

Hope and Imagination: Ecumenical Aspirations for Overcoming Violence

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Abstract: This article highlights the imperative of building defences of peace in the human mind, articulated in the Constitution of UNESCO. Pursuing the question of how such defences can be built in contexts of religious antagonism, the article explores the work of ecumenical theologians who seek to find ways of building defences of peace in the minds of believers. The exploration involves intersecting ecumenical theology with the fields of religious education, cognitive science, and peace studies. In this way, the article brings introductory perspectives to interdisciplinary research that considers pressing questions of how to overcome violence and build peaceful communities. Throughout the investigation, hope and imagination serve as guiding concepts. Hope is discussed with regard to memory, change of perceptions, and the building of trust and peace. However, the article also considers the tendency towards constructing imagined enemies. Elucidating how empathetic imagination can provide resistance to this tendency, it discusses the way dialogue might break destructive habits of imagining the religious other as an enemy. With a view to this capacity of dialogue, the article considers the role of longstanding endeavours of ecumenical exchange in processes towards overcoming violence and constructing defences of peace in human minds.

Keywords: Hope; Constitution of UNESCO; ecumenism; peace; empathetic imagination; imagined enemy; memory; dialogue

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1. Defences of Peace in the Human Mind

In November 1945, half a year after the end of the Second World War in Europe, a group of representatives from forty-four countries gathered in London around a common aspiration. Their aim was to create an organization that would strengthen human solidarity on a moral basis and by intellectual means, and in this way contribute to the prevention of another world war. Their meeting eventually led to the adoption of the Constitution of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.¹ Today,

1 UNESCO, *Constitution of UNESCO*, adopted in London on 16 November 1945, available in the UNESCO Digital Library, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000017503?posInSet=1&queryId=ee56505c-5ad8-4953-816f-df15dd5bcbc0>; UNESCO, “History of UNESCO.” Accessed May 3rd 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/en/brief>.

when the prevention of another world war once again appears an urgent issue, there is reason to return to what the representatives in London articulated months after the end of the devastating World War II. There are good grounds for considering what hopes they expressed for the future, and what they recommended with regard to their recent experiences of war.

In the Constitution from November 1945, the UNESCO representatives affirmed their resistance to contemporary tendencies towards prejudice and ignorance. The Constitution articulates that the ignorance of each other's ways and lives is a cause of the suspicion and mistrust that all too often lead the peoples of the world into war. Therefore, the Constitution recommends full and equal education for all, and a free exchange of knowledge and ideas. It declares that education for justice, peace, and liberty constitutes a sacred duty, which all nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern. Accordingly, it advocates increasing means of communication between peoples of different nations, for the purpose of mutual understanding and a truer knowledge of each other's lives. It concludes that if peace is to last and not fail, it must be founded not only on political and economic arrangements, but also on intellectual and moral solidarity.² In the Constitution, it is assumed that the development of such a solidarity finds a primary source in the human mind. The Constitution opens by declaring, "That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed."³

The voices of the UNESCO representatives resound clearly through the decades. Their message has endured. Today, it serves once again as a reminder that the human mind is a seedbed for war. In times of increasing international unease and the need for renewed efforts to prevent war, it begs the question: What does it mean to construct the defences of peace in the minds of human beings?

In what follows, this question will be pursued with a focus on *hope* and *imagination* in contemporary ecumenical aspirations for overcoming violence. Thus, throughout this exploration, hope and imagination will serve as guiding concepts. Their meaning and implications will be explored in dialogue with scholars in the fields of theology, religious education, peace, and cognitive sciences. The article introduces perspectives on hope and

² UNESCO, *Constitution*, Introduction.

³ UNESCO, *Constitution*, Opening words.

imagination that are elaborated in the framework of a range of disciplines, and discusses them at the intersection with ecumenical discourses on the overcoming of violence.⁴ Hence, while the article involves interdisciplinary dialogue concerning hope and imagination, it furthermore aims at clarifying the way in which ecumenical aspirations for overcoming violence connect to endeavours of building defences of peace in human minds.

The history of the modern ecumenical movement spans both times of peace and times of war. This means that ecumenical theology is frequently constructed in regard to how peace as well as war can begin in the human mind. As a religious movement evolving through the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century, the modern ecumenical movement provides numerous examples of religious resistance to violence and war. As such, it has created a breeding ground for theological discourses inspired by the hope of overcoming violence. However, ecumenism engages with matters that from time to time are far from peaceful, namely the encounters between churches and their respective traditions and groups of believers. Church history testifies to how religion can form part of the background to wars. It provides evidence of how violent attitudes and sentiments can grow in religious contexts.⁵ In other words, it is relevant to repeat the question of what it means to construct the defences of peace in human minds and, more specifically, in the minds of believers in contexts of religious antagonism. Subsequently, this question will be approached with a special view as to how ecumenical theologians in recent years have struggled with issues concerning the formation of mindsets in contexts of inter-Christian hostility.

2. Approaching the Perceived Antagonist

To begin with, focus will turn towards the ecumenical theologian and Catholic Bishop Michael Putney. In his book *My Ecumenical Journey*, he invites his readers to accompany him on a walk between historical places in the city of Rome. Contrary to what might be expected from a Catholic Bishop

4 This article is based on a conference lecture and has the limits of a short, exploratory, text. In this capacity, it aims at bringing introductory interdisciplinary perspectives on the themes of hope, imagination, and aspirations for overcoming violence. The lecture was held at the conference *Anthropology of Hope*, Prague, May 30th, 2023.

5 Sara Gehlin, *Pathways for Theology in Peacebuilding: Ecumenical Approaches to Just Peace* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 1–24.

in Rome, Putney takes his readers in the footsteps of the reformer Martin Luther. This gesture not only signals interest in another tradition; it also challenges settled perspectives and points at the possibility of changing rooted perceptions. While Putney moves beyond the familiar paths of his own tradition to seek new knowledge about an historical antagonist, he indicates that such new knowledge might be transformative of mindsets. According to Putney, initiatives to search for a renewal of understanding can open up new ways for overcoming inter-Christian suspicion and mistrust. Increasing knowledge and exchange, he maintains, can transform perceptions in liberating ways. Simultaneously, he makes clear that the lack of such knowledge and exchange can lead to isolation and even “imprisoning.” When religious groups do not meet and actively try to achieve a deeper understanding of one another, historical misconceptions can settle and remain influential. In this way, prejudices grow and may, in the worst case, lead religious groups into the trap of demonising each other.⁶ Reflecting on the widespread animosity among churches in Western Christian history, he concludes that,

[...] this exploration in isolation has also been an exploration over against the other, for example Protestants versus Catholics, Evangelicals versus Liberals, Reformed versus Lutheran, Lutherans versus Catholics. This has meant that each of us has emphasised in our tradition whatever distinguishes us from the other, and has interpreted the other as a damaged or limited form of ourselves, which has really been to imprison each other. The boundaries of isolation have been the walls of our mutual imprisoning.⁷

Bishop Putney’s conclusions find resonance in the document *From Conflict to Communion*, a document created by the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity in preparation for the common commemoration of the Reformation in 2017. With this upcoming commemoration in mind, they called attention to how accounts of the past can be oppositional, as in previous centennial commemorations of the Reformation. To commemorate can mean to justify and accuse as well as to stabilize and revitalize identities through polemics. Referring to the relationships between Lutherans and Catholics, the Commission recalls that historical remembrance has time and again intensified the conflict between the two church traditions and sometimes turned into open hostility. Accordingly, the way believers account for the past may have destructive consequences for the relationships between

6 Michael Putney, *My Ecumenical Journey* (Hindmarsh: ATF Theology, 2014), 63–78.

7 Putney, *My Ecumenical Journey*, 75–76.

believers of different traditions. Accounts for the past can dig new trenches between Christians of different church traditions.⁸ In Putney's words, such an exploration over against the other can raise walls of "mutual imprisonment."⁹ These assumptions are echoed in the field of religious education, which is where I now turn my focus.

3. Conversations at the Wells

According to Rune Larsson, a researcher in the field of religious education, new knowledge often emerges in the encounter with people and environments that are unfamiliar to oneself. This means that socially isolated groups and persons miss significant opportunities to acquire new knowledge and experience. The way to knowledge, Larsson maintains, can be described as an encounter with the unknown. This, however, requires courage enough to step into an unexplored terrain. He points out that the current situation of internationalization and a growing multi-cultural community give rise to different reactions. By many, it is perceived in terms of richness, abundance, and opportunity for renewal and new insight. By some, however, it is perceived as a cause of insecurity and a reason to fear. Therefore, Larsson elucidates the need of finding ways of living together *with* one's different backgrounds and traditions. Dialogue, he contends, is such a way. It makes possible a sincere, open, and critical reflection on what challenges and what nurtures the formation of reconciled diversity. With such a dialogue in mind, Larsson likens the creation of new knowledge with conversations at the wells. By listening to each other, human beings create new knowledge together. They draw from each other's wells.¹⁰

Larsson's image of the conversations and exchange of wisdom at the wells stands in contrast to Putney's metaphor of mutual imprisonment. In times of increasing antagonism and threat of war, it raises the question of how to find the way from the prison to the well. Research in religious education has generated essential insights on the nature of this way, which may be long,

8 Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt/Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2013), 11–15.

9 Cf. Putney, *My Ecumenical Journey*, 75–76.

10 Rune Larsson, *Samtal vid brunnar: Introduktion till religionspedagogikens teori och didaktik* (Lund: Arcus, 2009), 15–18, 24, 28–31.

winding, and difficult to find. Pointing to the widespread phenomenon of dualistic thinking in terms of friend and foe, the religious education scholar Karl Ernst Nipkow emphasizes that both history and theology are being used in the service of producing simplifying images of strangers. This may contribute to the preparation for violence. According to Nipkow, religious education can provide means for resisting such tendencies towards violence. At the same time, he observes that religious contexts frequently serve as seedbeds for the growth of simplifications and dualistic thinking.¹¹ This recalls the words of Putney, who points to the tendency of religious communities to end up in the trap of condemning and even demonizing each other.¹² Whereas Nipkow calls for efforts of religious education to close this trap, there is need for further inquiry into the possible consequences of being caught in its logic.

4. Imagined Enemies

The researcher of religion and sociology Mark Juergensmeyer discusses this issue with special reference to the concept of “imagined enemy.” On the basis of his research on the jihadi war, he points out that the tendency to imagine the religious other in terms of foe rather than friend may lead to an understanding of the other as a threat to one’s very existence. An imagined enemy, Juergensmeyer explains, is an attempt to make sense of a difficult experience. In some cases, the enemy can be imagined with little justification. However, in most cases the grievances are real. The imagination of an enemy usually takes place against the background of violations, such as years of colonial oppression or a terrorist attack. In the context of such grievances, the idea of a non-negotiable, intractable, and evil enemy easily takes root and grows.

Similarly to Nipkow, Juergensmeyer warns against simplified images of the other, and pleads for thoughtfulness about the difference between act and person. He stresses that in contexts of war, evil things are often carried out by ordinary people who think they respond to evils perpetrated against themselves. Violence is countered by violence. Therefore, in contexts of war,

11 Karl Ernst Nipkow, “Education for Peace: A Multidimensional Approach,” in *Peace or Violence: The Ends of Religion and Education?*, eds. Jeff Astley, Leslie J. Francis, Mandy Robbins (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), 113–16, 122–24. See also Karl Ernst Nipkow, *God, Human Nature, and Education for Peace: New Approaches to Moral and Religious Maturity*, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 2018), 85–98, 129–55.

12 Cf. Putney, *My Ecumenical Journey*, 63–64, 75–78.

the construction of imagined enemies usually takes place from two sides at the same time. The consequences may not only include the determination to destroy the other, but also the imagination of the war as a battle between good and evil, religion and irreligion, right and wrong.¹³

Juergensmeyer's discussion is illustrative of the way imagination can underlie hostilities that increase the risk of war. It confirms the statement from London 1945 that wars can begin in the minds of human beings. However, if recalling the continuation of that statement, it is also in the minds of human beings that the defences of peace must be constructed. This calls for further reflection on the possible ways in which imagination can serve the construction of peace.

Insights from the preparations of UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programme, on the eve of the new millennium, can provide a springboard for this course of reflection. At that point in time, the work by the researchers of psychology and religion David Adams and Michael True called attention to the presence of a parallel inclination in human imagination – towards war and towards peace.¹⁴ In preparation for launching the Culture of Peace Programme, they stated that, "peacemaking requires at least as much courage, imagination, patience and strategic planning as war making, with infinitely more positive results."¹⁵ Hence, imagination is a capacity which can serve both war and peace. It can underlie the heightening of conflicts but can also provide keys for resolving conflicts. It can form imagined enemies, but it can also be at the heart of an empathy which embraces both enemy and friend.

5. Empathetic Imagination

The cognitive scientist Mark Johnson emphasizes that the capacity for empathy is one of our most important moral capacities. In his work on moral imagination he stresses the need for an empathetic imagination, which means to imaginatively take up the experience, part, and place of another

13 Mark Juergensmeyer, "Religion in the Global Jihadi War," in *Gods and Arms: On Religion and Armed Conflict*, ed. Kjell-Åke Nordquist (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 24–29. See also Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* 4th edn. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 174–80.

14 David Adams, Michael True, "UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programme: An Introduction," *International Peace Research Newsletter* 35:1 (1997), 1–3.

15 Adams and True, "UNESCO's Culture of Peace Programme," 1.

person. Empathetic imagination means trying to inhabit imaginatively someone else's world, not just by rational calculation, but in feeling and expression. It involves participating empathetically in another person's experience – in suffering, pain, and frustration as well as in joy, fulfilment, and hope. This, says Johnson, is perhaps the most important imaginative exploration we can perform. Imagination, he underscores, is communal and transformative in its character and makes it possible for us to understand each other, share the world, and reach out to each other in caring ways. Empathetic imagination is, in other words, not a private activity but the chief way in which we are able to inhabit a common society. According to Johnson, imagination is the primary means by which our social relations are constituted.¹⁶

Johnson's approach to imagination emerges in stark contradiction to the inclination of imagining the enemy, as outlined by Juergensmeyer. It can be observed that the notion of community lies in the background of this contradiction. Whereas imagined enemies tend to take shape through explorations in isolation, empathetic imagination is based on the desire for community and sharing, also with those who are different from oneself.

Johnson stresses that imagination can be passionate in the sense of creating non-instrumental relations to others and moving beyond fixed characters and social roles. In other words, it can engender sensitivity to the reality of others with whom one interacts, and who one's actions might affect.¹⁷ As such, empathetic imagination closely connects to the meaning and implication of hope, as outlined by theologian Anthony Kelly. Following Kelly, hope begins with a new ability to imagine a larger sense of life and community. Hope for oneself expands to hope for others. It thrives in mutual assistance, cooperation, and compassion. Kelly insists that hope begins to stir when discovering oneself not as isolated, unreachable, or beyond all help, but as belonging to a larger community of care. By allowing oneself to be helped by others, the helper comes to represent healing and recovery. The presence of the helper marks the beginning of ways to imagine things differently. When isolation is broken, life recovers its momentum.¹⁸

16 Mark Johnson, *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 199–202.

17 Johnson, *Moral Imagination*, 199–200.

18 Anthony Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006), 5–10.

6. Hope and Memory

These perspectives are further developed by the theologian Werner G. Jeanrond, who stresses that the horizon of genuine hope includes the hope of others and of otherness. He emphasises that no one hopes for oneself alone. Instead, hope relates to our collective future. Jeanrond explains that in the Jewish and Christian traditions, hope results from trust in God and God's promises. Hence, in the framework of these religious traditions, hope is a relational concept. Turning to the Christian tradition, he points out that the church is a community of hope. Here, hope not only concerns the human quest for meaning. It also concerns the expectations of the peace, justice, well-being, and good relationships that are included in the vision of God's *shalom*.¹⁹

Nevertheless, Jeanrond also points to factors in contemporary times that challenge hope in its relational sense. He argues that even though we live in an ever more inter-connected world, currents of nationalism, extremism, and populism may bring limitations to one's imagination of the other by promoting tribal divisions between "us" and "them." The definition of "we" is made in opposition against an imagined other who is potentially threatening.²⁰ Jeanrond maintains that in this situation hope can inspire processes of change, not by turning against others, but by seeking community with others. Expressions of hope, he contends, can encourage acts of resistance. In resistance to suspicion, hatred and enmity, a new culture of remembrance can reinvigorate trust. Mindful of how memories of broken relationships can inform and shape our approaches to the future, he calls for new ways of remembering, which retrieve new energy for hope. This does not mean to deny the horrors or remove the guilt of a violent past, but to face the violent past together. It means to search for a different approach to the future, in aspiration for reconciliation and lasting peace.²¹ Here, however, Jeanrond points to the centrality of an existing desire for encountering, relating to, and developing trust in others, and for finding out more about them. If that desire exists, hope may flourish and encourage acts of resistance to old and new divisions.²²

19 Werner Jeanrond, *Reasons to Hope* (London: T&T Clark, 2020), 1–15, 161.

20 Jeanrond, *Reasons*, 162–65.

21 Jeanrond, *Reasons*, 100–101, 171–74.

22 Jeanrond, *Reasons*, 198–99.

This leads back to the question of how defences of peace can be constructed in human minds. In pursuit of this question, insights from the field of ecumenical theology point to how hopes for a peaceful future can be related to the ways of remembering the past. Accounts of history might affect the way religious others are imagined, not only in the past but in contemporary times too, and thus also in terms of future interaction. In hopes for a more peaceful future, ecumenical theological work has entailed longstanding endeavours of remembering differently and trying to imagine one's religious others in new and more nuanced ways. This is well exemplified by the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity which prepared for the common commemoration of the Reformation in year 2017. Hence, the subsequent discussion necessitates going back to their work.

In the document *From Conflict to Communion*, the theologians of the Commission underline that remembrance makes the past present. They maintain that the violent history of the relations between Lutherans and Catholics risks repeating itself if it is not approached with the aspiration for peace. Therefore, they stress that Lutherans and Catholics have many reasons to re-tell their histories in new ways. They admit that what happened in the past cannot be changed. Nevertheless, they insist that what is remembered of the past and how it is remembered can change – that the presence of the past in the present is changeable. The point is not to tell a different history, but to tell that history differently.²³

This recalls the walk of Bishop Putney in Rome, motivated by his interest in the reformer Martin Luther. While stressing the importance of togetherness in exploration, research, and education, he highlights the possibility of changing the perceptions of the other. Following Putney, explorations which have been carried out in dialogue, and not in isolation, have contributed to the formation of a different mindset among Lutherans and Catholics. The willingness to take the hand of a former antagonist and try to remember one's common history in new ways, has contributed to the development of a more nuanced and comprehensive picture of that history.²⁴

Accordingly, the discussion by Putney indicates that when Christians have escaped their previous isolation and explored history together, in dialogue, they have arrived at new ways of imagining each other. Thus, in spite of

²³ Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, *From Conflict*, 16.

²⁴ Cf. Putney, *My Ecumenical Journey*, 63–78.

historical adversary, there may be reasons to hope that mutual trust can grow and nurture a readiness to evaluate self-critically the history of one's own church community. This leads back to the debate on imagination, which indicates that such a readiness finds important roots in imagination and its capacities for breaking violent cycles.

7. Breaking the Grip of Violent Cycles

According to Mark Johnson, our ability to self-critically challenge our established points of view depends on our capacity to imagine alternative viewpoints. If we are able to see beyond our present vantage point, we are also able to imagine new directions for our relationships with others. Imagination is, in this way, transformative. It accommodates the power to break outside settled frameworks and patterns.²⁵ Inspired by Johnson's work concerning a moral imagination, the peace and conflict researcher John Paul Lederach translates the former's theories on imagination into the field of peacebuilding. Here, moral imagination entails the capacity of reaching beyond those patterns of thinking that perpetuate cycles of violence. In reference to peacebuilding, imagination forms an act of giving birth to that which does not yet exist. Thus, imagination implies the ability of initiating processes towards peace through discerning potential ways for breaking the grip of violent cycles.²⁶

In the field of ecumenical theology, dialogue between Christians of different traditions may initiate such processes. In the longstanding endeavours of Lutherans and Catholics for turning conflict into communion, dialogue formed a starting point for breaking habits of mind and for challenging settled patterns of hostility and mistrust. Their efforts exemplify how contexts of ecumenical dialogue may be grounded in aspirations for overcoming violence, but also nurtured by hope in the way described by Jeanrond: as based on the desire for encountering, relating to, developing trust in, and knowing more about the religious other.²⁷

The Common Commemoration of the Reformation, celebrated in the Swedish cities of Lund and Malmö in October 2016, communicated such

25 Johnson, *Moral Imagination*, 203.

26 John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 25–29.

27 Cf. Jeanrond, *Reasons*, 199.

a hope. In the Cathedral of Lund, the common commemoration took place with significant representation from the Lutheran as well as Catholic sides, while the participants witnessed how historical antagonists affirmed their mutual affinity, and even articulated this affinity in a Joint Statement.²⁸ In that sense, the event in Lund disclosed a turning point with regard to imagination. The imagined enemy had eventually turned into a friend, physically present here and now. However, as indicated in the Joint Statement, this change could not have taken place without a persistent ecumenical dialogue, which had engaged generations of Lutherans and Catholics for no less than fifty years in the desire for deeper communion and friendship.²⁹ Beyond the limelight, long-term endeavours of ecumenical dialogue had eventually led to new ways of understanding, and thus also of imagining, one other. This provides a hopeful response to the 1945 message of the UNESCO representatives. Even in contexts of longstanding antagonism, defences of peace *can* be constructed in human minds.

In the context of historical antagonism between Lutherans and Catholics, ecumenical dialogue has shown that the endeavour of constructing defences of peace in human minds means to engage in a process that is inward-looking and mutual at the same time. It involves a process of self-critical introspection and willingness to discuss the shortcomings of one's church through history. Simultaneously, it implies seeking and desiring mutual exchange. The history of antagonism between Lutherans and Catholics is elucidative of how the construction of defences of peace needs to take place not in isolation, but rather by means of breaking isolation. Their persistent ecumenical dialogue testifies to how mutual exchange can lead to transformation of mindsets and prevention of new outbreaks of violence. When isolation is broken, there is greater space for imagining the other in new and constructive ways. Empathetic imagination may thrive, and togetherness may become imaginable despite historical controversy.

However, the outcomes of this exploration have shown that discussions on imagination may acquire further depth if related to hope. Hope, in the sense of hoping not only for oneself but for the other as well, may contribute

28 See: *Joint Statement on the Occasion of the Joint Catholic-Lutheran Commemoration of the Reformation*, Lund, 31 October 2016, available at: <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/events/event.dirhtml/content/vaticanevents/en/2016/10/31/dichiarazione-congiunta.html>.

29 Cf. *Joint Statement*.

to the development of aspirations for the overcoming of violence. Hopes of a common future can hearten capacities of imagining former enemies as friends and even as helpers. Ecumenical dialogue provides examples of such a hope. Simultaneously, it testifies to the need for a sincere desire for building trustful relations and gaining more knowledge of the other, if new and constructive ways of imagining the other are to be discovered. Hence, ecumenical aspirations for overcoming violence are intertwined with aspirations for trust and knowledge.

This recalls the metaphor of the wells. Aspirations for encountering each other in conversations at the wells inspire the exchange of knowledge and the building of trust. The ecumenical dialogue between former antagonists, elucidated in this article, creates awareness of the possible impact of such aspirations for the deconstruction of imagined enemies, and thus also of the part they might play in the construction of defences of peace in human minds. Nevertheless, ecumenical efforts of dialogue also make clear that the way from mutual condemnation to the conversations at the wells might be a long and winding path. In times of international unease and need for renewed efforts for the prevention of war, this is a path that needs to be found again and again. It needs to be continuously discerned and paved anew.

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