

# AT THE ROOT OF VIOLENCE:

## An Interview with Dr. Claude Paxswell

*Claude Paxswell is a noted peace activist and author of several books on conflict resolution. He obtained a degree in philosophy from Aix-Marseille University in 1979 and gained some distinction for his research on Sartre. Prior to America's invasion of Iraq, he confined himself mostly to epistemological theory. However, since then he became more interested in the interplay between economics and aggression. A resident of Aix, he is currently a visiting professor of Peace Studies at George Fox University. He was interviewed at a peace conference in Hiroshima recently by T Newfields.*

**Q:** In your view, what are the main obstacles to world peace?

**A:** Lack of world government. The control of the world is in the hands of a few powerful big businesses that influence governments. The system is corrupt and unfair. Most of the world's people are voiceless and powerless. *C'est regrettable!*

**Q:** Why have previous attempts at peace been unsuccessful?

**A:** The reasons vary. Believing people will accept a single ideology is naive. Humanity is simply too diverse for that. Yet we do need to embrace some type of tolerance and acceptance – a sort of meta-belief that respects diversity. I've come to believe that eating meat causes at least some degree of human aggression. Many people are poisoned by the food they eat as well as the thoughts they think.

**Q:** So you believe the United Nations can be a vehicle for peace?

**A:** At the moment it's merely a pawn in the hands of more powerful interests. As such, it is little more than a farce. However, it has potential to become something greater.

**Q:** What can individuals do to contribute to peace?

**A:** Well, we can start by looking at our own spheres of influence. We can generate harmony in small ways. If you are interested in big change, however, you have to shift an entire social paradigm. *N'est-ce pas ainsi?* Quite ambitious.

**Q:** . . . Under current conditions, how likely is another world war?

**A:** Since most political leaders have various degrees of testosterone poisoning, quite likely. And as the world population soars and food becomes scarcer, military conflicts seem more likely to erupt.

**Q:** So can I describe you as a guarded optimist?

**A:** (chuckling) There's a subtle degree of violence structured into our language that most people don't realize. (pausing briefly, then sighing) Yes, I suppose so. Call me anything you wish. Does it matter?

**Q:** Thanks for your time.

**A:** Well, time is running out for all of us. Unless we change the course of current events, there is little reason to feel hopeful about humanity's future. More people need to think about issues beyond their personal comforts. Sadly, if humans screw up, many other life forms will disappear along with us. Our guilt is obvious. Theirs is not.

- T Newfields

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