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IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The 3/2011 issue of Media Development will take the theme “Communication and Theology Today”.

WACC taking sides
Peace journalism has come a long way since 1997, when a series of key lectures on the topic was given by sociologist Johan Galtung, one of the founders of peace studies, at a summer school on Conflict and Peace Journalism held at Taplow Court, Buckinghamshire, England.

In straightforward terms, Galtung observed that a great deal of War Journalism was based on the same assumptions as Sports Journalism: focusing on winning as the only thing in a “zero sum” game of two parties. In contrast, he described Peace Journalism as more like Health Journalism: recounting a patient’s battle against cancer, a good health correspondent would explain the causes of cancer – lifestyle, environment, genetic make-up, as well as a range of cures and preventive measures.

Alongside a plethora of articles in different journals, three books are notable for setting the standard – as it were – for the theory of peace journalism, its methodological foundations, and its ethical and practical application. Needless to say, perhaps, the notion of peace journalism has also been the focus of considerable critical and opprobrious debate.

In 2005 Lynch and McGoldrick published Peace Journalism, exploring concepts and methods “unavoidably based on the proposition that public understanding of key issues depends, at least to some extent, on how they are reported” (p. xix). Written to be accessible to the general reader or active citizen, what amounts to a handbook can be worked through using the large number of examples, exercises, and discussion points provided.

In 2007 Shinar and Kempf edited and published Peace journalism: The state of the art, critiquing some of the principal writings in the field and concluding that peace journalism is a way to “strengthen human, moral and ethical values in the media; widen scholarly and professional media horizons and provide better public service by the media” (p. 200).

Most recently, in 2010, Peace Journalism, War and Conflict Resolution appeared, edited by Richard Lance Keeble, John Tulloch, and Florian Zollmann. It draws together the work of more than 20 leading writers, journalists, theorists and campaigners to offer an eclectic range of perspectives aimed at strengthening a movement that, if it is to succeed, “must be intellectually rigorous, courageous, imaginative, life-affirmative – and open to diversity” (p. 11).

Describing the book as an essential roadmap of the discipline, Canadian writer and cultural commentator Jeffery Klaehn comments in his Afterword, “The contributors demonstrate how social communication and journalism intersect with power, explore ways in which power meets meaning within media discourses, and investigate how communicative power plays out into various circuits of the communicative process, directly and indirectly interfacing with political and economic power” (p. 354).

Peace journalism finds its place in newspapers and magazines, on radio and television, in film and documentaries, in digital media and mainstream cultural events such as public exhibitions and debates. There are also transnational online communities like Avaaz.org, which is dedicated to organizing “citizens of all nations to close the gap between the world we have and the world most people everywhere want.”

At the heart of the matter lies power. Excluding, invisibilizing, and marginalizing people facilitate all kinds of travesty and injustice. Including, making visible, and placing people at the centre of decision-making uphold their human rights.

Thus, peace journalism falls squarely within the realm of the right to communicate – strengthening the ability of people and communities to make known their economic, political, social, and cultural aspirations and urging them to live in peace with one another.

References
From challenge to hope

Rukhsana Aslam

Much has been said and written about peace journalism, starting from Galtung (1973) to Howard (2003), Lynch (2005), Allan (2007) and more recently Keeble (2010). To many, it brings the promise of shifting the media’s fascination with bodies and numbers in a conflict to a more humane and meaningful analysis of events that create these conflicts. But for the others, like Loyn (2007), peace journalism is a slogan better suited for propaganda or advocacy. At its best, it achieves nothing more than what “good journalism” cannot achieve.

Believers in peace journalism face many challenges which are extremely diversified and complex in their scope and application. At one level, they include conceptual understanding, its acceptance as a form of journalism-as-we-know-it-today, and its translation into journalistic values and practices to train future journalists. In the last issue of Media Development, Jan Servaes (2/2010: 62) has pointed out some “basic questions” that are still being raised by scholars working on the project for the international NGO Search for Common Ground. Such as who defines peace? How is peace conceptualized? How many types of peace exist for the various stakeholders and how do these apply in particular conflict areas? On which criteria, premises and priorities are journalists’ choices based over the target audience and the issue to be addressed? These questions evade an answer.

On the practical side, peace journalism is faced with another range of challenges. For instance, those faced by journalists in the developed world are vastly different from those faced by journalists in the developing countries simply in terms of resources, training and logistics. Also, each conflict brings its own cultural and social context which makes it difficult for journalists to operate in the area and deal with affected local communities, especially if they are considered as “outsiders” and the people are unwilling to trust and cooperate. Such is the case in the tribal areas of Pakistan, which has become the battlefield for the War on Terror and is discussed in more detail below.

Conceptual problems

One of the reasons why the concept of “peace journalism” disturbs many media professionals is because it challenges the fundamental values and practices of journalism as we know it today. For instance, ask the basic question: what makes the news? Or who makes the news? Most of the text books on journalism would answer “conflict” to the first question and “important people” to the second. Can such an approach, which judges the value of a news item in terms of the numbers of deaths or the position of a person speaking, make room for the slow process of peace building or be a voice of the people at the grassroots against the high profile politicians or officials? (Aslam, 2010).

Abandoning the notion of journalistic objectivity is another hurdle: how can a journalist be fair if s/he gets involved? The dangers of objective journalism, as Lynch and McGoldrick (2005: 210) point out, are many: it is biased, favours official sources and records events than the process. It also encourages “dualism” which means that it may be a safe way for a reporter to “hear both sides” but each side might end up viewing the report as a victory. However, on the other hand, abandoning “objectivity” might mean for a journalist taking on a role that romanticizes conflict.

The veteran American war correspondent Chris Hedges, reflecting on his experiences in the Vietnam and the Gulf war (2008), said: “I didn’t go to the war to be objective, I wanted to be the champion of the weaker side.” Such romanticism can be dangerous especially when the media industry makes a hero out of their war correspondents fighting alongside the soldiers and engaged in something noble. It becomes the pinnacle of their career. The glamour and romance which follows war correspondents on their return makes them the “role model’ that all young journalists must aspire to.

The challenge, therefore, is not whether the jour-
nalist should be objective or not but whether the journalists and committed academics are willing to rethink this ideal in favour of a more “involved role”. The Pulitzer Prize-winner and author of The Making of the Atomic Bomb (1987), Richard Rhodes, talks about it in terms of “deeper investigation” (2008). This means a journalism that is more assertive in the pursuit of a story, more sceptical towards the mighty and more sympathetic towards the weak. The danger lies in not knowing how to strike a balance.

For some academics, the concept of peace journalism lacks the theoretical perspective. Bratic and Schirch (2008) argue that despite an “optimistic shift” of media in conflict, the debate about the media’s role in peace-making leaves many questions unanswered. “The theoretical argument for the media’s impact on peace is underdeveloped, the practical projects are vastly scattered and a systematic analysis of the practice is missing.”

Practical challenges
How to respond to Globalization and Glocalisation? There are many social and cultural implications for practitioners of peace journalism. The first is the digital revolution which makes it a more complicated and complex phenomenon. The digital revolution and advances in satellite technology have given people unprecedented access to global events, with immediate and detailed reporting of war now possible. And while new media technologies do not alter the fundamental tenets of journalism, they do change user behaviour and hence news room paradigms, discussions and decisions. Today, faster speed, tighter deadlines, shorter time and space on TV screen and immediate audience participation severely restricts the journalist’s ability to make an in-depth analysis of a situation while maintaining the authenticity, balance and accuracy of the news.

The nature of information has also changed becoming more entertaining, interactive and instantaneous: for instance, blogs, vlogs, UTube, SMS and now twitters. It transcends the conventional geographical boundaries and hence has the capacity to absorb audiences at a global level. Therefore, the ability to view issues from a global perspective while connecting to local sources and understanding the local context, is a critical aspect of journalist’s response to conflict both ethically and socially. This includes mixing with people of different cultures, living in different countries, learning various languages, understanding local sensitivities and shedding one’s own presumptions and biases.

When war becomes entertainment. In almost all societies and cultures, conflict has always been the theme for stage, drama and oral story-telling tradition. But now it has transcended to becoming a visual entertainment that is universally accepted in the form of video games, movies etc. The disturbing aspect is not the theme itself but the actualization and identification of the characters as heroes (mostly dressed as American soldiers or citizens) and enemies (such as the games in which the enemy is Osama bin Laden).

Schubart’s book War Isn’t Hell, It’s Entertainment (2009) deals with the relationship between war and media. The book offers no apology for the existence of such a relationship. Neither does it try to condemn it or separate the two. “It is much too late for that,” as Schubart admits in her introduction. Yet at the same time, it makes anyone who is the active user of the visual media to pause and question their response to war and its exploitation in the visual media. Who doesn’t enjoy killing the enemy while playing the war video games? People watch the personal recordings of war on U-tube precisely because they are entertaining. Everyone likes war action movies because of the special effects and we all admire and remember the actors who starred in famous world war films. But all on the pretext that it is just a game or a film. A make believe, not reality. In our world of reality shows and visual effects, war itself has become an entertainment.

Matters of access, trust and support. Another factor that greatly affects the outcome of peace journalism is the support of local communities. Most of the time journalists either rely on the local government or the local people to get information for their stories in a conflict area. What happens when there is none?

Pakistan and the war on terror
A unique case in the analysis of practising effective peace journalism is the war on terror being fought in Pakistan’s tribal areas. These areas lie at the remote end of the North West of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan. Despite being the epicentre of the conflict, there is no access for Pakistani or
foreign journalists to cover the conflict. There are many reasons: a) the Pakistani government and the US army considers the operation too sensitive; b) the terrain is extremely difficult and treacherous to survive by oneself and, c) because they are looked upon as “outsiders” by the closely knit local tribes. Local journalists are the only source of independent information but they not only face death every day, they are also looked upon with mistrust by the government and the Taliban.

On 16 June 2006, journalist Hayatullah Khan, who was kidnapped by gunmen six months previously, was shot in North Waziristan. He was not a small time reporter but worked for the English language daily *The Nation* and the Urdu language newspaper *Ausaf*. He was also the general secretary of the Tribal Union of Journalists (TUJ) and had been covering the war in Waziristan since the beginning. His family and many others believe he was kidnapped and detained by the security agencies for his reporting on US military action in tribal areas. On the other hand, the local Taliban’s approach towards the media is even worse. They are hostile to the presence of any outside media person considering them all “Western spies”.

A media-related international NGO *Internews Pakistan* reported in June 2006 that at least 20 journalists in the tribal areas were killed, kidnapped, arrested, tortured or threatened by the local administration, the law enforcement agencies and Taliban all during the first six months of the conflict. The Pakistan Press Freedom Report (2007) concluded that “most journalists in tribal areas have either been forced to give up their profession or leave their home town. The few that remain, limit their coverage to innocuous topics such as school functions and activities of administration officers.”

Since then, the only source of information left in these tribal areas is provided by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) which is the army’s official agency. Its news credibility remains questionable as most of it is written in and disseminated not from the conflict areas but its offices in Islamabad. ISPR has claimed dozens of Taliban leaders have been killed yet not a single photograph has been released to the press. It has claimed the tribal area of Swat has been cleared of all Taliban elements, yet the Radio News Network reported on 21 July 2009 that the Taliban were running an FM radio station – just days after the internally displaced people during the war (IDPs) from the valley were allowed to go back to their homes. (Before the military operation in Swat began in April 2009, about 88 FM radio stations were estimated to be operating illegally in the area, mostly by the Taliban.)

Another example of how the news coming from Waziristan is contradictory, speculative and thus confusing, was the report of the Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud being killed in the drone attacks in August 2009. Lanche (2009), a research intern at Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), wrote in an article that it was a fact that a missile strike had destroyed Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud father-in-law’s house in Zanghora, South Waziristan, on 5 August 2009. Ironically, it was also a fact that: “...no one knows for sure if the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) chief was either killed or injured in the blast, his second wife reportedly did not survive the attack. Since then, various contradictory statements have been made by US officials, Pakistani intelligence and Taliban commanders to confirm or invalidate Mehsud’s death. It was US media sources that first issued reports two days after the strike saying Mehsud might have been among the dead in Zanghora. Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was the first Pakistani official to express the government’s feeling that Baitullah was killed on Wednesday, based on a phone call made by one of his aides. This was followed by Interior Minister Rehman Malik’s speech to the National Assembly on Monday, quoting intelligence reports to better illustrate this point. Yet, neither the Government nor the Taliban have been able to produce any material evidence that TTP’s charismatic leader is either dead or alive. ‘Time will reveal the truth’, most Pakistani commentators say. But patience will be required here, for one cannot step in South Waziristan to confirm the facts so easily.” (*ibid*).

Clearly the problems facing a media aiming to promote peace in this situation are vast: when its engagement in the conflict is nil; when there is no information available about the human suffering
and when no images are captured to evoke audience emotions. Moreover, how can journalists play a positive role in the tribal areas such as Waziristan when the community, the Taliban and security forces are violently opposed to their very presence?

Most of the peace-building initiatives in other parts of the world (such as Colombia, Rwanda and Serbia) started when conflict had crossed its peak point and the local communities were ready to start life anew. This does raise questions regarding the ability of the media to engage in peace-building efforts without any community support as in the tribal areas of Pakistan where none of the three fighting parties – the Taliban, the locals and the security forces – are willing to work with journalists. The support, readiness and will of the people in local communities might very well be the major factor in determining the effectiveness of media’s role in conflict resolution and peace building.

**Personal biases and prejudices**

On a more personal note, journalists need to be aware of their own weaknesses and biases. They are a product of society and hence not free from misperceptions which are ingrained in their minds from childhood. These biases might not be prominent in conflicts where they can act as “outside observers”, but when faced with conflicts which challenge their own ideologies and beliefs as individuals or citizens, these biases are reflected in their language and approach to the issue (Aslam, 2010).

An example is India and Pakistan where the personal bias of the Pakistani and Indian journalists against each has its roots in the bloody partition of the Indian Sub-Continent in 1947 that resulted in displacement of thousands of families and in the long-standing rivalry between Hindus and Muslims. Najam Sethi (1999), a Pakistani journalist, touched on this issue in his talk on the decades-long India-Pakistan conflict when he argued that “the role the press plays in both countries in reinforcing prejudices and old enmities” makes “the press part of the problem rather than part of the solution”. Thibeault (2000), in his detailed analysis of the reporting of the India-Pakistan Kashmiri conflict, found that many editors in both India and Pakistan “manifested the deep scepticism, and often hostility, with which journalists in India and Pakistan view the actions and pronouncements of their neighbour and rival.”

A study by Subarno Chattarji (2006) suggested that Hindi and Urdu news media in India and Pakistan have the tendency to report negatively on each other, with news reports and editorials reflecting mistrust whenever a peace process is initiated between the two countries. Shubha Singh (2007), in her study, stresses the “obsession of Indian media to cover Pakistan” and writes, “The turmoil in Pakistan has been a constant windfall for the new business here. The action unfolds there and analysis unfolds here.”

Talking about challenges is not fruitful unless there are hints of solution too. One such hint comes from Javed Mottaghi (2008) who says:

“I do not believe that we change anything in the globe until we first change ourselves. I certainly feel that the most important challenge of the day for us as journalists is how to bring about a revolution in our hearts and minds, a revolution which has to start with each one of us. Could this be done by training? Perhaps. But it has to come from our hearts and minds.”

Such an interpretation makes peace journalism more of an **integrated approach** that broadens and strengthens the scope and tenets of mainstream journalism – an approach which focuses less on the events and more on the possibilities that can decrease the conflict and promote a meaningful message of peace. Moreover, it is not restricted to news media; it can be equally meaningful when applied to other forms of mass media like documentary making, photojournalism, entertainment media and specialized media like that for women and minority groups.

A case in point is Kunda Dixit’s recent photographic exhibition *Frames of War* which he brought to New Zealand. It was a pictorial story of the war in Nepal and one of the highlights of the Media, Investigate Journalism and Technologies Conference (MIJT) at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) held 4-5 December 2010. Dixit worked as a “parachute” journalist for the BBC before civil war broke out in Nepal in 1996. Among other confessions he recounted how war correspondents, including him, behaved like soldiers and how “they
went to a bar at the end of the day and spoke in military jargon”.

However, when returning to war-torn Nepal, it was no longer “someone else’s war”. “It was my war and it was my people who were dying,” he said in his keynote address. “Journalism schools teach us not to get too involved; to be a spectator,” he said. “But back home I could not… We had to look beyond the battles… We had to look at the human cost.”

Being a mainstream journalist, he soon realized that, “the problem in war reporting in Nepal was that journalists were not involved enough; that there was no space for in-depth stories”. So Dixit and his two friends decided to turn to other means. “I chose photojournalism to tell the Nepal story through pictures while one of my friends wrote a novel and the other has made a documentary,” he said. Finding alternate mediums was not only another way for them to put across their message for peace, it also became their salvation (Dixit, 2010).

Granted the outreach of such initiatives towards capturing the attention of a mass audience has limitations, it can be improved with time and effort. The important thing is that such an approach can offer new opportunities to journalists to tell stories in different ways without losing their news value or appeal for the audience.

Conclusion

Peace journalism faces several challenges – some of them daunting – but it is not without hope, especially since the call for it is coming from those who are working in conflict situations and are witnessing crimes against humanity. Secondly, it is bringing together journalists, peace workers and academics on one platform thus strengthening their voices. And thirdly, none of the above mentioned challenges are insurmountable given time, patience and dedication from the journalists, practitioners and academicians who are committed to it. Ultimately, history teaches us, peace does not come without a price and like all good things, it is worth waiting for.

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The dramatic events escalated into more riots in Bizerte, Jandouba, Gasserine, Baja, Sfax, Nabeul, Hammamet, and even in the capital Tunis, among other towns and cities. This emergency situation compelled the government to say that they will swiftly kick-start development projects, namely in the southern deprived areas of the country.

President Ben Ali initially pledged 5 billion Tunisian dinars for the development of Sidi Bouzid and other towns. He then promised the creation of 300,000 new jobs for the next two years. In another major step, he sacked key ministers from the cabinet in an attempt to calm down his critics and buy time to bring the country back to order.

Faced with even more growing unrest (and in a latest move) the president promised to open up freedom of expression in the media, to free up political life, to bring to justice corrupt politicians and above all free the media and remove all restrictions on the internet. Yet all these measure came at the eleventh hour. The mounting pressure, which turned into a revolution, forced the president to flee the country.

Tunisia: A media led revolution?

Noureddine Miladi

There is considerable irony in the fact that Tunisia, which hosted the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2005 amid claims of harassment and intimidation of civil society groups by the secret police, has succumbed to political activism aided and abetted by social media. The following article appeared in the immediate aftermath of the government’s fall in 2011.

Contrary to civil unrests in Tunisia during the last few years, the dramatic death of 26-year old university graduate Mohamed Bouazizi on 4 January 2011 sparked off angry protests in many parts of the country and attracted international media attention thanks to social media networks.

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The role of new media
In light of the dramatic development of events, on a considerable scale, it has become evident that new media played a key role this time around in keeping the momentum going, and bringing the voices of the disengaged Tunisian youth to the attention of world media, and hence to international public opinion.

Mobile phones, blogs, YouTube, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds have become instrumental in mediating the live coverage of protests and speeches, as well as police brutality in dispersing demonstrations.

The internet in this case assumed the role of a very effective uncensored news agency from which every broadcaster and news corporation was able to freely source newsfeeds, raw from the scene.

Such developments have proven very significant in changing the rules of the game, of journalism production and dissemination of information in a country where the government historically kept tight control on the media and where almost no platform was available for opinions critical of the political elite.

Decades of state media control
Article 1 of the Press Code in Tunisia provides for ‘freedom of the press, publishing, printing, distributing and sale of books and publications’. The Tunisian constitution asserts that the ‘liberties of opinion, expression, the press, publication, assembly, and association are guaranteed and exercised within the conditions defined by the law’.

Yet as early as 1956, with the birth of the first republic under the leadership of President Habib Bourguiba, the ruling government gained control over the press and later over broadcasting. As a result almost all the media outlets remained propaganda tools in the hands of Bourguiba’s government and ruling party.

Under Ben Ali (who came to power through a coup in 1987) the media and government relationship got even worse. For a short period of time a few independent newspapers appeared, but their existence was short-lived.

Television and radio have remained state controlled and primarily serving the ruling government. The Tunisian Radio and Television Establishment (ERTT) is state-run and operates Tunis 7 (satellite channel), and Canal 21 (terrestrial channel). However, the audiovisual landscape witnessed the launch of the first private TV channel (Hannibal TV) headed by Larbi Nasra on February 13, 2005. The channel broadcasts via satellite and terrestrially, and is aimed at expanding the audience’s choice by producing a variety of programmes.

Increase of state-owned radio channels
Three ‘independent’ radio stations have also been licensed which include: Radio Mosaique FM, Jawhara FM (caters mainly for youth programmes), and Zitouna FM – owned by Mohamed Sakhr Almatri – launched on September 13, 2007 and was dedicated to the recitation of the Quran, the Prophet Mohammad’s life and broadcasting tarawih prayers during Ramadan.

A fundamental role the state TV plays is to promote the image of the president as a competent, successful and progressive leader. Almost half of the main evening news programme on TV7 or Channel 21 reports on the everyday meetings, initiatives and engagements the president takes part in.

The emergence of a couple of ‘independent’ radio and television stations during the last few years did not improved the situation as the scope of freedom of expression remains controlled by the same regimental unwritten rules: No room for opposing opinions; it is a taboo to criticise the president, cabinet ministers, or government corruption; et al.

Civil society organisations, lawyers, academics, and trade unions do not have a platform to express their critical views on state media or ‘independent’ media. The press has also had a stormy experience with tight censorship measures placed on them during the last few decades. Major newspapers in the country have developed self-censorship rules in order to survive, and they mainly report uncritically on government policies.

Other international newspapers (Le Monde, Liberation, Le Figaro, Al-Quds Alarabi to name a few) that attempt to expose government corruption, human rights abuses and the country’s democratic deficit get censored.

According to Reporters without Borders, ‘journalists and human rights activists have been the target of constant bureaucratic harassment, police violence and surveillance by the intelligence services.’ The government has direct control of the servers,
and ‘the regime has become almost obsessive about control of news and information’.

Empty promises
In his presidential address of November 7, 2000, Ben Ali stated his commitment to free media as a value that enlivens civil society: ‘It is pivotal that we give support and importance to the press. This sector has earned our attention for its role in reinforcing the pluralist and democratic path in our country and strengthening the components of civil society.’

In a meeting which included editors of national newspapers, the president of the Tunisian Journalists Association and the minister of communication, Ben Ali also expressed on May 3, 2000, his support for freedom of expression and his willingness to encourage and improve free and credible media in the country.

In an interview with the French newspaper *Le Monde*, the minister of human rights and communications Salah Eddine Maoui, soon after his appointment on February 19, 2001, expressed his concern about the poor media standards in Tunisia and promised a new vision which would promote civil liberties and human rights in the country.

Unfortunately that issue of *Le Monde* was banned from circulation in Tunisia. He further reiterated the same promises on May 5, 2001 by declaring ‘the end of pessimism’ vis-à-vis the media in Tunisia, and anticipated that the country will witness ‘a transparency era where there is no way to conceal information from journalists and public opinion’.

Yet, ten years on, the same culture of control and coercion has persisted. In its report dated May 3, 2002, the Tunisian Journalists Association revealed the stark discrepancies between theory and practice in government communication policies.

The Freedoms Committee Report on *Freedom of the Press in Tunisia 2000-2002* noted that ‘the daily practice of the profession shows a huge gap between the official political stance and the reality of the profession, whose work is at a standard lower than the level that the president called for and worse than that aspired to by journalists.’ The same concerns have been expressed during the last few years by Human Rights Watch, Reporters without Borders, and Amnesty International, to name a few.

The reaction of the country’s political elite to criticism from the media or political opposition has been always aggressive. Repressive measures are always ready to be swiftly taken against political opponents. Activities of non-governmental organisations such as the Tunisian League for Human Rights, Young Lawyers Association, the Tunisian Bar, the Association of Democratic Women, the Tunisian Trade Union and the Tunisian Journalists Association, to name a few, do not get reported in the state media.

Civil society organisations also rarely find a space in the ‘independent’ press, particularly when it comes to covering hot issues. Since it published its report about the restrictions on freedom of expression and media control, the National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT) has been under constant persecution and curtailment.

The challenge of satellite TV
The development of satellite technology and the mushrooming of TV channels available free-to-air marked a turning point in the dissemination of information and the relationship between Arab state broadcasting and Arab audiences. Tunisia is no exception. It is estimated that more than half of the TV audiences in Tunisia migrate every night via satellite TV to the rest of the world. Global TV broadcasting, headed by Al Jazeera, has become the refuge of people who look for uncensored information.

Zapping for news and current affairs analysis about Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and even sometimes to learn more about what is happening in Tunisia itself, characterise their viewing habits. Furthermore what people equally seek out are entertainment channels which provide an endless stream of various TV genres such as reality TV programmes, music videos, sitcoms, soaps and action films in various languages.

The recent unrest has given more prominence to satellite TV in the viewing habits of Tunisians. Al Jazeera, which was ahead of other international broadcasters in breaking the news, has become the most influential broadcaster in which critical information about news coverage in various parts of the country can be accessed.

Al Jazeera relied heavily on referencing Facebook pages and Youtube in reporting the raw events, which marked a key turning point in unveiling the bloodiness and horror of the manner with
which the police had been dealing with the riots. No wonder that Tunisians flocked to the social media networks, which fed and fuelled news stations like Al Jazeera, BBC Arabic, France 24, Al-Hiwar and other channels.

Reporting on the police brutality in dispersing a peaceful protest by actors and artists in front of the National Theatre, Fadhil Aljaaibi, a Theatre Director, told Al Jazeera that ‘I wished to have this statement made on our Tunisian TV. I am reporting about a protest that the artists today had in front of the national theatre and in which we were brutally attacked by the police...’

He also said, ‘the government representative (Besais recently appeared in an Al Jazeera Arabic programme, the Opposite Direction) is not talking the truth. He is probably reporting about a different country... certainly not Tunisia. ‘The gruesome picture of what is going on is completely different from the government’s version of events,’ he added.

Satellite TV, in this case, has become the international public sphere (to borrow a term coined by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas), available not only for Tunisians in different parts of the world to express their views on the events, but also Tunisians living in Tunisia.

As opposing views cannot be expressed on state or any other broadcaster in the country, Al Jazeera has become the virtual space in which Tunisians debate the developments in various towns and cities. Through its various news as well as current affairs programmes the channel has facilitated such debates about the need to change, and the type of change people look for.

The ‘cyber war’ effect
The mushrooming of social networks on Facebook and Twitter was by far the most instrumental factor in the escalation of recent events. Tens of thousands joined Facebook groups and got to know about the news developments and mobilised for further action. On a positive note, this has partly kept these social networks independent from any external pressures and from the politics of media corporations, and has partly kept the protests independent in their nature, i.e. free from being ‘hijacked’ by political groups.

Students and professionals have led the way, and the trade union movement and the political parties followed. Bloggers have proven that they can challenge not only the state media and other independent (self-censored) newspapers and radio stations, but also the government discourse on what is really happening.

On state media there has been systematic and organised silence, placing a blackout about the riots. During the first two weeks of the unrest the Tunisian main broadcaster Tunis 7 and Channel 21 completely steered away from mentioning news about the death of the two university graduates and the subsequent deaths of targeted civilians. They subsequently started a campaign of demonising the protester as thugs and outlaws.

In contrast, public defiance and the display of popular anger were sustained by new media outlets. Bloggers and Facebook pages have become sites of networking and spaces for exchanging and disseminating news about the protests. Notices like, ‘Demonstration at 4pm, meet in town centre’, have become common features of social activism on Facebook pages. New media have proven effective and swift in circulating information among tens of thousands of protesters who are unable to use other means of communication to access the public en masse.

Namely when the government attempted to enforce curfews, social activists on the internet found such sites a very valuable communication means. One of the popular pages in Facebook and has over 12,000 members is ‘Your people are burning themselves, Mr President’.

Also the phenomenal success of Hamada Ben-Amor (nicknamed ‘The General’), a 22-year-old rapper, led the police to arrest him along with dozens of other activists. Through his video clip entitled ‘Rais Lebled’ (O country’s president) Ben Amor has been able to flare up the protests and mobilise tens of thousands of people, especially university students.

Faced with a fierce and unprecedented cyber war, and in an attempt to curb the influential impact of such networks, the government decided to employ new measures of hacking and jamming Facebook pages and personal home pages of activists. Such measures included phishing for personal information and deleting content in an attempt to disable the networks. ‘Error 404’, an error message that comes up on computer screens whenever someone’s
account is hacked, became known to activists as ‘Ammar 404’, taking the name of the government’s internet censor.

Ultimately, one may argue that the US presidential elections which led to the victory of Barack Obama marked the first of its kind in political history in which Facebook and Twitter became instrumental in rallying support for the new president. Will the January 2011 social unrests in Tunisia turn into the first peaceful revolution to be driven by social networking sites?

What is noteworthy so far is that bloggers and social activities on the internet and satellite TV forced former president Ben Ali to flee the country. The subsequent caretaker government has promised to open up to the outraged public by freeing the media, securing justice for all, and an invitation to the ‘opposition’ for a free dialogue. Will this unabated social activism lead to a real breakthrough in the country’s democracy, the birth of the Second Republic?

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The work of overcoming violence has only just begun

Hans Ulrich Gerber

The post-Cold War and the post-apartheid situation made evident the need for new ways to address violent conflicts. Looking back at the Decade to Overcome Violence, initiated by the World Council of Churches, it is obvious that it has not achieved the expectations or fulfilled the hopes it gave rise to. Much remains to be done, and a large number of challenges lie ahead.

Still the visibility of the peace issue has increased among the churches, and it has promoted countless initiatives for justice and peace.

People often ask, “The Decade to Overcome Violence will soon be over – what has it accomplished?” I’d like to take a critical look at what has changed and moved during the Decade. It is not a systematic presentation of the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV), nor is it an analysis of its achievements or shortcomings. This article makes a number of observations followed by raising some challenges we face beyond the DOV, both for churches and for society at large.

To be sure, and in response to the question above: the DOV was not a full success, nor has it reached its objective, which was to move the concern for justice and peace from the margins to the very centre of the churches. However, and that is what I point out to those who brush it away as a failure, it has significantly contributed to a shift in the right direction. I will point out below the substance of this shift.

The context of the DOV was remarkable. The
end of the Cold War left hopes, expectations and possibilities, if not to say a vacuum. The end of apartheid made even clearer the dire need to address violence. The post-Cold War conflicts revealed in a frightening way that violence continues its rage when the core problem or original cause of conflict supposedly has disappeared.

Other efforts by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the ecumenical movement had preceded the Decade: The Programme to Combat Racism, the conciliar process on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, the decade Churches in Solidarity with Women, the Programme to Overcome Violence with its Peace to the City Campaign, all were expressions of the WCC’s agenda to promote peace and justice. One profiled project in this line is still going on and has widespread support within the churches: the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel.

It is important to note here that the DOV was operating within the framework of the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. Both decades had the same time frame, 2001-2010. Both decades had raised significant excitement and expectation in international and ecumenical circles. Yet it is clear that neither the UN, who had delegated its decade to UNESCO, nor the WCC in sharp decline after the golden years of its most successful and at the same time most controversial Programme to Combat Racism, were fully equipped or actually determined to follow through on decade-long campaigns with all the implications of such an undertaking.

The WCC’s wish to have a decade that mobilised the grass roots and the church hierarchies alike was not really compatible with its institutional disposition nor its organisational patterns, not to mention its declining resources. Nevertheless, the DOV has moved a number of things and helped shift the ground in significant ways. Obviously some of the change happened because of the context and not directly because of the Decade. Still, that is part of the reality.

The impact of the Decade
While the DOV has not managed to move the concern for peace, reconciliation and justice from the margins into the centre of the discourse and actions of the Church, these themes have clearly moved closer to the heart of the churches, both theologically and practically. Such an effort and process takes more than ten years. It is questionable whether churches have put peace higher on their agenda. But the quality of the concern has improved and its visibility increased.

The DOV has helped the longstanding and creative work of countless initiatives for peace and justice to be recognised. In many churches and elsewhere there have been significant peace initiatives for a long time. Recognition of such work is important for its sustainability. One of the greatest weaknesses of the peace movement, in the church and generally, is its being scattered and uncoordinated. That is so much the case that the very movement has become nearly invisible and gone unnoticed.

The DOV has helped improve that situation by beginning to raise the profile of peace work and by networking amongst such initiatives. The DOV has to some degree contributed to the motivation of initiatives at the grass roots level and to encouraging greater coordination. In this regard the annual foci were instrumental, in spite of their significant difference in receptivity and application.

The discourse on war, peace and violence has moved in the right direction: from a debate almost exclusively focusing on just war to a discussion on the meaning and practice of just peace. We are far from this agenda to be fully clarified, but its elaboration has become inescapable. Churches can no longer escape the question of just peace. At the same time the issue of justice is put forward in new ways, beyond the classical and somewhat worn-out discourse on peace with justice. Not only is justice to be pursued as a normative value in society. The very effort of keeping, making and building peace has to be just. This aspect has been explored particularly in the discussion around the Responsibility to Protect.

The DOV has helped reveal how imprecise, if not inaccurate, the general discourse on violence has been. The general complaint about violence through the DOV has given way to a more precise analysis and to more deliberate steps towards its prevention. The complexity of issues around violence has become much clearer, the discourse more differentiated. This development is to be credited largely to the solid work of the World Health Organization (WHO). It is the WHO that has carried
out the most significant and sustainable work on violence among the UN agencies during the DOV. The DOV has helped to spread the insights gained and lessons learned through the WHO’s work on violence and thus contributed to more effective approaches to violence prevention.

I am convinced that the churches would do well to apply the typology and follow the recommendations of the WHO, rather than insist on interpretations and appeals that are inaccurate or outdated and hardly understandable for people outside of church circles. During the DOV I have over and over again been surprised to the degree that the basic premises of violence prevention are ignored in church circles.

For example, many people don’t know that violence prevention is a public health priority and that this is mandatory for WHO member states. That approach implies a fundamental departure from a traditional approach geared exclusively towards criminal justice. This new development and its evolving potential should actually be of immense interest to churches. It uses a more holistic approach, keeping in mind the human being in its complex relational, social and cultural environment.

Justice must be built peacefully
For some time now it has been said that justice and peace cannot be separated, that there cannot be peace without justice. In a way this has become common place platitude. Through the DOV this truth has become more refined and the programmatic approaches more pragmatic and differentiated. The term Just Peace may still be diffuse for many, but it points to such a differentiation. What needs to happen is more than simply creating justice to then make peace. Just peace needs to be promoted and facilitated. This means that justice can only be promoted and built peacefully, without weapons and military might.

The DOV has also repeatedly made clear that the path to a coherent and sustainable theology on just peace is long and demanding. That is true in two ways: on the one hand the appeals and statements made over decades need to be brought to a more practical and consistent approach and must be actually applied. The statement that war is no solution and in light of the gospel not defendable has been articulated for a long time, but the churches’ practice over the decades has lagged behind this statement.

Think for instance of the message of the WCC’s founding Assembly in Amsterdam 1948: “War as a method of settling disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ. The part which war plays in our present international life is a sin against God and a degradation of man.”

What we really need today are new partnerships with joint and practical commitments to give factual expression to such statements. On the other hand we still have much to do in terms of theological work until we have reached the objective of the DOV that asks to “relinquish any theological justification of violence”. The theological work, and in particular as it relates to Christology, ethics, and ecclesiology, has much homework to do in light of recent sociological and anthropological insights on violence and healing or rehabilitation.

At the same time, nonviolence has until now not really been part of the theological vocabulary and church liturgies, or only marginally. The DOV has helped to introduce this, for many, uncomfortable or unacceptable notion. This is a difficult undertaking, and ironically so when one considers how Jesus describes and lives his nonviolence (meekness) as a lesson for us burdened people – and that he adds: Thus you will find rest/peace for your souls (Mt 11:21).

Another topic significant in peace making and work on violence is the healing of memories. This applies both to individual and collective levels and is a relatively new field, with essential insights from South Africa, Northern Ireland, Guatemala, Bosnia and many other places, all with deep wounds from armed conflict in the post-World War II period. The DOV was a platform to pursue stories related to the healing of memories.

Finally the DOV has facilitated the development of some new directions in interreligious encounters towards closer cooperation for peace. I have in mind a number of interreligious seminars at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey during the first half of the DOV, and several interreligious events in the last few years.

Challenges growing out of the DOV
The goal and process towards having just peace, the healing of memories and reconciliation at the very
centre of the churches needs to be vigorously pursued beyond the DOV by the churches at all levels. That process will best be helped by ecumenical and inter-religious efforts and cooperation. Preventing and overcoming violence can be done meaningfully and sustainably only in cooperation. Such cooperation is indispensable among churches, but that is not sufficient. Churches need to team up consistently with the actors of civil society and of other religious communities.

The threat of the human family by direct and indirect violence against nature was not taken into consideration sufficiently by the DOV, especially in its beginning. The subject has been brought to the table only late, while its urgency has drastically increased. While the urgency of the matter is being vigorously discussed in many circles, it calls for immediate action.

The theological discourse still works basically from the assumption that violence essentially originates from conflict and that conflict, if not stopped, inevitably leads to violence. This theological and cultural mentality, however, is in contradiction with recent human science. Violence, sociologists suggest, is not the continuation of conflict, but rather its opposite. The confusion of conflict and violence, very common in the news media, is fatal for the ministry of reconciliation and for building just peace. The linear connection of cause-and-effect, which dominates the thinking and approaches, even within the peace movement, is a hindrance to sustainably overcoming violence.

It is precisely for this reason that close collaboration between theology and sociology/anthropology and a consistent interdisciplinary approach between churches, civil society and the scientific community is essential. We see such cooperation growing within the Violence Prevention Alliance, which was initiated by the WHO. Related to that, there is still much theological work to be done towards fulfilling the DOV objective to “relinquish any theological justification of violence”. Such work is imperatively ecumenical and interdisciplinary and needs to revisit some common assumptions on atonement and redemption.

Nonviolence beyond the negative sense of the term as abstention from the use of force (nonviolence), as a way of life and of approaching conflict, must be pursued as a spiritual value that is beautiful and practical. In a way, nonviolence needs to be rehabilitated in church and society as realistic and faithful to the human destiny, regardless of religion or creed. If, anthropologically speaking, violence was a founding factor for social community, and a saving one for sacrificial religion, then today we are faced with the reality that violence works the opposite: it breaks communities and it binds people rather than liberating them! The alternative is nonviolence, which means respect and love, or loving kindness. Isn’t that how God is revealed in Christ?

Finally, churches have paid little attention to the fact that militarism, and world military spending, goes largely unchallenged among the churches. The DOV has not managed to mobilise churches on this. But how can the Christian Church not speak out against the totally disproportionate and still growing military spending?

Need for a spiritual journey

By now it is fully clear that theologically and ecclesiastically speaking there is a lot of work to be done. At the end of the 20th century there was a lot of discussion about a paradigm shift in Missions. Today, at the beginning of the 21st century, and a little over ten years after churches have begun to talk about violence, we can speak of something of a paradigm change in regard to peace, violence and justice. First of all there is, as mentioned above, the change in discourse and attention from just war to just peace. But that is not the full picture. The biblical testimony speaks of reconciliation as the place where peace, justice, mercy and truth meet.

Yet there are far too many lies and far too much protection of half truths in institutional religion, in spite of all the talk about peace and justice. The ecclesial context, parallel to the political and economic context, has a culture where transparency and truth are not always honoured. That may, however, be a spiritual rather than a theological problem. It points to the reality that general culture, respectively its distortion, is a stronger influence on people than theological or dogmatic premises. That is why the importance of a paradigm shift, in terms of not only a theological or ecclesial but a spiritual journey, should not be underestimated.

People today are far more interested in authentic spiritual insight and experience than in theological or creedal debates or statements. There is a quest
for real community, for authentically human, truth-
ful and just responses to the imminent threat of
deadly violence from conflicting parties, official and
paramilitary.

In summary, the DOV may not have accom-
plished very much in measurable programmatic
terms. However, it has facilitated or contributed
to the facilitation of an essential shift in a lasting
and sustainable way. It has increased awareness and
more differentiated consideration. It was just a be-
inning, and now it is up to us all to continue the
work.

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Revisiting peace journalism with a
gender lens

Cai Yiping

Peace Journalism (also called conflict solu-
tion journalism, conflict sensitive journal-
ism) has been developed from research
that indicates that all too often news about
conflict has a value bias toward violence.
Peace journalism also includes a practical
methodology for correcting this bias by
producing journalism in both the main-
stream and alternative media; and working
with journalists and other media profes-
sionals, audiences and organizations in
conflict.¹

In contrast to War Journalism, which is journalism
about conflict that has a value bias towards vio-
ence and violent groups that usually leads audienc-
es to overestimate violent responses to conflict by
ignoring non-violent alternatives, Peace journalism,
by identifying and avoiding these reporting conven-
tions, aims to correct this bias. And, by doing so,
allow opportunities for society at large to consider
and value non-violent response to conflict.

The peace journalism approach provides a new
road map for tracing the connections between jour-
nalists, their sources, the stories they cover and the
consequences of their reporting – the ethics of jour-
nalistic intervention.² An explicit aim of peace jour-
nalism is to promote peace initiatives from what-
ever quarter, and to allow the reader to distinguish
between stated positions and real goals.

Professor Johan Galtung, eminent Peace Studies
professor and director of the TRANSCEND net-
work, started using the term, “Peace Journalism” in
the 1970s. The peace journalism model was further
developed by Conflict and Peace Forums, a think-
tank based in UK in a series of international confer-
ences and publications in the late 1990s, e.g. The
Peace Journalism Option (1998); What Are Journalists For? (1999); and Using Conflict Analysis in Reporting (2000). In their book “Peace Journalism” (2005) Lynch and McGoldrick summarized and elaborated the basic tenets of Galtung’s approach as well as highlighting the misunderstandings and scepticism levelled at peace journalism by discussing dominant misconceptions and emphasizing the ways in which it is regarded as unprofessional, biased or partisan.

In 2010, Jake Lynch and Johan Galtung launched their new book, Reporting Conflict: New Directions in Peace Journalism. In it, the two leading authors in this rapidly growing field of research, practice, teaching and training, continue to challenge reporters to tell the real story of conflicts around the world.

Debates and criticisms around peace journalism
Peace journalism has run into a number of debates and criticisms from some scholars and journalists.

“Activist news”/peace advocacy lacks “objectivity”. Some opponents characterise peace journalism as “activist” new writing and peace journalist as peace advocate. It is criticised as either “too critical” or “not critical enough”. This raises the important question of how objective and impartial is peace journalism. From a peace journalism perspective, it is not peace advocacy and it is generally more “objective” than war journalism, with its inclusion of implications for international law, positive developments in both elite peacemaking and capacity building, and non-elite perspectives and peace-building initiatives.

Contextualizing/explaining violence equals justifying it. This criticism can be represented by neo-conservative proponent Richard Perle, that one must “decontextualise terror... any attempt to discuss the roots of terrorism is an attempt to justify it. It simply needs to be fought and destroyed.” And this may be a common response to journalism advocating context. Conflict Analysis and Peace Research has shown why an explanation of violence is not the same thing as a justification for it.

By focusing on root causes of conflict such as poverty or prior abuse, and not merely focusing on events associated with violent political encounters, peace journalism could act to “un-embed” seemingly immutable official positions from the greater context of a conflict by exploring the background to a conflict, challenging propaganda, and making visible official and local initiatives for peaceful conflict resolutions.

Journalistic agency versus media structure
Lynch argues that most journalistic work is “governed”, not “determined” by convention and structural factors arising from the economic and political interests of the news industry. Thus, journalists’ own self-awareness and efforts at reform can combine with mobilisations in civil society to challenge and supplement conventions.

Despite misunderstandings and scepticism, the peace journalism model has become a source of practical options for journalists; a lead in to media monitoring for peace activists and offers a firm basis for drawing distinctions in content analysis by academic researchers.

Peace journalism with a gender lens
The Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 report shows that only 24% of the people heard or read about in print, radio and television news are female. In contrast, 76% – more than 3 out of 4 – of the people in the news are male. And news continues to portray a world in which men outnumber women in almost all occupational categories, the highest disparity being in the professions. Meanwhile, high proportions of stories on peace (64%), development (59%), war (56%), and gender-based violence (56%) reinforce gender stereotypes. These findings confirm the imperative need to include women and integrate gender perspectives in the news media and journalistic profession, including peace journalism.

The genuine peace journalism model, of course, has an inherent gender perspective, which understands how gender relations play out. It is, therefore, better equipped to uncover the underlying roots of armed conflict and helps find solutions for lasting and sustainable peace from the locality and creativity, whether it be at the grassroots, mid level or upper level or a combination.

Based on collaboration on the project “Women Making Airwaves for Peace” in 2007, two Philippine based women organizations – Isis International and Mindanaw Women Writers, Inc. (Min-WoW) – developed “Engendered Peace Journalism: Keeping Community Whole – A Guide on Gender-sensitive
Peace and Conflict Reportage”. The following matrix is excerpted from this guide. The matrix is adapted from Professor Johan Galtung’s model, which re-frames Peace Journalism from widely practiced War/Violence Journalism in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick had outlined 17 tips for a peace journalist on what to do. In order to (re)frame stories with a gender lens, a journalist may consider the following questions when writing a story:

- Where are the women/girls in the story?
- How can gender information strengthen the story?
- What are the roles of the male and female subjects and how do these factors inform the issues and story?
- What are the power relationships between men and women, in the leadership of the conflict parties, in the negotiation panels, community structures, family structures? How do these roles and power relations further explain the issue?
- How are the impacts of events and processes written about in a specific story, different for women and for men?
- Where are the points of collaboration between genders? What are the common grounds and shared interests and needs?

Another useful tool to engender peace journalism is United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 unanimously adopted on October 31 2000, which marks the first time the Security Council addressed the impact of armed conflict on women, recognized the under-valued and under-utilized contributions of women to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace-building, and stressed the importance of their equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security. UNSCR 1820 passed in June 2008, builds on the historic UNSCR 1325 and provides concrete building blocks to advance its implementation.

UNSCR 1888 (30 September 2009) provides concrete building blocks to advance its implementation. UNSCR 1889 (5 October 2009) builds on the historic UNSCR 1325. It pays particular attention to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the immediate post-conflict peace-building period. These UN resolutions are binding on all UN member states.

The media can play a role in monitoring the implementation of these resolutions as well as broaden and deepen the reportage:

- Ask for interviews with all parties to the conflict on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and other resolutions.
- Consult local women’s organizations about their UNSCR 1325 monitoring processes and related demands.
- In peace or ceasefire negotiations, ask for the women’s representation on negotiation panels. In case no women are represented on the negotiation panels of the different parties, ask what they intend to do about this.
- If national or international armed forces and/or peacekeeping forces are being deployed to a conflict area, ask them if they received any gender training on women’s rights and UNSCRs.
- Ask the authorities of refugee camps and relocation sites how they address women’s needs and rights as guaranteed by UNSCRs.
- If a peace agreement has been reached, ask how UNSCR 1325 is reflected in the agreement and how much money is allotted to its implementation.

Special attention must also be paid to the safety of journalists covering conflict situations, both women and men, who are facing a read danger of physical injury and emotional stress.

Conclusion: Peace journalism in new era

Media activism is activism that uses media and communication technologies to strengthen a social movement, and/or tries to change policies and practices relating to media and communication. As Lynch pointed out, “It means that peace journalism is possible, and realistic, here and now, for professional journalists, and it can become the focus of media activism.”

This is even more promising with the booming wave of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and rapid growth of community and independent media and civil journalism, which bring the voices and initiatives that are not being reported by mainstream or corporate media in the past. As recent revolutionary movements in Egypt and other Arab countries have so powerfully demonstrated, digital and social media have enabled
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>War/Violence Journalism</th>
<th>Engendered Peace/Conflict Journalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. War/Violence-Orientated</strong></td>
<td><strong>I. Peace/Conflict Orientated</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on conflict arena: 2 parties, 1 goal (win), war, general zero-sum orientation</td>
<td>Explores conflict formation x parties, y goals, z issues, general win-win orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on mostly male resource persons – military, head of state, governments, police as source of information</td>
<td>Explores how women and men of all parties are affected and included in win-win orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed space, closed time, causes and exits in arena, who threw the first stone</td>
<td>Open space, open time, causes and outcomes anywhere, also in history and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making wars opaque/secret</td>
<td>Making conflicts transparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Us-them” journalism, propaganda, voice for “us”</td>
<td>Giving voice to all parties, empathy, understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sees “them” as the problem, focuses on who prevails in war</td>
<td>Sees conflict/war as problem, focuses on creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive: waiting for violence</td>
<td>Pro-active: before any violence occurs, focuses on initiatives including those coming from the women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses only on the visible effect of violence (killed, wounded and material damage)</td>
<td>Focuses on invisible effects of violence (trauma and glory, damage to structure/culture, marginalization of women and children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portrays women and children as helpless victims (see what “they” did to “our” women and children)</td>
<td>Portrays women as active contributors in conflict transformation and peace building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dehumanizes “them”</td>
<td>Humanizes all sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Propaganda-Orientated</strong></td>
<td><strong>II. Truth-Orientated</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposes “their” untruths</td>
<td>Exposes untruths on all sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps “our” cover-ups/lies</td>
<td>Uncovers all cover-ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Elite-Orientated</strong></td>
<td><strong>II. People-Orientated</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on “our” suffering; on able-bodied elite males being their mouthpiece</td>
<td>Focuses on suffering all over— on women, aged and children; giving voice to the voiceless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gives name of their evil-doers</td>
<td>Gives names to all evildoers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on elite peacemakers, mostly men</td>
<td>Focuses on people peacemakers, heroes of non-violence, including women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IV. Victory-Orientated</strong></td>
<td><strong>IV. Solution-Orientated</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace = victory + ceasefire</td>
<td>Peace = non-violence + creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceals peace initiatives, before victory is on hand</td>
<td>Highlights peace initiatives, also to prevent more war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on treaty, institution, the controlled society</td>
<td>Focuses on structure, culture, the peaceful society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aftermath: leaving for another war, return if the old flares up again</td>
<td>Aftermath: resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation (includes women’s needs and participation), peacebuilding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
essential information – via mobile phones, blogs, online social networks, satellite TV, wikis, and user-generated news, photos and videos – to reach people who otherwise would have been disenfranchised.

Meanwhile, collaboration between media and peace advocates, civil society organizations has been recognized as one of the effective strategies and introduced in many training modules on conflict prevention and peace-building, as well as being practiced by media organizations and civil society organizations.

Isis International is a feminist development communication organization based in the Philippines. It has conducted a series of workshops in the Asia-Pacific region for women community radio broadcasters, women community leaders, media professionals, peace advocates, women’s human rights advocates and development workers.

They have focused on how to use various media and communication tools, including traditional media like community radio, popular theatre, film and new ICTs such as mobile phones and online social networking, to advocate for lasting peace and climate justice and the elimination of gender-based violence.

The community radio station “Radio Purbanchal” in Nepal visited women victims of war and conflict. The visit was coupled with open discussions about the issues facing these women victims and how their rights can be ensured. The discussions initiated by Radio Purbanchal resulted in specific policy recommendations to the State, including the provision of better and qualitative education to women victims, proper health care and employment opportunities, training and capacity building programmes. Through the initiative of Ra-
dio Purbanchal, women also organized to advocate for their rights and welfare.11

Notes
1. “Peace Journalism” from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_Journalism#cite_note-2)
10. See Isis International website: www.isisinternational.org

Cai Yiping currently serves as the Director of Isis International, a non-governmental organization based in Philippines working through media and information and communications technologies (ICTs) towards achieving women’s human rights and facilitating networking and information sharing of women’s movements in the global South. Prior to joining Isis, Cai was Associate Professor at the Women’s Studies Institute of China, and served as the Deputy Director of International News Department, China Women’s News, Beijing. She was the national coordinator for China for WACC’s Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) in 2000 and 2005 and regional coordinator for Southeast and East Asia for the “Global Report on the Status Women in the News Media”, research conducted by International Women Media Foundation (IWMF) in 2009-10.

On the destruction of media buildings in war

Jörg Becker

During periods of social unrest, revolution, civil war, or war, libraries, media, post and telecommunications buildings have always played, and indeed still play, a decisive role. One need only recall the bloody Easter Rising by Irish independence fighters in the General Post Office in Dublin in 1916, the battle for the telephone and telegraph buildings in Petrograd on 11 November 1917 during the Russian Revolution, the start of the Second World War with an attack by German troops on the Polish radio station Gleiwitz on 31 August 1939 as part of a faked enemy assault, and the skirmishes in the Polish Post Office near Westerplatte in Danzig on 1 September 1939.

Obviously, the military have always fully understood the vital function of infrastructures for the transmission of information. In situations where latent violence turns into manifest violence, they are clearly determined to save their own information infrastructures and destroy those of their enemies. Another motive for this destruction is to discourage and demoralise the enemy, given that such buildings are often of great symbolic and cultural significance.

This applies, for instance, to the National Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo destroyed in 1992 by Serbian militia. The building was constructed in the 19th century and served as the proud Town Hall of Sarajevo and exactly here on its steps the Austro-Hungarian Archduke and heir apparent
Ferdinand was shot on 28 June 1914.

It also applies to the Television Tower on Mount Avala near Belgrade, destroyed in 1999. The mountain was the site of a mausoleum for an unknown soldier built in 1938 by the famous Yugoslavian artist Ivan Meštrović and it had an almost mythic significance for the population of Belgrade. The great political symbolism of a television tower could also be seen, for example, in Tallinn in 1991. Russian troops wanted to occupy the building, the tallest in Estonia, but Estonian demonstrators prevented it by masses of them hugging the tower.

Even though destroying media, post and telecommunications buildings would seem to have a long tradition in war-time, the assumption in the following is that such acts of destruction are carried out more systematically and frequently in wars today (the Balkan War, the Gulf War, the war in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Gaza, etc.).

The Table opposite shows 18 different cases of the destruction of television masts, transmitters and studios, and of broadcasting stations and newspaper buildings between the years 1991 and 2009. The list includes the most well known cases, but it is in no way complete. For example, the daily NATO surveys of the Bosnian War of 1992 to 1995, and the different White Books published by the Yugoslav government on the NATO War against Yugoslavia in 1999 indicate many more war-time attacks on media buildings by both Serbian militias and NATO bombers.¹

For the record: the number of registered war-time attacks on media buildings is greater the more powerful the warring party with the necessary potential to adequately document such attacks. Subsequently, the opponents of a strong NATO are always presented as more aggressive than, for example, the opponents of a weak actor such as Palestine.

These acts of destruction must be seen against the backdrop of three theoretical considerations.

1. *Humanitarian International Law*. The outstanding service of Humanitarian International Law (Law of War) is that it civilized the conduct of war. The altogether complex provisions are detailed in the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, and in the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Geneva Additional Protocols of 1977. One of the most important principles of Humanitarian International Law as a whole is the distinction made between

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1991</td>
<td>Destruction of the TV tower in Baghdad/Iraq by the British Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 May 1992</td>
<td>Destruction of the TV building in Sarajevo/BiH by Serbian militia</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 August 1992</td>
<td>Destruction of the Oslobodjenje newspaper building in Sarajevo/BiH by Serbian militia; 5 Bosnian journalists injured</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 1997</td>
<td>Military occupation of the TV station in Pale/BiH by NATO troops</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 April 1999</td>
<td>Destruction of the headquarters and studios of the Serbian radio and television company in Belgrade/Serbia by NATO planes; 18 dead</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 April 1999</td>
<td>Destruction of a television transmitters near Novi Sad/Serbia by NATO planes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 April 1999</td>
<td>Destruction of the television tower on Mount Avala near Belgrade/Serbia in a NATO bomb attack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 May 1999</td>
<td>Destruction of a television tower near Iriki Venac/Serbia by NATO planes</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 and 8 October 2001</td>
<td>Destruction of Radio Sharia in Kabul/Afghanistan by the U.S. Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 November 2001</td>
<td>Destruction of the offices of the Arab television station Al-Jazeera in Kabul/Afghanistan by the U.S. Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 November 2001</td>
<td>Belligerent destruction of the offices of BBC in Kabul/Afghanistan by unknown party</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 December 2001</td>
<td>Destruction of the Palestinian radio station Voice of Palestine in Ramallah/Palestine and its antennae in Al-Bire/Palestine by Israeli military</td>
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</table>
13. 19 January 2002
Demolition of the Palestinian radio station Voice of Palestine in Ramallah/Palestine by Israeli soldiers

14. 8 April 2003
Bombing of the Al Jazeera office in Baghdad/Iraq by the US air force; death of the correspondent Tariq Ayyoub and injury of his colleague Zuhair al Iraqi

15. April 2003
US-Army attack on the media base Hotel Palestine in Baghdad/Iraq; death of the Spanish cameraman José Couso and the Ukrainian Reuters cameraman Taras Protsyuk

16. 13 July 2006
Destruction of the master control room of Arab TV station al-Manar in Beirut/Lebanon by the Israeli Air Force

17. 28 December 2008
Destruction of the studio of the TV station of al-Aqsa-TV in Gaza City/Palestine by the Israeli Air Force

18. 15 January 2009
Attack on the media centre ‘al-Shuruk’ in Gaza City/Palestine by the Israeli Air Force; journalists and camera people injured

Throughout the history of war there has always been a discrepancy between the real event of war and the norms of Humanitarian International Law. It is very important, however, to address this discrepancy, legally and journalistically, and to describe and document possible breaches of law in concrete, detailed and precise terms. Be it a war between states or a denationalised war (the so-called new wars with all their legal uncertainties), according to Humanitarian International Law, all wars against supply lines and wars of exhaustion, all sea, road or food blockades and all aerial bombardment wars are unlawful if they deliberately bring about an erosion of the distinction between front and homeland, that is to say, between combatants and non-combatants.

So in today’s modern aerial bombardment war, wherever the destruction is preferably of infrastructures – meaning motorways, ports, railway stations, energy supply companies and also libraries, media, post- and telecommunications buildings – then International Law is being impaired and breached.

Media buildings may be bombarded and destroyed in war-time if it can be proved that they are being clearly used for military purposes, for example, when a television tower is used to transmit military communications. But as Amnesty International showed in detail in the case of the bombing of the headquarters and studios of the Serbian radio and television company in Belgrade by NATO planes in April 1999, NATO initially defended this attack by arguing that Serbian television was a propaganda relay station destroyed in Serbia.
station, and then later by arguing that the transmitter sites had been used for military purposes. Needlessly to say, NATO also knows that there is no internationally agreed definition of propaganda (and also no social-scientific definition), so that one not only can, but must, state that there is such a thing as a right to propaganda.

2. Media Law. In order to maintain freedom of opinion and freedom of the press, journalists in many democratic societies are under special, often constitutionally guaranteed protection. Compared to other professions, they therefore enjoy a number of special rights. In terms of human rights, the profession of journalist is also indirectly an expression of freedom of opinion and freedom of expression as certified in Article 19 of the General Declaration of Human Rights and Article 10 of the European Human Rights Convention.

It goes without saying that the Geneva Conventions also protect the activities of journalists during war-time, irrespective of whether they carry out their profession in the company of soldiers (‘embedded journalism’) or independently. Articles 72 to 79 in Part IV of the 1977 Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Convention of 1949 protect refugees, stateless persons, and journalists in particular, in case of war. Furthermore, according to the Geneva Convention, during a war a journalist may not be treated as a spy and may not be forced to give answers when interrogated.

Over the past years, journalists and human rights organisations, such as the International Journalists Federation, Article 19, Human Rights Watch, Reporters without Borders, the Committee to Protect Journalists and the International Press Institute, have denounced and documented (albeit only sporadically, not systematically, and not completely) the killing of journalists in war-time.

3. Military Strategies. As presented in detail by Jürgen Rose in his recent book Erstfall Angriffs krieg. Frieden schaffen mit aller Gewalt?, the United States have drastically altered their military strategy on decisive points over the past years. Now and in the future, the main focus of their conduct of war is a U.S. Air Force doctrine of aerial war conducted in keeping with a so-called ‘Five Ring Model’ by John A. Warden III, a U.S. Air Force colonel. This has already been successfully implemented – in Yugoslavia in 1999, in Afghanistan in 2001/2 and in Iraq in 2003. According to this model, the US American Air Force has five target priorities in a strategic aerial war. The main focus of these priorities is the top political and military leaders, followed in a second ring by key industries (electricity, water, petrochemical, finance), in a third ring by the transportation infrastructure, in a fourth ring by the civilian population, and in a fifth ring, by the enemy forces, who thus rank last.

This conduct of war is deliberately geared toward the destruction of the basis of life of a whole country and its people. It is a ‘total war’, which is contrary to international law because it deliberately blurs the borders between combatants and civilians and overrules the whole of Humanitarian International Law. The military destruction of libraries, media, post and telecommunications buildings is clearly in keeping with the second target priority in Warden’s Five Ring Model given that, in the so-called information society, these buildings and their inhabitants are defined as key industries.


Notes
Women, security, and peace journalism in Fiji

Sharon Bhagwan Rolls

In 2010 femLINKpacific carried out a project aimed at “Communicating a culture of peace by strengthening women and community media and advocacy”. The objectives of the project were to strengthen the collaboration and consultative processes between femLINKpacific and mainstream media organisations, in particular the Fiji Media Council and the Pacific Islands News Association and to forge ties between peace-women and women working in the news media in order to broaden understanding of gender equality commitments to women, peace and security in Fiji.

The period of implementation of this project was at a very difficult time in Fiji particularly following the (purported) abrogation of Fiji’s Constitution on April 10, 2009 and the subsequent imposition of the Public Emergency Regulation (PER) which included intensive media censorship. This immediately affected relationships with and within mainstream media, as well as the activities of anticipated project partners including the Fiji Media Council and the Pacific Islands News Association.

Additionally, femLINKpacific’s community media operations and activities were also subjected to media regulations and compliance with PER, requiring us to apply for “permits” or official permission to stage consultations and public activities. This application process was scrutinized by the police and often required us to negotiate to ensure there was no police presence in order to enable a “safe space” for participants.

In 2010, the promulgation of the Media Decree as well as the Crimes Decree also required the research aspect of the project to proceed more cautiously. It was therefore with immense gratitude that femLINKpacific was able to count on the support of WACC during this period, and particularly as we have had to extend the duration of the project to ensure we could complete the launch of the publication of the research.

Digital story training activity

Since 2004 following the launch of femLINKpacific’s mobile women’s community radio station, femTALK 89.2FM, the organisation developed a series of training programmes for young women in Suva, building on the role of in-school students who assisted the organisation stage our monthly “weekend” community radio broadcasts. The Generation Next project emerged from these training initiatives with the vision to develop a core group of young women, from diverse background and experiences, to be the Producers and Broadcasters of the “suitcase radio station” in Suva.

In February 2010 femLINKpacific staged an interactive digital story telling workshop which brought together young women from femLINKpacific’s rural and regional women’s media network to enable them to recognise the opportunity for using media technology to communicate their critical issues of concern. Following the initial training, a follow up training programme was undertaken in August 2010 with members of femLINKpacific’s Generation Next Suva team and Fijian-Australian hip-hop artist/ youth arts worker Thelma Thomas aka MC Trey.

From August 30 to September 2, 2010, MC Trey worked with a core group of femLINKpacific’s Suva-based Young Women Producers and Broadcasters to create a hip-hop anthem and digital story coinciding with the 10-year anniversary around UN Security Council Resolution 1325. The collaboration included the production of a soundtrack for femLINKpacific’s DVD and Radio campaign commemorating the 10th anniversary.

Strengthening networks with mainstream media

In July 2009 femLINKpacific’s Executive Director and Regional 1325 network correspondent attended the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) Media Summit in Vanuato as an opportunity to strengthen networking with key members of the re-
gional media network. While this was a chance to meet with and discuss the research process with a core group of media practitioners from across the Pacific region, the event was affected by issues relating to PINA’s lack of solidarity on issues relating to media freedom in Fiji.

From October 2009, in addition to serving as the regional focal media focal point, femLINKpacific also assumed the role of the Pacific Secretariat of the Global Partnership of the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) which has a strong media advocacy component. The research component of this project was launched in partnership with the commemoration of the International Day of Peace – GPPAC event. The GPPAC Pacific statement in April and August 2010 strongly called for support for media freedom in Fiji and the Pacific.

Implementation of the research project
femLINKPACIFIC’s research “Communicating a Culture of Peace through Strengthened Women and Community Media and Advocacy” was officially launched on International Day of Peace (21 September 2009). Keynote speaker, Gary Wiseman, Manager of the UNDP Pacific Centre, highlighted the value of media and civil society organization collaboration and addressed the subject of peace journalism and its importance in resolving conflicts through non-violent ways to achieve sustainable and just peace. In his opinion, peace journalism is about the way stories are structured to bring about conflict analysis and non-violent responses by raising questions on how decisions by policy makers affect the people at the community level.

Interviews were carried out with media professionals and civil society organizations between November 2009 and January 2010. It should be noted that media interviews were limited to newsroom personnel and that in the context of civil society interviews there was a greater need to ensure that the “media” was used to refer to “news media” rather than the totality of different media productions.

To help inform our research process, we also drew on the experience and advice of two key research advisers. Reverend James Bhagwan and Seona Smiles, who assisted us in grounding our research to provide a substantive understanding of Fiji’s media environment and the potential role of peace journalism as well as to provide a feminist context for our research.

A consultative Dialogue Session: “Communicating a Culture of Peace – Potential for Peace Journalism in Fiji” was hosted in Suva on May 22. The session saw femLINKpacific present its draft research findings, as well as gain further insight into the broader aspects of our research theme with input from Seona Smiles, Rev. James Bhagwan and Daryl Tarte.

Eleven participants and resource persons were also asked to consider the recommendations and develop practical strategies on the way forward relating to:

(a) What sort of peace-building/dialogue and/or media-related activity are you involved in?
(b) How have you been affected by the imposition of media censorship through the Public Emergency Decree since April 2008?
(c) Training has been discussed to improve the understanding of Peace Journalism – What should this training look like? Who should be involved?
(d) There is a need to bridge understanding between media and civil society organizations in the context of media freedom and freedom of expression – Do you think this is important? What should this process look like?

The dialogue enabled the participants to share in an understanding that while the mainstream media in Fiji has been blamed for creating political problems in the country, the perception needed to be corrected, as media reporting since 1987 has reflected the political situation in our country and has not been the cause of political coups or in Fiji’s recent case the reason behind the differences between Qarase and Bainimarama. However, there is a need for consideration to be given to how the language of reporting can exacerbate an already tense situation.

Participants acknowledged that the state of emergency and newsroom censorship had hugely affected the work of newsroom staff including recent graduates. Additionally, concerns were raised that as a result of the censorship of the news media, in particular newspapers, while there are many positive stories being published, civil society voices, including through the Letters to the Editor and regular special columns, were being curtailed. “There is no such thing as balance now,” one participant commented, and this was resulting in loss of confidence in the news media as a source of informa-
tion and therefore people with access to the internet were relying on “blogs” as sources of information.

Participants shared their current initiatives which range from a more strategic use of the media in addition to staging educational workshops to also communicate with constituents, to actually having a policy to stay out of the media and making public statements but instead linking with civil society partners involved in peace-building dialogue. A few organisations undertake media monitoring and communication of issues is not only limited to the use of the media, but also in dialogue with government officials to assist in connecting community issues and priorities. For example, the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy (ECREA) has developed a tele-centre project to enable rural communities to access ICTs such as fax, internet and telephone services.

One media organisation shared that they conduct community outreach and information sharing through school visits, while the University of the South Pacific is integrating issues on peace as well as the media in university curricula, workshops, research, journals, and conferences.

Discussion also centered on the need to work with media organisations to broaden and deepen their knowledge and understanding of peace-building while at the same time participants from civil society organisations (CSOs) acknowledged there was a need to broaden the appreciation of the evolution of Fiji’s media environment and to be able to either find a nexus or alternatives to communicating through the media, given the concerns raised regarding sensational reporting, as one participant commented, “it is their the job to sell newspapers.”

**Media organizations**

Interviews were limited to local journalists. They said that, although the term peace journalism implied that the media had a responsibility to publish or broadcast stories that would not aggravate situations of conflict between parties, or give rise to conflict, the specific details of peace journalism as a discipline were not well understood. A shared understanding of journalism as an instrument for peace-building is that it was important to be able to tell both sides of a story. Media professionals acknowledged that training in the techniques of peace journalism would be an advantage to the industry and to relevant government and non-government organizations.

Journalists also viewed themselves as generalists, covering stories on different subjects from day to day and use internal manuals to define the boundaries of terminology and appropriate approaches that could be used. There was for example a concern that some media organizations were still reporting on suicides and the methods employed to commit suicide. In the case of rape, there was also a concern that racial background of both the perpetrator and victim was still being highlighted. Issues like these in the peace journalism discourse can be approached using a conflict map as an analytical instrument where stories are reframed with a gender lens.

From this vantage point, media, civil-society, and government stakeholders’ organizations would benefit from discussions, including training on gender-sensitive peace and conflict reportage of which senior and junior journalists including gender advocates could both facilitate and participate at different levels.

Regarding the censoring of the media through the Public Emergency Regulation (PER), it is believed that the restricted access of information has stopped analysis and opinions in all sections of the community. The concept of focusing only on positive stories means it is difficult to express alternate viewpoints and most of the reporting concern day to day events outside of politics.

Those in the media realize that knowledge gained from consultations with a wider section of the community improves the quality of stories produced. News journalists are frequently involved in consultations on the environment, for example, climate change or socio-political development, such as civic voter education. These types of consultations can similarly be used for advocacy of gender through peace-building and conflict resolution focused reporting.

**Role of civil society organizations**

Civil society organizations (CSOs) in the country involved in peace-building processes continue to support freedom of the press as part of the necessary processes of peace-building for the country. Peace journalism in these organizations is understood as writing about the possibilities of creating peace...
in situations of conflict in the local context and in warring countries. It is also understood as a form of reporting and communicating of information by journalists that does not create violence in the community or conflict – where words are carefully selected and the monitoring of the view that there is a need for journalists to understand the concepts and the processes of peace journalism.

There were varied responses on the effect of media regulation on women in the rural areas. There are those who believe that women are still receiving newspapers, watch television, and listen to the radio and have equal access to information as do women in the urban area. Yet whilst access is readily available, there is an agreement that the limitation is in the content of the daily news and the question of whether social and economic issues are also viewed through the daily experiences of women.

In terms of the availability of alternative perspectives and viewpoints of what constitutes ‘news’ in the country, as one respondent shared: “Regulation of the media has really affected (people)...You can no longer believe what you see in the paper which is sad and when you can no longer believe everything that you see in there, it leads to doubt, it leads to all kinds of rumours and misconception of things and it doesn’t help with democracy, with people’s right to represent their points of view.”

Through the development of the internet, some academics and other writers have turned to blog sites to share views and engage in discussion. It appears that although the different sectors, including government, non-government organizations, and civil society organizations have a common objective to promote a culture of peace in the country, each sector utilizes separate methods in the dissemination of information.

The news media are seen by the CSOs as playing an important role in providing information on issues such as health, education, agriculture. In this area, television and newspapers have regular segments that focus on the people and the economy of the rural areas of Fiji. Community radio is viewed as a necessary avenue for women at the grassroots to tell their own stories in their own words.

Most respondents viewed the media as playing a powerful role in shaping the opinions of the citizens and would benefit from engaging in discussion with the CSOs on how peace journalism could be utilized as a mechanism for conflict resolution and peace-building in society.

**Highlights of the research and report**

femLiNKpacific’s research report was launched by the Counsellor of AUSAID on September 10, 2010, at an event which also commemorated the organisation’s 10th anniversary campaign of communicating UNSCR1325. The publication (report and poster) was distributed to media organisations, the University of the South Pacific, Ministry of Information, Dialogue Fiji as well as the Citizens Constitutional Forum. The report highlights and recommends:

1. There is a need for peace journalism training as a technique to be utilized by the media, civil society organizations, and the relevant government ministries to: a) Improve understanding and practice of peace journalism and communication practices; b) Incorporate it as a key component of local and national level peace-building strategies including the prevention of further tensions and the resurgence of violent conflict; c) Build bridges between and within media and civil society; d) Strengthen collaboration between Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and media organizations support freedom of the media / freedom of expression as a necessary process of peace-building in the country.

2. There is a need to broaden the understanding of gender inclusive perspectives in media content including community media and civil society information and communication strategies, this could be assisted through the incorporation of the strategies and practice of the Global Media Monitoring Project coordinated by the World Association for Christian Communication.

3. Support dialogue processes to enable better understanding of different styles of communication and to improve understanding the use of tools of conflict analysis and transformation.

4. Support greater interaction between media practitioners and civil society to deepen understanding between these different groups and their perspectives.

5. Incorporate the use of a ‘gender equality lens’ in media codes of ethics.

6. Strengthen recognition of the role of community media to bridge the gap between mainstream media content in particular to engender and broaden the incorporation of rural women’s perspectives.
7. Partnerships between the media and CSOs, such as femLINKpacific to conduct awareness-raising programmes with the media on Gender, Peace-building and the Media. It was noted that training must be contextualized to suit Fiji’s realities and experiences. Such awareness-raising programmes could enable and encourage taking a more inclusive approach to the range of issues currently being addressed, particularly to ensure a diverse range of viewpoints and experiences.

8. This type of collaboration is useful to build capacity of CSO groups to engage more effectively and positively with the media, and to enhance their media communication skills.

9. Peace journalism efforts should ensure engagement with the editorial process, as well as training and development programmes with journalists and media practitioners.

10. The role of faith-based organisations, including the churches, was highlighted as another critical communication space both within faith-based communities as well as through interfaith gatherings and communication strategies.

11. Develop a directory of peace-building terms, to assist both media and civil society groups to avoid the use of words and expressions which represent or can create more conflict in vulnerable environments.

12. Enhancing the media literacy building on efforts of Fiji Media Watch and other CSOs could also deepen the appreciation of Fiji’s diverse media environment.

13. There is an opportunity to conduct a needs analysis to inform the further development of journalism training curriculum.

14. There is a need for development partners to understand the important need to resource civil society media and communication strategies including qualified staff. CSO media and communication strategies, therefore, need to take into account the range of media forms available, including international media and community media forms.

The above project was supported by WACC under its programme “Communication for Peace” and co-funded in partnership with Church Development Service (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst – EED), an association of the Protestant Churches in Germany.

Peace education and awareness in Kenya

Abjata Khalif

In Northern Kenya, the Kenya Pastoralist Journalist Network (KPJN) carried out a peace education and awareness project to address the different factors that fuel conflict and retard development, including cattle rustling, direct marginalization, resource competition (e.g. water, pasture and salt licks), prevalence of small arms and light weapons. The project stressed traditional governance systems and traditional methods of conflict resolution, promoted understanding and exchange between rival communities, trained ex-combatants on alternative livelihoods and re-integration into society.

As the world ponders ways of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in developing countries, especially on the African continent, armed conflict and fear of ethnic cleansing continue to be the main factors that hinder their attainment.

According to the latest findings by the UN, most countries in the developing world will fail to reach the MDG targets, further placing their populaces in worse living conditions, abject poverty, and organized crime as a way of earning a living.

All these grim pictures are real and evident in some corners of African states. Two of the MDGs are ending poverty and offering universal education to children in the developing world where illiteracy has contributed to a large population of idle youths without skills, education and knowledge to prosper.

The large number of idle youths in most African states has played a role in fuelling conflict between states and disgruntled citizens, between warring communities and also youths themselves participat-
ing in activities like armed rides with a view to loott- ing and ransacking poor villagers and waylaying vehicles along busy routes to extort money.

Such problems have demanded answers, dialogue and intervention both within countries and internationally. At the “Climate of peace” conference, which took place in Oslo, Norway, in October 2010, delegates from all continents of the world converged to reflect on these questions and collectively to seek answers. Conference delegates came from different scenarios and interventions in conflict from various hotspots in Africa, Asia, and stood alongside representatives from major organisations in Europe working on international security, peace-building, disarmament and peace activism.

The conference recognized and fêted peace and disarmament activist Ms Binalakshmi Nepram from India, who has strived for many years to agitate for the rights of minority Indian communities. Founder of the Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network and Secretary-General of the Control Arms Foundation of India, she has made extraordinary efforts to promote disarmament and demonstrated deep commitment to the principles of peace.

The conference took place in the Nobel Centre in Oslo where the Nobel Prize committee meets to deliberate and where winners receive their prizes. Symbolically, each delegate making a presentation used the official podium of the Nobel peace committee, with representatives speaking on behalf of Kenya, Rwanda, Japan, Philippines and India. I was the presenter from Kenya, sponsored to attend by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC). I shared with participants a dynamic of conflict and intervention that had brought solution after many years of communities butchering each other.

The north eastern province of Kenya lags behind in development and lacks infrastructure due to marginalization by three successive regimes which has contributed to violence. Conflicts in northern Kenya are caused by competition for resources such as sharing of pastures and water and such conflicts have been aggravated by factors like lack of government commitment to addressing the situation and also state operatives siding with one community against another.

The conflict in northern Kenya is also exacer-
bated by some external factors like players in Somalia that side with their cousins in northern Kenya to “cleanse” rival communities. Large scale armed clashes have taken place between the different communities in which militias staged raids and kidnapped women to act as their concubines in the conflict zones.

Until peace interventions took place the conflict saw 4,567 people killed in Wajir, 2,700 people killed in Garissa and 3,421 killed in Mandera districts of northern Kenya.

Local journalists intervene to promote peace journalism
It was local journalists that began working on how to intervene, having decided that it was time to act. The first initiative was for each journalist to go back to their community to try to begin ironing out differences. This kind of intervention sent a signal to various communities that alternatives to violence might be possible.

Once the tempo had been set, the journalists came together, registered the new Kenya Pastoralist Journalist Network (KPJN) and approached the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) for assistance under its programme “Communication for Peace”. The network received support which brought the communities together in a roundtable involving local leaders and government officials.

The solution reached during the five-day meeting in 2010 was witnessed by government officials so that its implementation could have the blessing of the government. The five days of discussion resolved competing claims made by each community and they agreed that the agreement should be taken back to the communities at grazing areas and villages.

Subsequently, the journalists formed a second grouping called the Northern Kenya Peace Network that brought all stakeholders on board with three aims: to conduct peace education, community outreach campaigns, and awareness-building through community radio broadcast in the Somali language.

The stakeholders moved from village to village where peace education was conducted at the grassroots, elders from warring communities talked and danced together and women from different communities sang peace songs that reached all the audience. Community media were used to rebuild trust and to find common ground for resolving disputes.

The communities came to appreciate education for peace and decided that to try to live in peace and co-existence. To demonstrate their seriousness they decided to form village mediation committees to diffuse tensions, arbitrate in disputes, and also continue with peace education at the village level. The village committees comprised all stakeholders, including women, ex-conflict concubines, youths, rehabilitated ex-combatants and elders.

Towards the end of the project, journalists went back to the communities to follow up on what was happening. The communities that had benefitted most are now living side by side, schools have reopened, and the communities are sharing resources and trade routes.

During the follow-up work, one village elder who had lost his sons in inter-clan fighting asked if the peace education had been sponsored by the government. Informed that the peace activities had been supported by a global non-governmental organisation, the elder wept and said, “You mean a Christian organisation is bothered like this to have us making peace? I didn’t know that. Please thank them.”

The above project was supported by WACC under its programme “Communication for Peace” and co-funded in partnership with Church Development Service (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdiens – EED), an association of the Protestant Churches in Germany.
Challenging post-war conflict and the need for reconstruction in Nepal

Kamal Raj Sigdal

In 2009, a small Himalayan country sandwiched between two giant economies, China and India, stood at a crucial point in its history. Nepal was emerging from a decade-long violent guerrilla war following a peace process that started with a ceasefire in 2006 between the government and the (ex)rebel Maoists. Three years later, Nepal began writing its first federal republican constitution through a democratically elected 601-member Constituent Assembly.

Political parties, including the Maoists, had gone through several difficult phases of the peace process in the period 2006-09. They had reached the final but most difficult part of drafting the new constitution. The political parties were divided on what model of constitution the country should adopt. They had only nine more months to finalize a draft.

The country was still characterized by post-war confusion and violence. Despite significant progress in terms of defending human rights, impunity remained a major issue. In fact, there were several challenges to be addressed before the Nepalese regained their lost harmony and peace, the original sense of being in the birthplace of Lord Buddha.

The time, therefore, demanded constructive thinking from all responsible citizens, political parties and professionals. What was needed at this critical point was a collective effort to build peace. The message of peace – which entailed motivation for consensus making, negotiation, positive and constructive thinking, and conflict resolution – had to reach the conflicting parties and the general public alike.

Journalists at the Subaltern Forum came to realize that only through “peace journalism” could constructive and positive messages be spread to the public. It was in early 2008 that Subaltern Forum started a nationwide peace journalism campaign called “Building Capacity for Peace Communication” aimed at capacitating the media so that it could facilitate and consolidate the peace process.

With the regional trainings, interactions, widely circulated peace journalism e-bulletins and peace journalism scholarships, Subaltern Forum began to help Nepalese journalists – especially those working outside the Kathmandu valley – to understand, internalize and assimilate the principle of “alternative
Communication for peace in Lebanon

Danika Teeple

Sectarianism, violence and discrimination are obstacles to Lebanese society building a culture of peace. However, it may be possible for Lebanese activists to help overcome these barriers by promoting peace journalism. It may also be possible for activists to foster a culture of peace through alternative media initiatives.

Sectarianism is the conflict that arises between sub-divisions of a group because of perceived differences in belief. Though most citizens of Lebanon share a common ethnicity, they are divided along religious lines. Many Muslims, Christians and Jews live within Lebanon’s borders, and these religious groups are further divided into different confessional groups (for example, Sunni Muslims and Shi’a Muslims).

In addition, the parliamentary system in Lebanon is based around sharing power between groups: high-ranking government positions are reserved for individuals of a certain religion. The President must be a Maronite Catholic, and the Prime Minister a Sunni Muslim. Though this parliamentary system is intended to minimize sectarian conflict, in fact it results in constant political tension. The confessional system in government exacerbates sectarianism in Lebanon.

Sectarianism dominates all aspects of Lebanese social life: political speeches are infused with sectarian rhetoric, sports teams are often divided along religious lines, and schools include the values of the local dominant religion in their curriculum.

Likewise, Lebanese media institutions are strongly associated with certain religious and political groups; some are even owned or directed by politicians themselves. As a result, opinions which
cast a negative light on an institution’s religious or political affiliation are systematically underrepresented and ignored. Radio and television news stations broadcast divisional and provocative programs, promoting violence and stirring up hatred between groups.

In this way, media institutions not only represent the dominant culture of sectarianism in Lebanon, but also serve to maintain it. Lebanese newsmakers are propaganda-spreaders, more interested in towing the party line than maintaining objectivity. Few media outlets make any attempt to remain neutral, and because of their oppositional stance, many media professionals have actually been targeted and killed.

New media law
In 2008, a new media law was promulgated, demanding that all media institutions respect freedom of speech “in a way to ensure equity, balance, and objectivity between all candidates and to abstain from supporting or promoting any candidate or group of candidates in order to remain independent.”

A study completed by the Maharat Foundation, in association with International Media Support, demonstrates that the 2008 law did not succeed in achieving its goals. Media institutions continued to reflect the sectarian system by explicitly advertising on behalf of certain political candidates, by taking sides in political debates, and by allowing readers to post insults and offensive comments on news websites. Some media institutions even published false elections statistics in order to mislead candidates and the public.

Sectarian media have had immense power to spark violence and discrimination at all levels of society in Lebanon, and that is why some Lebanese communications organizations are attempting to address the issue of sectarianism through their own media initiatives. They are reclaiming media for peace.

WACC has supported one such organization, called the Lebanon Association for Civil Rights (LACR). LACR attempts to counter sectarian attitudes through alternative community media which encourage nonviolent methods of conflict resolution. After noticing a significant lack of resources in Lebanon for training and raising awareness about nonviolence, non-sectarianism, and human rights, LACR produced audiovisual training guides for use by universities, schools, NGOs and social workers.

It also produced a documentary film that addresses the question “how can we avoid being raised on sectarianism?” for use throughout Lebanese society. Because LACR recognizes that media institutions have the power to significantly shape public ideas about citizenship and sectarianism, a substantial portion of its work is devoted to training journalists. Since 1983, thousands of journalists and students have been involved in workshops on non-sectarianism. However, there is a real question to be addressed regarding how far peace journalism is possible in practice given the current media system in Lebanon.

Challenges to freedom of expression and the press
Before gaining independence in 1946 and well into the 1980s, Lebanon was known for its sophisticated and diverse media landscape. This reputation continued into more recent times, especially because most Lebanese media outlets are privately owned by well-educated professionals. However, the massive political and military upheavals that have characterized Lebanon over the past few decades have profoundly affected issues of freedom of expression and the freedom of the press.

By training journalists, distributing the documentary film, and making use of alternative forms of community media like street theatre, protest marches, and musical sit-ins, LACR has been able to reach many people in Lebanon with its message of hope and peace. It has also used these tactics to speak out against specific manifestations of Lebanon’s culture of violence, for instance, the country’s death penalty. Since 1997, LACR has been working toward the abolition of the death penalty which, in the opinion of many, obscures the need to address root causes of crime, and instead encourages violent responses to conflict.

A key component of LACR’s campaign is its intensive mobilization of the issue through the media. LACR volunteers prepare special files for journalists about the issue and produce television programs to raise awareness about the negative effects of capital punishment. In addition, they produce and publish books, articles and leaflets which explain the issue in simple terms. LACR’s work does not stop at print.
or broadcast media; volunteers spread the message of nonviolence through street theatre in local public spaces to raise awareness and encourage discussion about the death penalty and sectarianism. LACR is a great example of an organization using communication for social change in Lebanon.4

Another organization, the Lebanese Centre for Civic Education (CLEC), aims to promote democracy amongst Lebanese youth through the public education system.5 Its “One World in Schools” program raises awareness about civic concepts like nonviolence, non-sectarianism, and non-discrimination through films and other educational materials. CLEC has found that film is an extremely effective medium by which to reach youth; it allows students to relate through images and interactions, and promotes in-class dialogue about important civic issues. CLEC is using media to effectively present alternatives to the dominant culture of sectarianism in schools.

It is evident that non-sectarian, nonviolent ideas are beginning to taking root in Lebanese society because in 2010 Lebanon celebrated 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women; it was the first White Ribbon Campaign to occur in the Middle East. The celebration, sponsored by a Lebanese organization called KAFA (Enough Violence and Exploitation), focused on mobilizing men and boys to endorse the draft law on the Protection of Women from Family Violence. During the sixteen days of activism, a television documentary was launched to raise awareness about the issue of femicide in Lebanon.

KAFA also facilitated a day of graffiti art in Beirut in order that survivors of family violence might have the opportunity to express themselves through the medium of public art. The campaign also included ten family violence awareness sessions and the launch of an academic study about violence against women. Like LACR and CLEC, KAFA is making use of communication media to promote peace in Lebanon.

In May 2008, Lebanon witnessed a violent political conflict that eventually led to the end of an 18-month long political paralysis and the election of a new President. In the wake of the conflict and in the few months that followed, the Internnews Network launched five civil society projects in Lebanon to promote media as a tool for reconciliation and development. The projects are located throughout Lebanon and focus on community reporting, youth involvement, online media tools, information technology, and media for development. The success of these five groups can help address post-conflict political polarization and regional development challenges and put freedom of access to media at the forefront of Lebanon’s democratic development.

One of these five projects focuses especially on peace journalism. After the political violence ended, a group of young activists in Lebanon reflected on the role of the media during the conflict. The Lebanese media were accused of instigating violence by aligning themselves with narrow sectarian interests that eventually led to the violent conflict. With the support of Internews Network, the Lebanese Civic Media Initiative (LCMI) is working towards advancing human rights and civil peace through the media by advocating for quality journalism. In an effort to track and analyze hate incitement in Lebanese media, LCMI created an online media monitor, which highlights cases of hate incitement by all political actors and then uses this evidence to make viable recommendations to media practitioners.

The work of the Lebanon Association for Civil Rights (LACR), the Lebanese Centre for Civic Education (CLEC) and the Lebanese Civic Media Initiative (LCMI) highlights the ongoing need for media that offer alternative perspectives on conflict and present alternative solutions for public debate.

Notes
2. Ibid. Page 46.

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On renewing the “gene pool” of ecumenical communicators

Pradip N. Thomas

The following article attempts to deal with issues related to ecumenical communications and, in particular, the ecumenical communicator. The author has taken the liberty at times to conflate the two terms – ecumenical communicator and Christian communicator – while recognising that there are differences between the two. However, he argues that that the differences are not that profound given some obvious correspondences and the fact that they both belong to the same ‘species’.

Caveat: this is a very idiosyncratic account based on my experience of, and frustrations with, ecumenical communications and ecumenical communicators. I have used some very unflattering words to describe ecumenical communications and ecumenical communicators. The point, however, is not to offend but to get a conversation going on the future of ecumenical communications, especially in the context of the “field” of ecumenical communications and the work of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), whose past and immediate histories throw light on the limits and possibilities of ecumenical communications.

Let me begin with an observation. Ecumenism, in my way of thinking, is a fraught project given that its success is dependent on people from different denominational persuasions believing in and working towards a common goal – that of church unity. While the noble goal of church unity may be worth striving towards, the fact remains that it is at odds with the fact that the church has been splintering from time immemorial and continues to do so at a frantic pace. So the ecumenical communicator is certainly faced with a problem, especially if his or her vocation is to write positive...
accounts of church unity in an increasingly frac-
tious context in which the Orthodox refuse to break bread with other sinners, the Roman Catholics con-
tinue to see Rome as the centre of the universe and
the Pentecostals splinter into a thousand different
churches that reflect a virtual kaleidoscope of hu-
man interests.

In other words, time has revealed that that we know less and less about God’s interests and
more and more about human interests in matters ecumenical. Difference is human. The Universal Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (I am kidding!) may not want to sup with Pat Robertson or vice versa
or hold onto the values of the late Indian evange-
list Brother Dhinakaran, who once claimed that he had the experience of dying and having dinner
with Christ and his apostles. He finally did pass on
although he has not been seen since in the flesh.
Big picture Christianity is best left to God. That picture is certainly not going to be revealed to the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches or for that matter of WACC (no offence!). Against this background, there is a need for a larger under-
standing of ecumenical communications beyond the church, undergirded by a strong commitment
to communication rights and to universal human
values.

Core principles and values
For me, the core principles related to ecumeni-
cal communications are contained in, and can be
drawn out from, WACC’s Christian Principles of Communication. Not that this text should be
treated as the Ten Commandments – but, notwith-
standing the constant need for it to be updated,
the values expressed therein are wholly worth striving towards. Some of the 21 questions posed by Chris Arthur (1998: 67-69) at the conclusion of his slim volume The Globalisation of Communica-
tions: Some Religious Implications, echo some of the values expressed in the Christian Principles. These questions also address issues related to ecumeni-
cal communications.

To highlight just three of the questions: “5. To what extent can an individual act in accordance with his or her moral and religious values if these values go against the current of global business
practices or media conventions? 15. Is it possible to re-learn how to see things according to a different set of values from those suggested by a globalised
media system? What “theologies of seeing” are available to guide us in such new seeing? and 21. Globalisation fosters an increasing awareness of
a diversity of faiths. How can we ensure that this leads us to new possibilities for creative religious
thinking, rather than into the dead end of funda-
mentalism?”

So what are some of the challenges facing ecumenical communications today? Let me be blunt and say that it is definitely not about con-
stantly equipping the ecumenical movement with
new technologies – social networking being the
latest in what seems to be a love affair with online
wonders that are constantly being promoted as
better, faster, more social, best for networking, bet-
ter for the soul, etc. I am not suggesting that the
ecumenical movement should not be up to date
with new technologies – but merely that an accent
on the functionalities of new technologies is not,
and should not be the raison d’être for ecumenical
communications. While social networking is good
most of the time for the ecumenical movement,
the danger is that one can get so engrossed with
its many applications that it risks the possibility
of communications becoming trivial like so much
that is presently available on social networks.

What is probably a key need is for ecumeni-
cal communicators to sort out the grain from the
chaff and to adopt and adapt social networking
technologies that genuinely extend the ‘social’
through networking. I remember that when I was
in the ecumenical movement, our friends from the
USA constantly pushed WACC to adopt new tech-
nologies. With the benefit of hindsight, it is clear
that using Windows Outlook has helped ecumeni-
cal networking although unfortunately, such ex-
hortations were rarely, if ever, accompanied by a
liberating understanding of technology. In other
words, WACC partners rather uncritically dished
out a ‘dominant ideology’ related to technology –
and that was an ‘adapt or you will be left behind’ philosophy.
I would submit that the global hegemony of Microsoft is to some extent a consequence of the evangelical zeal of North American ecumenical communicators who introduced WACC and other organisations to the wonders of e-mail while not knowing what to do with the piles of “defunct” 486 computers that littered their basements after the Pentium stormed their front offices. Those of us familiar with the “dominant paradigm” in communication and development, recognise that very same message was part of the project of modernisation.

I remember attending a consultation in San Francisco in the mid-90s organised by the churches in the USA and in which the emphasis was on the wonders of Stanford. As participants we were supposedly privileged to be part of a conference held in the shadow of Silicon Valley. There was little engagement with Free and Open Source Software or with values that ought to have been an essential aspect of the ecumenical movement’s embrace of what has turned out to be a momentous, revolutionary technology.

Perhaps I am being a little too critical here – but it strikes me that this neo-liberal ecumenism’s supply-driven model infected ecumenical communications worldwide. I think WACC would have been a lot better off if it had gradually explored and adapted genuinely liberating hardware and software in its operations – in line with its philosophy of a liberating Christian communications. Good ecumenical communications is about being persistent with its core values, engaging with it, drawing lessons, submitting every new technology and program to that ultimate litmus test of a question – How does this new technology, project or idea enhance the project of liberating communications?

Ecumenical communication is liberating
WACC has had extraordinary fertile experiences with ecumenical communications down the years. In fact, WACC was responsible for communicating a brand of ecumenical communication that unfortunately fell by the wayside. For the history of WACC is also a history of missed opportunities. I remember that WACC was involved in a series of workshops on issues related to copyright (2003-05) including a workshop that also involved staff from the World Council of Churches and other bodies. To me copyleft is an issue that is of immense importance to ecumenical communications and it exemplifies a core value in Christian communication especially in the context of the digital era. For digital ‘energy’ has begun to shape the world, not just the media.

When ecumenical communicators take the view that technologies essentially are value free, in line with what social scientists term positivist thinking, it can lead to all sorts of ramifications including a shackling of the immense potential of Christian communications to contribute to human liberation. When ecumenical communicators do not provide leadership in the matter of copyleft, it offers the space for those in favour of copyright to take over or at least attempt to invest Christian communications with the values of copyright.

I recently received an email from a ‘Copyleft’ network that I belong to with information on a Cape Town-based organisation called the Christian Copyright Licensing International. It seems to be linked to evangelical churches and is pushing for a dominant, completely un-Christian line related to Christian music/video copyright. Their copyright even covers songs that currently exist in the public domain, and it would seem that they are making a fair amount of profit in the process. Owen Dean (2011: 24-25) in an article entitled “Good Copyright, Bad Copyright: Scamming, scamming – scamming in the Name of the Lord” (remember Bob Marley’s “We’re Jammin, Jammin/Hope you like Jammin too”) in the magazine Noseweek, describes CCLI’s scam thus:

“Cape Town-based Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) has made a good go of it, patrolling the country demanding royalty payments from churches and schools for singing hymns for which CCLI claims copyright. Even the much-loved Amazing Grace ‘belongs’ to them, and must be paid for… The local CCLI has been harassing schools and churches with threats of prosecution for failing to hand over royalties on hymns being
sung on their premises. Some have been handing over heaps of cash to avert being prosecuted for copyright infringements. The CCLI website announces that ‘CCLI helps churches maintain their integrity and avoid costly lawsuits, while also giving churches the freedom to worship expressively and spontaneously. Churches often face copyright issues in two vital areas: music used for congregational singing and videos shown in a church setting. CCLI provides practical licensing solutions for both’. Included in the list of hymns for which CCLI demands royalties are nearly 8,000 in the public domain, as their authors have been dead for more than 50 years. Amazing Grace, for example, was published in 1779 by English poet and clergyman John Newton and his friend William Cowper. Yet CCLI claims the right to be paid if anyone sings it.”

CCLI’s aggressive marketing all over Southern Africa and in other parts of the world needs to be curbed because they really are preying on the vulnerabilities of churches which, for the most part, are not in the know of how to deal with copyright related issues. If ecumenical communicators are not in a position to deal with this, I am afraid that the sharing of Christian worship material will become a minefield, that is, if it has not already become one. There are so many new licensing arrangements that can be worked out – including Creative Commons licenses and other, more progressive licensing arrangements.

Need for an understanding of communication rights
In other words the ecumenical communicator cannot just be a provider of content or for that matter a plain “techie”. While the ecumenical movement does need its technological enthusiasts, there is a need for, pardon the neo-liberal-speak, “value-added”, people, who are also versed in the liberating potential of, and new possibilities of, new technologies. Additionally they need to have an understanding of communication rights for all, not just for Christians, who are, with odd exceptions, no longer being fed to the lions today. The plain techie who joins ecumenical communications should be actively discouraged or be asked to upskill so that she or he plays a positive role in communicating the creative potential of these new technologies.

These value added communicators need to contribute to the making of communication environments for all people such as the kind described in the Christian Principles of Communication:

“Only if people become subjects rather than objects of communication can they develop their full potential as individuals and groups. Communication is now considered an individual and social necessity of such fundamental importance that it is seen as a universal human right. Communication as a human right encompasses the traditional freedoms: of expression, of the right to seek, receive and impart information. But it adds to these freedoms, both for individuals and society, a new concept, namely that of access, participation and two-way flow”.

While these concepts are no longer “new” there is a continuing need for another communications and the copyright status quo certainly does not enable access, participation, or for that matter two-way flows. Neither do modern-day mediocracies and the corrupting power of the Berlusconis and Murdochs of this world. Ecumenical communicators need to have an understanding of the role played by the media as one of the most potent powerbrokers in our world today. Sadly, most ecumenical communicators have little clue or no clue or understanding of media ecologies. The professional ecumenical communicator is, for the most part, a nuts and bolts person. Some are competent. Most are completely oblivious of the history and politics of any given communications practice.

I am generalising here, for there are exceptions and I certainly have come across and learned from profoundly committed, activist ecumenical communicators in Latin America and elsewhere. Such communicators, unfortunately, were not always found in the corridors of power at the level of WACC’s Board of Directors. Their influence is limited. And in the vacuum created by their absence, the accent is on the professional communicator. This continuing accent on technological skills is
evident in the job description recently distributed for an editor and general manager of Ecumenical News International.

I do understand that there are jobs and jobs within the ecumenical movement including some that purely functional. However one can argue that all ecumenical communicators need to be grounded in an understanding of communication ethics and communication rights. There is absolutely nothing in the job description that states a requirement for the value-added skills necessary for an ecumenical communicator today. In other words, it seems that the person who will eventually get this job will work as a pure functionary of the ecumenical movement, with absolutely no commitment to the larger values of ecumenical communications.

As the position requirement rather unambiguously states, all that is required is someone who can source, perhaps write, and most importantly bring out the ENI regularly and in time:

“Position Requirements:
A university degree (or equivalent) in journalism and 7 years experience.
Fluency in written and oral English.
A proven ability to assign and edit stories.
Well organised, accurate, efficient and possessing strong analytical skills. Able to coordinate and meet deadlines within a tight timeline.
An understanding of the structure, programs and polity of key Christian ecumenical organisations around the world.
Ability to work with a high degree of independence.
Ability to inspire the ENI team to meet the goals of the organisation.
Ability to work with the executive committee in developing and implementing the vision of ENInews.
Ability to work with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds.
Ability to handle confidential material.
Skill in Microsoft Word and using email.
May be required to travel and to work outside regular office hours”.

There is, to be fair, some information on the values of ecumenical communication in the section on Communication on the World Council of Churches’ web site: “The WCC is committed to making the work of the Council as well as to the life and work of its member churches visible, to bringing the ethical and moral alternative voice of the churches and the ecumenical movement to the world”. These are well-expressed although those same values could as well exist in thin air as they are not reflected in the four projects subsequently mentioned – WCC’s Public Voice, Web Office and Visual Arts, WCC Publications and Language Services. Those readers with a long ecumenical memory will remember that WCC Communications in the 1970s was actually involved in key debates on global communication. The WACC also did an admirable job communicating ecumenism and much else until financial constraints and a not so supportive internal culture marginalised the consistent exploration of liberating ideas.

My own strong conviction is that ecumenical communicators need to be also concerned with the project of greater ecumenism and to work with “secular” communicators. After all, communications and Christian communications affects all of the inhabited world. And in this context there simply has to be a strong commitment to go beyond the straitjacket “Christian communicator”, who invariably is a church or ecumenical functionary whose knowledge or commitment to communication rights is seriously amiss. There simply has to be a symbiotic relationship between the ecumenical and the secular. It cannot be otherwise for ecumenical communicators are of this world. I would argue that WACC too squandered opportunities to work with secular communicators (imagine not choosing the Noble-prize winning Seán MacBride as a President when the opportunity was there!) and to open its membership to those who were not Christian.

To get back to the point I was trying to make earlier, there have been exceptions like the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), although the
mind boggles at the many lost opportunities at creating real, sustainable partnerships with non-church bodies precisely because some regional representatives at past WACC Central Committee meetings baulked at such a relationship. In this context WACC’s continuing relationship with communication stalwarts such as Cees Hamelink and Margaret Gallagher needs to be commended. But for how long? And where are the new partnerships that will become equally enduring?

Reaching beyond boundaries
WACC’s history can certainly be termed a “journey”. It has, for the most part been an enlightening journey, although there have been moments when it stalled – a key moment being that of opening up WACC membership to all people. One of the most important tasks for an ecumenical communicator today is to reach out beyond our human-made boundaries, if not to embrace then at least to acknowledge the other within their own communication environments. I fought hard to open WACC up to all communicators in whichever category, individual or corporate but, instead, the so-called non-Christian communicator was relegated to a compromise category – Affiliate status. Thankfully the Affiliate status has been removed although non-Christian applicants did have to brave the small mindedness of regional satraps and their seeming inability to accept the other – the Muslim – in Africa and the Middle East and the Hindu in Asia within a “Christian” organisation.

When ecumenical communicators play the same tune year after year amidst much Christian hand-wringing about perceived threats to the identity of WACC if it opens up to non-Christians, it grates against WACC’s Christian Principles of Communication. They are addressed to a liberation for all created order, especially the most marginalised, and to large projects linked to rights, freedom and liberation. I do not mean to downplay the real threats from fundamentalists and those with a limited grasp of shared humanity in our world today. I would, however, submit that, apart from the rarest of instances, most non-Christians who have wanted to become a WACC member, applied because they did identify with WACC’s core principles that really do go beyond creed or caste, even if the language with which it is expressed is “Christian”.

WACC has played a formidable role in nurturing ecumenical communications beyond borders and irrespective of creed and caste, so why is there an unwillingness to bite the bullet and embrace ecumenical communications for what it should be? WACC’s commitment to the most progressive ideas in communications was second to none and it was globally recognised for its clear endorsement of communication rights. A close reading of WACC’s Christian Principles of Communication will reveal that these principles really are not that faith-specific. After all Christians do not have a monopoly over the fact that Communication creates Community, Communication is Participatory, Communication Liberates, Communication Supports and Develops Cultures, Communication is Prophetic.

What of the future?
I may be wrong but I get the impression that WACC’s ecumenical moorings, like that of other ecumenical bodies, are being tested on a daily basis. As the movement continues to face issues with its funding, and its “traditional” partnerships begin to unravel, it is important to pose and explore those difficult questions. What should WACC look like in 2030 (or even 2020)? Will the core values it holds on to for now remain sufficient in the context of emerging global challenges? What are the new partnerships that WACC ought to explore? And what should its program priorities look like?

So how should WACC move forward from where it is at the moment?
1. While “difference” and cultural ways of doing things certainly need to be respected, at the very same time cultures and traditions are not sacrosanct. In WACC’s journey towards greater openness, there simply has to be a dialogue on WACC’s core concerns, with a view to grounding all of WACC in a commonly agreed set of principles that clearly signify the “openness” at the heart of WACC. WACC cannot afford to have a fractured identity with a given region pulling it in one direction of openness
and the other in the direction of closure.

2. There simply has to be a renewed emphasis on finding and nurturing ecumenical communicators – the need to replenish the gene pool of ecumenical communicators. I remember that the Latin American region of WACC once organised an exciting series of regional workshops in their region precisely oriented towards this “finding and nurturing”. The accent ought to be on the strengthening of ecumenical “capital”. Perhaps there is a need for such workshops to be explored for the staff as well as for regions and beyond.

3. WACC regional membership must take up the challenge of working towards an ‘open’ WACC. I am aware that this is easier said than done but regional workshops must try and intentionally include people who come from backgrounds that are not connected to the official church with the view to bringing them into WACC.

4. As a species, ecumenical communicators must include practitioners and public intellectuals, theoreticians, and activists. There is no other basis for a genuinely ecumenical “gene pool”.

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Empowering hill tribes and citizenship in Thailand

Boonlert Supadhihloke

Since the year 1997 when the people’s constitution was promulgated in Thailand, promoting freedom of expression and information, there have been a series of social movements to set up community radio to help speed up the national development process. Many academic and civic groups nurtured a high hope that participatory radio stations possess the potential to transform the grassroots into active citizens. Given the fact that community radio has unique ability to treat listeners as subjects and participants rather than as objects or target audiences, it was expected to be successful in involving and empowering the grassroots, the marginalized and the underprivileged in remote areas.

For over a decade now, the community radio movement has been at a stand-still due mainly to the government’s failure to establish a national broadcasting regulator to reallocate radio frequencies as required by the constitution. Consequently, over 30,000 pirate radio stations are found operating throughout the country, most of which were intended for commercial and political gains rather than for public interest.

However, in many cases, community radio has proved to be an effective participatory medium that gives a voice to the voiceless, serves as the mouthpiece of the minorities and is at the heart of good governance. Of particular interest is community radio among the hill tribe minorities in Northern Thailand. For over four decades, radio has
been taken as an agent of political socialization that has empowered a large number of marginalized non-Thais, turning them into effective citizens (Charoenwong, 2000).

**Early hill tribe radio development**
The first radio station was set up in Thailand in 1930, just before the country changed from an absolute monarchy to democratic government. However, it was not until 1966 that this participatory medium spread to the hill tribe minorities in Northern Thailand. That was a time when Thailand was being threatened by the infiltration of Communism from outside the country.

Many ethnic groups living in the highland areas in the North had been suspected by the government of being involved in the Communist movement. These ethnic minorities included: Karen, who were the majority and actively involved in the insurgent movement; Hmong, who were instigated to create social unrest; and Yao, who held a hostile attitude against the government (Boonyasaranai, 2000: 35-41).

Consequently, the Thai government, with financial support from the U.S. government, set up an A.M. radio station in Chiangmai province with 100 KW transmitters that beamed the programme directly towards the three hill tribes (Chairat, 1977). The programme was designed primarily to provide information and knowledge about subversive activities of the Communist movement to the ethnic minorities.

Later, the programme was expanded to cover a wide range of topics related to the living conditions and welfare of the hill tribes as well as development issues and chronic problems caused by these groups, particularly the cultivation of opium and the practice of slash-and-burn farming (Boonyasaranai, 2000: 38-40).

The initial broadcasts were transmitted in three hill tribe dialects: Karen, Hmong and Yao and, a year later, three more dialects were added, namely, Lahoo, Leesor and Arkha together with Thai language and local dialects. Local hill tribes were also recruited and trained to serve as announcers and programme producers and presenters.

At the beginning, the radio programmes appeared to be very interesting and attractive because of their broadcast in dialects. They attracted a large number of marginalized audiences across geographical sections with their feedback. Most importantly, these marginalized groups felt that they now had a promising tool to “voice their opinions and grievances that they had hitherto been deprived of from concerned authorities” (Chairat, 1977).

One Karen announcer was quoted as saying:

“When it was first broadcast in our hill tribe dialect, it was very exciting and received tremendous enthusiasm and reactions from our audiences. No such broadcasting was done in ethnic dialects before. Some hill tribe sections that did not have even radio receivers gathered together before a radio set from sunrise to sunset to listen to the programmes and chat on various topics of concern. It was a tremendous success in terms of the marginalized attitudes and opinion change” (Chairat, 1977: 27).

The radio programmes were normally produced live at the studio in Chiangmai province. Several programmes were also reproduced in various hill tribe dialects such as Karen, Hmong, Arkha and Yao and aired in neighbouring provinces such as Chiangrai, Nan, Mae Hong-sorn, Pitsanuloke and Tak.

After the first hill tribe radio station was put on air in 1966, another attempt was also initiated by the military to use radio as a strategic tool to counter Communist infiltration and protect national security. On February 26, 1973, the Supreme Command of the Armed Force had officially set up a new A.M. radio station titled “914 National Security Command” (now changed to 914 Development Military Command) at Chiangrai province as a public relations arm to wage psychological warfare against the insurgent movement (Boonyasaranai, 2000, p. 90). Although the station initially broadcast only in local dialect, it was later expanded to include nine hill tribe dialects in the year 1986.
They were: Hmong, Lahoo, Karen, Arkha, Leesor, Yao, Lua, Thai Yai and Central Chinese.

The 914 radio station, with 10 KW transmitters, covered most northern provinces where hill tribes minorities were predominant: Chiangmai, Chiangrai, Mae Hong-sorn Lampang, Prae, Payao, Nan, Tak, Uttradit and Pitsanuloke. Its main mission was to promote democracy and protect national security as well as to bridge the gap between hill tribes and the government.

It was obvious that both radio stations described above represented government efforts to reach the marginalized groups in northern mountainous areas because of fears of Communist insurgency. They were the top-down communication process from policy makers to target audiences without taking into much consideration the needs and interests of the beneficiaries.

Most such radio programmes reflected government policy guidelines and platforms to “assimilate” the hill tribe minorities or to socialize them to become Thai citizens in the so-called “Thai-ization” (Boonyasaranai, 2000, pp. 25-26). This was tantamount to creating a sense of Thai nationalism through media propaganda which was common during the time of a political crisis.

Freedom of expression strengthens community radio

The turning point for community radio, which is conceived as ‘radio by the people and for the people,’ came in the year 1997 when the people’s constitution was promulgated. As earlier described, the 1997 constitution guaranteed a wide range of individual freedoms of expression and opinion, freedom of information, right to access of information and responsibility which were considered key elements in political and media reforms. Most important, the 1997 constitution placed emphasis on people’s participation as essential to participatory democracy and communication development. After 1997, Thai people from all walks of life became very conscious about the importance of participatory community broadcasting for the marginalized and the disadvantaged.

The existing hill tribe radio stations may be cited as a good example to illustrate the potential of a participatory medium in transforming the marginalized in the highland areas into citizens. They also provide a lesson for Thai officials concerned to learn how to communicate with the grassroots in order to win their hearts and minds. The time has past for linear top-down communication processes. Now, authorities need to adjust their thinking, perceptions and attitudes towards hill tribe minorities. These underprivileged people should not be misperceived as “outsiders” or “non-Thai” or the enemy. They deserve to be recognized as full Thai citizens who enjoy every right to participate in the development process.

With changes in the legal framework, mindsets and climate of opinion, there emerged some promising community radio stations ‘by the hill tribe and for the hill tribe’ in Northern Thailand. Noteworthy is the Upper-Dam community radio, F.M. 90.75 Mhz at Hod District, Chiangmai Province. This small-scale radio station was set up by the Karen community to protect and conserve the cultural heritage of Ploang by using their local dialect.

The Ploang dialect had been widely misperceived and stereotyped by Thai officials as “inferior” and “instrumental” in challenging the government authorities by insurgents. As Boonchan Chanmoh, the station manager, said, “This stereotype hurts us and is a big insult to our identity and culture.”

To correct the stereotype, Boonchan and several community leaders relied on community radio as a participatory platform for dialogue between the Ploang community and state officials. Boonchan admitted that in the era of globalization, it would be hard and take a long time to remove the misperception about the Ploang language and tribe as well as to stem the tide of global civilization. However, having committed to struggle for their own cultural heritage, the Upper-Dam community leaders felt satisfied with the radio as a “participatory means to voice their language and identity,” (Sukkosol, 2008: 100).

Another good example is a community radio at Pai district, Mae Hong-sorn province, where many hill tribe minorities live. A small valley city
surrounded by a beautiful natural environment ranging from forests, rivers, and canyons to mineral springs as well as traditional cultures, Pai district has become a famous tourist attraction in Thailand. About 200,000 local and foreign visitors thronged to this 'paradise on earth' every year, bringing an annual income of almost $30 million.

The F.M. 103.00 MHz radio station was set up at Pai to serve its community of about 30,000 people, composed mainly of local (Khon Muang) and Thai Pai including many other hill tribes. Apart from promoting tourism and protecting local culture and tradition, the F.M. 103.00 MHz radio station was designed primarily for empowering youth in the area of radio programme production for community development. Young people would normally come to the radio station to receive on-the-job training in programme production, presentation and other technical skills until they became competent to manage the jobs themselves (Sukkosol, 2008: 98-99).

The Pai community radio turned out to be a successful alternative channel for young listeners along with commercial radio stations in the city. It focused on local news, public affairs and topics related to community development while its competitors relied on commercial information and entertainment. The Pai community radio has attracted a large number of youth together with other social networks and websites (Sukkosol, 2008: 99).

Empowering marginalized Thai communities

We can conclude that the hill tribe and community radio stations in Northern Thailand have significantly contributed to the empowerment of the marginalized as citizens. By using the hill tribe dialects and local contents, radio became a promising medium that gave voice to the voiceless and served as the spokesman of the marginalized. Consequently, during the years 1999-2000, the Thai government through the Ministry of Interior granted Thai citizenship to 142,870 hill tribes or 75% of all hill tribes in Chiangmai province (Boonyasaranai, 2000: 43-43). Subsequently, a large number of the marginalized have been registered as full Thai citizens in other provinces as well.

However, the concept of “citizenship” is not restricted to the legal status; it goes beyond education to designate “a well informed-citizen”. In this regard, participatory communication has a major role to play in citizenship. In the case of Thailand, subject to well-planned broadcasting policy and regulation, the country can have a truly participatory community radio produced and controlled by the citizens and for the citizens in the future.

With community radio, many hill tribe minorities have the means to realize their rights, duties, freedoms and responsibilities and make their views known to the public. Hill tribe radio has proved to be a participatory medium that gives voice to the voiceless, serving as the mouthpiece of the marginalized and the underprivileged and is at the heart of citizenship and civil society.

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References


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Thinking about thinking

James Keegan

Reflections after spending 49 years as a professor in higher education, the last 37 years as Chair or Dean of a Communication Department in the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The one continuous activity that was present through all of those years was the regular need to revise, or update, the curriculum content of the Communication Department’s program. One of the general reasons was the change and development of the technology. For me, personally, there was also the change in my international location, with the resulting awareness of different cultural norms, values, and behaviours. This meant an increasing demand to be a “learner” as much as a “teacher”.

Such learning had to be much more than mastering the operating skills of new technologies. It included the impact of that technology on society. That meant an early understanding of how that society thinks and acts and how that impacts on the communication process both locally and nationally within a global environment. So, for educators and administrators, it is absolutely vital that they have a desire to know more about “Ways of Thinking” and to develop their own capacity to engage in ‘Thinking about Thinking’.

This in turn has meant following the writing of authors such as Bernard Lonergan, who wrote in 1957 a seminal text entitled Insight: A Study of Human Understanding. Then, Edward de Bono with his book in 1970 on Lateral Thinking, and later, many others providing ways to develop lateral thinking. In 1991, along came Michael Michalko with Thinkertoys – a handbook of creative thinking techniques, with a second edition in 2006.

These, and many other authors on the same subject, proved to be invaluable for a professor of communication faced with the educational issues raised by new technology and the growth of social media. They confirmed that the principles and skills of broad thinking also needed to be part of the learning experience of students of human communication. It also made obvious that the students of the 21st. century are usually very capable when it came to technical skills, but are often in need of help when it comes to the principles and skills of thinking.

This need can be easily recognized if we look at a number of examples of the professor’s own learning.

Perception and processing

Perception is the way we look at things. Processing is what we do with that perception. In general it has been the common practice to concentrate on processing. However, the continuing development of the computer and associated digital technologies has shifted attention back to perception. This is because the computer has superb processing capabilities.

Perception becomes increasingly important because the way we look at a situation will determine what we do about it. How we look at a situation depends on the “view” we have. It, therefore, becomes important to have as many views as possible, and not be focused too narrowly. This is a question of one’s “frame of reference”.

Another example comes from what is often perceived as the essence of the writing of a real genius. In Insight (1957) Bernard Lonergan wrote:

1. Question your questions
2. Think about your thinking
3. Learn about your learning

The creative genius of the famous philosopher, Bertrand Russell made everyone think when in the 1930s on a BBC program he summarized “viewpoint” by creating a kind of conjugation of viewpoint, perspective, reality, truth – cultural and personal barriers:

I am firm / You are obstinate
He is pig-headed / I am righteously indignant
You are annoyed / He is making a fuss about nothing

A further simple example of the need to be a broad or lateral thinker is when we realize we must work hard to think about and understand the context of a statement, a question, or a particular action by an individual or a nation. What's the context?

Statement: He can't add 2 and 2.
Response: He must be pretty stupid.
Context: He is only two months old.

If the person looking at the following set of additions thinks of numbers rather than the 12-hour clock, then we will have disagreements. We need to be on the same wavelength:

2 plus 2 = 4
4 plus 4 = 8
5 plus 4 = 9
10 plus 3 = 1
5 plus 7 = 12
11 plus 4 = 3

Similarly, if you start with false assumptions, then your solutions will be poorly constructed and may not fit the situation.

Michalko’s “false faces”
Example – the yard-stick that is an inch short and is then used to build a house. Keegan interpretation: this is similar to the problems created by not recognizing that your view depends on where you are standing.

Example – The famous charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimean War between Britain and Imperial Russia. There is a poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson saluting the bravery of the soldiers. There is no poem that describes the stupidity of the commander who made the decision for the charge based only on what he could see from where he was standing on the top of a hill. He could not see that there were two valleys facing the soldiers down below.

A number of the writers on the subject of “ways of thinking” not only described what they meant, but went on to create and publish tools that could be used to improve and develop the ability to think. Edward de Bono was certainly one of the most successful. Here is an outline description of what de Bono introduced: lateral thinking (as opposed to vertical thinking, where we move logically from step to step).

1. Background
The mind creates patterns that we continue to use; we do not normally change them. Continuity is responsible for most ideas and we very rarely re-assess their value. We need to be capable of introducing discontinuity into our thinking.

2. Process
Escape. We deliberately search for alternatives. We refuse to accept assumptions. We know the need to enlarge the problem context. We attack the arrogance that is attached to any one way of looking at things.

Provocation. We separate the generation of ideas from their evaluation. We make unjustified leaps in our thinking and then catch up with them later. We accept being wrong in order to be right at a later stage. We accept that many times you need to be at the top of the mountain to see the way up. We use chance as a provocative source of discontinuity. We look for movement just for the sake of movement, in order to generate a new direction instead of just following an old one.

3. Method
Attitude
Provocative Operation
New techniques and skills in using the thinking process
A new word to keep remembering - PO as in POssible, hyPOthesis, supPOse

THINKING SKILLS - METHODS AND TOOLS – Edward de Bono
1. The PMI:
P = plus for good points
2. The APC - the mind has a tendency towards certainty - and action.
   A = Alternatives
   P = Possibilities
   C = Choices

   How are we to handle successfully, and efficiently, all the information and opinion that is now so easily available to us with the use of social media technologies and systems? It is absolutely necessary that what is available be carefully selected, analyzed, filtered, and even discarded. To do this our thinking abilities should have first place and our technical skills follow, technical skills that we regularly have to update.

   So, as we open our Facebook page, our latest Blog interest, our advert filled Web pages, our latest cell phone and its Apps, let us look at a few suggestions (collected from many sources) about how to use that thinking system that is in our heads.

   Some ways to achieve better thinking
   • Creativity – a whole collection of different ways to open up problems so as to get better solutions
   • MindMaps – a tree diagram way of detailing problems, to help the mind suggest solutions
   • Critical Thinking – a structured approach to thinking, to find ways of improving the thinking process itself
   • Accelerated Learning – an extension of critical thinking, which adds in other factors which affect thinking and learning so as to maximize learning effectiveness (a holistic approach)
   • Problem Solving – a variety of methods to explore the detail of problems, to help find solutions.
   • Rule of Three – View from on high (see the big picture)
   • Get the right key question (consider all factors)
   • Solve the key question

   The best way to think
   Survey like an Eagle as if from on high. Get the big picture, include all that’s relevant, see the boundaries. Understand in a summary way what is happening.
   Observe like an Owl with 360° vision. Be aware of all factors, even hidden or difficult to spot which may affect what should be the real question.
   Solve like a Human with ingenuity and wackiness. Use the full rein of your imagination to find the non-obvious solutions. Better thinking = Better actions = Better results

   We have to remember that winning does not happen just because you think well. Many other factors affect whether you are a winner, however good your thinking process may have been. An example may be your hidden mental resources – your Subconscious, gaining Positive energy, the Zen approach, your wish to Win – your Motivation, your Enthusiasm, your Desire, your Will. The more you can incorporate these other factors, the more your better thinking will translate into better winning.

   Conclusion
   Historians have long written about the Agricultural Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and more recently the Information Age, or the Social Media Age. Now we are possibly in the Age of Analysis, or does it sound more elegant to call it the “Age of the Thinking Revolution”? ■

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RCC2011: THINKING AND COMMUNICATING OUTSIDE THE BOX

The National Convention of the Religion Communicators Council took place in Little Rock, Arkansas, USA, 31 March to 2 April 2011 on the theme “Communicating Outside the Box”.

As a curtain-raiser to the Convention, WACC Global and WACC North America joined forces to screen The Garden at the End of the World, a documentary by Australian film-maker Gary Caganoff and winner of the WACC-SIGNIS Human Rights Award 2010.

The film portrays the lives of those hardest hit by the consequences of war in Afghanistan – widows and orphans, who number tens of thousands. It follows two women, Afghan refugee Mahboba Rawi and internationally recognised permaculturalist Rosemary Morrow, who offer alternative views on how to solve the problems facing the country.

Through these two remarkable women, Caganoff elicits stories and images of Afghanistan rarely seen before. Neither sentimental nor sensational, the film explores the social depths and complexities of war-torn Afghanistan. Stunning visual imagery combines with heart-rending stories that not only raise moral questions but offer a glimmer of hope in the struggle to survive and rebuild lives.

This documentary film is available for purchase from the website of Lysis Films: [www.thegardenattheendoftheworld.info/Home.html](http://www.thegardenattheendoftheworld.info/Home.html)

Opening plenary

WACC was privileged to be invited to make the opening plenary presentation. Dr Sarah Macharia, coordinator of WACC’s programme on Media and Gender Justice and of the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), spoke on “Gender and the news media: A new approach to building lasting peace?”

Macharia (photo above) explored how societies have become increasingly polarised along competing political or ideological positions. This has often led news journalism to prefer one-sided positions over more balanced positions. This results in certain interests and voices being accorded grossly disproportional print coverage or broadcast time. She said:

“The imperative to focus on news media becomes clear when we consider two facts. The first is that the news is the foremost source of information about issues and events, knowledge that in turn informs communities’ understanding of and responses to their world.
The second is that the news has the ability to influence policy agendas as issues attain centre-stage in public debate.”

WACC’s Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) has starkly demonstrated that the diversity present in reality is veiled or ignored in the world depicted in the news. Furthermore, news tends to magnify and normalize discrimination, injustice, and inequality when it comes to gender difference. See: http://www.whomakesthenews.org/

Macharia pointed out that, “If the rate of change observed in the past decade in women’s presence in the news is maintained, it will take at least 40 more years to reach parity. The GMMP 2010 report contains a plan of action intended to not only accelerate the pace of change but also re-direct progress to areas of media policy and practice that constrain advancement towards more gender-equitable news media.”

Drawing on research findings, the presentation suggested how the advancement of peace can be strengthened by gender-fair and gender-balanced reporting. It argued that representing society in all its diversity is the key to the emergence of a more equitable world.

Subsequent plenary sessions during the Convention heard media consultant Lorri Allen of Family Life Radio network in Tucson, Arizona; Associate Director of the White House of Public Engagement D. Paul Monteiro; and William J. Clinton Professor and Dean of the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service James L. Rutherford.

Knowledge-sharing workshops
The Convention programme included a variety of workshop experiences. One explored the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) findings in more depth. Participants heard Mary Jacobs, staff writer for the United Methodist Portal [http://www.umportal.org/] respond to some of the issues raised by the previous day’s plenary presentation. Ms Jacobs’ professional experience includes being a freelance writer for the award-winning religion section of the Dallas Morning News and contributing to Religion News Service.

Workshop participants learnt more about the history of the GMMP and its methodology. They carried out a coding exercise in relation to recent news coverage of the sex discrimination lawsuit against Wal-Mart. This “class action lawsuit” brought on behalf of some 1.6 million women claims that Wal-Mart Stores Inc. favours men over women in pay and promotions. Lively media coverage has ranged from overt bias against parity, describing the lawsuit as frivolous, to well argued support for gender equality.

Derose-Hinkhouse Memorial Awards
The Convention saw the annual Awards of Excellence to active RCC members who had this year submitted 268 entries. Each entry in ten categories is judged on overall quality, including concept, design, creativity, style, use of colour, appropriateness of material, creative use of resources, communication value, and effectiveness in achieving its purpose. From among the Awards of Excellence, one best of class trophy is presented in each category.

Winner of the best of class trophy in Class A – Periodicals was Gregg Brekke of the United Church of Christ for StillSpeaking Magazine (photo above, with Deb Christian, RCC President). Brekke is a member of the WACC North America Executive Committee. “The covers of this magazine are so striking they would draw attention from across the
room,” said the judges, who called the publication a “great concept” and “highly readable.”


**Wilbur Awards 2011**

Documentaries on Liberia and Haiti each won Wilbur Awards at the Convention. First given in 1949 in recognition of excellence in communicating religious issues, values and themes in the public media, the Wilbur Awards are judged by media professionals through a jury process.

With 22 communication nomination categories, candidates are judged on content, creativity, execution, and results. Winners are chosen in the fields of newspapers, radio, magazines, cartoons/comic strips, books, television news, television documentaries, feature films, and web-based communications.

*Rainbow Town: The Documentary*, directed by Lauren Selmon Roberts, is the true story of a Liberian orphanage. With civil war raging around her, Mother Feeta was presented with a stark choice: to protect the orphaned children forced into her life or to abandon them and go in search of her own family. She wanted the children to live, so today, seven years after the fighting ended, they are living at a rural Liberian farm named Rainbow Town. All 86 of them.

To the beat of an original soundtrack by the children and narrated by Mother Feeta, three of her children, and Liberia’s President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, this documentary unearths the price of war, while illustrating the strength of the human spirit. Major problems constantly face Rainbow Town, but clinging to faith and each other, Mother Feeta and her children find a way to overcome. Web site: [http://rainbowtown.org](http://rainbowtown.org)

Haiti was the setting for a second prizewinner. *Haiti: Religion’s Response to Disaster* is a CBS Religion Special about the assistance given to the people of Haiti. John P. Blessington is the executive producer and Liz Kineke is the producer. It was produced in cooperation with the National Council of Churches, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Islamic Society of North America, the Union for Reform Judaism and the New York Board of Rabbis.

After a 7.0 magnitude earthquake ravaged the country in January 2010, some of the first responders were religious relief organizations. These faith-based groups continue to work in Haiti, as the road to helping the country sustain itself remains a long one. The documentary looks at relief efforts begun immediately after the quake as well as the progress currently being made in Haiti by faith-based organizations. Members of Church World Service, Catholic Relief Services, Jewish Distribution Committee, and United Methodist Committee on Relief share stories about their work with viewers.

While religious relief organizations worked to help the living, they often struggled to cope with the dying, with some groups mourning the deaths of their own members. Representatives from United Methodist of Relief Committee (UMCOR) were in Haiti when the earthquake hit and lost two members. Melissa Crutchfield, UMCOR’s Assistant General Secretary for International Disaster Response, tells viewers about the Haitian people’s struggle for survival and UMCOR’s renewed efforts and commitment in Haiti.

**Memories of the struggle against racial segregation**

Participants at the RCC Convention visited the Little Rock Central High School which, in 1957, was racially segregated. A group of nine African-American students enrolled there were prevented from taking their places on the orders of Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus.

On their first day of school, troops from the Arkansas National Guard prevented the nine from entering and ugly crowds gathered to protest against desegregation. The ensuing crisis led to the intervention of President Eisenhower and is considered to be one of the most important events in the African-American Civil Rights Movement.

*Report by Philip Lee, WACC Deputy-Director of Programmes.*
The Ecumenical Jury for the Berlinale 2011 saw each of 16 films in Competition. Half the group also covered films in the Forum section, and the other half of the group films in the Panorama section. There was limited cross-sampling by members across both Forum and Panorama. As far as possible, members saw the same films in a pre-determined order so that each evaluation session would be most meaningful. All final judgements followed the formal criteria laid down for the Jury, which gave careful consideration to each of the films that was viewed.

The Jury’s Prize in Competition was awarded to Jodaeiye Nader Az Simin (Nader and Simin, A Separation) directed by Asghar Farhadi (Iran, 2011). This film powerfully dramatises conflicts associated with family life and living in Iran. It addresses its subject-matter with equality, respect, and sincerity. Its themes include parent-child relationships, separation, ethical decision-making, justice, and religious commitment.

Its power is strengthened by the invitation the director offers to the viewer to engage with suggested solutions. It creatively maintains tension throughout, and never loses the integrity of its individual themes. The film communicates effectively its moral viewpoints in a realistic and culturally sensitive way. Nader and Simin: A Separation also won the Festival’s top prize, the Golden Bear.

The Ecumenical Jury’s Prize in Panorama was awarded to Lo Roim Alaich (Invisible) directed by Michael Aviad (Israel/Germany, 2011). This film deals with women’s rape – a major and frequent social problem of physical and mental trauma. It shows with empathy, and brilliant psychological relevance, the complex feelings and behaviour of two victims who meet by chance. They try to overcome the long-lasting consequences from which they are suffering. Through the generosity, the energy, and the talents of the director and her two actresses, this
first feature film is based on real facts. It shows the successful fight for women’s rights and dignity.

The Ecumenical Jury’s Prize in Forum was awarded to *En Terrains Connus* (Familiar Ground) directed by Stephane Lafleur (Canada, 2011). This film (still, opposite page) is structurally original in showing how “accidents” can alter human relationships. It is innovative in drawing warm and human comic moments out of an alienated world where relationships are fragile. Its dialogue is sparse and well-controlled, and the soundtrack integrates very effectively with the film’s visual imagery.

**Special Mentions**

A Special Mention in Competition was awarded to *The Forgiveness of Blood* directed by Joshua Marston (USA/Albania/Denmark/Italy, 2011). This film (still, top of this page) informs forcibly about a son taking responsibility for his actions in a family caught up in a vendetta culture in Albania.

A Special Mention in Panorama was awarded to *Barzakh* directed by Mantas Kvedaravicius (Finland/Lithuania, 2011). This film depicts forcefully the rage and despair about the injustices and abuse of human rights in Chechnya after the Russian withdrawal.

A Special Mention in Forum was awarded to *De Engel van Doel* (An Angel in Doel) directed by Tom Fassaert (Netherlands/Belgium, 2011). This film sympathetically shows how urban development and globalisation affect individuals in an aged community in Antwerp, Belgium.

**Conclusion**

The Ecumenical Jury considered Berlinale 2011 to be an exciting and stimulating festival. It felt honoured to be a part of the dynamism and energy of the Festival, and to have assisted in its important deliberations. The Jury for 2011 comprised: Dietmar Adler (Secretary), Germany; Gabriele Carunchio, Italy; Julienne Munyaneza, Rwanda – UK; Peter Sheehan (President), Australia; Lothar Strueber, Germany; and Jean-Michel Zucker, France.

*Report by Peter W. Sheehan, Jury President.*