

Speech for Le Fevre High School Graduation Ceremony, 2014.

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There are currently about 16,400 nuclear weapons in the world, with several thousand on hair trigger alert. If wars continue to be fought as they have done in the past with nuclear weapons, we are now likely to destroy the world and all life on it. There are no winners in a nuclear war.

Because of this fact, for our very survival, it is now necessary for us to examine how and why we fight wars and to develop ways of making peaceful resolutions to conflict in our troubled world .

It follows that aspects of human nature are necessary, but not sufficient causes of war: Frustration caused by clashes of interest, spurred on by aggression fuelled by fear are central ingredients to making war. The degree of fear of the enemy depends on each nations perception of both the others ability to harm it and the firmness of its intent to do so.

Economic , ideological, dynastic, political and other sources of international conflict can all mobilize a fever for war, resulting in people slaughtering each other. For example, estimates of the number of dead in the First World War range from 5 million to 13 million and a staggering 50 million people died during World War II.

Fortunately , self importance and the potential for violence are counterbalanced by equally strong forces in the desire to be loved, concern with others welfare, joy in co-operative enterprises and interdependent bonds with each other.

It is powerful to recognise that humans would generally rather love than hate and feel more fulfilled by acts of affiliation rather than hostility.

Survival today depends on reducing , controlling, channelling and redirecting the drive for power and the impulse to violence and fostering fellowship and community values. The world spends approximately US \$ 105 Billion on nuclear weapons every year , but only \$ 40-60 billion or roughly half of this, would be enough to meet the the Millennium Development Goals on poverty alleviation by the target date of 2015.

An ethos of peace consists of the beliefs that empathy, perspective taking and trust are essential in maintaining and fostering harmonious relationships and that non-violence is valued over violence, thereby making non violence a moral mandate that needs to be acted on.

Peace is the converse of war, and is essential for all growth and life to flourish. Finding peace starts within ourselves, then expands outwards to allow us to form peaceful connections with our families, communities and nations.

Let us all make a peaceful future together.