

Point IX. The responsibility of procreation

Point IX of the Letter of Peace Addressed to the United Nations presents a series of practical consequences, explicit responsibilities, and the rights of diverse people parting from the notion that the Human Rights and Human Responsibilities are the feet on which society walks on. This is because both need and complement each other.

The text is presented in three paragraphs which address different aspects yet share a common topic: If we truly desire peace, what is society's shared responsibility before its people?

Those Responsible for Procreation

Progenitors are responsible for giving existence to other beings. Therefore, with the help of society, they should provide their offspring with sufficient support for their entire lives, above all in the inheritance of a more peaceful world for their entire lives. This obligation is particularly strong in the case of the weak willed or those with mental difficulties. This provision should allow them to develop their lives with human dignity as they have not asked to exist. Parrafo 1

The responsibility to procreate stems from the fact that no one has asked to be born or been able to do anything to exist. Society and those presently in existence are the responsible parties to give rise to new lives.

Given the great dignity and uniqueness of each person the act of procreation becomes one of the grandest duties to undertake. No one in this world has the right to force anyone to engender a new life against that person's will. Procreation is such a dignified reality it should never take place in the absence of personal liberty. Not even the Creator obliges human beings to have children, if we do not wish to do so; for He made man and woman free beings. It would be contradictory to disrespect the freedom he granted them when they face such an important decision. Hence, liberty and responsibility must be adequately developed in preparation for the act of procreation.

Not one person has brought life upon himself or has done anything to aid its occurrence since the person did not exist. No one is responsible for having begun to exist. Only the procreators

are the responsible ones for sparking existence within a new life. Then, if we have provoked the existence of others we must accept them all, granting each one dignity and rights, and providing them with the proper means so they may live honorably. We must also encourage them so they may collaborate with this world. Only then will there be real peace.

Some believe that procreators are merely “green traffic lights” that just “bring” into the world an already existing person. However, biology proves that each human being is a precise product of the man and woman who procreated him; so other men and women would produce different offspring but not him. Therefore, procreators don't just bring pre-existing people into the world, they are responsible for creating the existence of a new person, one that didn't exist before, and without them would have never existed.

The Shared Responsibilities of Society

It is obvious that parents hold the key responsibility in the existence of their children; but this responsibility is not exclusively theirs. Had events prior to their child's conception occurred in a different manner, this person would not exist today (Point IV). Needless to say, in order for human beings alive today to exist it was necessary for their procreators, ancestors and society to unfold the way they did.

An entire society in an indirect and secondary but real manner shares the responsibility of the existence of the new beings that begin to exist¹. Consider the following examples: grandparents or other relatives that advice couples to engender, advances in Gynecological Sciences, a better standard of life, or decisions to relocate parents based on the scarcity of employment, even unpredictable events such as a heavy snowfall or an electrical failure, etc.

To engender is an individual right and responsibility, not individualistic, yet it involves the community and its solidarity. It is also a right not to be perceived as a luxury or egotism; one that can not be restricted arbitrarily or for personal gains by the society. Society must respect and support the decisions freely taken by those who have engendered the children that will grow to be productive and proactive adult members of this society.

¹ J.Cussó (1977), *Pensión a su hijo*, en Revista RE de Pensamiento y Opinión. nº 41, p. 44

Just until Legal Coming of Age?

Some people think that to engender is only to give life to another being and so quite easily forget the obligations that derive from it. Others tend to think that the responsibility of the procreators ends when their children become of age. However, the Letter of Peace reminds us that this responsibility lasts until death. No one forced us to procreate and no one asked to exist. Out of this responsible liberty rises the commitment to care for those I have brought into existence throughout their entire lives.

Point IX explicitly states two situations where it is obvious that parents and society must care for their children for as long as they live. They must do so especially if their children are psychologically disabled or if their will is weak. In addition there are youths dedicated to stoppage who remain stuck there until they retire, others are discouraged to live due to causes such as: childhood malnutrition, illness, conflict and aggression in the home, drug addiction, not to mention circumstances of war and deportation; they are doomed to experience suffering, marginalization, and delinquency; which is a new obstacle for peace.

The responsibility of the procreators in harmonious collaboration with society has no age limit for it must cover the person's life span. Regardless of how harsh and demanding this may sound parents are responsible for their children until these die. While in many cases such responsibility won't have to be exercised to the limit, it is a real possibility; one that must be accepted before progenitors decide to engender. By the same token, collectively we must care for the orphans, the abandoned, and the sick, etc. that prevail within society.

What Should Be Facilitated to Our Children?

The Letter of Peace does not advocate a paternalistic attitude. It states the duty to "propitiate" or facilitate and make sufficient support systems accessible. It does not say that all must be handed already resolved in all cases. The objective is for children to develop their lives productively and with dignity if they are able to do so, not for them to become idle and lazy.

Among sufficient resources and support systems it is foremost mentioned that the best inheritance is a world at peace. In effect we could bequeath culture and material goods etc. to new generations. But the best inheritance is to leave them as joyful adults living a fair and happy coexistence. That is definitely the best gift for all new beings to be born! How then, can a person who never advocates solidarity to others, who never works for peace or for the world to be a better place dare to provoke the existence of a new being and in a world he

tolerates as fractured, at war, disputed, hungry, and unfair? Working toward peace will undoubtedly be one of the top human obligations.

Jordi Cussó comments on this in an article published in the RE magazine²:

“We can not give that which we do not have. If I don't have a transistor or the possibility to obtain one, I will be unable to give it regardless of how persistently I am asked to do so. It is true that sometimes we kid ourselves and even fantasize about gaining that which we don't have. But how many times do we fall prisoner to our fantasies becoming filled with frustrations which we then transmit to those who surround us. Yes, we will give life because we are alive; but how will we excite others if we lack excitement? How will we convey the joy of being alive to a new being if as progenitors we are unhappy with our existence? If we never make an effort or refuse to provide the basics to secure an existence with dignity, we won't be able to deliver the means and support systems necessary for a life to develop with dignity.

If we don't make an effort to achieve a more united and peaceful society, we are failing to make our children feel welcome. Deep down children feel unwanted because we did not provide dignity or a welcome environment; and so they ask:

If you are unhappy with your existence, why did you give me mine? Why do you mistreat me bringing me into an unfair world with wars, if you have chosen to do nothing to improve it?”

Youths need to perceive their parents and other adults as happy that they exist. If the progenitors aren't happy, how could they have brought their children into an existence that displeases them? A mature and coherent human attitude is being joyous; joyous to exist, aware of the possibility of not existing. It is also true and quite understandable that some people who have suffered and continue to suffer great limitations, ailments, and deficiencies might be unable to feel the joy of being alive, or the happiness existing signifies aware of the possibility of not having existed.

² J. Cussó (1998), *Ocuparse casi toda la vida*, en Revista RE de pensamiento y Opinión, n° 43 p. 21-22

The Joy of Existing

The young have a right to be motivated and enthused by the joy of living, learning from the example of their parents, family and society. In the same way they have the right to carry out research in the sciences and technology, in order to build a more peaceful world.

Children need to see their parents, their family, and society enthused to work, willing to make the world better, overcoming adversity with hope, and being happy. This makes it easier for them to fit in joyfully into the task force. But those unhappy with who they are, how they are, or the world they live in have a difficult time collaborating zestfully to make others happier.

Enthusiasm:

Fervent exaltation caused by that which is admired or that which captivates for a reason, not by idealism or unfounded self-persuasion.

According to the dictionary, to enthuse is all that brings us the joy to live and that makes us feel free. He, who is happy and feels free, wishes to enhance his family setting along with his social, economic, and political environment; we work for many things that remain pending and need so much of our collaboration.

To enthuse means not to complain in vain and to know how to escape the routine life falls into many times. One must be excited about there being more peace, more cheer in our world and vanishing unjust situations and the prevailing evils. Work is a consequence of a true enjoyment; discovered, felt, and lived within the family and social environment. Without this enthusiasm or excitement any type of work is purely a punishment and weariness.

All Who Exist Are Equally Worthy

It is clear that it is impossible to build worldwide peace while in society itself, and even in the family, there is disdain toward more than half of its members: women, children, senior citizens and other marginalized groups. Rather, a full recognition and respect for their dignity and their rights would lead towards favouring peace.

Society is made up of human beings with limitations, that it why nature has wisely endowed individuals, towns, and nations with a generous abundance of capabilities and energies. Some persons and nations healthy and working happily obtain results that if excessive could push them to live in an overabundance of excesses and prejudice towards others.

In society there are groups and individuals suffering illness and people that are needy, including delinquents that need help. If we truthfully and responsibly desire a stable and stronger peace, the wealthy groups of society must share some of their wealth with those less fortunate. The contribution must not be a handout or charity based on false compassions; it must stem from justice and human dignity.

No one has asked to exist. If people have been engendered within society's bosom, it should shelter all, especially the weak. Only then will peace be possible.

The family is where each family member is loved for who he is. It is in the family that all members collaborate to aid the weak or sickly and insure the equality for all. However, more than half of society's members, including family members, are suffering the disdain of many around the world. In fact, in developed nations there is much to be done to achieve a daily practice of recognition and respect for dignity and the rights of women, children, senior citizens, and groups of misfits. This is a monumental obstacle for peace.

WOMEN. Many scientists consider women to be the archetype of the global human being. Men and women enjoy an equal nature and dignity. Yet women are structured quite harmoniously; they possess organs for each function and they organize both hemispheres of the brain. Embryology has demonstrated that a fertilized ovum begins to evolve as female; in time had it received the "Y" chromosome, the evolution comes to a halt and turns back damaging part of its path as it detours and begins its evolution as a male. Besides, a woman is the "first home" to all human being³.

But this reality has done little to diminish one of humanity's most prevalent evils: male chauvinism. "The offensive treatment of women which results when considering them inferior" is the briefest and clearest definition for male chauvinism. This humiliating treatment is always an injustice regardless of the motives; an injustice which augments when its cause is considering women as inferior beings. Inferior to whom? Why? Men and women are different, each with a precise way of being which in no way allows for the creation of superiority of ones over others.

³ JM.GONZÁLEZ-FERIA, (1989): *Aceptar ser sexados*, en Revista RE de Pensamiento y Opinión. nº 1, p. 34

We may ponder if there is equality between a man and a woman in any of society's couples or if they enjoy some type of friendship. If there is no friendship then there can be no peace. As long as men and women experience friendship as a conditioned, subjugated, jealous domination of one being over another it will remain quite difficult to achieve peace. This issue must be revised to construct peace; not just because men have mistreated women but because there are resentments between them. Friendship blossoms between equals, which is why both men and women must be free. Unfortunately, many women do not enjoy complete freedom, or are they accepted for who they are or for the female traits which characterize them. If due to these realities they are a bit "enslaved", as primary educators how will they be able to educate their children as free citizens? No one can fully give that which he fully does not possess.

CHILDREN AND YOUTHS. As we have seen before, children and youths are happy to be alive and even of the way their parents are; for had they been different they would not exist.

Yet there is another side to this. Many parents dream of having children with a number of capacities and specific values. Somehow the children are born different to their expectations. As a result, these children and youths feel unwelcome and unwanted. Parents must accept their children with joy. They must accept them including their genetic inheritance which they can not change. They must accept *them*, for there to be peace. This is to say, that every person, young and old, must develop his capacities and ethical attitudes to best of their ability.

Jordi Cussó comments some more from his prior article:

"If our children don't turn out the way we wished, our discontent and apathy will transform them into a heavy load we won't be able to bear. As soon as possible we become progressively detached from their preoccupations, difficulties, joys, and experiences. Time offers the best way to distance our relationships. Then, while we can, we focus on the weakest and try to forcefully change that which we dislike in him engaging in violence and without any trace of tenderness without realizing that deep down it is our person and our own existence that we truly dislike. There is nothing worse than having someone's presence continuously show us what we neglect to uncover or admit. This is why our children, sons and daughters get in our way."

THE ELDERLY. We are not gods but human beings with limitations. We are beings that age in time, that is how we are, or we would not be. If we do not accept our own aging process with peace and joy it will be very difficult for us to treat the aged with the dignity they deserve.

Presently, many societies care for their children and youths by providing education, rest, travel etc. This is great. But if these same societies neglect to care for their elderly in the same manner it will provoke suspicion about the motives involved in the care of the young. People will wonder if those helping the young are doing it out of personal interest regarding future compensations from them.

An elderly person has much to give. He holds a certain role within the family and the neighborhood; an ecological function. Sensible families know this well. Regardless of his actions in the past, an elderly person is a “victor of time”, which is to say that he exists! He is an ethical filter of History which must be addressed.

The neglect of the aged is hard to perceive since it tends to remain within the family environment. Persons or societies that claim to abide by the basic laws of coexistence such as: no lying, no stealing, no killing, etc. still neglect to care for their elderly with compassion and tenderness. As a result they are not credible. Whenever they have the chance to lie, steal, or end life without getting caught they will do so, since they are already doing it to their elders⁴.

OUTCASTS. All human beings that exist are brothers in existence since we share a common and profound reality: the fact that we exist aware that we could have never existed. We exist in contemporary times. This facilitates solidarity (Point V).

Not all outcasts are guilty of their circumstances. Many of the guilty ones find themselves in much worse situations than their actions merit. They are unable to crawl out of such situations on their own. This holds true for individuals as well as for entire nations.

It is arrogant to refuse to aid any person that has done bad things for I suffer the consequences. The refusal is an arrogant claim that I will never make a mistake or do any bad deeds. It is understandable for us to commit errors and to hurt others, even if unwillingly so, due to the limitations humanity harbors. Hence, we must go forth together, without leaving anyone behind, and work together toward a better and more peaceful coexistence for all.

⁴ J.L. ARANGUREN, “*La ética de la sociedad ante la ancianidad*” en VV.AA, *La ancianidad, nueva etapa creadora*. Barcelona, 1984. p. 113-132.

There is no peace without justice. There is no justice without love.

It is well known that authentic peace should be based on justice. Without it the other can't be. This is generally accepted even; although the statement: "There is no justice without love" in a lesser degree. Many view justice as if it were a talisman that can fix all problems on its own, regardless of those who engage it.

In order to build peace societies need to organize themselves as one great family. Love is not a legacy exclusive to religions. It is very difficult almost impossible even, to engage peace in all aspects of life, in all occasions and with equal respect toward others in the absence of love.

The human being has moral responsibilities. It is limited, therefore it can commit errors. That is why self assessment of ones actions is a proper attitude of the human being; not restricted to religions which are quite helpful in this field. We are conscious of our ability to commit errors and the need to rectify them, not due to moralistic ideals but by realism. If the desire to build true peace many attitudes personal and social can not continue they way they are.