Ethics and Eschatology
Transforming the World’s War System to a World Peace System
Founding a Global Social Contract

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The dominant ways in which human beings organize their thinking in the modern world has resulted in what Emmanuel Levinas has called war and a war system: “The visage of being that shows itself in war is fixed in the concept of totality, which dominates Western philosophy” (1969: 21). Similarly, drawing on Christian biblical concepts, Enrique Dussel contrasts “this world” (of sin and evil) with the “reign of God” (the world to come). Our contemporary world is understood as “a system or structure of prevailing, dominant social actions and relationships under the hegemony of evil” (1988: 29), in other words, a war system intimately connected, for Dussel, with a system of domination and exploitation. In the first part of this essay I attempt to elucidate further the closed off nature of the world’s dominant system (which produces the world’s dominant subjective attitudes) with the opened up or awakened nature of the ethical and its revolutionary child, the eschatological. To do this, I also draw on the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Immanuel Kant, Raimundo Panikkar, and Paul Tillich.

In the second part, drawing on the ethical and eschatological insights developed in part one, I attempt to show that neither ethical exhortation nor a philosophy of nonviolent action will suffice. The key pivotal point for moving from the world’s war system to a world peace system is ratification of the Constitution for the Federation of Earth. The ethical awakening culminates in eschatological vision, a vision that needs to include institutional transformation: I argue that the Constitution, or something very similar, forms a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for actualizing the ethical and eschatological potential of our human situation.

1. Ethics and Eschatology

In the act of objectifying of the other by an autonomous subjectivity lies the negative relationship of war. The world is conceived as a totality of entities in objective relations of power, subservience, alignment, or disalignment with regard to my needs and interests. Other people, and the collective identities that I project on them in my objectifying of the world, are central to my assessment of threats to my security and well-being. War
is the relation I have to all such threats (and ultimately even those now identified as allies continue to count as possible threats).

When I am not actively fighting to eliminate threats and possible threats to my self-conceived collective or individual autonomy, I engage in politics (war by another name): maneuvering to enhance my strength, my position, my security and diminish the relative strength and position of others. Morality (in this objectified world of autonomous selves and others) lies in loyalty to the collective identity and its norms, for the “sticking together” with those identified as “we” over and against those understood as “them” is the foundation of my security and well-being. War, as Heraclitus declared, is king and master over all.

In the objectified world in which other people appear as objects of threat or as allies, my autonomy and well-being also require a domination in which some are used as instruments to produce the wealth and security of others. The system of private property establishes relationships into owner and worker, manager and managed, those who produce and serve and those who own and command. This system is an offshoot and corollary of the objectified negative relationship of war. My autonomous subjectivity, individual and collective, opposes its “we” to a “them” who are instrumentalized as enemies or subordinates.

In Ethics and Community, Christian philosopher Enrique Dussel characterizes societies with this orientation as follows:

In the totality of the systems of practices of the world, as objective and social reality, the “carnal” subject or agent desires the permanency of order, which, however, attempts to legitimate itself by appealing to the “gods” as its foundation. The “flesh” is idolatrized in the “kingdom of this world,” and promulgates its own law, its own morality, its own goodness….

This system is closed in upon itself. It has replaced the universal human project with its own particular historical project. Its laws become natural, its virtues perfect, and the blood of those who offer any resistance—the blood of the prophets and heroes—is spilled by the system as if it were the blood of the wicked, the totally subversive. (30-31)

The prophets and heroes whose blood is spilled by the system of morality live from a depth of awareness largely unknown to the objectifying consciousness of the representatives of the system. This is awareness of a depth that is not a product of the totalized system of the world, but an awareness that is nevertheless there as a possibility in every human subjectivity: love for the other, love for the other as other, as a person (with the dignity and holiness manifest in all persons as persons). The prophets and heroes represent the relationship of community, a community of persons who treat one another as persons, each with attention to the needs of the others. The autonomous objectifying subjectivity of the system is broken through in the person to person relationship of the community characterized by agape.

For Dussel, negating the other (in the system of objectification) means negating God (19). Our relationship with the other is our relationship with God: “when you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me” (Matt.25:40). How is it that our relationship with God is identical with our
relationship with the other? How is it that the Infinite can be reflected in the other in such a way that doing toward the other is identical with doing toward God? Perhaps we can discern something of the answer in the thought of Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas.

Levinas attempts a phenomenological description of subjectivity directed to revealing a primordial idea of infinity in the depths of subjectivity prior to its constitution of the “objective world.” Infinity is prior to the correlative relation of a Kantian transcendental unity of apperception with the world in the subject-object relationship. Infinity, the not finite, the idea of a depth beyond being and beyond saying, he says, does not first exist and then reveal itself. Rather:

Its infinition is produced as revelation as a positing of its idea in me. It is produced in the improbable feat whereby a separated being fixed in its identity, the same, the I, nonetheless contains in itself what it can neither contain nor receive solely by virtue of its own identity. Subjectivity realizes these impossible exigencies—the astonishing feat of containing more than it is possible to contain.... Here intentionality, where thought remains an adequation with the object, does not define consciousness at its fundamental level. All knowing qua intentionality already presupposes the idea of infinity, which is predominately non-adequation. (1969: 26-27)

The human being is opened up to the depths through an intentionality that presupposes what intrinsically cannot be adequated to thought. Levinas focuses on the idea of Infinity, within us primordially prior to the ego confronting its world. Infinity is not and cannot be an object of consciousness but finds signification in the ethical demand that I be responsible for the other person.

The exposition of the ethical signification of transcendence and of the Infinite beyond being can be worked out beginning with the proximity of the neighbor and my responsibility for the other.... It consisted in being struck by the “in” of infinity which devastates presence and awakens subjectivity to the proximity of the other. (1998: 166)

Human subjectivity can be seen to become aware of the primordial depths through several other encounters or “being struck by” certain aspects of experience that cannot be adequated to thought. I want to point to these encounters as aspects of our ethical situation all of which also point to an eschatological imperative at the heart of the human situation.

In a famous passage within the Critique of Pure Reason, for example, Immanuel Kant writes:

Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not merely conjecture them and seek them as though obscured in darkness or in the transcendent region beyond my horizon: I see them before me, and I associate them directly with the consciousness of my own existence. The former begins at the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and it broadens the connection in which I stand to an unbounded magnitude of worlds beyond worlds and systems of systems and into the limitless times of their periodic motion, their beginning and continuance. The latter begins at my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity but which is comprehensible only to the understanding – a world with which I recognize myself as existing in a universal and necessary...connection, and thereby also in connection with all those visible worlds. (1956: 166)
I am related to the boundless magnitude of worlds beyond worlds in a number of ways that evoke ever “new and increasing admiration and awe.” Kant says that this magnitude is directly related to him. The human mind comprehends this as a whole. Its wholeness is correlative to the unity of the human consciousness he points out in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Their unity and order “associated directly with the consciousness of my own existence.” There is an a priori connection between the human mind and the limitless universe.

But implicit in Kant’s awe and wonder is also astonishment at the existence of these worlds. Kant stands before the moral law within and the boundless magnitudes without as a conscious existing being, astonished at being so and at the existence of the universe itself. The experience here is not only that of beauty but of the sublime, a trembling and awe in the encounter with numinous presence.

There is a note here, implicit to be sure, of an awareness later made explicit by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his 1929 Lecture on Ethics. Wittgenstein identifies three “absolute experiences” the literal description of which, he says, is strictly nonsense. Yet they illustrate what he means by ethics and by “absolute value.” They are experiences of astonishment that anything at all exists, of feeling absolutely safe, and of feeling guilty.

The last of these “absolute experiences” links to Kant’s declaration quoted above. The moral law, Kant says, “exhibits me in a world which has true infinity but which is comprehensible only to the understanding.” The understanding can only comprehend the categories of the world within which the unifying subject stands in correlative relationship to the order and regularities of the finite world open to science and human understanding. But the infinite cannot be understood, only encountered. For Kant the essence of the moral law within is the absolute command to always do what is right regardless of one’s inclinations, a command that cannot be understood in terms of the categories of the understanding but appears to break into my subjective consciousness from the infinity of the noumenal dimension (from an Infinity beyond the understanding).

Human beings, in view of the moral law within, have dignity, that is, their dignity is “exalted above all price and so admits of no equivalent” (1964: 102). That is, human beings have “intrinsic value” or “absolute value.” They must be respected as ends in themselves, and never reduced to mere means or instruments (1964:96). The concept of human dignity, that later became the premise of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, points again beyond the closed system of finite and objective knowledge to an Infinity incommensurable with that system.

An absolute command or Infinite value confronting a finite being means at the same time (just as it does for Wittgenstein) “feeling guilty.” Wittgenstein nowhere discusses the philosophical implications of his absolute experiences at length perhaps because, as he declares in the *Tractatus*, he wants to put everything firmly into place by remaining silent about it (note). As I have pointed out elsewhere, the whole of Wittgenstein’s philosophy and life might serve as an elaboration of his encounter with the unsayable Absolute (Martin: 1989).
Guilt here is an absolute experience (an experience of Infinity), in the face of absolute demands and the sense that “God disapproves of our conduct.” This in turn can be linked to Levinas’ sense of an absolute obligation to the other, beyond understanding, reason, and prior to the egoistic constitution of subjectivity. Levinas begins by quoting Dostoyevski:

“Each of us is guilty before everyone, for everyone and for each one, and I more than others,” writes Dostoyevski in The Brothers Karamazov…. But it is thus a position already deposed of its kingdom of identity and substance, already in debt, “for the other” to the point of substitution for the other, altering the immanence of the subject in the depths of its identity. This subject irreplaceable for the responsibility assigned to him finds in that very fact a new identity. But in extracting me from the concept of the ego, the fission of the subject is a growth of obligation in proportion as obedience grows, the augmentation of guilt that comes with the augmentation of holiness, the increase of distance proportionate to the approach…. The subject as a hostage has been neither the experience nor the proof of the Infinite, but a witness borne of the Infinite, a modality of this glory, a testimony that no disclosure has preceded. (1998:168-69)

Wittgenstein does not elaborate on his “absolute experience” of feeling guilty beyond the idea that God disapproves of our conduct. But the relationship appears significant, especially in the light of the other two “absolute experiences” described by Wittgenstein. The second of these is the experience of “feeling absolutely safe.” He makes clear that this feeling has nothing to do with ordinary relative experiences of feeling safe or unsafe. To feel absolutely same means “I am safe, nothing can injure me whatever happens.” He says that the metaphors characteristic of religious language would translate this into the idea that “we feel safe in the hands of God.” But the idea is connected with Wittgenstein’s insight into the deep unsayable reality of the self, what he terms in the Tractatus as “what is true about solipsism.” Like the anatta of Buddhism, Wittgenstein understands the sense in which there is no self and hence the sense in which one can have the experience of “feeling absolutely safe.”

For Wittgenstein, however, his “experience par excellence” is the experience of “wonder at the existence of the world. And I am then inclined to use such phrases as ‘how extraordinary that anything should exist’ or ‘how extraordinary that the world should exist’.” His subsequent discussion makes it very clear that this idea is “nonsense” to ordinary meaning and sense. Yet it is Wittgenstein’s primary example of “absolute value.” He tries to explain absolute value with the following: “I can only describe my feeling by the metaphor, that, if a man could write a book on Ethics which really was a book on Ethics, this book would, with an explosion, destroy all the other books in the world.” “Ethics,” he says, “if it is anything, is supernatural.”

In all these cases we see that the experience cannot be adequated to the finite world of concepts, knowledge, and facts. We encounter the Infinite in the mystery of the starry skies above, in the agape for the other that is identical with agape for God, in the absolute commands of the moral law within transcending the totality of selfhood, in the face of the other that, as Levinas says, speaks to me as a master, in the experience of
astonishment that the world exists, in the absolutely safe self, and in the feeling of guilt for which there is no expiation. Similarly, Paul Tillich (recalling the astonishment St. Augustine felt in his *Confessions*, Book X) finds in the present moment an experience that cannot be adequated to the finite world:

The mystery of the future and the mystery of the past are united in the mystery of the present. Our time, the time we have, is the time in which we have “presence.” But how can we have “presence”? Is not the present moment gone when we think of it? Is not the present the ever-moving boundary line between past and future? But a moving boundary is not a place to stand upon. If nothing were given to us except the “no more” of the past and the “not yet” of the future, we would not have anything....

The mystery is that we have a present; and even more that we have our future also because we anticipate it in the present; and that we have our past also, because we remember it in the present.... The riddle of the present is the deepest of all riddles of time.... We live in it and it is renewed for us in every new “present.” This is possible because every moment of time reaches into the eternal. It is the eternal that stops the flux of time for us. It is the eternal “now” which provides for us a temporal “now”.... Not everybody, and nobody all the time, is aware of this “eternal now” in the temporal “now.” But sometimes it breaks powerfully into our consciousness and gives us certainty of the eternal, of a dimension of time which cuts into time and gives us our time. (1963: 130-31)

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein declares: “If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present.” For Wittgenstein, as for Tillich, the present moment (as absolute) is not in time at all. There can be no adequation between the absolute present and the ego in its structure of correlation to the objective world of fact and knowledge, governed as it is by history and clock time. If the Infinite is what lifts us out of our selves in “an awakening” as Levinas states (1998: 168), if we are held “hostage” by that which is within and around us at every moment to which we are usually half asleep, then the dimension of absolute value, ethics (the Good beyond being declared by Plato in *Republic* 509b) is the key to liberation from the enclosed world of the totality and its social morality. Raimundo Panikkar perhaps sums up this awakening when he declares:

Every being has an abyssal dimension, both transcendent and immanent. Every being transcends everything – including and perhaps most pointedly “itself,” which in truth has no limits. It is, further, infinitely immanent, i.e., inexhaustible and unfathomable. And this is so not because the limited powers of our intellect cannot pierce deeper, but because this depth belongs to every being as such. (1993: 61)

Every being, that is, every aspect of our encompassing human situation, contains a dimension that breaks the finite, closed world of being and presents us with an infinity beyond adequation with human comprehension or knowledge. For the human being, and the dignity associated with these depths that live within us prior to our subjectivity and our knowledge, this means reverence for human freedom and personal uniqueness:

Nothing which stifles human freedom can endure or be called truly human. Humanness demands the free fulfillment of Man. There is no justice if liberty is not respected. But there is no freedom where justice is violated. No monistic system or uniform worldview will ever satisfy the inexhaustible versatility of Man, whose greatest dignity is inseparable from his or her freedom and personal uniqueness. (1993: 8)
What spills the blood of the martyrs is the system itself, Dussel maintains, the so-called “natural order” of things, recognizing no transcendence and no eschatological imperative for transformation. What constitutes the “Antichrist” is the self-contained system of institutionalized domination and exploitation, generating its own self-justifying norms, and living off the blood of the poor and the dispossessed. It is the world of endless war in which the other is objectified as enemy, terrorist, Moslem, Jew, or Black, in which the other is reduced to a member of some nation-state (Iraqi, Afghani, or Russian). Subjectivity, in the closed totality of a world of objective knowledge, facts, and power relations, finds its security and defense in the preemptive attack on the not-self, on the other, different than we are.

But the self that has encountered the unsayable beyond being within which it is immersed at every turn, is broken open to an encounter with the other as other, and to the absolute responsibility for the other, in what Levinas calls “inspiration” (1998: 171):

I am a testimony, or a trace, or the glory of the Infinite…. But this is without thematization; the sentence in which God gets mixed in with words is not “I believe in God.” The religious discourse that precedes all religious discourse is not dialogue. It is the “here I am” said to a neighbor to whom I am given over, by which I announce peace, that is, my responsibility for the other. “Creating language on their lips…. Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near, says the Eternal” (Isaiah 57:11). (1998: 170)

Levinas understands that we are not speaking here of “belief.” We are not talking about mere religious opinion, which is often contrasted, to its detriment, against the objectivity of knowledge. Knowledge thematizes categories and concepts within commensurable relationships of sameness and difference (as Nicholas of Cusa long ago pointed out in De Docta Ignorantia). The Infinite permeates our situation prior to the distinction between knowledge and belief. It is incommensurable with both knowledge and belief and can only be pointed to in the claim that “I am a testimony.” It speaks of a different world order, one of “peace to him who is far and to him who is near.” That peace is actualized in my responsibility for the other, in my agape, in my obedience to the Good beyond being.

For Dussel, this is the reign of God promised by Jesus as the fruit of agape and love of neighbor for neighbor (which is simultaneously love of God). The closed system of the world-totality, in which domination and exploitation have become institutionalized within the framework of a self-justifying ideology and set of “moral norms,” is broken open in those who experience the Infinite at the heart of the human situation. Within the depths of our human situation lies the eschatological demand for transformation: “The reign that is absolute transcendence with respect to all praxis, to all historical face-to-face, to all community, is ever a ‘beyond,’ an approach to full human realization…. As eschatological horizon the reign of God is the absolute principle of Christian ethics, which is the measure of all historical undertakings—reformist and revolutionary included” (1988: 15-16).
For Levinas, we have seen, “the visage of being that shows itself in war is fixed in the concept of totality which dominates Western philosophy.” The system opposes an objective world to a subject fully commensurate to that world and encompassing all things within it as objects or forces within the totality. “The state of war,” he says,” suspends morality” (1969: 21). But the Infinite that can be encountered in the opening or inspiration of discovering the other as other and our limitless responsibility for the other opens history to eschatological hope:

Eschatology institutes a relation with being beyond the totality or beyond history, and not with being beyond the past and the present.... The eschatological as the “beyond” of history, draws beings out of the jurisdiction of history and the future; it arouses them in and calls them forth to their full responsibility. Submitting history as a whole to judgment, exterior to the very wars that mark its end, it restores to each instant its full signification in that very instant: all the causes are ready to be heard.... The eschatological vision breaks with the totality of wars and empires in which one does not speak. It does not envisage the end of history within being understood as a totality, but institutes a relation with the infinity of being which exceeds the totality. (1969: 22-23)

That which is incommensurable with knowledge and history is the Infinite, an a priori encompassing our lives that is not thematizable. It cannot be adequated to the system of knowledge and history: the Good beyond being. It is this “beyond” of both knowledge and history that calls us forth to assuming full responsibility for the dignity of the other, for the “infinity in the face” of the other, for the love (agape) of the other. This eschatological command lives at the heart of our human situation. Tillich describes this call to assume our full responsibility:

The demand calls for something that does not yet exist but should exist, should come to fulfillment. A being that experiences a demand is no longer simply bound to the origin. Human life involves more than a mere development of what already is. Through the demand, humanity is directed to what ought to be. And what ought to be does not emerge with the unfolding of what is; if it did, it would be something that is, rather than something that ought to be. This means, however, that the demand that confronts humanity is an unconditional demand. The question “Whither?” is not contained with the limits of the question “Whence?” It is something unconditionally new that transcends what is new and what is old within the sphere of mere development. Through human beings, something unconditionally new is to be realized; this is the meaning of the demand that they experience, and which they are able to experience because in them being is twofold. For the human person is not only an individual, a self, but also has knowledge about himself or herself, and thereby the possibility of transcending what is found within the self and around the self. This is human freedom, not that one has a so-called free will, but that as a human being one is not bound to what one finds in existence, that one is subject to a demand that something unconditionally new should be realized through oneself. (1987: 143)

Each human being is “unconditionally new” and, as self-aware, is subject to the demand that something unconditionally new be realized through his or herself. Similarly, in his well-known study of the Stages of Faith (1981), James W. Fowler identifies the highest stage of faith as “Stage 6,” which he calls “universalizing faith” that flows from a “universalizing compassion.” It is a faith that has apprehended the “depth of reality” (199-200). In its highest stage, faith is grasped by “the futurity of being” (203) and is reflected in Jesus’ teachings of the coming Kingdom of God, of “the eschatological character of the Kingdom of God.” Fowler characterizes
freedom in a way very similar to that of Tillich: freedom is not ‘free will,’ but rather the transcending of what one finds in existence, discerning the demand that comes to us from the future. Fowler speaks of “the freedom of God’s future for us and for all being” (209).

Christianity articulates this eschatological insight in one way, but expressions of Stage 6 faith may articulate the freedom of futurity through other symbolisms, for all forms of Stage 6 faith are universalizing, no longer limited by which symbols are used. For Christianity, Fowler says, it can be expressed as follows:

Seen in the light of this vision the human vocation—and it must be understood as a universal human vocation—is to live in anticipation of the coming reign of God. The human vocation is to lean into God’s promised future for us and for all being. It is to be part of the reconciling, redeeming and restoring work that goes on wherever the Kingdom of God is breaking in. It is to be part of the suffering rule of God, to oppose those structures of life that block and deny the future of persons and being in God. (1981: 210)

From apprehension of the depth of reality, which includes the mystery of freedom and the future, flows the ability to live in terms of a vision of our human-divine possibilities. In a similar vein, Paul Gordon Lauren declares that “there are times when the visions seen of a world of possibilities provide a far better measure of a person’s qualities and contributions than the immediate accomplishments of his or her lifetime. That is, those unique individuals who possess a capacity to go beyond the confines of what is or what has been, and to creatively dream or imagine what might be, sometimes have an impact on history that far transcends their own time and place” (2003: 1). Perhaps this “capacity to go beyond the confines of what is” becomes present through apprehension of the depths, the infinity that confronts us on every side. For Fowler:

Stage 6...persons....have become incarnators and actualizers of the spirit of an inclusive and fulfilled human community. They are “contagious” in the sense that they create zones of liberation from the social, political, economic and ideological shackles we place and endure on human futurity....[which include] the criteria of inclusiveness of community, of radical commitment to justice and love and of selfless passion for a transformed world, a world made over not in their images, but in accordance with an intentionality both divine and transcendent.... In these persons of Universalizing faith these qualities of redemptive subversiveness and relevant irrelevance derive from visions they see and to which they have committed their total beings. These are not abstract visions, generated like utopias out of some capacity for transcendent imagination. Rather, they are visions born out of radical acts of identification with persons and circumstances where the futurity of being is being crushed, blocked, or exploited.... (Ibid. 200-203)

Like Panikkar, every being has an abysmal dimension, and part of the depth within human beings is their freedom, their radical otherness that radiates what Levinas calls “infinity in the human face.” What circumstances and what institutions block or crush the futurity of being? What concrete possibilities can we point to for human liberation, or does everything have to remain in the realm of abstract symbols of a human liberation with no clear objects of focus for a concrete praxis?

For the war-system of the world’s disorder, everything is bound to the origin. Its premises assume an objectified world system locked into universal causal laws with fragments (such as nation-states of competitive
individuals) in struggle with one another for goods, wealth, power, and resources. Like Kant, Tillich and Fowler do not see the ethical demand (what ought to be) arising from “the sphere of mere development.” With human self-awareness, the reality of the absolute demand for something truly new in history can become conscious, the eschatological demand for what Kant called the “kingdom of ends,” a world in which war has been abolished and human dignity becomes the foundation for economics, law, culture, and planetary unity. Fowler and Tillich recognize the same eschatological imperative identified by Dussel and Levinas.

2. From the World’s War System to a World Peace System

Perhaps it is easier to identify what is wrong with the contemporary war-system of the world than it is to determine how to correct it. We need to move beyond war, that is, to move beyond the enclosed and truncated system of the world that has little or no experience of any non-idolatrous redeeming transcendence. We need establish a regime that can free us from the tyranny of causal laws of power, domination, instrumentalization, and objectification. Fowler declares that eschatological persons create “zones of liberation from the social, political, economic and ideological shackles we place and endure on human futurity.” Is it the case that Fowler’s idea of “zones of liberation” or Dussel’s idea of “ethical communities” or Levinas’ “eschatological vision breaks with the totality of wars and empires” necessarily implies an anarchism on Earth that cannot be institutionalized or structured? Can there be a peace system on the Earth that organizes social, political, economic, and ideologically for liberation rather than slavery? There would seem to be no reason why a peace system could not be established that does not preclude “a relation with the infinity of being which exceeds the totality.”

For the past several centuries, the war system has been closely linked with the system of sovereign nation-states and global capitalism, gigantic institutions and forces self-contained and implacable in their violence. These systems and the ego-centered subjectivities that populate them use violence as the fundamental form of social control: violence in enforcing laws over recalcitrant populations, violence in protecting property rights from masses of poverty-stricken citizens, violence in eliminating or torturing perceived enemies, violence institutionalized in the form of military and paramilitary organizations within nearly every one of the world’s 193 sovereign states.

Fundamentalists in various faiths may abdicate responsibility for action and passively wait for a miraculous intervention that ends human history. But intellectually honest people know better. If the eschatological promise is to be realized, it will be through human actions: intelligence, responsibility for the other, and establishing the foundations for a loving and compassionate planetary community. How can this be done? Dussel’s liberation theology may have influenced the founding of some Christian Base communities in Latin
America, but these have had little defense against the weapons of the death squads trained in the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, by the imperial dominators of Latin America.

Christian philosopher Jacques Ellul concludes that repudiating violence is the only path toward “a revolution in depth”: “My study of politics and sociology have convinced me that violence is an altogether superficial thing; that is, it can produce apparent, superficial changes, rough facsimiles of change. But it never affect the roots of injustice—social structures, the bases of an economic system, the foundations of society. Violence is not the appropriate means for a revolution in depth” (1978: 118). Can a revolution in depth result in institutions free of structural, overt and spiritual violence? (cf. Martin 2005: Ch. 3). Peace educator Betty Reardon links violence to the process of turning others into instrumentalities: “Otherness connotes,...in its negative form, hierarchies in human worth, the fundamental assumption that makes possible the dehumanization of the other sex, another race or class, citizens of another state, or adherents to another political philosophy” (1985: 50-52 and 93). Can we find institutionalized systems that promote human equality and dignity rather than dehumanization of the other?

These are positive insights, but the eschatological hope needs to establish institutional conditions on the Earth that make its realization of dignity and nonviolence possible. We need to oppose the wars system with a peace system. Indeed, the establishing of such institutions appears as a necessary condition for the realization of that hope. A philosophy of nonviolence alone will not do it, unless this is supplemented by concrete ways to replace the dominant institutions with structures that allow the ethical dimension to flourish among human beings. Ethical exhortation will not do it in the face of gigantic systems of ideology deceiving human beings into thinking otherwise. The first step in our analysis must be to concretize Levinas’ highly abstract notion of a totalizing world recognizing only being and the same and excluding the Infinite. What are the specific institutions that concretely dominate our planet and perpetuate the objectifying consciousness everywhere on Earth?

Philosopher of religion John Hick points out that human beings find the world meaningful in a variety of overlapping ways. They engage with the world in terms of their meanings and assumptions about reality, and, if those meanings are wrong about the world: “in what would soon become a fatal encounter the larger system would inevitably prevail and we should be eliminated” (2004: 137). The dominant ways of cognizing the world of the past several centuries are clearly incompatible with “the larger system” in that we are destroying the planetary biosphere that sustains us, confronting one another with weapons of mass destruction that can wipe out civilization, and funneling the wealth of the planet into the hands of 10% of its population while the other 90% live in ever-greater poverty and deprivation.

The dominant meanings by which human beings interact with the world, we have seen, involve assumptions about the self and the world that instrumentalize nature and other persons, seeing the world as a
totality of forces, powers, and things, with no outside, no (non-idolatrous) transcendence, no infinity. The dominant assumptions reify human groups (nations, races, cultures, religions) into objectified entities governed by instrumental and power relationships. These assumptions are reproduced in subsequent generations because they are embodied in the dominant institutions governing the planet. They generate their own moral norms that justify and reinforce these orientations. They have no place for the ethical or eschatological as we examined these in part one above. To the dominant mode of meaning, the voices of the ethical or eschatological are subversive, dangerous, traitorous.

It is widely understood among scholars that the modern world is dominated by two gigantic, interrelated systems: the system of sovereign nation-states and the system of global capitalism (e.g. Petras and Veltmeyer 2005). As social scientist Christopher Chase-Dunn expresses this:

The state and the interstate system are not separate from capitalism, but rather are the main institutional supports of capitalist production relations. The system of unequally powerful and competing nation-states is part of the competitive struggle of capitalism, and thus wars and geopolitics are a systematic part of capitalist dynamics, not exogenous forces. (1998: 61)

The sovereign nations cannot but objectify the other nations in a world of political manipulation, competition, and reductionism of one another to “enemies” or “allies” in a global struggle. Citizens of each state identify themselves as Russians, Chinese, or Americans and externalize those of other states as in some vague way different from themselves. According to Mahatma Gandhi, the modern state is “violence in a concentrated and organized form” (1972: 132).

The same is true for capitalism. For Gandhi so also “capitalism” (as opposed to the capitalist) must be destroyed, for “the entire social order has got to be reconstructed” (1972: 120). Gandhi’s name for the reconstructed social order is a “socialism” in which “truth and ahimsa must be incarnate” (1957: 3). Capitalism, we have seen, amounts to institutional and overt violence in which legalized private property relationships allow a tiny minority to dominate and exploit the vast majority. “Truth,” for Gandhi, means an economic system that benefits all, not just the few. To the extent it embodies the truth of “all,” it would also embody nonviolence. Under corporate capitalism, weapons cover the globe, and the production and sale of weapons is one of the biggest businesses on the globe. The military-industrial-security complex (nation-states integrated with corporate capitalism) thrives on war and disaster, as Naomi Klein demonstrates in The Shock Doctrine: the Rise of Disaster Capitalism (2007). Gandhi argues that an anarchism of nonviolent resistance is clearly not enough. We need to transform the nation-state and global capitalism into institutions incarnating “truth and ahimsa.”

Just as the nation-state is violence in a concentrated form, so the world of capitalism cannot help but treat all of nature and human beings as mere instruments and implements within the institutionalized mechanisms
for amassing private capital. Capitalism is, in its very essence, at war with nature and humanity, just as nation-states are at war with the concept of law, respect for law, and recognition of a true human dignity recognized by the law. Chris Williams, in his 2010 book, *Ecology and Socialism: Solutions to Capitalist Economic Crisis*, concludes that “capitalism is thus systematically driven toward the ruination of the planet and we underestimate how committed the system is to planetary ecocide at our peril. As stated above, ecological devastation is just as intrinsic to the operation of capitalism as is the exploitation of the vast majority of humans in the interests of a tiny minority, imperialism, and war” (2010: 232).

Dussel describes capitalism in terms of its victims:

The “poor” are those who, in the relationship of domination, are the dominated, the instrumentalized, the alienated.... Because of this domination, and in virtue of the basic fact of sin, person 2 robs person 1 of the fruit of his or her toil. The poverty or want suffered by the poor (person 1) is not the sheer absence of goods. No, the poverty of the poor consists in having been despoiled of the fruit of their labor by reason of the objective domination of sin. Thus the alienation of the other (fruit of the praxis of the sinner) produces the poverty of the poor (fruit of sin) as robbery, or dispossession.... The life of the poor is accumulated by the rich. The latter live the life of the rich in virtue of the death of the poor. The life of the sinner feeds on the blood of the poor, just as the idol lives by the death of its victims.... (1988: 22-24)

There can be no liberation from war and violence through an *evolution* of this system that recognizes no outside to itself, only more of the same, decade after decade, century after century. It remains, in Tillich’s words, “bound to the origin.” The Pentagon is still significantly operating on the basis of a 1902 paper, the “Geographic Pivot of History” by Sir Halford John Mackinder, which stated that Europe, Asia and Africa constituted the “world island”: “who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the world-island; who rules the world-island controls the world” (Escobar 2006: 11). There is nothing whatever in the totalized world view of the Pentagon that might allow for an evolution to a humane, ethically based planetary community. The evil character of the totalized world system is there for all who care to open their eyes and see. You cannot slowly “evolve” what is evil into conformity with the Good beyond being. You can only found a new order on correct premises from the very beginning.

The continuing process of human beings breaking out of the totalized world system into the creative freedom, compassion, and hope of the “awakened” or “inspired” self (aware of infinity permeating our human situation) is a necessity if there is ever to be a world peace system, which would necessarily include ecological sustainability, reasonable prosperity, and freedom for all the world’s citizens. This process requires new modes of thinking, a new paradigm, for human beings in which they envision a planetary community under the rule of democratic laws with humane institutions and protected human rights. The first step in the eschatological actualization of the promise of history, therefore, is the establishing of institutions and can defang the nation state and transform capitalism from a cancer on the Earth into a system of reasonable prosperity and ecological
sustainability. Wittgenstein states correctly that “you cannot lead people to what is good; you can only lead them to some place or other. The good is outside the space of facts” (1980: 3). However, the key to a new paradigm is that it not be closed off, that it not exclude a possible awareness of infinity.

How do we convert human thinking from the fragmentation implicit in objectification of nature and human beings in terms of rigid categories, forces, and powers to a sense of the unity of the human community living cooperatively together within a finite and fragile planetary ecosystem? How do we establish a sense of unity in diversity as part of our worldview in which each unique personality (as Panikkar puts it) is respected and preserved in its infinite dignity while uniting the species in the unity of a planetary community? How do we eliminate militarism in nations and the military-industrial-security complex, and transform economics into relationships that promote sustainability and reasonable equality?

The institutional framework necessary for the actualization of the reign of God in history is given in the Constitution for the Federation of Earth (see Martin 2010). Only the establishing of a global, non-military set of institutions that have the legitimate authority to regulate the nation-states and global capitalism by democratically legislated laws will suffice. As Dussel and Levinas both emphasize, human beings are conditioned by the dominant institutions into adopting the self-justifying “morality” of those institutions: “the ‘flesh’ is idolatrized in the ‘kingdom of this world’,” Dussel writes, “and promulgates its own law, its own morality, its own goodness” (1988: 30). Sovereign nation-states with their objectifying of enemies, together with capitalism with its instrumentalizing of human relationships, constitute a global war-system that must be transformed into a planetary peace-system.

There are many reasons for ratifying the Earth Constitution, many of these comprehensible at a pragmatic level by nearly everyone. But those aware of the eschatological demand at the heart of human history can see in its ratification, and in the quest for its ratification, an additional set of reasons. The Constitution defines its specific political, administrative, and economic arrangements in terms of a world of unity in diversity and the foundations of a new era of cooperation, peace, justice, prosperity, and sustainability for all humankind. It presents itself as an eschatological document beyond the reign of objectification, alienation, and nihilism. It announces in its Preamble the establishing of “a new age when law shall be outlawed and peace prevail; when the earth’s total resources shall be used equitably for human welfare; and when basic human rights and responsibilities shall be shared by all without discrimination.” The Constitution presents a coherent set of institutions designed to overcome both capitalism and the sovereign nation-state, making possible the coming of the reign of God to Earth.

A full philosophical grounding for a universal democratic constitution would require moving far beyond the scope of this paper into the philosophy of law and related subjects (see Martin 2008). However, a compelling
basis for my claim can be easily found in Kant’s ethics and eschatology discussed in part one above. As is well-known, Kant drew conclusions that bear directly on the issue of a transition from a war-system to a peace-system in his essay *Perpetual Peace* (1795) and in his social contract theory emphasizing the moral obligation to live under republican government. He argued that, *first*, persons are morally required (by the categorical imperative) to leave the “state of nature” in which they live according to power-only principles without a republican constitution to ensure their common freedom and equality (a condition that he calls “war”) and to become equal citizens under the rule of universal, enforceable republican laws, in other words, under a peace system (1983: 71-72).

*Second*, he pointed out that nations, similarly, are required to “leave the lawless state of savagery and enter into a federation of peoples” (ibid. 34). “The state of peace,” Kant correctly says, “must be established.” It can only be established through a global social contract forming the universal rule of enforceable law over all (ibid. 111). He states that philosophy has its own “chiliastic vision,” its own eschatology. However, this is “anything but fanciful” since it is promoted by the philosophically justified idea of a cosmopolitan world of peace among all peoples (ibid. 34-38).

We find here another eschatological implication of the idea of human dignity and its consequent ideal of a future Kingdom of Ends. Human beings encounter a moral imperative to unite in an earth federation ending war and bringing the rule of republican law to all. Kant also understood that the rule of law under a republican constitution cannot establish the Kingdom of Ends, but it can establish the conditions that make further progress possible. As John Ladd points out in his introduction to Kant’s *Metaphysical Elements of Justice*, “this whole book may be regarded as an extended philosophical commentary on the relation between what is and what ought to be, both in politics and law” (1965: xxix). This could be said of Kant’s entire philosophy. Global republican laws must be established that promote what ought to be (the Kingdom of Ends: all persons living morally within a peaceful world system), and do not merely ideologically cover up and justify what is (systems of war, exploitation, and domination).

Democratic government under the *Earth Constitution* is premised on ending the inherent lawlessness of the system of some 193 militarized sovereign nation-states. Only the rule of democratically legislated enforceable law can bring the nations to lawful (peaceful) behavior. So called “international law” has proved entirely powerless in this respect. The *Earth Constitution* is also premised on awareness of our planetary community cooperatively living within a fragile ecosystem, and on recognition of the inalienable dignity and human rights of every citizen of the Earth (cf. Martin 2008 and 2010). Within this institutional framework, the violence of sovereign nation-states and the global structural violence of capitalism can be pacified and transformed.
Many people of Earth have understood the possibility of democratic government since at least the 18th century. They have understood the idea of inalienable human rights since the 18th century, and the responsibility of government to promote the common good. But today, planetary crises beyond the scope of individual nation-states threaten human existence in a variety of ways. Democracy, human rights, and the common good can no longer be protected without a world government that can also deal with these planetary crises. The “broad functions” of the Earth Federation government, given in Article One of the Earth Constitution, mandate that government to (1) end war and demilitarize the nations, (2) protect universal human rights worldwide, (3) eliminate poverty and establish reasonable economic equity, (4) regulate and conserve global resources, (5) protect the environment and the ecological fabric of life, and (6) to find solutions to all problems beyond the capacity of the national governments (Martin 2010: 29).

Only an Earth Federation government could accomplish these things and only accomplishment of these things can set the stage for a truly cooperative and loving planetary society. A fundamental premise of the Constitution, given in its Preamble, is the principle of unity in diversity: the diversity of “nations, races, creeds, ideologies, and cultures” shall be united in a unity in which “war shall be outlawed and peace prevail” (Ibid. 28). The eschatological and ethical demand for deep transformation necessarily passes through the Earth Constitution or something very much like it. Not only its Preamble, but the entire Constitution embodies fundamental principles resonating with the principle of unity in diversity, uniting all under the concept of our common humanity and our common political, environmental, and economic needs while, at the same time protecting, in the words of Panikkar, every human being’s “freedom and personal uniqueness.”

In Dussel’s terms, ratifying the Earth Constitution would be the necessary preliminary for the coming reign of God on Earth, for Levinas it would be the preliminary for the Messianic Age, for Kant, it would be the necessary (although not sufficient) condition for a possible “Kingdom of Ends.” Nothing can be done without taming the war-system of the raging sovereign nation-states or the structural and overt violence of the capitalist system of dehumanization and exploitation. The Earth Constitution abolishes militarism and disarms the nations, leaving the enforcement of law to civilian world police and local police. It does not abolish “free trade” but tames it, bringing economics under the rule of democratically legislated laws and the common good of the planet and its citizens. These transformations derive from, and make possible for human beings, a new way of cognizing the world and our human situation.

Articles 12 and 13 of the Constitution draw on the human dignity that is at the heart of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (a concept, we have seen, that points to infinity within human beings) and actualizes that dignity in a comprehensive list of political, economic, environmental, and peace rights. Human dignity and the cooperative spirit of working together in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue, and even love as
agape, lies at the heart of the Earth Constitution. A carefully designed system of checks and balances assures that the old tyrannies cannot colonize the new paradigm, which is premised on holism rather than fragmentation, dialogue rather than war, and sharing of basic resources rather than private appropriation by the few.

The ethical dimension that functions as a framework for human life, and that gives us the eschatological demand for a transformed world system, is released and validated by the Earth Constitution. The paradigm shift from fragmentation to holism, under the principle of unity in diversity, makes possible the recognition of our common humanity in a multiplicity of ways that can transform our understanding of self and other, making possible recognition of the infinity within. We have before us a concrete road map, a specific set of steps we can take, a path to tread upon, that we know will take us into the new paradigm that must be founded if we are to survive and flourish on this planet. To equivocate is to be lost, to mumble about the need for a slow “evolution” of existing institutions is to be tethered to the origin, to fail to see the real foundations of the matter and the real possibilities that inform human life. Peace, as Kant declares, must be established—through a global social contract that embodies universal principles from the very beginning.

World peace involves both an ethical awakening on the part of humanity and a world peace system in which the conditions for ethical awakening are institutionalized worldwide. “Man must awaken to wonder,” Wittgenstein exclaims, “science is a way of sending him to sleep again” (1980: 3). We do not need to repudiate science, since this is absolutely essential to living sustainably with a quality existence within the limits of a finite, ecologically interdependent biosphere. But we must also awaken to the absolute demands of the ethical that transcend the spheres of science, technology, and organization.

Awakening to wonder opens persons up the depths of the mysteries of time, the present, and the ethical and makes possible awareness of the demand that flows from the futurity of God. The vision of a transformed set of world institutions is found in the Earth Constitution, a vision of what is possible for human beings in terms of peace, justice, freedom, and sustainability. We can found a world system that makes possible human liberation. The Earth Constitution provides a concrete grounding for a world peace system that cries out, in the words of Isaiah: “Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near.” Ratification of the Constitution and activation of a democratic Earth Federation perhaps makes possible, for virtually all humanity, the awakening to the Infinite that lies at the foundation of the universe and at the heart of our human situation.
Works Cited


