as people were forced to cultivate cash crops such as cotton for export instead of food crops, and the death of miners when their holes collapsed while digging. This action resulted in the dismissal of the DC and Chief Lorola himself. The DC was fired for failing to win the political support of the local chiefs and people, while the DC

replaced Chief Girima in Amadi for fear that if such a personality were tolerated, he would soon mobilize popular resistance against the colonial regime.

Sudan after Independence in 1956

Since the Independence of Sudan in 1956, non-violent popular uprisings (*intifada*) overthrew three military dictatorships.: The regimes of General Ibrahim Abboud in 1964, General Jaafar Muhammad al Nimeiry in 1985 and General Omar Hassan al Bashir in 2019. The 1964 and 1985 revolutions were led mainly by students and trade unions, while women and youth-led the 2019 revolution. The most recent *intifada* was notable for the discipline and courage shown by the demonstrators who refused to either surrender or be provoked into violence in the face of killing, rape, detention and torture by the security forces. In all three cases, the military themselves eventually reached a point where they could no longer sustain the level of violence against such a vast number of civilian protesters, and they removed their leaders to de-escalate the situation.

During the Second Civil War

During Sudan's second civil war from 1983-2005, Church leaders were critical in peace advocacy and non-violent campaigning. In the early 1990s, the Sudanese Church and its international ecumenical partners formed the Sudan Ecumenical Forum (SEF) to advocate for peace in Sudan's "forgotten war".

SEF focused on three priorities: stopping the oil, stopping the bombing, and the right of self-determination. SEF played a leading role in raising awareness about human rights atrocities associated with the oil companies. "We travelled worldwide and campaigned against oil companies fuelling war in Sudan," recalled Bishop Paride Taban. "We told the world that buying oil from Sudan kills people." The Talisman oil company sold its Sudan oil operations, with its chief executive complaining that due to intense lobbying by churches, he had to spend 90% of his time dealing with an operation that only generated 10% of Talisman's profits. A court case against another oil company, Lundin, over its collusion in war crimes is ongoing in Sweden as of September 2023. SEF collected detailed statistics on the bombing of civilians in Sudan. These were used by international actors, including governments, to challenge the Khartoum regime, and during this period bombing of civilians was seen to reduce. Both in Khartoum and the international community, the right of self-determination was seen as laughable, ridiculous and unobtainable. Still, after lobbying by SEF, culminating in a meeting in London in 2002 which produced an influential paper entitled "Let my people choose" (cf Exodus 9:1), just a few months later, it became the centrepiece of an agreement signed by the two protagonists in the Sudan war in Machakos, Kenya. Later, towards the end of 2010, when Khartoum and the international community appeared to be reneging on the timetable for a self-

determination referendum, a delegation of senior Church leaders traveled to the US where they had meetings at the white house and also met the UN Secretary General and successfully lobbied for the referendum to take place on time, presenting a detailed, evidence-based analysis of the potentially dreadful consequences of failure.

In 1991, there was a split between the leaders of the southern Sudanese liberation movement, SPLM/A, leading to a significant setback for the cause of liberation and to tribal conflict, which caused massive bloodshed as southern Sudanese fought against each other. The Church initially sought to reconcile the two leaders, Dr John Garang and Dr Riek Machar, but failed, so instead, they turned to the grassroots, creating the People-to-People Peace Process. In 1999, chiefs, elders and women from the leaders' two main tribes, after a long process of preparatory mobilization and conscientization, came together in a small village called Wunlit and signed a peace agreement between themselves. Further conferences and advocacy followed this, and eventually, in 2002, Drs John and Riek reconciled their immediate political differences, and their forces ceased fighting each other.

During the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

When the two main warring parties eventually negotiated a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), all other groups, including more minor warring factions, political parties, faith communities and civil society, were excluded from the negotiations held in Naivasha, Kenya. Refusing to be sidelined, the Church set up its parallel "Entebbe Process" in Uganda, holding a series of meetings shadowing the Naivasha talks. Since many of the delegates at the official meetings were Church members, those individuals introduced the resolutions of the Entebbe meetings informally into the Naivasha talks.

None of these successes brought lasting peace to Sudan, in the same way as violence has also never brought lasting peace, but lessons were learned, and, alliances of solidarity formed each time, and the non-violent struggle always continued in the face of violence.

South Sudan

Following the outbreak of conflict in December 2013 and July 2016, different South Sudanese actors including women, youth, civil society actors and clergy, have engaged in various forms of non-violent strategies to call for an end to the war and promote peace.

Art in its different forms - music, poetry, dance, paintings, murals - has been used by youth to call for an end to the war. In 2016, a group of youth artists formed the artists collective Ana Taban to advocate for an end to the war. "Ana Taban" is a Juba Arabic word loosely translated as "I am tired." Artists painted murals mentioning they were tired of hunger and insecurity, sang calling for an end to war and held festivals like the Hagana Festival to promote a culture of peace and unity. Art, especially for the youth, became a tool for non-violent expression and galvanizing for peace.

In December 2017, just before the commencement of the High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) to revitalize the 2015 South Sudan peace agreement, women civil society actors, women of faith and young women, accompanied by male allies took to the streets in a silent march. Protesters taped their mouths with masking tape and wrote their messages on manila paper as they silently walked across the national capital, Juba.

Similarly, in March 2020, hundreds of protesters, mostly young artists, women and men from different civic groups took over Mobil Roundabout in Juba and protested the tragic car accident and poor health services which led to the death of a famous female artist, Trisha Cee. The protesters denounced corruption and poor working conditions for civil servants which have crippled public service sectors. One protester claimed, "The Juba Teaching Hospital, the only teaching and referral hospital in the country, is just a building. It has no experienced doctors on duty, nor an accessible blood bank to save lives." Over 20 activists were arrested and detained by the South Sudan Police Service for participating in the protest but were released without charges on the same day. Protests have been used by South Sudanese citizens to advocate for peace, provision of services and an overall better South Sudan.

During the 2018 South Sudan peace talks, the civil society actors at the peace process felt that the warring parties were becoming complacent and not focusing on the needs of the South Sudanese people. They thus spearheaded campaigns like the 'South Sudan is Watching' campaign where citizens took photos with sunglasses, and these were posted on Billboards across Juba to remind the warring parties that the citizens were watching their actions closely. A non-violent reminder to focus on finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Statements and position papers were used by various civil society organizations, youth and women groups to outline their priorities for peace in the 2015 and 2018 peace agreement processes. This non-violent strategy continues to be employed in the implementation of the peace agreement. Prior to the peace negotiations, stakeholder groups would host convenings with their respective constituencies,

during which they would develop their positions on matters of governance and security arrangements. For example, in January 2018, the South Sudan Women's Coalition for Peace convened a stakeholder meeting in Uganda where its members came up with a list that they referred to as their "10 red lines" and "10 green lines." This document outlined their priorities for the then upcoming round of peace negotiations including their demand for 50% quota for women's representations at all levels of government. This document was shared with the warring parties, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (the mediators of the peace talks, the African Union and other international donors.

Additionally in February 2023, during the visit of the global church leaders to South Sudan, women clergy with support from PAX for Peace Netherlands and the South Sudan Council of Churches Women's Desk developed a list of 10 points outlining the citizen's priorities that needed to be brought to the attention of the global church leaders and South Sudan's political leaders. This document was shared with Pope Francis, Archbishop Welby and Moderator Greenshields. Following the presentation of the document at the Presbyterian church, the First Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar, who was in attendance, underscored that what the women clergy



highlighted was indeed true and a good summary of the challenges in the country that needed to be addressed. Position papers and statements continue to be an effective and efficient non-violent tool for sharing South Sudanese citizens' concerns and priorities.

End note

We hope and pray this book will inspire people to choose the non-violent alternative.

After reading this book, we trust you recognize that conflict is part of human life, but that conflict can be addressed non-violently. Although it is not always the easiest option, non-violence aims to create a society that benefits everybody.

Thinking about non-violence can start a journey of thinking about other values and how to realize them non-violently. We look forward to continuing the conversation on how non-violence can help realize the values mentioned in the South Sudanese anthem: Peace, Harmony, Justice, Liberty and Prosperity.

In peace

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