

# **An Anabaptist Paradigm for Conflict Transformation**

*Critical Reflections on Peacemaking in Zimbabwe*

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# INTRODUCTION

## The Significance of this Study

This thesis outlines a proposal from an explicitly religious standpoint of the key dimensions of *peacebuilding*, focusing particularly on mediation and facilitation as a primary task. What is the value of such a study? My initial responses in the paragraphs which follow are made at the broadest possible level: the desperate need for effective peacebuilders in a world torn by violence and the potential for religiously-based peacebuilders to fill that need. I then support this response by examining other reasons for the study: the current inadequacy of religious response to conflicts, the danger of manipulation of religious leadership by other actors, and potential for the insights of religiously-based actors to contribute to the over-all practice of peacebuilding and diplomacy. In addressing the latter question I outline my own understanding of the meaning of “religion”, an understanding whose impact on the broad question of peacebuilding I explore throughout the chapters which follow.

## The Changing Context of Conflict and International Relations

That conflict is devastating to our world requires little documentation, yet only in numbers are we able to grasp the dimensions of the costs of war. One respected researcher reports that since World War II there have been 149 wars and a total of 23,142,000 people killed in them.<sup>1</sup> In 1993, the same report estimated that military programs worldwide cost \$600 billion per year.<sup>2</sup> Another study reports that between 1989 and 1994, ninety-four armed conflicts took place globally in sixty-four locations.<sup>3</sup> The statistics for war over a four-century period numb the mind.

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Leger Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures 1993* (Washington DC: World Priorities, 1993), 20.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Wallensteen and Margareta Sollenberg, “After the Cold War: Emerging Patterns of Armed Conflict 1989-94” in Margareta Sollenberg, editor, *States in Armed Conflict 1994* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 1995), 7.

### ***Soldiers and Civilians Killed<sup>4</sup>***

|       |                                   |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| 1500s | 1,600,000                         |
| 1600s | 6,100,000                         |
| 1700s | 7,000,000                         |
| 1800s | 19,400,000                        |
| 1900s | 107,800,000 (First 90 years only) |

### ***The Changing Nature of Conflict***

What may be less apparent than the devastation of war is the changing nature of conflict. Perhaps the most important change here is the shift away from the large state as the source of identity towards smaller regional entities, ethnicism, and religion as the source of identity.<sup>5</sup> In 1994, only 4 of the 42 conflicts recorded concerned a “classical” inter-state conflict, “where two internationally recognized countries were waging an armed battle over a politically defined issue. Instead, the most common conflicts during this period have been internal conflicts over government (civil wars) or over territory (state formation conflicts).”<sup>6</sup> Parties in conflict increasingly seek identity and internal cohesion around narrower lines than that offered by national citizenship, namely through clan, ethnicity, religion, or geographic location.<sup>7</sup> Thus traditional approaches to diplomacy and peacebuilding, which assumed the nation-state as the fundamental unit of operation are increasingly impotent to deal with conflicts.

Directly related to this is *factionalization and diffusion of power*.<sup>8</sup> One researcher concluded that as many as 100 different political parties and movements may be active in the countries of Djibouti, Somaliland, Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and the Sudan.<sup>9</sup> Such a proliferation of factions makes power a diffuse and ever-shifting phenomenon. Organization and planning of peace efforts are complex and difficult. Claims of individual leaders to be representative are hard to assess. Agreements that may be reached are subject to the internal vicissitudes of larger numbers of organizations and thus are harder to sustain on the long-term. In short, no longer is it possible for two or three parties to gather at a negotiations table and walk away confident that agreements reached among them will be sustained. Far larger and more complex processes of negotiation are required to

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<sup>4</sup> From Donald W. Shriver, Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 65.

<sup>5</sup> Manus Midlarsky, *The Internationalization of Communal Strife* (New York: Routledge, 1992), xii.

<sup>6</sup> Wallensteen and Sollenberger, *States in Armed Conflict 1994*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Tokyo: The United Nations University, 1995), 9.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Suzanne Lunden, editor, *The Horn of Africa Bulletin*, 1993 (Uppsala, Sweden: Life and Peace Institute), quoted in John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Tokyo: The United Nations University, 1995), 8.

build a body of consensus among the large number of stakeholders whose support is often required to sustain the peace.

As local and communal identities take on greater significance in defining the parties in conflict, increasingly *combatants live in relatively close proximity to each other and hence are connected in immediate ways by long-term relationships*. “For the purveyor of inflammatory propaganda...it is not necessary to portray a people half way around the globe as a threat to group security. The enemy is only a village away - or in some instances actually lives next door.”<sup>10</sup>

In summary then, the changing nature of conflict suggests a new set of requirements of peacebuilding as well. For one, peacebuilding is more likely to be successful if it does not depend heavily on classical “statist” models of political analysis for assessing the causes, dynamics and possibilities for resolution of conflict. For another, peacebuilding can no longer be an activity centralized in time and location and dependent on the power of a small number of participating leaders to impose agreements on constituents. Rather, peacebuilding must be de-centralized and diffuse, unfolding chronologically as an on-going task and rooted broadly across the social/political spectrum of affected peoples.

Finally, due to the proximity of combatants to each other, peacebuilding can no longer settle for political settlements which at one time might have been expected to be implemented through impersonal political processes between former combatants interacting primarily through political representatives. Peacebuilding must address not only the need for political settlements, but also the need for healing from the social, psychic, and spiritual damage of war, enabling parties whose constituents must inescapably interact in large numbers to restore (or establish for the first time) relationships capable of sustaining peace on the long-term.

### ***The Disintegration of Existing Peacebuilding Mechanisms***

Accompanying these trends in the changing nature of conflict has been the disintegration and widespread discrediting of the mechanisms of peacekeeping employed in the last century (such as existed). The structures of colonialism and more recently the superpower contest between East and West provided the primary framework for peacekeeping and peacebuilding throughout most of the twentieth century. These structures repressed conflicts in many situations, such as in the Balkans, or parts of Africa and Asia, where the presence of colonials prevented local and regional conflicts from flaring up. In the era of the superpowers and client states, the superpowers sometimes pressured client states to settle conflicts. The United States, for example, pressured Egypt and Israel to come to

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<sup>10</sup> Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 11.

terms<sup>11</sup> But the end of the colonial era and the decline of the superpowers has meant that a handful of nations are no longer willing or able to impose peace on the many regional conflicts which remained latent throughout much of this century.

The structure widely looked to provide mechanisms for resolving conflict, the United Nations, has proven to be far less effective than many hoped it might be. Burdened by impossible expectations, severely limited in its resources, heavily oriented towards military peacekeeping operations, paralyzed by political squabbles both among as well as within member states, and hobbled by bureaucracy and poor internal coordination<sup>12</sup>, the United Nations is at best capable of reducing bloodshed and helping to create an environment in which conflicts can be peacefully resolved. But the number and scope of conflicts in today's world and the problems inherent in mobilizing any multi-national effort mean that the UN is likely to remain limited in its ability to address conflicts.

Thus, we face a critical situation. At the same time that conflicts are increasing, even the slender and often poorly conceived resources that existed previously have disappeared or prove painfully limited in their ability to address conflicts.

## **The Potential for Religiously-based Peacebuilding**

### ***The Ubiquitous Presence of Religious Institutions***

Few social institutions hold potential for constructive impact on situations of social and political conflict equal to that held by organized religions. At the most obvious level of analysis, organized religious institutions are pervasively present in communities through-out the world. "The Methodist Church has more retail outlets than any other institution in this country," quipped an American Methodist leader some years ago, pointing out that the Methodist Church had more than 50,000 institutions in the US alone. Such figures would of course multiply if one considered world-wide Methodist structures. This is just one denomination within one religion which has many other denominations as well. If we add to this the presence not only of similar structures in numerous other religions, but also "second-tier" ecumenical bodies such as local, national, or international councils of churches, the potential for involvement and impact of religious leaders becomes evident.

In an effort to systematically document the many roles of religious figures and institutions in a historical conflict, Cynthia Sampson identified over 20 types of religiously-based actors at work in

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<sup>11</sup> Reflecting in 1995 on the changes in the international conflict, Henry Kissinger commented: "Ethnic conflicts are quite a different phenomenon from our historical experience. The Cold War encouraged some calculus of risks and rewards on which superpower policy could be based. Even in regions of intense passions such as the Middle East, the adversaries were clients of the superpowers and therefore to some extent restrained." Henry Kissinger, "Bosnia: Only Just Beginning", *Washington Post*, Sept. 11, 1995: 21.

<sup>12</sup> Kofi A. Annan, head of UN Peacekeeping Operations, "Towards a Future for Peacebuilding", Row Memorial Lecture presented at Bridgewater College, Bridgewater, Virginia, USA, April 24, 1995.

South Africa during the years of the struggle against apartheid. These ranged from individual laypersons at local church levels to local clergy to national denominational leaders to international ecumenical figures; from local churches to regional, national, and international religious bodies.<sup>13</sup>

### ***The Human Capacity of Religious Institutions***

The potential for significant involvement in conflicts is more than a matter of numbers of “retail outlets”. Response to conflict requires specific resources from those attempting to respond. The most important is human *capacity* in the form of people within physical proximity of disputing parties with excellent knowledge of the local scene, and with culturally appropriate skills for leadership and problem-solving. Religious institutions routinely train, field, and support individuals with these capacities.

### ***Availability of Material Resources***

Additionally, these people need material resources to sustain them, in the form of access to meeting places and communication networks, transportation, backup personnel, and emergency funds to enable travel or cover other needs. An institutional base - a large and strong one - is often required to provide these elements and sustain involvement. Again, religious institutions are often already equipped to meet these needs.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Credibility***

Just as important as the resources at their disposal is the credibility of peacebuilders in the eyes of conflicting parties. Credibility begins with being perceived as capable of understanding the dimensions of the problems at hand, as having an understanding of the larger political, economic, and social context in which conflicts arise. Even more important, credibility raises issues of values and integrity. Is the peacebuilder motivated to truly serve the best interests of others? Do the peacebuilder’s commitments go deeper than the narrow parochial interests that define the activities and sympathies of most economic, professional, political, and social institutions? Is the ideological foundation of the peacebuilder sufficiently broad and autonomous as to support the peacebuilder to act on principle rather than yield to the partisan pressures so powerfully at work in the arena of conflict? While many exceptions could be found, it seems apparent that religious leaders in many places in the world enjoy high credibility in ways that would offer them an effective base for peacebuilding if they chose to act on it.

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<sup>13</sup> Cynthia Sampson, “Religion and Peacebuilding”, an essay in a larger volume, *Handbook on International Conflict Resolution*, to be published by the United States Institute of Peace in 1996.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Douglas Johnston, “Review of the Findings”, in Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 262.

### ***Influence on Values and Ethics***

One of the most important and difficult challenges in peacebuilding lies in the realm of minds and hearts. If conflicts are to be truly resolved, parties must come to genuinely perceive the situation and/or each other in different terms. Such changes in perceptions can result from a variety of inner shifts within one or both parties: a re-focusing of priorities to recognize the benefits of peace over short-term military gains, a willingness to acknowledge the legitimacy of the claims of the opponent, a discovery that the basic needs of both sides can be addressed in a “win/win” solution, a decision to act on the base of moral reflection rather than political expediency, etc.

Actors from a wide variety of backgrounds are capable of operating effectively at the level of deepest values, motives, needs, and perceptions, of course, but religious actors possess a unique set of resources.<sup>15</sup> Most religions, after all, concern themselves extensively, though by no means exclusively, with the inner realm of mind and heart. Not only are religious actors often highly skilled in this arena, their contributions are usually viewed as credible if not noteworthy. What is more, because religious institutions normally have a vast network of influence ranging from the realm of personal interaction with leaders of conflicting parties to public media access to national and international audiences, their ability to provoke and encourage moral reflection is often unrivaled by any other institution.<sup>16</sup>

Recalling Reinhold Niebuhr’s social and moral vision of “a body of citizens...who see the issues between their own nations (or groups) more clearly than the ignorant patriot and more disinterestedly than the dominant classes”, Charles Villa-Vicencio described the potential for churches to contribute to the South African struggle in the following terms:

...when this community of people emerges from within the dialectic of conflict and commits itself through participation to be part of the resolution of social conflict, it provides an eschatological or utopian vision that no society can afford to ignore.<sup>17</sup>

In summary, involvement in peacebuilding requires numerous important elements including presence, capacity, resources, credibility and moral influence. Many religious organizations are richly endowed in these areas. If they acknowledge the wealth of their resources and direct them constructively, religious organizations could contribute significantly to the resolution of many conflicts.

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<sup>15</sup> See Harvey Cox’s summary of themes, stories, scriptures, and traditional wisdom of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and Judaism relevant to peacebuilding. Harvey Cox, “World Religions and Conflict Resolution” in Johnston and Sampson, 266-282.

<sup>16</sup> A recent study of the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the overthrow of the Marcos regime in the Philippines in February, 1986, highlights the significance of the Catholic Church’s moral legitimacy in its ability to mobilize nonviolent opposition to the military. Henry Wooster, “Faith at the Ramparts: The Philippine Catholic Church and the 1986 Revolution”, in Johnson and Sampson, 153-176.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Trapped in Apartheid* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 21.

## The Reality of Uninvolvement or Negative Involvement of Religious Leadership

The above is a discussion of need and potential. The reality of course is different. At a functional level religious identity has often served as the demarcation line separating groups in conflict, as illustrated in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, the former Yugoslavia, and even the Cold War, when “Christian” leaders rallied constituencies against “godless” communism. Worldwide, the bone of contention in armed conflicts has shifted away from ideology which dominated perceptions during the Cold War towards the demands of regions and identity groups for self-determination. The Canadian peace and conflict researcher Ernie Regehr estimates that two-thirds of the world’s current armed conflicts can be identified as identity conflicts, that is “conflicts in which the rights and political/social viability of ethnic groups or national communities are central issues.”<sup>18</sup> As a powerful definer of identity, religion is inherently vulnerable to manipulation by leaders seeking to mobilize partisan support for group struggle.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to providing a convenient demarcation and rallying point, religion has long been used by dominant political groups to legitimize and perpetuate their dominant status, and hence to justify a brutal response to opponents.<sup>20</sup> South Africa provides one of the most notorious and prolonged examples here: the role of the Dutch Reformed Church in legitimating the imposition of political, social and economic structures by the Nationalist Party in the apartheid era, and the role of the English-speaking and indigenous churches in fostering apathy towards the injustices of apartheid has been well-documented.<sup>21</sup>

In Zimbabwe, the object of later study in this thesis, Anglican priest Michael Lapsley documented the misguided efforts of white Anglican leaders there to take a role of “neutrality” during the war, thus prolonging the deception of whites about the reality of their government’s policies by failing to take a clear moral stand in regards to the underlying issue at stake in the conflict.<sup>22</sup> Although the Catholic Church ultimately committed itself to actively supporting the struggle for racial justice in Zimbabwe,

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<sup>18</sup> Ernie Regehr, *War After the Cold War: Shaping a Canadian Response*, Ploughshares Working Paper 93-3 (Waterloo, Ontario: Project Ploughshares) 2.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Rene Girard, who in *Violence and The Sacred*, translated by Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), presents a complex argument that anthropologically the development of religion can be demonstrated to be the result of competition, jealousy, and envy. These dark desires, “mimetic desire” as Girard calls them, lead eventually to murder; and the myths, rituals, and prohibitions which form the heart of primitive religious experience are “the essential tools for extending the social benefits of the *esprit de corps* that accompanied the founding murder.” The quote is from Gil Bailey’s insightful elaboration on Girard’s work, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroad* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 127.

<sup>20</sup> Otto Maduro, *Religion and Social Conflicts* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1982), develops this thesis in detail in a Marxist framework in his study of religion in the Latin American context.

<sup>21</sup> See for example, John W. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, second edition, 1986), and Villa-Vicencio, *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Michael Lapsley, *Neutrality or Co-Option?* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1986).

significant portions of Church leadership resisted this commitment in the beginning and a small minority maintained its opposition long after the larger Church had entered the fray.<sup>23</sup>

The varieties of religious apathy or negative involvement in conflicts, then, though only reviewed in part above, are many. The *roots* of these destructive involvements are many as well, ranging from laziness and greed to class interests to dualistic theologies which call for disengagement from material matters. We must acknowledge this dark face of the religious presence in conflict if we intend to build on the positive potential of religious response to conflicts.

But ultimately we must light a candle rather than curse the darkness. While granting that religion is often a destructive force in conflict, my interest is in addressing those people who are committed to bringing the rich and life-giving forces present within the human experience of religion into the arena of conflict. From years of personal experience serving as a resource person to religious communities in conflict situations worldwide in North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia, as well as from the in-depth study of the response of religious actors to the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict occasioned by writing the case study in this thesis, I am convinced that in every situation of conflict there exists an surprisingly large category of people on all sides who are committed to the well-being of all. These people long to respond in ways that meet the needs not only of themselves and their children but also the needs of their “enemies” and their children. While by no means all are rooted in communities of explicit faith, to a disproportionate extent, most of them are.

The struggle of these potential peacebuilders is not *if* they want to do something to bridge the chasm between themselves and their enemies, or in some instances to bridge as impartially the gap between two enemies both of whom they count as friends. Rather the cry of their heart is *what* to do. As latent peacebuilders the problem is less a matter of *will* than of *skill*.<sup>24</sup> While it is important to explore and address the many ways in which religious communities allow themselves to be used for destructive purposes in conflict, there is an even more urgent challenge to meet in mobilizing the resources of religious communities and religiously-aware persons for peace. That challenge is to help those who already possess the will to act courageously but are unsure how to proceed, by assisting them in determining how to respond. This thesis cannot offer a blueprint for all peacebuilders, but

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<sup>23</sup> Ian Linden, *The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Zimbabwe* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1980). See also Carl Hallencreutz and Ambrose Moyo, *Church and State in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1988), particularly Hallencreutz’s essay on the response of the Zimbabwe Christian Council, “A Council in Crossfire: ZCC 1964-1980”, 51-113; Victor de Waal, *The Politics of Reconciliation: Zimbabwe’s First Decade* (London: Hurst and Co., 1990), describes briefly and critiques at some length the efforts of some churchleaders, notably Anglicans, to be “neutral” in the Zimbabwe conflict.

<sup>24</sup> I wish to acknowledge Barbara Date who worked closely for a number of years with peacebuilding efforts in the Church of the Brethren for this formulation. I should also point out that I use the work “skill” loosely here; a more precise word might be *praxis*.

hopefully it will invite others to something essential to effectiveness and integrity in peacebuilding: reflection about values and articulation of strategic responses consistent with those values.

### **Religious Actors Used to Further the Interests of Others**

Another concern motivating this study is the fact that religious leaders are frequently used by other actors to further their own interests in a situation of conflict. We witness this in most pernicious form when political leadership solicit divine sanction by religious leaders of partisan war efforts, a maneuver practiced worldwide.

But a current and more subtle phenomenon forms part of the motivation for this thesis: the interest apparent among diplomats and professional practitioners in the field of conflict resolution in studying and working in partnership with religiously-based peacebuilders. Although I welcome this interest for its many positive potentials, to the extent that religious actors lack a clear framework for peacebuilding which is explicitly grounded in their own vision for human life, they are vulnerable in a number of ways.

At the very least, there is danger that religious actors betray their own comprehensive vision for human life by uncritically throwing support behind efforts which usually have a much narrower agenda. The “bottom line” for political decisionmakers who in turn control diplomats at work in a regional conflict, for example, may be that they seek resolution by any means which can bring a hasty end to overt manifestations of tensions due to their disruption of economic markets. From the perspective of a religious vision, other factors may be more important than ending economic disruption, such as the need for injustices to be openly challenged, or for conflicts to be addressed in ways that strengthen the role of civilians in public decisionmaking rather than relegating it to an elite corps of politicians. Similarly, while there is a clear trend apparent in the world of NGOs to solicit the involvement of religious agencies in conferences, training events and mediation efforts, the motivation for doing so may have more to do with a desire on the part of NGOs to add the luster of affiliation with grassroot-based organizations to funding applications than an understanding of, appreciation for, and willingness to be responsive to the insights of religious communities.

A question which peacebuilders would do well to ponder regarding any initiative seeking their partnership is this: Whose interests are the initiators of this request ultimately committed to serving? Even many apparently altruistic NGOs operate in ways that make it clear that their ultimate interest is self-serving: to expand the reputation, power, and resources of the organization and/or the individuals in it. Self-service is of course a ubiquitous motivation that cannot and perhaps should not be eradicated, even from religious institutions. The question is one of *degree, transparency,*

*countervailing values, and accountability.* The ideal partner would be one who brings a track record of relatively low levels of self-interest, great transparency regarding “what’s in it for themselves”, high levels of counter-vailing values such as clear commitment to justice, compassion, and empowerment of others, and proven willingness to be accountable to others in discerning the appropriateness of actions under question.

But religious leaders, like everyone else, are easily blindsided by the glamour of operating in the arena of public issues. Frequently they appear to yield to the supposition that if they are to operate in such arenas they must assume the vision and ethics of the actors already at work there. One intention of this thesis is to challenge this naive and corrosive assumption. In part I will do this by defining religion in such a way that the fundamentally religious nature of even “political” visions become more obvious and therefore more accessible to moral scrutiny. Rather than blindly entering the political arena on its own terms, my hope is that religious leaders might recognize that the political world is populated by religious visions which make powerful, self-serving claims on all they encounter. My goal is for more interaction - not less - on the part of recognized religions with “political” religions. But it is important that such interaction take place in full awareness of the terms of encounter. This would enable people from recognized religions to bring the same critical scrutiny to dialogue and involvement in the political arena that they rightly bring to their conversations and partnerships with each other.

Building on this broadened understanding of religion, I then propose ways of operating in the realm of public conflicts that are grounded in my own religious vision and practice. Such a framework is unlikely, of course, to provide a suitable framework for others whose experiences differ from those which shape the vision I here outline. But my hope is that it might serve as a catalyst for such self-explication by others, leading ultimately to the possibility of honest, insightful dialogue.

### **Dialogue with the Broader Field of Conflict Resolution**

A final reason for this study is to contribute to the broader professional field of conflict resolution. As a professional active in the field of conflict resolution for nearly 20 years I have been convinced for many years that the questions I wrestle with as a person of faith merit the reflection of a much larger community. Some of those questions are of course particular to the experiences and understandings of my own community of faith, the Mennonites. But many of them are generic.

About a decade ago I attended a conference of conflict resolution practitioners from throughout the United States. During the course of the conference I experienced enormous inner ambivalence. On one hand I felt stimulated and encouraged by the intense commitment to peaceful resolution of conflicts apparently shared by a body of over 500 people. But at the same time many small signals

made it clear that many of the participants had only a superficial grasp of many of the concepts which they so glibly referred to during the course of the workshop. For example, while ideas of “win/win” negotiations and joint problem-solving were frequently referred to throughout the conference, it was apparent that great competition was at work among the organizations attending. Participants guarded their training materials carefully. Prickliness among competing organizations and individuals became apparent in a number of sessions. I had the feeling that many people were more interested in demonstrating their own success and that of their organizations than in learning from or genuinely contributing to others. At a personal level, I felt by no means immune from the spirit of competition and egocentrism. Throughout the conference I repeatedly wrestled with my own desire for personal and institutional credit for the work I and my colleagues had been engaging in.

I was scheduled to address a plenary session of the conference, and I decided to share my experience with the group as the core of my presentation. I confessed the inner struggle I felt in wanting to work cooperatively with others but at the same time feeling the pulls of competition and desires for credit and control, and I observed that it seemed to me that this same struggle was also at work among many others. I suggested that conflict resolution is potentially more than simply a set of techniques, that it can also be a way of life that has much to say about how we function as human beings in all areas of life, including the ways in which we functioned as professionals. I closed by challenging the group to reflect on their “theology of peacebuilding”, that is, to seek to identify the values underlying their work in conflict resolution and to bring all of their life and professional conduct into systematic service of those values.

I said this with sweaty palms and quaking knees. I was afraid that I would sound “soft”, parochial and judgmental, and that my words might effectively end my ability to work as a colleague with many present. The speaker who was scheduled to follow me was an internationally known author and practitioner of conflict, based in a large and prestigious secular institution. In many ways he symbolized for me the very tension I had been trying to describe. On one hand he was noted for advocating participatory and “win/win” approaches to resolving conflict. But on the other hand, he was noted for operating in ways that suggested to others that his interest in building a personal and institutional reputation was as big or bigger than his commitment to working constructively as an equal with others. I had no idea how he would react to my comments.

I was astonished when he began by addressing me directly from the podium, expressing thanks for my presentation, saying that although he had planned a talk he had decided to discard his notes because he thought the questions raised were so important. After the session many individuals pressed to the front of the crowded auditorium to thank me as well, some in very emotional ways.

They too experienced the struggle I had shared and were disturbed by the dynamics present in the conference. "This is the first time anyone has ever publicly named this," commented one woman. For several years afterwards people continued to approach me in letters, phone calls and at conferences to talk further about a theology of conflict. Some of them worked for religious organizations, but most did not. The majority were sensitive and thoughtful professional people working with secular organizations who had, through the course of their work in conflict resolution, come to realize that much more was at stake than simply a body of skills and tactical concepts. They were not sure exactly what else was at stake, nor how far it could take them, but they were eager to explore.

It is widely accepted that in the post-modern era there is no moral center, that, in the words of Scott Holland, "the Enlightenment's dream of discovering one story that can name us all has crashed leaving us with many little narratives."<sup>25</sup> Tragically, commitment to moral reflection and discernment of any kind also seems to have crashed as well. Indeed, for many people there is no longer any kind of meaningful "little narrative" available, but only a collection of little episodes, shards of experience unassimilated by the kind of thoughtful reflection that enable human beings to act with consistency, decency, and integrity. In making decisions about personal, professional, and public conduct, each individual stands in isolation, guided only by personal desire and predilection, none powerful enough to provide an organizing center from which to mount a coherent framework through which to view reality and guide moral decisionmaking.

Like every other professional discipline of our times, the field of conflict resolution suffers from the inability of those active in it to engage in sustained reflection on their own personal lives and careers or to enter thoughtful discussion with others about the larger issues in the field. Although the field displays enormous vitality and much positive intent, there are few signs of systematic moral reflection and dialogue. It is as though conflict resolution practitioners were struggling to plant a massive and beautiful tree which had no roots. Practitioners talk the language of "human community" and "reconciliation" and employ techniques useful in accomplishing these, but often behave in ways that make it clear they have no understanding of the terms.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the behavior of conflict resolution practitioners towards each other. A practitioner recently confided that thrice in twelve months he had personally witnessed situations where large, expansionist conflict resolution organizations made moves to work in partnership with smaller organizations. But in each instance the behavior of the larger organization

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<sup>25</sup>Scott Holland, "So Many Good Voices in My Head", paper given at Bluffton College Forum, Bluffton, Ohio, 26 September 1995.

strongly suggested that the primary motivation was not a genuine partnership to enable collaboration in serving a superordinate goal, rather the motivation was to secure funding and to enhance its own credibility by enlisting the support of organizations “on the ground.” A handful of conflict resolution professionals could easily multiply such stories.

An ethics professor once opened a class I took by saying that it was the intention of this class to reflect on issues of our times “from the perspective of the afterlife.”<sup>26</sup> No matter how we define the afterlife, such a perspective raises profound questions. What kind of human society would we like our children and grandchildren to inherit? When our work is assessed 50 years from now, what might we most hope would be said about us and our lives? What kind of persons would we hope to be remembered by others as being? Are the things we are doing now consistent with those hopes? What activities deserve highest priority in light of those hopes? What is the meaning of “success” and “failure” in light of those hopes? These are enduring questions that, if answered only in small measure are capable of making us consistent and therefore powerful, aware and therefore vital spiritually, sensitive and therefore humane.

Ever since the conference experience I have been convinced that a substantial number of people operating in the professional field of conflict resolution wrestle inwardly with such enduring questions, that they long to engage others with them, and that the insights and experiences of religiously-based peacebuilders have much to contribute in addressing this longing.

### ***Awareness Leading to Accountability and Discernment***

Accompanying my hope to contribute to moral discourse in the field of conflict resolution is the conviction that the first goal in moral reflection and discourse is *awareness*, by which I mean conscious understanding of the components of our value system and the ability to reflect thoughtfully on our actions and the ways our values are expressed in our actions. Only as we become aware we are able to critically scrutinize our values and actions. Only when an administrator explicitly states, for example, that he holds equality between men and women to be an important value can he begin to wrestle with the implications of this value for hiring procedures in a firm where all senior partners are men. Additionally, only as he becomes aware that his own conduct towards women is so patronizing that every competent woman who meets him decides not to apply for positions in the firm can he begin to bring his daily conduct into conformity with a value that in theory he may hold deeply.

Two important results can follow from awareness. One is *accountability*. Only when we have stated what we believe and how we believe that is expressed in action can we be held accountable by others

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<sup>26</sup> The professor was the late Clarence Bauman of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana.

for what we do. Let us say, for example, that a peacebuilder says, as many do, that she holds a general commitment to empowering others to take greater control over their own lives. But in fact, after years of effort, she continues to be the primary resource person at work in virtually all the conflicts and training workshops she is involved with. Because she has explicitly stated that empowerment is an important value for her, she is vulnerable to the constructive challenge of others in ways that would never be possible had she not stated her values explicitly. Possibly there are good reasons why those she seeks to empower still rely heavily on her, but perhaps she is unawarely operating in ways that are inconsistent with her values. Either way, only as practitioners consciously identify their values and, better still, articulate them openly to others, does it become possible to examine and address issues which every practitioner ought to address regarding their practice.

Another result of awareness is *moral discernment*. How should mediators respond where there are grave power disparities between the parties? Mediators respond differently to such a question based on their differing experiences of life and values. There may be no “right” answer but the issue merits wrestling with. The most illuminating insights are likely to come when mediators are able to state clearly the values which they think are important and describe specifically how they have handled such situations. From dialogue and debate between these explicit points of view arises greater sensitivity to the variety of factors needing to be weighed in such a situation, and possibly even consensus about some general guidelines for responding.

Thus, I view the framework which follows as an essential first step towards entering into moral discourse with fellow practitioners. Although I hope that a few may here and there be persuaded by the reasoning by which I present my understandings, my intention is dialogue rather than prescription.

### **Theory of Religion and Implications for Peacebuilding**

Up to this point I have used the term “moral discourse” to describe the reflection process to which I hope to contribute, choosing this term in order to express my interests in the broadest terms possible. But my understanding of religion and of the kind of reflection required make this term less than satisfactory.

In his seminal essay laying forth a sociological theory of religion, *The Sacred Canopy*, Peter Berger outlines a theory describing how societies constitute their own reality through a three step process of *externalization, objectivation, and internalization*. Human beings express themselves in various actions in the first step, these then take on the appearance of constituting an objective reality sustained in its own right in the second step, and this perceived reality in turn acts on and shapes the

people in a society in the third step.<sup>27</sup> These processes are not apparent to people in a society, hence the reality of any given society has a taken-for-granted quality which makes it extremely powerful if not irresistible in informing the understandings of its members about what is “real” and what is not.

Then, at a certain point, Berger says, a critical new dimension enters the picture. Reality as experienced by a given society begins to be perceived as corresponding to “the nature of things” and indeed to the reality of the entire universe, the very cosmos itself. In Berger’s words, the meanings of the constructed social order merge “with what are considered to be the fundamental meanings inherent in the universe. Nomos [i.e.: the taken for granted social order] and cosmos appear to be co-extensive.”<sup>28</sup> One of the consequences of this is increased stability for the social order: “When the nomos is taken for granted as appertaining ‘to the nature of things,’ understood cosmologically or anthropologically, it is endowed with a stability deriving from more powerful sources than the historical efforts of human beings.”<sup>29</sup>

This point is the beginning of religion. Historically, this expansion of the world of human meaning to cover the entire cosmos was expressed and conducted in a sacred mode. Certain objects, spaces, persons, moments in time were linked in special ways to the meanings of the cosmos and imbued with a quality of mystery and awe. Originally, Berger says, “all cosmization had a sacred character”.<sup>30</sup> But cosmization need not be sacred in its expression. “Particularly in modern times there have been thoroughly secular attempts at cosmization, among which modern science is by far the most important.”<sup>31</sup>

Building on Berger’s theory of religion I now wish to make several assertions which form the point of departure for this thesis.

### ***Humankind as Homo Religiosus***

Firstly, human beings are *homo sapiens* or wise beings only in our best moment, but we are at all times *homo religiosus*, religious beings.<sup>32</sup> Of course many people are not religious in “conventional” ways, that is, consciously living their lives under the umbrella of meaning offered by recognized religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, etc. But people and societies organize their time, energies, and resources around certain priorities which they hold important. What frames of meaning are at work in establishing and communicating those priorities? The chances are very high

<sup>27</sup> Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967), 4.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>32</sup> Karen Armstrong, *A History of God: The 4000-Year Quest for Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (New York: Knopf, 1993), xxi.

that, in Berger's terms, they are religious in nature. The fact that many "modern" people are unaware of the religious nature of their worldview and understand themselves to be non-religious merely confirms the success of the cosmization of their own understanding of the world. To take but one example here: to assert that there is no God assumes an ability to know the true nature of the universe. Whatever frame of reference which is assumed to correspond so exactly to the reality of the universe as to allow for such an assertion is itself a religion as defined by Berger.

Such an understanding was stated in theological terms by Paul Tillich, who defined God as "that to which we give "ultimate allegiance"<sup>33</sup>. Much earlier Luther offered a similar understanding: "Whatever then thy heart clings to...and relies upon, that is properly thy God."<sup>34</sup> The significance of these definitions of God becomes more obvious if we state them conversely: That which lies at the source of our values and the center of our loyalties is God.

From this perspective it becomes apparent that a pantheon of gods inhabit our world and compete for our attention. This is not all bad. For example, as a secular religion, scientific empiricism assumes that its own understanding of reality as residing only in that which is empirically verifiable corresponds to the nature of the universe. Pressed to its logical conclusions, scientific empiricism contradicts fundamental dimensions of many sacred religions. Yet many people who are deeply committed to sacred religions recognize the value of the scientific method in exploring the world.

The problem lies less with the competition of the gods and more with the capacity of the gods to confuse the humans who create and then serve them. On one hand, human beings typically fail to see the mortal origins of their gods, that is, they assume that their worldview does indeed correspond to the reality of the universe and thus act arrogantly and often cruelly in regards to other human beings. The act of war in this sense represents a massive assertion of the religion of one group over against that of another, an insistence that *our ability to correctly apprehend the true reality of this situation corresponds so closely to the true nature of the universe that we are prepared to sacrifice life itself in defense of what we believe to be right and just.*

More devastating yet is the capacity of the gods to dress themselves in the clothes of mortals, to function surreptitiously as gods while appearing to be lesser beings. Capitalism like its erstwhile counterpart Marxism offers one such an example. Although it lacks the trappings of familiar sacred religions, most people in capitalist societies assume that the capitalist tenets of a primary human quest for material possessions and an innate sense of competition correspond to the nature of

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<sup>33</sup> Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Vol. I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 12-14. See also D. MacKenzie Brown, *Ultimate Concern: Tillich in Dialogue* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965), 1-16.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in H. Richard Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), 119.

anthropological reality. So successful has capitalism been in defining the perceived reality of the universe that many people in such societies are not even aware of the basic tenets of capitalism because they have never encountered a different point of view. Yet their lives are dominated by the power of this hidden god. They are bombarded from the time they awake until they fall asleep at night with messages manipulating their deepest drives to motivate them to purchase goods; they trek to malls on a regular basis to appease their unmet longings; they engage in daily rituals to confirm their financial worth in stock reports, etc.

Nationalism and ethnicism would provide equally fruitful examples of the power of historical phenomena to press themselves into the pantheon and lay godlike claims on humans while nevertheless disguising their status as gods.

In a world with a crowded pantheon then - and the effect of global communication has thus far been to make the pantheon of gods ever fuller - the most powerful gods are often those which avoid confrontation by disguising their status as gods. It is the hidden nature of the secular god of capitalism, to return to the example above, which prevents millions of Christians and Jews in modern capitalist societies from wrestling with the many ways in which capitalism contradicts fundamental dimensions of their sacred religions.

### ***Unmasking the Gods***

My second point of departure flows from the first. The hiddenness of the gods, I have been arguing, forms a major part of the challenge of discerning what is right and good for the human community. Only as humans name our gods and reflect on the claims they make on us through our taken-for-granted understandings of reality are we capable of genuine introspection and responsible choice. Hence my dissatisfaction with the term "moral discourse". Valuable though it is as a starting point, the term fails to alert us linguistically to the existence of the reality where dwell our greatest problems. "Moral discourse" as a response to the challenges of our world is equivalent to calling housecleaners in response to a house filled with smoke and lethal fumes and asking them to organize the furniture in a safe place. They might with perseverance and a willingness to press into places uninvited get to the source in the basement, but their skills and the understanding of the task given to them fails to equip them for the nature of the real problem.

### ***Peacebuilders as Inherently Religious***

It follows from the above that every peacebuilder is religious and could not be otherwise. Although I focus in Section Two on peacebuilders who are *explicitly* religious, to isolate them for study partially undercuts my argument that all are religious for it could imply that only those who are explicit about it are religious. Rather than supporting what I see as an already too-strong tendency to lump

“religiously-based peacebuilders” into a special minority category of saintly actors my intention is the opposite. Namely, I wish to expand definitions of the “religious” category so that a greater number of peacebuilders recognize their presence in it and thus enter the process of critical self-reflection and dialogue which I see as essential to the integrity and effectiveness of peacebuilders. However when I use the term “religiously-based” I refer to peacebuilders whose efforts are based in institutional structures that are explicitly religious in nature.

### ***Peacebuilding as Doing Theology***

The only linguistic concept which does justice to the kind of inquiry called for then is *doing theology*. By now it should be apparent that I am not calling for formulation and disputation of dogma nor for prescribing for others how they ought to live. Rather I seek a process of dialogue and critical self-reflection about human activity, in this case about peacebuilding, which unmasks the gods, that penetrates to the deepest assumptions and meanings underlying our understanding of the world. James McClendon hints at the kind of activities I have in mind when he defines theology as “the discovery, understanding, and transformation of the convictions of a convictional community, including the discovery and critical revision of their relation to one another *and to whatever else there is.*”<sup>35</sup>

In the previous discussion about moral discourse I developed the case for awareness as the starting point. All that was said there could be said now about the task of doing theology, but with some additions. The challenge is not merely *self-awareness*, foundational though it be in the task of theological discernment. The task is also *god-awareness*, that is, becoming aware of the fundamentally religious nature of the structures shaping human communities and perceptions, a task that is particularly difficult because of the hidden character of many of the most influential religions of our times. But unless we recognize the nature of this foundational layer of the structures of human perception we are unlikely to penetrate it. We are not truly aware until we name the gods governing awareness.

McClendon’s definition highlights two additional points inherent in my understanding of doing theology in conflict. One is his focus on “convictional communities” as the social unit under scrutiny. A great deal of conflict resolution, like a great deal of ethics, reflects the modern liberal worldview which assumes the individual as the locus of awareness and decisionmaking about values and strategies. The widely-known concept of “separating interests from positions”<sup>36</sup>, for example,

<sup>35</sup> James Wm. McClendon, Jr., *Ethics* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 23.

<sup>36</sup> In their best-selling book on negotiation, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991) authors Roger Fisher and Bill Ury offer the devise of “separating interests from positions” in conflict resolution. Positions are the demands presented by people in conflict; interests are the deeper concerns which positions are intended to address. In an example cited in the book, two people arguing in a library have opposing positions: One

while useful tactically in generating options for resolving conflicts, has a hollow ring in the context of Ireland or the former Yugoslavia where powerful collective perceptions on both sides frame the opponent in ontological categories which defy facile solutions. Peacebuilders are more likely to be able to contribute in such settings, I believe, if their paradigm for analysis and action approaches the parties as “convictional communities”.

Another dimension of McClendon’s definition of theology which parallels my own understanding of the nature of the task required of peacebuilders is his emphasis on the creative dimension of the effort. To “do theology” as a contribution to peace in settings of conflict is not merely to seek to discover and understand, it is also to *transform*. Such an assertion of course begs the question: towards what? Without addressing that question now I wish to highlight an important implication of the language of “transformation”, namely, that peacebuilders have an agenda based on values important to them. Handling this constructively requires special care on the part of peacebuilders. Not only are they required *to assist others in doing theology*, they must also be disciplined in *doing their own theology* so as to be able to on one hand contribute their own values to the peacebuilding process but on the other hand do this consciously, openly and without manipulation. I develop this proposal further in the “Transformation” chapter and call it *discernment*.

## **An Overview of This Thesis**

My goal is to propose a framework for peacebuilding based on my understandings and experiences as a religiously-motivated peacebuilder and to compare it with the experience of other religiously-motivated peacebuilders. Rooted as it is in a tradition of faith and practice which like every other understands the world through its own beliefs and stories, this framework is openly selective, for it is based on a particular experience of life and God. In formulating it I have sought to reflect my own values and experiences which in turn reflect those of the Anabaptist/Mennonite community of faith rather than to develop a framework capable of describing or directing peacebuilding responses of religious actors in general.<sup>37</sup>

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wants the window open. the other wants it closed. A wise librarian intervenes by asking each *why* he insists on his position. The first replies that he needs fresh air; the second that the open window is creating a terrible draft over his desk. The librarian responds by closing the window currently open and opening another in the next room, bringing fresh air with no draft.

Fisher and Ury suggest that in conflicts it is useful to *separate positions from interests*, *ignore positions* (since challenging peoples’ positions or trying to get them to compromise only “locks them into” their positions), and *focus on ways to meet interests* (through creativity or application of standards of precedent or principle).

<sup>37</sup> Anabaptism was a church reform movement which originated in the 16th century as a part of the Protestant Reformation. The direct descendants of the Anabaptists are today known as Mennonites, after Menno Simons, a prominent Dutch Anabaptist active in the first half of the 16th century. However, Anabaptism has exercised significant influence in broader Protestant circles, notably in regards to the “free church” concepts of adult baptism and separation of church and state.

I present this framework, the heart of the thesis, in Section One in the form of seven themes each allocated a chapter as follows:

Chapter One: Vision

Chapter Two: Transformation

Chapter Three: Vulnerability

Chapter Four: Engagement

Chapter Five: Transformation and Structures

Chapter Six: Reconciliation

Chapter Seven: Community

In order to provide a historical context against which to test my proposed theoretical framework for peacebuilding, Section Two presents an account of the work of three religiously-based peacebuilders

Anabaptists placed great emphasis on discipleship, holding up the life and teachings of Jesus as the model for followers, particularly his teachings to care for the poor and love enemies, and they believed that discipleship was likely to place followers in sharp conflict with the way of life accepted in larger society. Menno Simons, Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and other early Anabaptist leaders argued that living in the way taught by Jesus is demanding and costly, and that therefore only adults making a free and conscious choice should be baptized. Having been already baptized as children, a practice adhered to by both Catholics and other Reformation groups, the first Anabaptists had themselves re-baptized as adults. For this reason they became known as Anabaptists, or “re-baptizers”. Although substantial variation existed within the movement itself (including the disastrous Muenster incident in which a minority element of apocalyptic Anabaptists sought to establish the New Jerusalem by force in the city of Muenster, leading to a bloody battle in 1535 in which many residents lost their lives, an event by which the entire movement was judged for centuries), common emphases in addition to those already mentioned included:

- \* Rejection of the concept of sacred words, things, or persons in favor of a practical, instrumental understanding that each person has direct access to God. This included the concept of the priesthood of all believers.
- \* Rejection of violence and refusal to participate in warfare.
- \* Insistence on religious freedom.
- \* Refusal to participate in the magistracy or other state offices as these were viewed as connected to the “kingdom of strife” rather than the “kingdom of peace” [Walter Klaassen, *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant* (Waterloo, Ontario: Conrad Press, 1981), 45].
- \* Emphasis on the church as a voluntary fellowship of those who had committed themselves to the new way of life taught by Jesus and to supporting each other in the demanding task of living in this way.

A substantial body of scholarship documents the diverse historical and theological streams within the early Anabaptist movement. C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press, 1995) presents perhaps the best current introduction to historical Anabaptism and to scholarly sources. George H. Williams’ encyclopedic work *The Radical Reformation* (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1992) has long stood as a defining study of the “left wing” of the Reformation within which Anabaptism emerged, and includes substantial sections on Anabaptism.

The writings of Mennonite scholar John Howard Yoder have deeply influenced Christian understandings of the social and political implications of Christian faith. See his *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972); *Nevertheless* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1971); *The Original Revolution* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971). Charles Scriven, *The Transformation of Culture: Christian Social Ethics After H. Richard Niebuhr* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1988) presents an insightful comparison of Anabaptist social ethics with H. Richard Niebuhr and influential interpreters of Niebuhr, characterizing Anabaptism as a theology of social transformation through political engagement (albeit by being an “alternative society” offering “transformative example” rather than through extensive involvement in existing political structures), universal loyalty; and non-violence. (Scriven, 167ff). See footnote 58 in Chapter One for additional citations to current writers presenting an Anabaptist emphasis.

prominent during the conflict in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe in the period 1970-1979: the Roman Catholic Church, the Quakers, and Moral Re-Armament. This historical section however is instrumental to the larger primary purpose of the thesis. It is included merely to assist in the exploration of a theological and theoretical framework for guiding peacebuilding.

Section Three presents then the fruit of the comparison between my framework and the activities of other peacebuilders, noting similarities and dissimilarities and summarizing conclusions.

## **Audience**

To write with efficiency and clarity an author must choose an audience. Each category of reader brings its own presuppositions and critical concerns to an essay such as this; few writers, surely not this one, are effective in addressing all simultaneously. Within the larger field of conflict resolution there exists a subcategory of people, I believe, who share the following traits:

- 1) Deep interest in and commitment to the possibility of resolving conflict justly and without violence;
- 2) Openness to religious experience as a valid and pervasive category of human awareness, combined with an openness to learning from reflection on conflict resolution efforts rooted in religious experience;
- 3) Awareness of human diversity and a commitment to dialogue with others from backgrounds different from their own about the possibilities for peaceful coexistence in our world;
- 4) Appreciation of the fact that the only mode of dialogue capable of enabling this to happen is post-modern awareness, namely, awareness that reality is mediated to us through faith, by which I here mean taken-for-granted assumptions about reality and that no human community can make legitimate claims to universal truth. On one hand the dialogue on which the future of our world depends happens best when we openly identify and claim the sources of our faith. But on the other it is essential that when in the public arena we become skillful in, and indeed seek to be models of, the art of expressing particularity in the most universal mode possible.

It should be apparent that although I write from a particular perspective, namely Christianity as understood from the experience of the Anabaptists or Mennonites, my imaginary audience includes many with other perspectives. Much as I hope that members of my own community will read and benefit from my reflections, much as I believe that the proposals developed here do not contradict our

own deepest understandings of life and meaning but rather flow from them, it should also be clear that they do not exhaust my own understandings of Christian faith. That would be a conversation with a different purpose.

## **Section One**

# **A Paradigm for Peacebuilding**

## Chapter One

### Vision

It shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob; that [God] may teach us [God’s] ways and that we may walk in [God’s] paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

[God] shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples;

and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.<sup>38</sup>

Isaiah 2:2-4

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

Luke 4:18-19, 21

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross thereby bringing the hostility to an end.

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

Eph. 2:13-17

### Vision as Starting Point

How we respond to conflict, how we go about dealing with people who are in deadly disagreement is the practical expression of deeper, more abstract beliefs about the world, history, and the future of human society which in turn are formed by the stories and myths through which we bring meaning to our lives.

As an example of the power of one such myth, consider the Babylon creation story. In *Engaging the Powers*, theologian Walter Wink asserts that the Babylon creation story, whose distinctive feature is the victory of order over chaos by means of violence, is the dominant myth in his country, exerting

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<sup>38</sup> This and all Scripture quotes are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

far more influence than Judaism or Christianity. In a sweeping review of American art, culture, and politics Wink shows the pervasive presence of this myth of redemptive violence and its accompanying assumptions about human life which he summarizes as follows:

Chaos and evil are the original, normative state of affairs in the universe and among human beings.

Order and good can prevail only through the imposition of force and violence. Because chaos and evil are the norm, force and violence must be institutionalized in order to prevent the return of chaos.

The world is divided in simple lines between people who serve good and those who serve evil.

Good can prevail only if those who are good amass sufficient force to defeat and keep at bay those who are evil.<sup>39</sup>

These beliefs lead Americans (it is clear that Wink believes that many other peoples share similar beliefs, but he focuses his analysis on his own country) to bring a simplistic “good guy/bad guy” analysis to every conflict, to assume that massive accumulation of weapons is essential for peace, and to seek domination in every sphere of life.

The influence of the Babylonian creation myth can be found within the field of conflict resolution. For example, some mediators view their task as being largely to broker a deal reflecting the prevailing balance of power at such point in time as the parties have bludgeoned each other into a “hurting stalemate”<sup>40</sup> Others approach their task by injecting themselves in prominent roles as “good guys” who by heroic effort redeem situations of confrontation, bringing peace for a time but failing to equip the parties with means to address their own conflicts and neglecting to address the underlying causes so as to enable true resolution. After all, if “salvation” comes only through the vigilant presence of the “good guys”, then peace efforts should be structured in ways that maintain the “good guys” in prominent roles and give them pre-eminence in the constant battle for visibility and credit for their cause. Seeking to structure peacebuilding in ways that empower others to work out their own

<sup>39</sup> Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992), 13-31. Cf. John Howard Yoder, *The Original Revolution* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1971), 172. who without reference to the Babylonian creation myth offers a similar analysis of the prevailing moral legend in Western culture.

<sup>40</sup> Cf., for example, I.W. Zartman, “The Strategy of Preventive Diplomacy in Third World Conflicts”, in *Managing US-Soviet Rivalry*, edited by A. George (Boulder: Westview, 1983), 341-364. Zartman proposes a “ripeness” theory of mediation, saying that the parties are ripe for mediation when a particular set of circumstances are simultaneously at work: When the parties are in a situation of deadlock and deadlines which create a sense of crisis, when unilateral solutions are blocked and joint solutions become conceivable, and when the party that previously held the upperhand has slipped from its dominant role and the weaker party is in ascendancy. Additionally, the parties need to believe that they are approaching a moment “when things will significantly get worse if they have not gotten better in ways that negotiation seeks to define.” (354). While Zartman’s theory is insightful, I think that he relies too heavily on the dynamics of power in his understanding of settlement of conflicts.

differences would be futile and fail to meet the need to score another visible triumph for the institutions of good.<sup>41</sup>

Still others teach “win/win negotiations” but are notorious in their personal and professional lives for egocentrism and competitiveness, an anomaly that could be viewed as an expression of the dualistic understanding of good and evil underlying the Babylonian creation myth. The forces of good and evil are clearly separate; evil is at work only in others, not within the “good guys” themselves. Therefore there is no need to live a life of constant self examination to oppose the affects of evil on themselves.

Wink’s analysis demonstrates at one level the power of unacknowledged, accepted-by-faith narrative structures in determining practical human responses to mundane situations. Myth shapes our lives at fundamental levels, influencing what we believe to be real, what we deem to be the fundamental challenges of human existence, and what we believe to be appropriate ways to go about addressing those challenges. Wink also makes us aware that to the extent that we are unaware of the myths shaping our lives, we are at their mercy. Unexamined, they lead us to believe that there is only one way of understanding the events around us, and thus prevent us from responding in any ways other than those prescribed by the myth. More specifically as well, Wink introduces us to the impact of one particular, dominating myth on people’s perceptions of conflict and how to respond to it.

Thus to develop a comprehensive understanding of peacebuilding we must begin with myth, that is, with the accepted-by-faith narrative structures through which we apprehend “reality” and give meaning to the events around us. However, I prefer the term “vision” to “myth” because “vision” has a larger linguistic and moral horizon than “myth”. The understanding of reality which shapes the world as I know it is as concerned with the future and its possibilities as with the present and the past. Additionally, this vision makes constant normative claims on responses to the problems of the world in which we live. Not only does it shape what we see as key problems, it also provides a reference point for determining responses.<sup>42</sup>

The questions this chapter addresses are: What is the vision governing my own understanding of reality? What are the implications of this vision for peacebuilding? My goal is not to “defend” the vision or prescribe it for others, but rather to establish a starting place from which to construct the approach to peacebuilding developed in this thesis.

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<sup>41</sup> The highly-centralized, top-down involvement of American forces in Somalia under United Nations auspices provides one example of this understanding of making peace.

<sup>42</sup> Stanley Hauerwas develops this argument at some depth in his analysis of the role of “vision” in the novels of Iris Murdoch. See Hauerwas, “The Significance of Vision: Toward an Aesthetic Ethic”, in his *Vision and Virtue* (Notre Dame: Fides Publishers, 1974), 30-47. See also Charles Scriven’s analysis of this dimension of Hauerwas in Scriven, *The Transformation of Culture: Christian Social Ethics After H. Richard Niebuhr* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1988), 126-136.

It is important to recognize at the outset that a vision for peace is *per se* unremarkable. Since at least the days of the “Pax Romana”, which was created by the brutal subjugation of competing powers by the Roman Empire by Caesar Augustus, a great deal of warmaking has been justified in the name of establishing or preserving peace. The telling points about a vision for peace are the nature of the peace envisioned, the beneficiaries of that peace, and the means by which it is accomplished.

## The Vision of Shalom

The foundation for the vision for human society which underlies this thesis is the conviction that God intends to establish peace on earth and that to work for peace is to co-labor with God in a task of highest significance. Supported by a substantial volume of research documenting the biblical origins of such a view and theological treatises by theologians from a variety of Christian backgrounds reflecting on its implications for social and political ethics, such an understanding is neither original nor unique. Therefore my purposes in this chapter are modest. First I wish to describe the vision of shalom in depth just sufficient to provide a context for the points which follow. I will undertake this description by reviewing the work of several biblical scholars and theologians who have been influential in articulating a vision of shalom. Secondly, I will highlight dimensions of this vision which I see as particularly significant in guiding the activities of peacebuilders.

Contemporary Christian understandings of the concept of shalom were significantly influenced by the work of the biblical theologian Gerhard van Rad, whose article on shalom in Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* in 1964 has been a common reference point for discussion and debate ever since. Von Rad’s essay notes that shalom has a wide range of meanings which have to do with material, physical “well-being”. He also argues that shalom is an “emphatically social concept” in that it most commonly refers to a group’s prosperity or well-being rather than that of an individual. He concludes by pointing out that there is “no specific text in which it denotes the specifically spiritual attitude of inner peace” rather shalom “manifests itself in the form of external well-being.”<sup>43</sup>

Kittel’s understanding of shalom established an important precedent which has been supported by most biblical scholarship in recent decades. As a description of the state in which God intends humans to live, shalom shifts attention beyond a focus on inward, individually experienced experiences of quietude or bliss into the realm of human relations, society, economics, and politics.

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<sup>43</sup> Gerhard van Rad, “Shalom” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. II* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), edited by Gerhard Kittel, 406. Cf. Perry Yoder’s summary of von Rad in *The Meaning of Peace: Biblical Studies*, edited by Perry Yoder and Willard Swartley (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 5.

In *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice, and Peace*, a book that has unofficially become the "Mennonite statement" on the concept of shalom biblical scholar Perry Yoder outlines three dimensions of shalom as used in the Old Testament:

- 1) material well-being and prosperity
- 2) social and economic justice
- 3) honesty, integrity, and straightforwardness<sup>44</sup>

Stressing a point that has historically formed a central tenet of Anabaptist/Mennonite theology, Yoder cites large numbers of passages in the Bible which present God as a God who desires people to experience this multi-dimensional state of well-being. The thrust of Yoder's argument is that shalom lies at the center of God's intentions for human beings and is in fact God's "ultimate will". Yoder supports this by examining concepts of sin and salvation and interpreting them in terms of the larger vision for shalom. Sin is "disobedience to God's intentions for shalom and justice"<sup>45</sup>. Salvation is "freedom from bondage," "a process and struggle for both personal and social change", and "deliverance from the physical, material conditions of oppression and from the habits of thought which feed on and foster this oppression". Salvation "liberates people from their plight both through transformation of minds and hearts and through transformation of social structures."<sup>46</sup>

Walter Brueggemann's treatment of shalom in *Living Toward A Vision: Biblical Reflections on Shalom* is similar to Yoder's in that for him shalom forms the *Leitmotif* of theology. "The central vision of world history in the Bible is that all creation is one, every creature in community with every other, living in harmony and security towards the joy and well-being of every other creature."<sup>47</sup> This vision is expressed in various forms, for example:

- \* Abraham is father of all Israel and every person is his child (Genesis 15:5; Isaiah 41:8; 51:2)
- \* Isaiah has a vision of all being drawn into community around the will of God (Isaiah 2:2-4)
- \* In the New Testament, "the church has a parallel vision of all persons being drawn under the lordship and fellowship of Jesus (Mt. 28:16-20; John 12:32) and therefore into a single community (Acts 2:1-11)."<sup>48</sup>
- \* Throughout the Bible, "all persons are children of a single family, members of a single tribe, heirs of a single hope, and bearers of a single destiny namely, the care and management of all of God's creation."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Perry Yoder, *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice, and Peace* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1987), 51ff.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 51-52.

<sup>47</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Living Toward A Vision: Biblical Reflections on Shalom* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1976) 15.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

Brueggemann acknowledges that no single word or idea in the Bible captures the “persistent vision of joy, well-being, harmony, and prosperity” which the biblical vision conveys, and a cluster of words is required to express the dimensions and nuances of this vision: “love, loyalty, truth, grace, salvation, justice, blessing, righteousness”. But “the term that in recent discussions has been used to summarize that controlling vision is shalom.”<sup>50</sup> It is in this sense that I use the word in this thesis, as a summary of the vision pervading the Bible for humanity to live as one community where justice and well-being characterize every relationship.

One index of how broadly such an understanding of Christian faith has pervaded Christian thinking worldwide is the extended conversation undertaken by the World Council of Churches in its “Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation” program. A process of global dialogue among Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic Churches begun in 1983 under WCC auspices culminated in a “covenant” document approved by Christian representatives from around the world in 1990 in Seoul, affirming numerous themes outlined above. God is understood to be present in the world, particularly where there is suffering and pain, actively working for “the new heaven and the new earth which are to come”<sup>51</sup>. Human beings are called into “covenant community” which is open to all. “Through the Spirit a new community is being gathered out of the dispersion and division of nations, religions, classes, sexes, ages and races.”<sup>52</sup> “Jesus proclaims a permanent jubilee and thereby confronts the church with the constant task of witnessing to the demands of justice, reconciliation and the dignity and rights of nature.”<sup>53</sup> God’s covenant “is open to all and holds the promise of life in wholeness and right relationships.”<sup>54</sup> “In Jesus Christ, God has broken through the bonds of hostility between nations and peoples, and even now offers us the gift of peace with justice. No wound, hostility or sinfulness is beyond the reach of the peace that passes understanding. For biblical faith, true peace means every human being dwelling in secure relatedness to God, neighbor, nature and self.”<sup>55</sup>

### ***Shalom as a Guide in the Present***

While a substantial consensus has emerged within the larger Christian fellowship about the centrality of shalom to God’s purposes in the world, much greater diversity exists about how to respond to that vision. In this regard, my understandings have been heavily influenced by the work of the

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>51</sup> “Final Document: Entering into Covenant Solidarity for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation”, final document of the Commission on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation issued at World Council of Churches world convocation in Seoul, Korea, March 5-12, 1990. Reproduced in D.P. Niles, *Between the Flood and the Rainbow: Interpreting the Conciliar Process of Mutual Commitment to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1992), 164-190.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

Mennonite theologian, John Howard Yoder, whose groundbreaking essay, *The Politics of Jesus*<sup>56</sup>, first published in 1972 has formed a common reference point for a substantial group of theologians and ethicists influenced by his work.<sup>57</sup>

A primary concern for J.H. Yoder are two prevalent misunderstandings of Jesus. One diminishes his significance to the realm of the purely personal, viewing salvation as saving the souls of individuals who are then freed as individuals to live with greater morality and tranquillity before God. Another, often related understanding of Jesus which Yoder targets de-historicizes his teachings on social conduct such as “love your enemy”. These “hard sayings” are either dismissed as irrelevant to the current historical era, or at best acknowledged by Christian ethicists such as Reinhold Niebuhr as an inspiring but quaint and unrealistic Tolstoyian ideal.

Yoder proposes an alternative understanding. Jesus’ mission was to *inaugurate the Kingdom*, that is, to call human beings to a new way of living based on the Old Testament concept of shalom described above. He presented people in his day and now not with a pietistic call for individuals to engage in a transaction of the heart. Rather he called people to participate in a new reality of shalom which begins now within and between people, and in the structures of economics, politics and society which mediate human interaction. Jesus repeatedly used the term *kingdom of God* to refer to this reality, one of numerous ways in which he asserted the immediate, practical relevance of this new reality, and its claims for allegiance superseding current structures. The nature of this kingdom was that human beings lived in a state of justice and wholeness, where the old divisions of race, sex, social position, and national identity were irrelevant.

### ***Shalom As Call to the Struggle for Justice***

Justice is a central theme in the vision of shalom. The chorus of Hebrew prophets thundering for fair wages and regard for the poor is reinforced by the image of Jesus surrounded by revolutionaries waging a deadly struggle for justice. Not only did Jesus spend a great deal of time with the outcasts of society - beggars, tax collectors, and women, within the inner circle of his friends and supporters were also several revolutionaries. One respected biblical scholar has concluded that six out of Jesus’ twelve disciples may have been Zealots, a group of revolutionaries who sought to overthrow Roman rule of the Hebrew people by guerrilla tactics.<sup>58</sup> Since Jesus, like everyone else must have come to know his friends and disciples through a process of common social networks and interests, this offers

<sup>56</sup> John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972).

<sup>57</sup> For example, Stanley Hauerwas, a Methodist ethicist who teaches at Duke University; Glenn Stassen, a Baptist ethicist at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Charles Scriven, a Seventh Day Adventist pastor and ethicist; James McClendon, a theologian teaching at Church Divinity School of the Pacific; Duane Friesen, a Mennonite who teaches Bible and religion at Bethel College; Perry Yoder, who teaches Bible at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. I draw on the work of all of these; for citations to their work see the Bibliography.

<sup>58</sup> Oscar Cullman, *The State in the New Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1956), 88ff.

an important clue regarding Jesus' self-understanding of his calling.<sup>59</sup> The prominence of Zealot disciples within his closest circle of friends suggests that his first step in living out the vision of shalom was to join the struggle for justice, developing such close friendships with people moving in "struggle" circles that they willingly dropped everything else at his invitation to join him. The first call of the vision of shalom, then, is to justice.

### ***Shalom as Means and End***

The second call of the vision of shalom is to work for justice in ways that truly transform rather than merely bringing temporary relief. The *means* by which we seek to act in the complex arena of human affairs determine the *ends* at which we arrive. Violent revolution begets counter-revolution;<sup>60</sup> violence begets violence. The problem with revolutionary violence is not that it is radical, but that it is not radical enough, for it merely cuts off the weed at the ground rather than tearing it out at the *radix*.

J.H. Yoder's work in New Testament has received widespread attention in circles of Christian theology in this regard. Jesus' intention, Yoder says, was to call people to a way of living with far-reaching and indeed revolutionary implications for all dimensions of human existence, including social, political, and economic life. But the "kingdom" could be entered only through means consistent with its own values. Hence the title of the book, *The Politics of Jesus*, which emphasizes on one hand the political relevance of Jesus' life and death, but on the other hand highlights that Jesus' way of engaging in politics differed from that currently employed by political and social leadership.

In the kingdom taught by Jesus, change takes place by means of solidarity with and elevation of those in need, and by transformation and conversion of those who dominate old structures, not through coercion. Thus although Jesus shared deeply the commitment for justice of his comrades, he rejected the Zealot option for liberation through violence and instead pointed to a different means. A central dimension of this was establishing an alternative social structure, symbolized in part by the choice of twelve disciples, a counterpart to the twelve tribes of Israel. His identification with the poor and outcast, his "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, and his death represent a critical dimension of the kingdom, that it is introduced through identification with the weak and vulnerable, through unconditional love of even the powerful, and through a willingness to accept and suffer loss and pain from the old reality rather than retaliate in kind. In the eyes of Christian faith then, Jesus' resurrection symbolizes the shattering of the cycle of violence and supports the assertion

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<sup>59</sup> I am indebted to Ray Gingerich for this insight.

<sup>60</sup> See Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolutions* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), for a classic study of the phases of revolutionary violence.

that the means of creative, non-violent love are stronger than violence. The Roman empire, after all, is long since fallen; followers of Jesus populate the globe.<sup>61</sup>

As an ethicist and theologian substantially influenced by Yoder's writing, Larry Rasmussen states the connection between means and ends as follows:

To walk in "the way" as a 'people of the way' involves a moral style so intimately related to the destination itself that to wander from the way is also to miss the goal, which is a righteous life in a community faithful to God as a 'foretaste of the feast to come.....The manner of the route and its travelers is as much a part of the pilgrimage as the final arrival and is in its own way a rehearsal for it. In moral terms, means are themselves 'the ends in process' (with thanks to Gandhi for the words and Jesus for the example)."<sup>62</sup>

### **Implications for Peacebuilders**

Against this background I now wish to explore dimensions of the vision of shalom as described above that play a prominent role in the vision of peacebuilding which undergirds this thesis:

#### ***Shalom as True Reality***

Conflict has a powerful capacity to dominate perceptions of reality and thereby create a pseudo-reality that exerts enormous influence on everyone it touches. This pseudo-reality not only convinces each party that the other is a bitter enemy deserving of death, it convinces many bystanders that peaceful resolution of conflicts is impossible<sup>63</sup>. Rather than apply the full power of their resources towards peaceful conflict resolution, parties and bystanders acquiesce to force and brutality as the only means of resolving conflict. Hope in the possibility of just and peaceful resolution of conflict is, then, the first and most critical casualty in violence, and reclamation of hope is the first step in peacebuilding.

An essential element of the vision of shalom as outlined by the Yoders and others influenced by Anabaptist theology is that it falls in the category of *realized eschatology*.<sup>64</sup> That is, as a vision for life as it ought to be, it not only describes a future historical epoch, it speaks to the present and serves as a moral guide for life here and now. It is a vision for the end times which is realized already in the present. Life now is not yet fully "in the Kingdom", of course, for the world still lies in the grip of the pseudo-reality of antagonism, selfishness, hatred and patterns of domination which have

<sup>61</sup> These themes are developed in Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*.

<sup>62</sup> Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community*, 139.

<sup>63</sup> Perhaps I should state explicitly my own understanding of the nature of evil: I do not believe evil has an ontological existence in its own right, but rather that its enormous destructive capacity exists through its ability to create the perception that reality is vicious and destructive. This perception leads people to respond in ways that correspond to this illusory reality; for example by investing heavily in weapons to defend themselves rather than focusing proactively on addressing the problems causing conflict or by seeking to eliminate people they are afraid of. Thus humans do evil things because they believe reality supports their evil acts.

<sup>64</sup> C.H. Dodd, *The Coming of Christ* (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1951), 15, 35.

characterized human behavior for most of history. Most people are unable to see more than the pseudo-reality and believe they have no choice but to accept it and operate in its terms. Therefore the pseudo-reality has real power through the acts of people under its illusion and causes enormous destruction.

But the stories of Christian faith as understood in Anabaptist theology and which shape this thesis assert that shalom is the inevitable true reality, that this reality is already operating in the present, and that therefore shalom reality can and should govern decisionmaking *in the present*. Events or actions in the present which do not reflect or participate in this reality have no lasting historical significance. Stated in a positive sense, the only events and actions which have lasting significance in the present are those based on the shalom reality.

John Howard Yoder makes this point in part by calling for a commitment to *faithfulness*, rather than *effectiveness*. To participate in the Kingdom requires that followers of Jesus make decisions on the basis of being faithful to or in accordance with the reality of that Kingdom, not on the basis of whether or not they appear effective by the criteria of current realities.<sup>65</sup>

This understanding of reality and history offers a formidable base from which to operate as a peacebuilder. For one, it provides the peacebuilder with that element most essential to any effort in resolving conflict, an unshakable sense of hope. No matter how discouraging a situation may appear to others, a peacebuilder who believes that reality says that conflicts can be peacefully resolved and that any appearances to the contrary are mere illusions will never give up hope.

A related and equally important contribution of this understanding of history is that it is well prepared for and therefore undaunted by “failure.” It is taken for granted that pseudo-reality lingers and that the results even of actions grounded in true reality may not become apparent for a long time to come. Therefore “success” is measured according to criteria that are broader than immediate apparent impact. What is important is not that peacebuilding efforts yield obvious fruit now, but rather that the seeds of the future are cast in the present. A conflict may rage for years, decades, conceivably centuries. But the significance of peacebuilding efforts are judged according to whether or not these efforts have injected into the situation of conflict the dynamics of true reality: a call for justice, truthfulness, integrity, love, and willingness to absorb pain in a commitment to ending retaliation.

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<sup>65</sup> Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, 234, 235, 238; *The Original Revolution* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971), 81-82; 159ff. See Duane Friesen’s summary of Yoder on this issue in his *Christian Peacebuilding and International Conflict: A Realist Pacifist Perspective* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1986), 154-155. This concept might be viewed as parallel to Hindu understandings of the nature of *karma*. Liberation comes by not by a focus on action and results, for these only entrap the mind in an endless cycle of “desire, action, latent desire, further action.” By dedicating action to God with no concern for a desired action the mind is liberated from karmic shackles. Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, translated by A.R. Natarajan, *Upadesa Saram (Essence of Teaching)*, (Bangalore: Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 1992), 3.

From this perspective all genuine peacebuilding efforts have intrinsic meaning and significance, even those which are costly to the peacebuilder or which appear futile by short-term criteria.

***Shalom Addresses All Dimensions of Human Life***

Shalom is a pervasive vision for the transformation of all dimensions of life towards justice, truthfulness, and full human potential. Therefore peacebuilding guided by this vision aspires to more than cutting deals between political or military elites enabling cessation of hostilities. Peacebuilders may of course begin at this level but their mission is at once both simpler and more complex. It is simpler in that they demand of themselves only that they interact with the situation in ways that reflect the values of the vision of shalom: with integrity, compassion, concern for those who are suffering, and forthrightness in advocating the quest for non-coercive measures. As we have seen earlier, whether or not the interaction based on these values leads to cessation of hostilities is not their criteria for success.

But peacebuilding guided by shalom seeks more than agreements to end violence. It requires that peacebuilders also seek to introduce a new way of thinking and interacting among those in conflict that is based on shalom values of justice, compassion, truthfulness and well-being for all. This means that they will operate with a variety of concerns:

- to foster justice so that structural inequities between the parties are addressed
- to root the process of peacebuilding deeply in the societies involved so that patterns of decisionmaking and leadership can be supported which, rather than perpetuating domination by elites on each side, empower people at all levels to participate in the creation of their own future
- to contribute to genuine reconciliation of the social relationships between the parties to support peace on the long-term
- to support reflection and greater integrity at moral and spiritual levels among the people they interact with, so as to plant the seeds for transformation at the deepest levels of human functioning.

These concerns address every dimension of human existence: the intrapersonal (the spiritual and psychological dimensions of individuals), interpersonal (that which takes place in relationships between individuals), and structural (the realities of social, economic, and political conventions and structures which govern the lives of people in relationship to others). Thus peacebuilders must develop strategies for peacebuilding that acknowledge and address every level of human existence. In the chapters which follow I spell out the implications of this.

However one implication which deserves attention now regards language, specifically, the terminology used to describe efforts to make peace. In 1992 United Nations General Secretary Boutros Boutros-Ghali's published a proposal for peace efforts by the UN and the international community identifying four major tasks in responding to conflict. They were: *preventive diplomacy* which seeks to prevent disputes from arising and when they do, seeks to prevent escalation, using means such as fact-finding, early warning, preventive deployment and establishment of demilitarized zones; *peacemaking* which seeks to bring hostile parties to agreement through mediation and negotiation, adjudication at the World Court, humanitarian assistance, economic sanction; *peacekeeping* which seeks to prevent hostilities from recurring through deployment of United Nations (primarily military) personnel; and *post-conflict peace-building* seeks to consolidate peace at the social level by disarming warring parties, repatriating refugees, monitoring elections, supporting human rights, facilitating cooperation in development projects and cultural exchanges, etc.<sup>66</sup> This set of terms has acquired wide usage in academic and media circles since 1992.

The Boutros-Ghali proposal represents an important departure in international political circles for it defines the agenda for peace in terms broader than mere cessation of hostilities. But it remains less than satisfactory for my purposes. For one, it relies heavily on military measures as an integral dimension of peace efforts, devoting more attention to activities in this category of response than to any other. For another, the Boutros-Ghali proposal creates a problem for someone like myself seeking one over-arching term to describe the broad range of activities required to make peace. While taking the word "peacebuilding" which in previous general usage had broad connotations and defining it with a new and much narrower meaning, the proposal offers no alternative to it.

Thus I will follow Lederach and Sampson in using the word *peacebuilding* as a such a term.

Lederach says:

I am suggesting that peacebuilding be understood as a comprehensive term that encompasses the full array of states and approaches need to transform conflict toward sustainable, peaceful relationships and outcomes. Peacebuilding, thus, involves a wide range of activities and functions that both precede and follow formal peace accords. Metaphorically, peace is seen not merely as a stage in term or a condition. It is a dynamic social construct. Such conceptualization requires a process of *building*, involving investment and materials, architectural design, coordination of labor, laying of a foundation, and detailed finish work, as well as continued maintenance.<sup>67</sup>

Sampson expands on Lederach's definition as follows:

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<sup>66</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacebuilding and Peacekeeping* (New York: United Nations, 1992).

<sup>67</sup> Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, 14.

Peacebuilding...spans a continuum of activity from *conflict prevention*, through the establishment of a just order and healthy civil society, to *conflict transformation* which, in its various stages (latent conflict, confrontation, negotiation, and post-conflict) may involve the processes of education, advocacy, conflict resolution, reconciliation, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development.)<sup>68</sup>

Shalom requires that we frame the task in these broad terms. Hence for the remainder of this thesis I will use the terms *peacebuilding* and *peacebuilder* rather than the more conventional language of *peacemaking* and *peacemaker* which I have used up to this point.

### ***Conflict is Essential for Building Shalom***

A common misperception is that the goal for those who wish to work for peace is to end conflict. This is a damaging view, for the world reflects pervasive patterns of injustice that grip the majority of humankind in a state that is far from shalom. The goal for peacebuilders then cannot be merely “restoration of order” or “harmony” alone. These may of course be desirable, but only to the extent that they preserve a just order of life that supports the well-being of all creation. Where current structures are committed to less than this, the vision of shalom requires that peacebuilders welcome conflict as an essential ally in the struggle for change.

It is significant that in the Judeo-Christian theological traditions which have nurtured the vision of shalom I describe, conflict is a consistent companion to the inbreaking of God’s intentions into human affairs. The Exodus event, for example, formative in the life and self-understanding of the God’s people, came as a result of the crying out of Hebrew slaves for mercy from the oppression of the Pharaohs, and Moses’ challenge commanded by God to the Pharaoh to release his people. The Hebrew prophets who pointed to God’s intentions of shalom for his people were often out-spoken critics of existing practices and repeatedly got clashed with others around them. Jesus himself, the “Prince of Peace” confronted and alienated authorities of several kinds. The early church was repeatedly tested by conflict.

What is more, a review of the New Testament and the history of the formation of Christian orthopraxis reveals that revelation in Christian theology emerges consistently in the arena of conflict and thus suggests the possibility of viewing conflict as a moment of supreme epistemological significance. Jesus’ words brought consternation to the hearts of the existing guardians of truth, the religious authorities. The book of Luke-Acts records in detail the contest in the early church over the presence of Gentiles. The resolution of that conflict, accomplished in a universalizing of the scope of salvation, has ever since been accepted by Christians as one of God’s most important revelations.

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<sup>68</sup> Sampson, 6.

Christian scriptures themselves were formed into a canon only after centuries of disputation. The study of “orthodoxy” is thus in reality the study of negotiated settlements to conflicts in which each word was carefully selected to address particular concerns. The processes for creating creeds and doctrinal formulas such as the Apostle’s Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Chalcedonian formula, etc., were by current understandings of conflict resolution often adversarial and crude. But the point is not that followers of Jesus have been skillful in making peace, but rather to say that in this tradition there are no theological grounds to fear or avoid conflict. To the contrary, the Christian tradition offers good reason to view conflict positively and expectantly as the setting in which, by the testimony of our own Scriptures and traditions, we believe that God is most likely to reveal divine purposes.

A strong tradition within the field of sociology supports a positive orientation towards conflict as well. Karl Marx, George Simmel, Ralf Dahrendorf, Lewis Coser, and others in the tradition of “conflict theory” explored extensively the role of conflict in societies. Although their explanations for conflict varied, these theorists share in common a conviction that conflict is an unavoidable and potentially highly constructive dimension of social life.<sup>69</sup> Coser, for example, asserts that “conflict prevents the ossification of the social system by exerting pressure for innovation and creativity”<sup>70</sup> “The clash of values and interest, the tension between what is and what some groups feel ought to be, the conflict between vested interests and new strata and groups demanding their share of power, wealth and status, have been productive of vitality...”<sup>71</sup> One consequence of such conflict is that it “generates new norms and institutions”<sup>72</sup> Similarly, the noted peace researcher Johannes Galtung believes that it is important “to distinguish between conflict and the consequences of conflict”.<sup>73</sup> This enables us to view conflict positively, as “a tremendous challenge both intellectually and emotionally to the parties”, as “one of the major motivating forces in our existence, as both a cause, a concomitant and a consequence of change, as an element as necessary to social life as air to human life.”<sup>74</sup>

A concept developed by a number of conflict theorists is that conflict actually has potential to bind a society together. So long as cleavages in a given society cut in different ways with different issues,

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<sup>69</sup> See M. Francis Abraham, *Modern Sociological Theory: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 105-242.

<sup>70</sup> Coser, quoted in Abraham, 135.

<sup>71</sup> Lewis Coser, “Social Conflict and the Theory of Social Change” in Clagett G. Smith, editor, *Conflict Resolution: Contributions of the Behavioral Sciences* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971), 58.

<sup>72</sup> Coser, *ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Johannes Galtung, *Peace and Social Structure: Essays in Peace Research, Vol. III* (Copenhagen: Christian Eljers, 1978), 486.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 490.

the overall result is a *cross-stitching effect*, which actually strengthens a society and reduces the danger of violence. The key to enabling this to happen however is flexibility within societies and a positive attitude towards the expression of discontent.<sup>75</sup>

Reflecting in the late 1980s on the possibilities for Christian churches to contribute to the struggle for justice in South Africa, Charles Villa-Vicencio saw a willingness to enter into the arena of social conflict as both a means to enable the church to rise above its own internal divisions as well as to contribute to laying the foundation for political renewal, creative restitution and genuine reconciliation. Acknowledging the insight emerging from the sociology-of-knowledge debate that all ideas, including religious ones, are shaped by the society within which they emerge, Villa-Vicencio believes that church members, like everyone else, are “locked into their own group-determined perception[s]”<sup>76</sup>.

Villa-Vicencio suggest that the only hope to rise above the limits of these contextually-influenced perception is for Christians to willingly enter into conflict with each other: “The most that can be hoped for is a situation in which our respective ideas and experiences are tested in relation to the ideas and experience of others. In so doing conflicting parties...are afforded the possibility of confronting one another’s gospel.”<sup>77</sup> Were the church able to accomplish this, it could have a powerful impact on the larger society. “The possibilities which can... emerge from the dialectic of creative conflict is a component which a society facing the threat of violent destruction cannot afford to ignore either in a pre- or post-revolutionary era.”<sup>78</sup>

In summary then, peacebuilders should not be concerned about the presence of conflict *per se*. Our concern rather should be how to respond to conflict in ways that harness this powerful engine for change, directing the energies unleashed by conflict constructively towards realization of the vision of shalom.

### ***Shalom Requires Conversion, Not Coercion***

I noted earlier that a vision for peace is in itself unremarkable. Military leaders worldwide routinely describe their mission as “preserving the peace” and have encoded their vision in the phrase “if you want peace, prepare for war.” A central feature of the vision underlying this thesis is the connection

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<sup>75</sup> Lewis Coser developed this theory most extensively in *The Functions of Social Conflict* (New York: The Free Press, 1956), 72-80. Galtung, *ibid.*, 521-522, reviews other theorists who have developed this idea. See also my essay and accompanying diagram in “‘Cross-Stitching’ Organisations: How Conflict Can Bind Them Into Stability” in *Track Two*, (August, 1993), Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town]: 7, 8.

<sup>76</sup> Villa-Vicencio, 20.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

between means and ends described earlier in Yoder. From this perspective it is impossible to achieve the vision of shalom through violence or domination.

Coercion is taken for granted in many circles as an inevitable component of responding to conflict. Much of what passes for diplomacy is in fact coercion thinly cloaked in the political language of *realpolitik*. While I will not in this thesis attempt to argue in principle against the use of force by impartial external parties to separate warring parties and protect civilians,<sup>79</sup> I assert that such actions have little if anything to do with the vision of shalom described earlier. At their very best they might be likened to efforts by forest fire fighters whose only skills are “fighting fire with fire” by starting new backfires to limit the damage of old ones. With skill, discipline, and luck such firefighters may succeed in putting out old fires, but the costs and risks are high. Even in the best scenario, the real work of restoration only begins after the fire is out, and the skills demanded for restoration are far more complex than those of the firefighters. Unfortunately, often the work of military “peacekeeping” is viewed as the primary task in making peace, with the result that the difficult tasks of building genuine peace are ignored.<sup>80</sup>

The vision of shalom calls for peacebuilding efforts that fundamentally alter the perceptions and attitudes of the parties in conflict towards each other. Such changes cannot be achieved by mere coercion, it can be accomplished only by *conversion*, a process of encounter, dialogue, critical self-examination, and voluntary change in the people involved in conflict. In the following chapter I call this “transformation” and propose strategies to accomplish it.

### ***Shalom Requires Universal Loyalty***

The shalom vision proposes not only a new understanding of reality but also a new and transcending *social identity* which supersedes all loyalties of class, kin, race, or nation. The Apostle Paul spoke of a “new humanity” in which old divisions were removed. At the cost of considerable controversy early followers of Jesus removed the ethnic barriers between Jews and Gentiles in response to this vision of loyalty to a new universal people.<sup>81</sup> The assumption at work here is that, in the words of Glenn Tinder, “the Lord of all time and existence has taken a personal interest in every human being, an interest that is compassionate and unwearying. The Christian universe is peopled exclusively with

<sup>79</sup> Cf. John Howard Yoder’s catalogue and assessment of theories of religious pacifism, *Nevertheless* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1971).

<sup>80</sup> See John Paul Lederach, “Ethical Dilemmas of Military Intervention in Disaster Relief, the Development of Cooperative Relationships for Long Term Rehabilitation and Development”, June, 1993. Unpublished paper available from the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Transformation, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA.

<sup>81</sup> Charles Scriven, *The Transformation of Culture: Christian Social Ethics After H. Richard Niebuhr* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1988) 167-180, says that “universal loyalty” is one of three social virtues “implied by the Anabaptist idea of solidarity with Christ”. The other two are *political engagement* and *nonviolence*. Scriven credits the specific term “universal loyalty” to H. Richard Niebuhr.

royalty.” Because each person has been immeasurably dignified, all deserve attention, and without exception “no one is to be casually sacrificed.” “No one should be left outside, an alien and a barbarian.”<sup>82</sup> No one can be “consigned to silence or deprived of those powers that mean full participation as members of the community.”<sup>83</sup> None can be indifferent to the destiny of anyone else anywhere on earth for all share equal status.

The biggest challenge to the vision of universal loyalty today is that of nationality. Virtually all nations claim the highest loyalties of their citizens, expecting that citizens will be loyal to the nation’s interest and serve it diligently in all situations.<sup>84</sup> Even “Christian” nations assume that citizens will place loyalty to nation higher than loyalty to fellow believers by serving in armies in wartime and unquestioningly killing other Christian believers who happen to live in other nations.<sup>85</sup> But an ultimate commitment to a new and transcending order of human existence is likely to test other loyalties as well: institutional, economic, ethnic and racial, professional, class, etc. The vision of shalom calls those committed to it to make decisions based on commitment to the new order, not to existing loyalties.

The implications are multiple. For one, peacebuilding capable of bringing shalom can be undertaken only by peacebuilders who see clearly and continually resist the diverse, often subtle ways in which their own loyalties of race, religion, and nation impose claims on the peacebuilders themselves. If a great deal of peacebuilding is undertaken through coercive means, an equal amount is undertaken to support the partisan interests and prejudices of peacebuilders. A question peacebuilders need to continually ask themselves is this: Is our primary commitment to serving the interests of these parties and the larger vision of shalom, as versus serving our own institutional or national agenda?

Peacebuilders do have an agenda of course, namely, the introduction of shalom to human relationships. But this is an agenda based on universal loyalty to the equal well-being of all. Additionally, as I will develop in detail later, the appropriate stance for peacebuilders is transparency regarding their own identity and values. This provides an important safeguard against the danger of manipulation of the trust placed in peacebuilders by the parties and the influence over the lives of others which results.

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<sup>82</sup> Glenn Tinder, “Can We Be Good Without God?” *Atlantic Monthly*, (December 1989): 72.

<sup>83</sup> Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community*, 149.

<sup>84</sup> The concept of the nation-state is essentially European in origins. The fact that it is now the international norm is hardly testimony to its universal value as the basic unit for conceptualizing the organization of people. Rather it is one of the many legacies of the colonial era during which European political ideals pervaded the globe.

<sup>85</sup> While virtually all contemporary Anabaptist theologians acknowledge the need for and legitimacy of state structures in organizing human life, a central theme of Anabaptism from its earliest day has been the priority of loyalty to the kingdom of God over loyalty to nation, and an assumption that the two often stand in tension.

Another implication of universal loyalty is that it requires peacebuilders in a world dominated by structures with partisan loyalties to actively communicate to others the nature of their loyalty. To interact transformationally with people in conflict requires enormous trust on their part, and grasping the universal loyalty of peacebuilders is an important contribution towards building that trust; in the later Chapter on “Community” I point out the value of peacebuilders being rooted in a tradition of people who demonstrate universal loyalty as an essential resource in making such claims credible. In addition to enhancing the building of trust with people in conflict, by publicly articulating an identity that transcends loyalties of race and nation, peacebuilders strengthen their own ability to be faithful to that identity, for they are now publicly accountable to their own values.

Finally, peacebuilding initiatives need to reflect in their own human composition the nature of the reality to which they testify by being staffed by people of diverse backgrounds. A group of peacebuilders consisting of men and women of various races is likely to have more credibility and effectiveness than a team of white men of European origins. If that team contains people from both sides of the conflict being addressed it may have even more impact. Partly this is a mere matter of faithfulness and integrity, of practicing what is preached. But it is also a matter of empathy, credibility and trust with the parties in conflict, and thus ultimately of effectiveness in interacting with them. Mistrust is after all probably the biggest handicap to peacebuilding in the model outlined here and mistrust is ubiquitous in conflict; cynicism about human motivations is the norm. Universal loyalty guides, then, in fundamental ways in decisionmaking about the formation of peace initiatives.

## Conclusion

Is not the above utopian, “out of touch” with the political realities of the current world? Yes, it is utopian, in the sense that Beverly Harrison says, “as all good theology is, in that it *envisages* a society, a world, a cosmos, in which...there are no ‘excluded ones.’”<sup>86</sup> Let us also hope that it is not in step with current political realities, for if there is anything that can be said with confidence, it is that politics as they are currently engaged in do not serve the “excluded ones”. The point of this chapter is not that peacebuilders must embody the full vision of shalom as a prerequisite for action. Rather it is that we need an explicit reference point to guide our decisionmaking, an overarching vision for human life which enables us to determine the direction in which we will invest our energies and to articulate to others what we are about so that we can be held accountable for our actions.<sup>87</sup> If

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<sup>86</sup> Beverly Wildung Harrison, *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics*, edited by Carol S. Robb (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 20; Harrison attributes the idea to Jules Girardi.

<sup>87</sup> Stephen R. Covey, *The Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1990) 1-182, makes this point quite effectively, albeit in the context of personal life planning. The well-known Quaker peace activist Elise Boulding has conducted a large number of workshops based on a similar premise. See her book *Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World* (New York and London: Teachers

our reference point is explicit rather than implicit, we are less vulnerable to making decisions according to values which we do not wish to serve, including quite possibly the same values which contributed to violence in the first place.

From the standpoint of shalom, the goal is not to fine-tune a system which basically works well, it is to enable the abandonment of a set of assumptions and behaviors whose devastation to life on this planet is all too evident, and to introduce a new reality which nourishes and supports all. Larry Rasmussen says we accomplish this by living "as if":

"...as if God's exalting, leveling grace and its way mattered. It means living as if the barriers between rich, poor, and underclass were not the givens the present economy says they are; living as if the chief actor of the past two hundred years, the nation-state, were no longer the only chief power, since it is now too large for local problems and too small for global ones; living as if the world were indeed a single public household or world house, to recall Martin Luther King's image; or in another of his images, living as if we constituted a single moral community wrapped in a common garment and shared destiny.<sup>88</sup>

The challenge for peacebuilders is to operate in the current environment in ways that most effectively abandon the old and support the introduction of the new. That becomes possible only to the extent that we have a clear understanding of the shape of the new and what it looks like in actual practice.

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College Press, 1988) 107-117, for a description of a workshop for "Imaging a World Without Weapons". The workshop begins by clarifying hopes for the kind of world participants would like to live in 30 years into the future and works backwards from there in five year increments so as to devise a strategic action plan of steps required to create such a world.

<sup>88</sup> Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community*, 149.

## Chapter Two

### Transformation as the Path to Shalom

I have argued that every actor in the arena of conflict operates from an often implicit vision of what the possibilities for dealing with conflict are. By setting the parameters of what is believed to be desirable or possible, this vision profoundly influences the attitudes and responses of each actor to the conflict. Therefore constructive response to conflict is more likely if decisionmakers state explicitly the source and nature of their vision. I pointed to the Judeo-Christian vision of shalom as the source of my own understanding of peace as a holistic state of well-being that includes dimensions of material well-being, justice, harmonious relationships, and moral/spiritual integrity.

This raises a second question that is related to the question of vision, strategy. If vision answers the question “towards what?”, strategy answers the question “how do we get there in ways consistent with the vision?” This and the chapters which follow in this section respond to the latter question. The current chapter addresses one particular aspect of it, the nature of the transaction which peacebuilders seek to facilitate in settings of conflict.

Conflict arises from and causes a bewildering array of problems. In many situations of conflict, problems range from urgent short-term survival needs such as food, housing, and health care to highly complex, political and/or economic issues such as human rights, disputed national boundaries, ethnic and religious diversity, social and economic stratification, etc. Between these short-term and long-term problems lie the medium-term problems that any “normal” society wrestles with such as schooling, transport, human and economic development, environmental issues, etc.

Thus peacebuilders need a way of allocating their time and resources most effectively. The challenge is not to identify one set of problems as more important than others, for in the end all problems need to be addressed. My goal in this chapter is rather to propose a general criterion for deciding which actions on the part of the peacebuilder are most likely to contribute to reaching the vision of shalom. Drawing on the work of Robert Baruch Bush and Joseph Folger in their book *The Promise of Mediation*, I propose *transformation* as that criterion.

## Moral Transformation

Writing in the American context, Bush and Folger outline four stories or paradigms of the mediation movement which they believe currently dominate thinking in their country about mediation: the Satisfaction Story, the Social Justice Story, the Oppression Story, and the Transformation Story. The Satisfaction Story views mediation “as creative problem solving, which produces settlements that satisfy disputing parties on all sides of conflicts.” The Social Justice Story “sees mediation as helping to organize and build coalitions among individuals, so as to generate greater bargaining power for the ‘have-nots.’” The Transformation Story “pictures mediation as working to engender moral growth in disputing parties, thus producing stronger and more compassionate human beings out of the crucible of human conflict.” The Oppression Story reflects the views of critics of mediation who oppose its use because they see mediation “as applying pressure and manipulation in ways that cause greater unfairness to the already disadvantaged.”<sup>1</sup>

Bush and Folger agree with some goals of all the stories. They agree for example that the goal of the Satisfaction Story, finding optimal solutions to the needs of all parties, is a good one. They also make clear that they are committed to the goal of the Social Justice and Oppression Story, namely to promote equality and justice. However they believe the most important goal should be “engendering moral growth and transforming human character, toward both greater strength and greater compassion.” This is the Transformation Story, which “stresses mediation’s capacity for fostering empowerment and recognition, because when these occur in conflict, it signifies that the ultimate goal of moral development has been attained to some degree by one or both parties.”<sup>2</sup> Transformation via empowerment and recognition “should take precedence over the other goals mediation can be used to attain, even though those other goals are themselves important.”<sup>3</sup>

They argue that the goal of transformation has a unique character which sets it apart from other goals such as satisfaction or fairness. On the one hand, satisfying peoples’ unmet needs is an important goal, as is “preventing unfairness, which usually also means reducing suffering.”<sup>4</sup> But such goals do not go far enough, for

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Bush and Joseph Folger, *The Promise of Mediation: Responding to Conflict Through Empowerment and Recognition* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-29.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 29

both of these aims involve changing people's *situations* for the better. Transformation is a different *kind* of goal. It involves changing not just situations but people themselves, and thus the society as a whole. It aims at creating a 'better world,' not just in the sense of a more smoothly or fairly working version of what now exists but in the sense of a different kind of world altogether. The goal is a world in which people are not just better off, but better: more human and more humane. Achieving this goal means transforming people from dependent beings concerned only with themselves (weak and selfish people) into secure and self-reliant beings willing to be concerned with and responsive to others (strong and caring people). The occurrence of this transformation brings out the intrinsic good, the highest level, within human beings. And with changed, better human beings, society as a whole becomes a changed, better place."<sup>5</sup>

The primary goal in transformative mediation then is not improving the parties' situation, but rather "improving *the parties themselves* from what they were before."<sup>6</sup> This is accomplished by two primary strategies: empowerment and recognition.

Empowerment involves increasing peoples' sense of strength and ability to take control of their situation. People are empowered when they come to a clearer recognition or understanding of their goals, when they become more aware of their options and the degree of their own control over those options, when they increase their skills in conflict resolution, communication, problem-solving, etc., when they gain new awareness of resources already within their possession or new sources of support; or when they increase their ability to make conscious, reflective decisions.<sup>7</sup> Whenever these things occur in mediation, "the party experiences a greater sense of self-worth, security, self-determinations, and autonomy."<sup>8</sup>

Bush and Folger are at pains to point out that "empowerment is independent of any particular outcome of the mediation", including an unfair or unwise outcome. They say that "even a 'poor outcome' produced by the party's own process of reflection and choice strengthens the self more than a 'good outcome' induced by the mediator's directiveness or imposition."<sup>9</sup>

The other key factor in transformative mediation according to Bush and Folger is *recognition*, which involves moving beyond self-absorbed postures of defensiveness, suspicion, and hostility towards a stance of other-awareness. A party gives recognition in mediation when he stops thinking exclusively about his own situation and begins to focus to some degree on what the other party is going through, when she allows herself to see the other party in a new and more favorable light than before, or says or does things which indicate a new and more sympathetic view of the

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

other party. Such moves enable a party to reach “beyond himself to relate to another person’s common humanity in a concrete way. When the mediator helps to bring any of these kinds of things about in the mediation, the objective of recognition has been achieved to some degree.”<sup>10</sup>

Success in mediation, then, is not judged according to whether the parties have reached accord.

Rather mediation is successful to the extent that:

- 1) “the parties have been made aware of the opportunities presented during the mediation for both empowerment and recognition;”
- 2) “the parties have been helped to clarify goals, options, and resources, and then to make informed, deliberate, and free choices regarding how to proceed at every decision point;” and
- 3) “the parties have been helped to give recognition wherever it was their decision to do so.”<sup>11</sup>

If these objectives are met, the parties “will experience both strengthening of self and greater actualization of their capacity for relating to others, and they will advance in both critical dimensions of moral development. Successful mediation will bring out the intrinsic strength and goodness that lie within the parties as human beings, to the fullest extent possible.”<sup>12</sup>

In practice, the challenge for mediators is to conduct themselves in relation to the parties in ways that “capture opportunities” to facilitate empowerment and recognition. Bush and Folger suggest three basic strategies for accomplishing this:

- 1) **Microfocusing on the Parties’ Contributions.** Mediators should scan every move by the parties - “their statements, challenges, questions, narrative - for the possibilities each affords for transformative opportunities.”<sup>13</sup> What they seek is “points where choices arise that the parties can be empowered to make...” and “openings that afford disputants the chance to give recognition by acknowledging each other’s perspectives. In general, mediators enter the session looking for, and expecting to find and capture, myriad opportunities for empowerment and recognition as the case unfolds in front of them.”
- 2) **Encouraging Parties’ Deliberation and Choice Making.** This strategy flows from the commitment to empowerment. Mediators should “try to clarify parties’ available choices at all key junctures and encourage parties to reflect and deliberate with full awareness of their options, goals, and resources. The parties’ goals and choices are treated as central at all levels of decision making. Mediators consciously try to avoid shaping issues, proposals, or terms for settlement, or even pushing for the achievement of settlement at all. Instead, they encourage parties to define problems and find solutions for themselves, and they endorse and support the parties’ own efforts to do so.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

- 3) Encourage perspective taking. This strategy flows from the commitment to facilitating recognition. Mediators “actively explore each party’s statements for openings that allow one party to consider the other’s situation or self.” “To aid perspective taking, mediators reinterpret, translate, and reframe parties’ statements - not to shape issues or solutions but to help make each party more intelligible to the other.”<sup>15</sup>

## Moral Transformation and Shalom

Bush and Folger move far towards defining an approach to peacebuilding which is compatible with shalom. With its emphasis on supporting parties in conflict to reach towards their fullest potential while simultaneously acting in ways that are compassionate and considerate, moral transformation as they envision overlaps substantially with the vision for shalom outlined in the last chapter.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>16</sup> In *Just Peacebuilding: Transforming Initiatives for Justice and Peace* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) 53-113, Glenn Stassen, a Baptist scholar, develops the concept of “transforming initiatives” as a key theological concept through exegesis of a number of key passages dealing with conflict in the New Testament. Stassen’s proposal is similar to Bush and Folger’s concept of moral transformation in its commitment to changing the hearts of opponents. In the interests of addressing the broadest possible audience, I am building my case wherever possible on work outside of theology, hence my choice to structure my initial argument in this chapter around Bush and Folger rather than Stassen. Then too, Stassen addresses primarily situations where his audience are themselves parties to conflict rather than prospective peacebuilders. Nevertheless his work merits note here for it broadens the repertoire of strategies proposed by Bush and Folger for peacebuilding.

Stassen begins by arguing at some length that Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount is not a legalistic prescription of utopian answers for dealing with adversaries as it is widely understood. Instead it points to a new ethic for dealing with evil and injustice. Rather than respond in ways that lock us into the same behaviors as opponents, we should respond in creative and surprising ways that are capable of transforming not only the situation but the opponent as well, hence the name “transforming initiatives.” Such an approach is well-demonstrated in the tactics of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and others in the non-violence movement who have developed an extensive body of experience.

Studying the experience of “die Wende”, the end of a divided Germany, Stassen proposes seven steps for transforming initiatives, a number of which overlap with themes treated elsewhere in this thesis:

1. Affirm the legitimate interests of opponents and acknowledge common security. Parties in conflict should seek ways to acknowledge the legitimate interests of their enemies and acknowledge that they have related security needs that will require cooperation to meet.
2. Take independent initiatives. Parties can independently take initiatives intended to transform the perceptions of opponents by, for example shifting the focus of their military planning from offensive capacity towards defensive capacity. The goal is to establish each side’s own positive intent by unilaterally taking steps that shift away from confrontation, but that do not put the party undertaking an initiative at risk.
3. Talk with the enemy. Each side can commit itself to talking and negotiation as its preferred way of resolving conflict.
4. Seek human rights and justice for all, especially the powerless, without double standard. Stassen’s emphasis here is on each side taking responsibility for its own failures to act justly in a variety of relationships. By taking measures to set its own house in order, each side can contribute to a larger atmosphere of just and principled behavior.
5. Acknowledge vicious cycles; participate in peacebuilding processes. Each side should acknowledge the way in which all are caught in a spiral of escalation and seek to set in motion peace processes designed to de-escalate the conflict.
6. End judgmental propaganda; make amends. Instead of judgmental propaganda, each side can acknowledge that it has caused hurt and wants to take action to do better. Stassen asserts that repressed guilt about its own destructive actions often distorts each side’s perceptions and blocks trust on the part of others.
7. Work with citizens’ groups for the truth. Stassen’s emphasis here is on empowering citizens groups on each side with accurate information and a voice in policy-making, as a corrective to the self-justifying and self-interested tendencies of governments.

Less apparent is another commonality their framework shares with the biblical vision of shalom: the priority it places on *achieving the highest possible level of goodness* in human relationships. This goal over-rides all other concerns that might commonly be viewed as acceptable. It is not enough, for example, simply to achieve justice, or merely to work out an efficient solution to a problem. Folger and Bush are more interested in whether or not the parties have changed in ways that enhance their general ability to function compassionately and to achieve their highest capacity as human beings. Although they use secular language, they reflect the commitment called for by shalom to guide response to problems according to a vision for the highest potential of human community. They superimpose this vision even on situations that might appear inconsequential and urge that it guide responses there, even if doing so reduces the chances of meeting other goals like gaining short-term settlement or achieving immediate justice. In the sense that they seek to guide present behavior by their understanding of a future reality, they operate from what Christian theologians call *realized eschatology*.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Value of Moral Transformation in Setting Priorities**

One of the most useful dimensions of the concept of moral transformation in peacebuilding is its capacity to address the problem I identified earlier in this chapter, the need to set priorities. Much of the richness and power of the vision for shalom outlined in Chapter One is due to the fact that it is holistic, encompassing all dimensions of human life. But being holistic can be hazardous. Human beings and our institutions are limited in resources; it is impossible to do everything at once. Peacebuilders therefore need to set clear strategic priorities.

Although the framework offered by Folger and Bush assumes and supports the broader goals of justice and restoration of relationships which are key elements of the vision of shalom, it gives priority to moral transformation, changing the way the parties think. What might such a priority look like in practice?

I wish to examine here a specific peacebuilding effort undertaken by the Mennonite Central Committee, a religious actor which has strongly influenced my own understanding of peacebuilding. Although the term “moral transformation” was not a part of the vocabulary of MCC planners, in retrospect it seems apparent that MCC’s priority was indeed to contribute to the possibility of change in ways similar to “moral transformation”.

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Part of the value of Stassen’s proposals is that whereas the strategies offered by Bush and Folger assume that the parties have already agreed to mediation, Stassen’s work suggest responses which can contribute to the transformation of opponents even where there has been no agreement to mediate.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. footnote 64, Chapter One.

During and after the Viet Nam War, the American-based Mennonite Central Committee sent several shiploads of medical supplies and equipment to Hanoi as a gesture of love for the people of North Viet Nam, whom the US government at that time was fighting. Although the MCC was operating world-wide in many situations of desperate need, it chose to give special priority in fundraising and publicity to this effort.<sup>18</sup>

This effort suggests a number of guidelines with which to put the concept of moral transformation into practice in situations of conflict.

***Focus on moral transformation, not on right outcomes.***

The starting point of the Mennonite response was an assumption shared by Folger and Bush: the goal in peacebuilding is to impact the parties at the level of moral awareness, not to deliver or impose right outcomes. The amount of aid delivered by the MCC was small compared to the needs of the embargoed Vietnamese people. Any effort to calculate the utility of this response in terms of immediate outcomes would likely have judged this effort impractical and therefore ill-advised. The goal in immediate terms was modest; not to set things “right” but to offer the parties opportunities to change the way they thought about the situation, and each other.

***Focus on activities which do not depend upon power for implementation***

Moral transformation can never be imposed. Recognition, one of the two essential dimensions of moral transformation “can only be achieved when parties willingly give it—either in response to a mediators’ efforts or spontaneously.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore efforts imposed on the parties by power contribute little or nothing to the possibility of moral transformation. One implication of this is that peacebuilders need not hold positional power to be effective. Later we will see in fact that certain kinds of powerlessness can number among the peacebuilder’s greatest assets.

The Mennonites were few in number and MCC was a relatively small NGO. In terms of ability to impose any significant changes in behavior on either party, MCC was virtually powerless in the situation. But this practical powerlessness was no obstacle in finding a way to interact with the parties in a way that had a significant impact on both.

***View peacebuilding as an incremental undertaking.***

The example illustrates another feature of the moral transformation vision that is valuable in strategy-setting: an incremental understanding of peacebuilding. The Mennonite response met the

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<sup>18</sup> See Robert Kreider and Rachel Goosen, *Hungry, Thirsty, A Stranger: The MCC Experience* (Scottsdale: Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1988), 139-162; and Luke S. Martin, *An Evaluation of a Generation of Mennonite Mission, Service and Peacemaking in Viet Nam 1954-1976* (Akron, Pennsylvania: Viet Nam Study Project sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities: July, 1977), 108-114.

<sup>19</sup> Bush and Folger, 984.

parties where they were, seeking neither preconditions for implementation nor “settlements” as measures of a successful outcome. With Bush and Folger, those planning this response shared the awareness that even small changes in empowerment and recognition can eventually have a significant impact on the possibility of peace. But because the goal is to change the way people think, the practical results are often slow in appearing.

***Re-focus humanitarian efforts to meet the goal of moral transformation.***

This experience demonstrates the capacity of the moral transformation goal to re-focus and give new meaning to a wide range of activities that in themselves are ordinary, thereby accomplishing something more significant. The actual amount of materiel sent was modest; surely it made little practical difference in the daily lives of most North Vietnamese. Nevertheless the gesture was transformative. By acknowledging the humanity of the North Vietnamese, the Mennonite effort presented an opportunity for recognition of their enemy to the American public in the form of a bold challenge to re-assess views of a people commonly known as “gooks”, “VC”, “Charlie”, and “commies”. Likewise the relief effort surely increased the sense, to recall a phrase from Bush and Folger, of “self-worth, security, self-determination and autonomy” of the North Vietnamese. The fact that the US government, fighting propaganda battles at every front, unsuccessfully sought to block shipment of the supplies is itself some indication of the power of the act.

The goal of moral transformation then guides in setting priorities. Out of many needy areas in the world, the MCC chose to give priority to the Viet Nam situation because they wished to be a reconciling presence. In the language of Folger and Bush, the question implicitly being asked and answered by the MCC administrators was this: Which of the many situations of need and conflict in the world offers the most important opportunities for us to contribute to the moral transformation of the parties?

Moral transformation also suggests useful questions after a situation has been selected. What activities are likely to maximize the possibility of moral transformation? As framed by Folger and Bush, the question would be: How could activities be undertaken in such a way that the parties are most likely to be empowered in terms of self-respect and self-initiative, and enabled to offer recognition to their opponents?

***Give priority to activity with symbolic impact.***

The case demonstrates a key reality in the practical application of the goal of moral transformation: much significant impact takes place at the level of the symbolic. No amount of relief to the people of North Viet Nam would have been adequate to truly empower them, nor capable of converting the prevailing American mindset against them. Nevertheless the token measures of the MCC made an impact on both parties. The shipments drew controversy in the

United States during the war years and formed an important part of a larger national outcry against the war which in the end led to its termination. For their part the North Vietnamese repeatedly expressed enormous gratitude to Mennonite representatives for the materiel provided and for the spirit of reconciliation in which it was offered and used the Mennonite Central Committee for several years after the war ended as its only channel of diplomatic interaction with the West.

We see then the potential for a small action that is insignificant at the moment in terms of changing the balance of power to contribute to a deep shift in the way people think. This can lead eventually to changed actions so that ultimately the affect even at a practical level can be profound.

Perhaps it goes without saying that many religions have a rich variety of resources to draw upon in selecting actions with symbolic value: sacred scriptures, liturgies, places and objects; rituals, pronouncements and acts of prophetic challenge, compassion and forgiveness; saints, clergy, institutional staff, and lay persons able to act in the name of a metaphysical calling, etc. What is more, religious symbols often command widespread recognition and respect. A cleric's collar or robe is likely to evoke a respectful response anywhere in the world, regardless of the religious environment. It is hardly chance that the world's two most prominent and respected disaster relief organizations, the International Red Cross and the International Red Crescent societies, have origins in and operate under the sacred symbols of Christianity and Islam, respectively.

### **Conceptual Limits of Moral Transformation**

Despite its important strengths, the concept of moral transformation as understood by Bush and Folger requires substantial expansion in order to serve as an adequate guide for peacebuilding in the kinds of conflicts envisioned in this thesis. The concept of empowerment deserves to be extended to include the concept of *responsibility*, which embodies the ultimate, most mature form of empowerment. To the extent that people choose to take responsibility for their actions and the consequences of their actions, they are empowered to learn from the past and thus change in the ways Bush and Folger recognize as important. Similarly the concept of recognition deserves to be broadened to include the concept of *forgiveness*, which symbolically expresses the deepest possible recognition that one person can offer another person in conflict. By declining to hold specific mistakes and failures against those who have made them, people in conflict are able to recognize the underlying existential legitimacy of their opponents.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> I am grateful to Larry Hoover for the points about recognition and forgiveness. As I will make clear in the later chapter on "Reconciliation", by suggesting the possibility of forgiveness I am not advocating amnesia or facile release from the past.

More fundamentally however, the framework as presented reflects a methodological discontinuity that corresponds to a conceptual gap in the thinking of many people in conflict as well as in many peacebuilders. That gap consists of a failure to develop meaningful strategic connections between the personal and the communal, between the dynamics of personal transformation and social transformation, between the ethics of individual relationships and public planning.

Bush and Folger reflect awareness of systemic and public issues, but their book concerns itself with conflicts at the *micro* not at the *macro* level of society. The two case studies which they explore in depth to present their concepts, for example, are about tenants and landlords and angry neighbors operating *as individuals*, not as groups or classes. The mediation strategies they propose assume a small number of individuals sitting across a table representing themselves alone.

The vision of shalom in contrast calls our attention to another reality: that humans are more than individuals, we live in *societies* which shape us profoundly and often in hidden ways. When communities and societies are shattered and sick they diminish the ability of individuals to relate humanely to others or become deeply moral beings.<sup>21</sup> Thus individuals are affected by forces much bigger than might appear from the image of a handful of people gathered around a mediation table.

Let us say, for example, that recently a government bill was passed which raised taxes for working families but reduced them for owners of apartments. Neither party may be thinking about this as they face each other across a mediation table, yet the potential of this external economic dynamic to influence the ability of the parties to resolve this conflict is obvious. Or suppose one of the parties belongs to a racial or cultural group which others view in stereotypical ways as lazy, greedy, aggressive. This does not prevent a mediator from offering opportunities to the parties for moral transformation and in the best case, such opportunities may be accepted. But at the end of the session the people at the table must go home, to the fold of their own cultural or racial group. If stereotypes are strong here, it will be difficult for either party to sustain any attitudes of recognition they may have achieved at the table. Somehow people in conflict need to be enabled to become aware of and critically examine these larger systemic and structural issues, and to respond in ways that address them.

We cannot hope to transform individuals unless we are acutely aware of the larger structures and social forces constantly at work whenever any two individuals interact. These forces are often not very visible, a fact which only increases their power, for if they are not seen they cannot be

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<sup>21</sup> Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community*, provides the best analysis I am aware of regarding the shattered nature of American society, and his analysis could be applied to many urban communities worldwide.

addressed. But in powerful ways they subtly mold the expectations and overall well-being of individuals long before and long after they may encounter each other at a mediation table. No matter how much improvement individuals may experience as moral beings, these larger forces are likely to keep them or others like them at cross purposes unless the moment for transformation occasioned by their conflict addresses structures as well.<sup>22</sup>

To their credit, in their concluding analysis Bush and Folger are at pains to critique what they characterize as an “Individualist worldview” with a corresponding minimalist view of society as a “kind of referee or intermediary” whose primary task is to ensure the freedom and individuality of all.<sup>23</sup> The individualist worldview, they insightfully assert, “leads to a view of human nature that emphasizes separateness, autonomy, individuality, and self-interestedness”.<sup>24</sup> They propose as an alternative, the “relational worldview” whose most important value is transformation, “the achievement of human conduct that integrates strength of self and compassion toward others”<sup>25</sup> The central feature of human nature in this alternative worldview is the capacity to be both strong in oneself and compassionate to others, to be “simultaneously separated and connected, autonomous and linked, self-interested and self-transcending.”<sup>26</sup> The role of society and institutions, Bush and Folger say, is to enable transformation by helping individuals to master the tension between these two competing requirements of moral behavior. They stress that in contrast to the Individualist worldview, they believe that the role of society and institutions is not simply to *allow* individuals to be free and strong, rather these collective structures must actively *help* them to achieve the difficult balance that lies at the heart of the human transformation.

This is good, so far as it goes. But it is too little if we wish to avoid the pitfalls of the Individualist worldview which Bush and Folger insightfully critique. The critical reality needing to be addressed is that how we live as individuals and whether or not we are capable of living in authentic human community is profoundly influenced by institutions and society. Bush and Folger acknowledge this and devote a paragraph - the one alluded to above - to the need for institutions and society to actively help individuals to balance the tension inherent in moral transformation. But one paragraph to address what is arguably at least half the problem in accomplishing moral transformation? By failing to address the implications of the vision of moral transformation for

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. David Tracy and John B. Cobb, Jr., *Talking About God*, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983), 90, who write: “Do we change individuals through structural social changes? Or do we change society through changing individuals? The answer, of course, is that neither can occur effectively except in interaction with the other.”

<sup>23</sup> Folger and Bush, 238.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 242.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

how mediators interact with the realm of structures and collective life, Folger and Bush gravely jeopardize their aspiration to overcome separateness and autonomy.<sup>27</sup>

### Transformation as Goal

If the “micro” focus of their study allowed Folger and Bush to avoid facing the need for addressing the transformation of institutions and societies, the topic here, war and conflict between large groups of people, does not. Granted, peacebuilding in the setting we have in mind involves interaction with individuals in the sense that all planning, decisionmaking, and negotiation require interaction between a small number of individual leaders or representatives. This fact redeems the work of Bush and Folger for our purposes, for the moment-by-moment interactions of peacebuilder with conflicting parties may often take place in the individual context assumed by these authors.

But peacebuilding efforts in wars and group conflicts have credibility only to the extent that those individuals are connected to large collectivities; that connection comes via institutions. If peacebuilding is not rooted in institutions - whether grounded in formal, informal, symbolic, or legal realities will depend on the situation - it is a waste of time and worse, a fraud. Peacebuilders must have a clear sense of the structural dimensions of moral transformation if we intend our efforts to contribute to it. In the following chapters I spell this out in greater detail.

In light of the above I propose then to use the simple term “transformation”. The goal is not only *moral* transformation of the parties as proposed in Bush and Folger by providing them opportunities to become better people through empowerment and recognition, but also *societal* transformation by addressing the economic, political and social structures in which conflicts are embedded and the values reflected in those structures. The concepts of empowerment and recognition, writ large to the level of collectives, serve well in conceptualizing transformative strategies in this greater arena of awareness and action. Even in the arena of structural or political change, they capture the need to, on one hand, empower groups to become strong, self-reliant, and capable of asserting their needs and on the other, to enable them to recognize the legitimate needs of other groups.

The critical dimension of transformation that remains missing is an understanding of where and how empowerment and recognition are joined at the level of collectives and societies. To

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<sup>27</sup> Larry Rasmussen makes a similar critique of Carol Gilligan, from whom Bush and Folger borrow their basic framework of moral transformation: “We are left, then, with innumerable proposals for society that, like Daly and Cobb, take the requisite basic moral formation utterly for granted; and studies of moral development that, like Kohlberg, Fowler, and Gilligan, say too little about the necessary ‘macro’ social structures and the nature of morally healthy social participation.” Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community*, 112.

elucidate this point, let us suppose that each party is indeed fully empowered and fully committed to recognition of each other. What then? What enables them to proceed from their separate states of empowerment and recognition to the essential task of jointly addressing the issues which stand between them? In mediation between individuals it may be sufficient to rely on a mediator. But groups or societies are complex, often paradoxical phenomena.<sup>28</sup> Their differing structures for creating meaning cause them to react in diverse ways to the same event. Their identity and values, while powerful in influencing the response of members, are often unclear and in a process of ongoing transformation. Internal norms and structures of authority and decisionmaking often contradict key values.

Minimally we can say that to interact transformationally with conflict in groups and societies requires peacebuilders to view their task in broad terms. John Paul Lederach offers a useful set of categories here, proposing that transformation involves promoting peaceful change in four spheres of human reality:<sup>29</sup>

**Personal:** Conflicts create enormous stress and trauma for individuals by disturbing or destroying routines of personal physical survival and social existence, by creating enormous fear, anxiety and often hatred; by limiting or destroying opportunities for education, work and personal development. Together the damage at these levels often precipitate emotional and spiritual crisis. A vision for holistic human well-being therefore requires that peacebuilders find ways to restore the structures of personal life and development and to enable healing from the traumas inflicted by conflict.

**Relational:** Conflicts damage and often destroy relationships. Communication often functions poorly, expectations of the relationship often become mismatched, perceptions are often widely distorted, ability to cooperate even in non-conflictual areas is usually reduced. Special efforts are required to address these problem in order to establish or restore relationships.

**Structural:** Conflicts often have their roots in social conditions or structures that block the meeting of basic human needs (substantive justice) and the participation of people in decisions that affect them (procedural justice). Transformation at this level requires analysis of the structural causes of conflict and the creation of non-violent mechanisms to address them.

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<sup>28</sup> See Kenwyn K. Smith and David N. Berg, *Paradoxes of Group Life: Understanding Conflict, Paralysis, and Movement in Group Dynamics* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988), for a review of paradoxes inherent in group life.

<sup>29</sup> Revised from John Paul Lederach, "Conflict Transformation: A Working Definition", unpublished handout, 1994.

**Cultural:** Often cultural patterns exist that contribute towards violent expressions of conflict. Such destructive patterns often develop as a response to conflict as well, increasing the likelihood of future violence. The possibility of transformation requires an examination of culture, in order to identify patterns that contribute to violence as well to use it as a resource in promoting and building upon existing concepts and mechanisms for constructive response to conflict.

If we place these four dimensions of involvement on a spectrum it becomes apparent that it is a broad one indeed.

**Personal                  Relational                  Structural                  Cultural**

**Microanalysis <-----> Macroanalysis**

### *Spheres of Transformation*

But in addition to recognizing the broad understanding of human life required for transformation to be a possibility in social conflicts, I wish to define the essential nature of what needs to happen in order to enable transformation in these areas. In addressing this question, I turn to one of the most troublesome but powerfully healing responses to conflict and violence, *apology*, which provides an important insight here.<sup>30</sup>

Apology is widely recognized for its almost miraculous capacity to alter relationships,<sup>31</sup> but the nature of its power is little understood. Nicholas Tavuchis points in the right direction in his discussion of diplomatic apology:

...a collective *mea culpa*, publicly uttered in response to its own call, simultaneously bespeaks recognition and commitment to a normative domain beyond that of immediate self-interest and effectively shifts the moral burden onto the offended party by focusing upon the issue of forgiveness.<sup>32</sup>

The power of sincere apology lies in the meta-message embedded within it that the apologizers have at least begun to guide their conduct by moral vision and principle rather than mere expediency and self-interest. Apology implies *hope* in the possibility of guiding human behavior by moral discernment, by “what is right” however undefined that is yet likely to be, rather than by “what is expedient”. Apology also asserts a *willingness to be self-critical* in application of principles of “what is right” to one’s own behavior. Because it is offered to another person or

<sup>30</sup> I say “troublesome” because apology is widely understood as a “magical” solution to problems or an easy way out. Cf. the later chapter on “Reconciliation”.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Shriver, 220-224; Nicholas Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991), 6.

<sup>32</sup> Tavuchis, 6.

group, apology additionally recognizes that moral discernment is a *collective* process in which groups have legitimate claims on each other; it is not merely a question of each group doing as it chooses. In summary, apology is powerful because it evokes the possibility of *moral discernment as the governing response to conflict*. Perhaps it goes without saying that such a possibility is central to shalom, which asserts that it is possible to guide human behavior by attending to a vision for what ought to be.

The possibility of moral discernment lies at the heart then of the essential third dimension of transformation. Many practitioners will recognize how difficult it is to get people in conflict to even *attempt* to deal with their issues by a process of joint discussion and planning rather than through the unilateral strategies which typify almost all violent conflicts. Thus one of the first goals for peacebuilders is to enable groups in conflict to *recover hope* in the possibility of addressing their differences through a process of joint discussion, analysis, and planning rather than through coercion or unilateral action.

But hope is only the beginning. Moral discernment implies the existence of norms. Who determines these? The only possible answer is *those who are in conflict*. Of course international law and concepts of human rights are useful and should play a central role in informing the response of people in conflict. But enforcing such norms in the global community has proven impossible. Philosophically, the quest for universal norms is increasingly recognized as fruitless as well.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps of greatest importance in my own frame of reference, transformation calls for working in ways that plant the seeds of peace through moral change, which direct responses away from coercion as a solution. Transformation cannot happen unless people in conflict choose to become moral. They must choose to respond to conflict in a process of reflection and decisionmaking that enables them to:

- \* identify the deepest values at work in each side
- \* search for standards on which to base their behavior towards each other
- \* critically apply these standards in analyzing the conflict and in seeking solutions to it.

This process, “discernment” as I will refer to it, assumes both empowerment and recognition as essential dimensions, but it adds dimensions of moral critique of self and context and of a joint morally-based quest for solutions.

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. elaboration on this point in a critique of the concept of neutrality in Chapter Four.

Earlier I argued that the structures shaping the perceptions of people in most violent conflict are in Berger's definition of the term, religious in nature. To the extent that people are prepared to organize themselves in the application of violence to opponents, we can assume that the conflict is rooted in a religious framework of meaning. Human beings share in common, after all, a deep experiential awareness for the mystery and preciousness of life, evidenced by the power of the "will to live" pulsing in virtually every individual. We also possess powerful abilities to sympathize with others and recognize the presence of a similar will to live in them as well. Thus it seems reasonable to suggest that we intuitively understand that to destroy human life is an act of the gravest possible consequences. Only with cosmic sanction through the permission of a god or gods is it possible to contemplate the organization of violence against other human beings. Thus, if we are to work at the level of the deepest values at work in conflict, we are required to work with religious frames of meaning. We must, in short, do theology.

Doing theology or discernment as here understood is of course very different from traditional theology. The most important difference is that whereas the latter was done in the service of particular gods and communities, discernment is theology undertaken in the service of several communities or indeed the entire human community. The language employed in discernment may be entirely secular, for as Berger points out, some powerful religious frames of reference are secular in character. This adds the complication of trying to engage in what is at heart theological discourse with people who do not see themselves or their motivations as religious. Obviously, the task is not an easy one.

Probably the most important interactional skill is the ability to invite people to reflect deeply and self-critically. Framing meaningful questions, telling stories which move a conversation deeper, disclosing personal struggles, creating contexts for interaction which support introspection and reflection on deeper issues are all important means of accomplishing this.

An additional requirement explored later in the chapters on "Engagement" and "Community" is that peacebuilders themselves must be explicitly rooted in communities of meaning. Post-modern awareness makes it possible to enter the arena of public moral discussion only through the doorway of particular communities of meaning or what Alasdair MacIntyre calls "traditions of enquiry".<sup>34</sup> Thus not only must peacebuilders be rooted in a community of meaning, we need to engage in our own on-going process of discernment as a part of the peacebuilding task.

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<sup>34</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Whose Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1988). Cf. discussion of MacIntyre in Chapter Four.

Discernment does not necessarily call for an entirely novel set of procedures on the part of peacebuilders, but it gives new meaning and importance to ones familiar in the field of conflict resolution. "Entry" and "relationship-building" between peacebuilders and conflicting parties become more than simply gaining trust of the parties and understanding the issues and options, they also become an important opportunity to foster hope in the possibility of moral discussion as a basis for addressing the conflict. In the next chapter I suggest, for example, that approaching potentially hostile people in conflict unarmed may help to send an important message from peacebuilders that they have faith that moral awareness still resides in the people they are meeting with. Asserting that faith in such a powerful though unspoken way often succeeds in enabling peacebuilders to begin interacting with people in conflict at precisely the desired level of interaction.

"Hearing each side's perspective" becomes more than simply hearing a recital of facts and positions, rather it takes focus around a goal on the part of peacebuilders to discover the internal frames of meaning governing each side, and to uncover the values on which those frames of meaning are based. Awareness that such values often have religious roots calls peacebuilders to special alertness in such discussions: to ask questions that invite reflection at deeper levels, to not rest content with superficial answers, to demonstrate great care and sensitivity in dealing with such matters.

Because peacebuilders understand that part of their task of peacebuilding is to assist people in conflict to do their own theology they will seek to foster deep reflection as an on-going dimension of internal discussion within each side. In the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe struggle which we examine later, for example, for many whites and some blacks, white racism was a hidden god. For many whites, racism crowded out the Judeo-Christian God who thundered for justice, and was capable of doing so because it never claimed to be a god, and in fact claimed to come in the service of the Judeo-Christian God. Some blacks also succumbed to the god of white racism as the recurrent message of black inferiority took its toll on the consciousness of blacks and acquired the power of an ontological truth. Discernment in such a context could be facilitated through a variety of strategies including reflective one-on-one interaction, problem-solving workshops, community organizing, and conscientization strategies.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Quaker peacebuilder Adam Curle was among the first in conflict resolution circles to articulate an understanding of peacebuilding which linked awareness-creating strategies with negotiations as a peacebuilding response to conflict, proposing a series of steps for peacebuilders to follow in settings where injustice is high and awareness is low. In such situations peacebuilding must begin with what Curle called education. This may lead to confrontation, which may in turn eventually lead to the possibility of negotiation and finally to sustainable peace. Curle's work on this, *Making Peace* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1971) has been out of print for many years. Cf. Lederach's discussion of Curle in Lederach's *Preparing for Peace*, 12-14.

The moments in which the interaction is undertaken in explicitly theological language are likely to be rare. What these activities have in common is their capacity to bring to awareness the nature of previously hidden assumptions about the nature of reality, what is ultimately meaningful, and the implications of these assumptions for the one or ones engaged in reflection.

One common result of making their assumptions at this level explicit is that people for the first time recognize the nature of the gods they have in reality but perhaps not in name been serving. Now more fully aware of the reality of their lives they are in a better position to explore possibilities to organize their lives according to different priorities if they wish to do so. In some instances this may mean greater conflict with opponents, in other cases it may reduce conflict with opponents.

Aware that a key dimension of doing theology is being self-critical, peacebuilders will seek to encourage this as well, perhaps, like Moral Re-Armament in the study following in Section Two, by first of all demonstrating the capacity to be self-critical of themselves. Additionally peacebuilders will seek to evoke reflection within each group about the resources within their own traditions and beliefs for addressing conflicts through discussion and dialogue rather than violence.

In discussion with each side about the other side, peacebuilders will seek to foster awareness of moral awareness and concern on the other side as a way of keeping alive the hope for relinquishing violence and moving to dialogue as a means of addressing problems. Later we will see ways in which the Quakers sought to support awareness of moral sensitivity among the combatants in Rhodesia by facilitating the release of prisoners.

Sometimes peacebuilders may initiate actions intended to introduce or strengthen principled behavior in the conflict in hopes of establishing a foundation for further interaction at this level. Recognizing that joint moral discernment is not possible unless both sides are prepared to take responsibility for their own actions, peacebuilders in certain circumstances might challenge behaviors which by their own values are outrageous, as did the Catholic Church in Rhodesia with both sides in regards to atrocities. They might also explore possibilities such as apologies, prisoner exchanges, agreements regarding treatment of civilians, or problem-solving workshops.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The use of off-the-record workshops involving well-placed people from both sides of a conflict is well-established. Typically participants are "second-tier" actors, that is, people with access to key leaders on their own side, but sufficiently distant institutionally to avoid implying official backing for the discussion. This is advantageous for it makes it easier to get participants to attend and allows greater freedom in exploring the roots of conflict and possibilities for resolution. See Herbert C. Kelman, "The Problem-Solving Workshop in Conflict Resolution" in Maureen Berman and Joseph E. Johnson, editors, *Unofficial Diplomats* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 168-200. See also Ronald Fisher's review of various problem-solving workshops, "Interactive Conflict

To their interaction with those in conflict, peacebuilders bring a fundamental agenda: *identifying and supporting that which is life-giving within the worldview of the parties.*<sup>37</sup> In other words, peacebuilders listen not only for the “interests” underlying the positions of the people in conflict<sup>38</sup>, they also listen for values and beliefs which support the possibility of peace and well-being of all those affected by the conflict.

What is the meaning of “life-giving”? Modesty about the limitations of their own experience rules out the possibility that peacebuilders seek to issue a definitive answer. However precisely this refusal to define for others what is “life-giving” places peacebuilders in the position essential to facilitate common exploration of the question among others. Modesty is an essential asset for peacebuilders and provides them with a focusing question in their interaction with people in conflict: what are the themes, commitments, and insights of your community which you believe are capable of supporting just and peaceful life for all?

But on the other hand, the influence of peacebuilders is inescapable and in fact essential to this discussion. The dimensions of a group’s worldview that are “life-giving”, after all, are rarely presented in lists or concise summaries. They emerge in bits and pieces scattered through the narrative structure of often lengthy and laborious interaction, like tarnished gems dispersed in a truckload of gravel. To even recognize concepts and possibilities which may be candidates for the category of “life-giving” peacebuilders must have their own understanding of “life-giving”. From a clear understanding of what they believe to be life-giving, peacebuilders can invite others to clarify what they understand to be life-giving. By being models of willingness to consider the value of other people’s understandings of “life-giving” they seek to establish an atmosphere of mutual discernment.

My own understanding of “life-giving” is grounded in the vision of shalom as described in the last chapter. Those dimensions of religious understanding are life-giving which recognize every person as equal and precious in their differentness, which recognize that all are bonded in such a way that none can be whole until all are whole, which acknowledge a powerful human inclination towards confusion and self-deception particularly in regards to our inclination to deify our own perceptions and frames of meaning; which therefore assume the necessity of self-critical reflection and confession; which take for granted that in the matters that really count there is more than enough for all, which take seriously the current historical realm as the place and time to act

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Resolution” in *Handbook in International Conflict Resolution* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, forthcoming in 1996.)

<sup>37</sup> I credit Ray Gingerich for this idea, as well as for the larger proposal that peacebuilding is to a substantial degree a matter of facilitating theological discernment among the people involved in conflict.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. the footnote to Roger Fisher and Bill Ury’s popular book *Getting to Yes* in the Introduction.

decisively on all the above affirmations; which address matters of ownership and possessions in their rightful place, namely, subsequent to affirmation of all the above.

Such a list raises the possibility that peacebuilders may find little that is life-giving in the gods being served by people in conflict. Discernment of the gods of Hitler's National Socialism, for example, would have revealed little that was life-giving as defined here. In such a case peacebuilders are called to confront and oppose the gods of death by broadening the process of discernment to include larger numbers of people involved in and affected by the conflict. Many "good" people in Germany, we know, failed to see the true gods of National Socialism and their death-dealing nature. Although a small number of Christian theologians through their own process of discernment eventually came to see the death-dealing nature of the Nazi regime and sought to engage the larger Christian community in a discernment process by publishing the "Barmen Confession"<sup>39</sup> the rise of National Socialism was due in part to a massive neglect of discernment on the part of German Christians.

But in most cases things are less clear-cut. More typical is a situation where discernment reveals the presence of some values and commitments which are life-giving and some which seem death-dealing. The Nationalist Party in South Africa in mid-1990, for example, presented a contradictory picture of the values at work within it. On one hand its history as architect and implementer of *apartheid* contradicted the understandings of *life-giving* as defined above. But on the other hand, Nelson Mandela had just been released, the ANC unbanned, and President de Klerk promised negotiation for changes. Thoughtful people committed to racial justice agonized: should they continue to oppose the Nationalist Party or should they now offer cautious support?

Whether the situation seems clear-cut or ambiguous, discernment remains a relevant response on the part of peacebuilders. To a situation of conflict they bring the persistent quest for clarification about the nature of the gods being served by those in conflict, a focusing mission to identify understandings and possible responses for each side which are life-giving, and the catalyzing role of their own thoughtfully articulated understandings of values which are life-giving.

The goal of discernment is insight and awareness, not necessarily to end a conflict. It is likely to lead in many cases to opportunities for empowerment and recognition. Having engaged in deeper reflection about the nature of the gods at work - both their own and those of others - people in conflict are likely to arrive at a broader awareness of the options for response open to them and a deeper understanding of their opponents.

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<sup>39</sup> The Barmen Confession was a declaration of resistance to National Socialism that resulted from a meeting of German Protestant leaders at Barmen in the Ruhr, in May 1934.

## Summary

In its emphasis on laying the foundation for change by changing the people in a conflict rather than focusing on particular outcomes, moral transformation is a valuable concept in working for shalom. However, as a philosophy of conflict and mediation which addresses micro-conflict, moral transformation as defined by Bush and Folger fails to acknowledge the structural dimensions of conflict and suggests no strategies for peacebuilding capable of guiding response to *macro*-conflicts. The vision of shalom requires that we frame the task of peacebuilding more broadly to *transformation* and that we add to it a dimension that addresses the structural nature of many conflicts.

I called the key dimension of this broadened understanding of transformation *discernment*, defining it as a strategy to enable people in conflict to address the problems and issues that divide them through a process of collective moral discussion and decisionmaking. This process is theological in the sense that it requires engaging the people in conflict at the level of their deepest frameworks of meaning.

The chapters which follow describe additional dimensions of transformation. Chapter Three proposes an epistemological reference point for guiding peacebuilders. Chapter Four describes the kind of relationship between peacebuilders and parties which is required by the vision of shalom. Chapter Five reviews strategies for operating as peacebuilders in ways that maximize the possibility for transformation. Chapter Six develops the concept of reconciliation as central to transformation. Chapter Seven makes the case that peacebuilding in the model of shalom cannot be undertaken by lone individuals, that instead it must emerge as a team effort by people grounded in community.

## Chapter Three

# Vulnerability: Marker of Reality in the Path to Shalom

### **The Problem**

Conflict presents powerful and competing claims on perceptions of reality, for each side has its own self-justifying narrative through which it imposes meaning on the welter of events that comprise conflict. Thus the peacebuilder is presented with difficult questions: Which story is true? In the midst of competing claims on reality, to whom do we give credence?

These questions loom all the more important in light of the discussion in the last chapter. The proposal that an important part of transformation is drawing the parties into deep moral reflection or *discernment* and that peacebuilders must actively participate in this process requires that we articulate the criteria which guide us in responding to the competing claims we face.

One common way of dealing with competing claims on reality is to launch a forensic investigation to determine truth. This is the approach undertaken by the judicial system which has established elaborate procedures for determining truth. But such an approach is futile in the chaotic and complex environment of most conflicts. What court could determine the “truth” of the centuries old struggle in Ireland? Even if it were possible to determine the “truth”, the odds of such a determination being accepted by both sides or of it leading to an effective solution would be small. While each side needs to be supported in telling the subjective truth of its own experience of reality, a quest for “objective Truth” is unlikely to contribute much to the resolution of many conflicts.

Nevertheless, peacebuilders need a way of interacting with the competing claims for Truth which they invariably encounter at every step of their involvement. Partly this is a matter of determining with whom to meet to gain an understanding of the conflict. It is never possible to speak with everyone, after all, and peacebuilders must in the end rely on the perceptions of a few in forming their understanding of what is happening. Whom they interact with profoundly shapes their understanding of the issues at stake. A military official, whether heading a guerrilla army or government forces, for example, is likely to have an entirely different understanding of what is real, true, and significant than a peasant on whose land a struggle for political power is being waged.

In addition to determining with whom to speak, peacebuilders must make decisions about how to respond, and this inevitably requires weighing competing claims. It would not be constructive, for

example, to simply take the attitude that “truth cannot be determined, therefore we must act as though both sides are equally right or wrong.” Without pretending to have discovered “objective Truth” regarding a situation of conflict, peacebuilders nevertheless need to interact with widely diverse perceptions, decide which perceptions to weigh most heavily in forming their own assessment of a conflict, and then determine appropriate responses.

### **Vulnerability as Epistemological Marker**

My proposal is that peacebuilders view weakness, vulnerability, and suffering as “markers” in defining what is “real”, that is, in shaping their understanding of what the key issues in the conflict and what should be done about them.

This proposal is supported at the epistemological level by work in the field of critical theory which has advanced awareness in recent decades of the impossibility of unbiased observation and social analysis<sup>1</sup>. The question is not whether or not we bring a bias to our understanding of situations of conflict, but what that bias is, and whether we are aware of it. From the standpoint of the vision of shalom and its calls for justice and well-being for all people, it seems obvious that if we have no choice but to choose a “bias” we should choose one which supports those who are the least well off.

In the field of sociology, Weber concluded that modern society was trapped in an “iron cage of history” by the “bureaucratic manipulation and routine of the dominant center.”<sup>2</sup> The structures of society, in his view, control and direct human beings to serve their own purposes. The only possibility for escape is through religion, “not that of the dominant ecclesial organization and bureaucracy” but that of marginal elements in society, a religion that is spontaneous, heroic, prophetic.<sup>3</sup> Charles Villa-Vicencio sees Weber’s understanding of the kind of religion capable of releasing society from its own cage of bureaucratization as similar to the prophetic tradition in the Bible. Such a religion “is dysfunctional and asocial in terms of society’s dominant values, given at times to emotionalism and prophetic movements bordering on what society regards as pathological.”<sup>4</sup> But for Weber, only from here, at the fringes of the controlling, regulating, dominant society, can new ideas and visions emerge capable of leading society beyond the grip of its own self-constructed conventions and restraints.

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<sup>1</sup> See M.L. Lamb, “Critical Theory and the End of Intellectual Innocence” in his book *Solidarity With Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1982), 28-60, which provides a helpful overview of the work of the Frankfurt School and Habermas in exposing the individual, group, and social biases and interests which inescapably influence and distort analysis and communication

<sup>2</sup> Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Trapped in Apartheid* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 184. See also Arthur Mitzman, *The Iron Cage: An Historical Interpretation of Max Weber* (New York: Knopf Books, 1979), 5, 181-92.

<sup>3</sup> For this quote and the summary of Weber’s thought I am indebted to Villa-Vicencio, *ibid.*, 187.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

Situations of conflict are a far cry, of course, from the kind of stable, routinized societies Weber had in mind in his writings. Nevertheless, even in the chaos of conflict the same kind of self-serving, self-perpetuating dynamics are at work within the ranks of each protagonist which Weber saw operating in turn-of-the-century European societies. As evidence of such an assertion one need only visit any society recently emerged from “revolutionary” change and witness the number of former revolutionaries now driving Mercedes Benz and living in opulent houses. Then too, we must remember that to engage in warfare requires institutions, arguably ones even more rigid and self-justifying than those required in the humdrum of routine social existence.

Thus the political and military institutions which normally dictate the response of all factions in conflict may be the places least capable of offering hope for a new response to the devastation of violence. The greatest potential for gaining a deep understanding of the issues at stake in conflict and the possibilities for their resolution may reside, not with those who stand at the pinnacle of the institutions purporting to speak for others but rather with those who are weakest and most marginal in the struggles for power usually at work within the ranks of each antagonist.

At a biblical and theological level, liberation theology has mounted a powerful argument for the “option for the poor”, documenting the prominence of concern for the poor in biblical accounts of the gathering of God’s people, the calls of the prophets, Jesus’ life and teachings, and the concerns of the early church.<sup>5</sup> Its concern, in the words of Gutierrez, is to begin “from the questions asked by the poor and plundered of the world, by ‘those without a history’, by those who are oppressed and marginalized....”<sup>6</sup> In an argument that in effect reiterates Weber’s in theological language, Old Testament theologian Walter Brueggemann draws a similar conclusion, asserting that “the history-making process in ancient Israel is done through *the voice of marginality* which is carried by prophetic figures and those with whom they make common cause.”<sup>7</sup>

For Brueggemann the question is not only a matter of doing justice, but also of hope, and the possibility of opening historical experience to transcendence. Those who are comfortable and well-served in the existing structures seek to maintain their monopoly and thus seek certitude and control. They do this in part by silencing the voices of those who are in pain, for exposure of this dark face of human experience threatens their ability to remain in domination. In so doing, the dominant ones

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<sup>5</sup> See for example, Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983); Thomas Hanks D. Hanks, *God So Loved the Third World: The Bible, the Reformation, and Liberation Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983); Sr. Marie Augusta Neal, *A Socio-Theology of Letting Go: The Role of a First World Church Facing Third World Peoples* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977).

<sup>6</sup> Gutierrez, 212.

<sup>7</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Hope within History*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 55.

“want to stop the free play of the historical process”<sup>8</sup> and in effect obstruct the possibility of the in-breaking of God’s kingdom, thus they are “history-preventers.” The “real historical process” in contrast “has as its function to *disclose*, to open, to reveal, to permit the exercise of free choice and the practice of new possibility”.<sup>9</sup>

The insights from Weber and Brueggemann clarify then the purpose of seeking out those who are vulnerable in peacebuilding. The motivation is not mere class analysis and a reversal of power, but rather a particular understanding of the historical process and what is necessary to enable the transformative vision to unfold. Historical transformation can take place only to the extent that human processes acknowledge and give voice to the “dark” side of human experience, that which is painful, tragic, and hence at root uncontrollable and unpredictable. The point is not that pain and tragedy are intrinsically desirable, but rather that in acknowledging and disclosing them and consciously conducting planning and decisionmaking in their shadow, we open ourselves and history to the realm of things beyond our control.<sup>10</sup> It is only from this shadowy realm, normally at the margin of historical awareness, that hope can emerge. Here resides the possibility that something genuinely new may break forth capable of breaking the existing rigid patterns of aggression and revenge, patterns whose very existence depends on the deep-rooted assumption that it is possible to control the historical outcome of human action.<sup>11</sup>

By supporting acknowledgment of the dark face of contingency, vulnerability, and uncertainty within the arena of negotiations, then, peacebuilders become advocates of transcendence and hope. To the extent that the parties open themselves to this realm, moral and social transformation become not only an opportunity, but a likelihood. To the extent that peacebuilders are connected to those who are marginal and vulnerable, they are in a position to facilitate communication processes capable of bringing transformation.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>10</sup> Miguel Bonino makes a similar point in *Toward a Christian Political Ethics* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 43. “The poor are not morally or spiritually superior to others, but they see reality from a different angle or location - and therefore differently.”

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Robert Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992), who suggests that in Christianity the cross “challenges the understandings of what constitutes power in this world” for in it God reveals power where the least powerful expect it. Reconciliation for Schreiter begins with the victim, whose humanity must be restored as a first step (43). Thus Schreiter says that “those who are weak, broken, and oppressed show the way to those who had wielded power” (61).

## **The Vulnerable as Guides to Reality**

With whom should peacebuilders talk? In the face of conflicting accounts, who should they believe? My proposal is that peacebuilders seek out and view the testimony of the vulnerable as more important than that of anyone else in conflict.

In Chapter Five I assert that peacebuilding as widely practiced is an exercise in elitism. While elites cannot be left out of peacebuilding efforts, their experience of the realities of the conflict situation is by definition of their role, usually limited. While others face hardship and death on a daily basis, leaders at the highest level usually live in relatively safety and comfort, shielded from the existential costs of war.

Even when elites are deeply in touch with the suffering of war and eager to bring peace, they are often prevented by their role from doing so. Often they have arisen to power through taking a combative stance vis a vis opponents and have been rewarded for such a stance. Thus their entire political experience may argue against anything less than outspoken aggressiveness. Even if they wanted to explore peace, they may need to adhere to a combative position in order to maintain their power base with constituents over against internal opposition.<sup>12</sup>

The vision of shalom calls for the well-being of all, and as we saw earlier, displays particular concern for the disenfranchised. This means that peacebuilders must operate in ways that access the realities of ordinary people, who in most situations of conflict are disenfranchised, and support the emergence of structures of decisionmaking which empower them. Although spending time with elites can be an essential part of peacebuilding, peacebuilders committed to transformation and shalom should bring a fundamental bias against relying on such discussions to shape their perceptions or define the scope of their activities. Instead they should give greatest weight to the perceptions of those who are weakest and most vulnerable to the costs of conflict. Later we will consider an example of such a stance in the efforts of the Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace to hear the stories of thousands of ordinary Rhodesians and convey the reality of their experience to an international audience.

## **Vulnerability as Access to Reality**

The argument thus far emphasizes the importance of peacebuilders connecting with a certain kind of person, the weak and vulnerable. But at some level, all human beings are vulnerable, weak, and fearful. Social and political elites are able to reduce their exposure to physical danger and suffering, but even they are not immune from it. What is more, they are as vulnerable as everyone else to fear, and conceivably even more so, for they have more to lose than most people and less experience in

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Lederach, "Structure: Lenses for the Big Picture", *Building Peace*, 18.

dealing with hardship. Therefore, while maintaining a bias towards seeking out and hearing the experiences of those who are most vulnerable to the costs of conflict, peacebuilders must nevertheless bear in mind that vulnerability defies simplistic definitions.

The point is important not merely because it brings the powerful into the fold of those with whom peacebuilders need to seek compassionate interaction, but also because it provides a useful reference point in determining what to talk about and what to weigh most heavily in evaluating the significance of such discussions. Specifically, my proposal is that *in meeting with people at all levels of conflict, peacebuilders should assume that discussion of the fears, suffering, and vulnerabilities of disputing parties and accounts of specific incidents of trauma and suffering they have experienced provide more trustworthy access to the realities driving the conflict and the possibilities for resolution than discussion of demands or statements of intent.* In at least two ways this assertion is supported by work in the broader field of conflict resolution.

One is work on the role of perception and image in international relations. In his study of the superpower conflict, R.K. White, for example, concluded that exaggerated fear resulting in “defensively motivated aggression” was the dynamic driving both the Americans and the Russians in their arms race which brought the world to the brink of doom.<sup>13</sup> For the Russians, the trauma of massive invasion of the motherland during World War II resulted in a determination never again to be vulnerable to such attack. Fearing that the Russians intended to dominate the world and to destroy their own way of life, the Americans sought to contain Russian power through counterforce, leading to an inevitable spiral of weapons-building. Had each party sought to understand and respond to the conflict through the lens of the fears and traumas of the other side rather than reacting to the public face of belligerence each presented to the world, the world might have been spared the most expensive and dangerous arms race in history.

“Needs theory” provides another theoretical framework within the field of conflict resolution supporting a proposal that peacebuilders give priority to discussion of fear and suffering. One of the primary contributions of “needs theory” is the understanding that conflicts are rooted in more than thirst for power as proposed by the *realist* school of international relations, namely in the drive to meet basic human needs.<sup>14</sup> Burton and Azar, among others, have argued that a characteristic common in protracted social conflict is the denial of needs that are essential for the development and well-being of all people. Exactly what those needs consist of is a matter of debate among theoreticians, but

<sup>13</sup> R.K. White, *Fearful Warriors: A Psychological Profile of US-Soviet Relations* (New York: The Free Press, 1984).

<sup>14</sup> See John Burton, editor, *Conflict: Human Needs Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990) for a collection of essays on the topic. See Ronald J. Fisher, *The Social Psychology of Intergroup and International Conflict Resolution* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990) 146-149 for a summary of needs theory and reference to writers.

those most commonly identified as essential for individuals and groups to function constructively are: security, identity, recognition and respect from others, and participation in decisionmaking.<sup>15</sup> People are driven at a deep ontological level by the need to satisfy these requirements, and will often fight at staggering costs against impossible odds in a struggle to meet their needs. Only when these needs are identified and met is it possible to resolve a conflict. So long as agreements satisfy these basic needs, parties often prove surprisingly flexible regarding the precise nature of solutions.

In practice, needs theory calls for delaying the articulation and negotiation of “demands” during the peacebuilding process, for these are recognized to be merely avenues to addressing deeper needs. Conflict resolution efforts should focus first on identifying needs, and when this is done, a wide variety of possible ways to address them are likely to become apparent.

The connection to the current discussion is that identification of blocked needs is by definition a discussion of fear, resentment, humiliation, weakness and trauma. Only by describing this dark and painful side of their experience are people able to identify the unmet needs which underlie their fears and resentments. Only when these needs are acknowledged is it possible to begin efficient and constructive discussion about meeting those needs. From its location at the intersection of social and political science, needs theory thus provides a theoretical framework to support a bias towards vulnerability as an epistemological marker of the real.

My initial experience with the power of vulnerability came in years of work with conflicted religious congregations. With a predictability that surprised me I discovered that a major breakthrough in understanding frequently took place within a matter of minutes after somebody broke into tears during a discussion of difficult issues. There were exceptions in which tears seemed disingenuous and manipulative, to be sure. But in the majority of experiences it quickly became apparent that when a baseline of vulnerability was established, greater honesty entered the conversation, and the “real” issues came to the fore.

Scott Peck writes that “as long as we look at each other only through the masks of our composure, we are looking through hard eyes. But as the masks drop and we see the suffering and courage and brokenness and deeper dignity underneath, we truly start to respect each other as fellow human beings.”<sup>16</sup> How to enable people embittered by conflict to experience this with each other is of course a difficult challenge. But the starting place is for peacebuilders to connect to the people behind the masks through attention to those who are most vulnerable.

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<sup>15</sup> Fisher, 147.

<sup>16</sup> Scott Peck, *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987) 69.

From a number of standpoints then we are able to affirm an understanding long present within the Christian vision: Unusually important and life-giving dimensions of reality are apprehended through encounter with the experience of weakness. Hearing and addressing this reality provides an important guide in determining response to conflicts.

### **Vulnerability and Power Struggles**

An issue that cannot be avoided in peacebuilding work is power and decisionmaking. In many situations of conflict it quickly becomes apparent that those suffering are trapped because they exercise little power. They are poor economically, but more importantly, they have no access to decisionmaking over their lives. What is the responsibility of peacebuilders in this situation?

The goal of moral transformation suggests two simultaneous responses. On the one hand, peacemakers should seek to empower the parties, that is, support them in exploring the fullest range of options available to them for responding to the situation they are in. Given that those who are relatively powerful already have adequate resources for identifying their own options in a situation, an empowerment response is likely to be particularly beneficial to those who are most vulnerable. Simultaneously, moral transformation calls for offering the parties opportunities to recognize the legitimacy of the other party's concerns. Again, such a response is likely to most directly support those who are most vulnerable, for the powerful are often able to proceed with unilateral solutions to a problem regardless of the wishes of others.

Reflection on the nature of power provides an additional way of conceptualizing the response of peacebuilders. Larry Rasmussen suggests that all power, whether coercive or persuasive in nature, is relational in the sense that the goal is to have influence on the object of our power. However, most current understandings of power are "calculatedly non-mutual", that is, people "seek maximum influence on the other with minimum influence upon [them]selves."<sup>17</sup> Rasmussen suggests that as an alternative we still view power as relational, but as characterized by mutuality rather than sovereignty. Instead of "mastery" we can then achieve "meeting" and in place of distance and domination, we experience "intimacy, vulnerability, and exchange"<sup>18</sup>.

This alternative opens a new understanding of how to deal with power struggles and imbalances in peacebuilding. Rather than viewing their task as to create a balance of power, mediators might view

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<sup>17</sup> Larry Rasmussen, "Jesus and Power", address given at Union Theological Seminary, New York, Sept. 12, 1985, quoted in *Pedagogies for the Non-Poor*, by Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans, and William Bean Kennedy (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990), 271.

<sup>18</sup> Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community*, 272.

it as seeking to create *mutuality* and *balance of vulnerability*.<sup>19</sup> A substantial amount of the work of the religious actors in this study can be understood in this modality. By seeking to establish close, intimate conversations among individuals from very diverse backgrounds, for example, Moral Re-Armament can be seen to be seeking to increase the sense of understanding and respect on both sides for the concerns of the other side. By interpreting the actions and concerns of the various parties to each other, the Quakers can be seen to be working for the same goal. By stressing the suffering of ordinary citizens to both parties and issuing a call in the name of God to end the war, the Catholic Church can be understood to be seeking to create a sense of mutual culpability and responsibility in the parties to find a speedy political solution to the military struggle.

It would be too much to say that exposing vulnerability is always desirable or that it necessarily leads to constructive exchanges, for vulnerability that is rejected or exploited only deepens the divide between people in conflict. James Laue and Gerald Cormick, American pioneers in the field of conflict resolution rightly cautioned against the use of “sensitivity group” techniques particularly in situations of unequal power, noting that powerful “in-groups” often use information gathered through such experiences to increase their power.<sup>20</sup> Therefore peacebuilders must exercise great care in handling the expression of vulnerability in any setting.

But on the other hand, transformation cannot take place unless the deep wounds of conflict are acknowledged, followed to the important insights about issues central to long-term peace they invariably contain, and exposed to a process of healing. In summary, a focus on vulnerability offers one effective approach in dealing with power imbalances that may be particularly useful in accomplishing transformation. To the extent that the parties are able to acknowledge and expose their fears, hurts, and resentments they open windows of insight to others regarding issues essential to any resolution of conflict.

## Conclusion

The assertion that vulnerability is the most reliable “guide to the real” has numerous implications for peacebuilders. One is they need to consciously seek out the weakest and most vulnerable in situations of conflict and find ways not only to hear them but to enable them to be heard by others. We will later see the Catholic Church involved extensively in this in its role as “Truth-teller” in the

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. the chapter “Power” by Joyce L. Hocker and William W. Wilmot in their book *Interpersonal Conflict: Fourth Edition* (Madison: Brown & Benchmark, 1995), 69-94. Hocker and Wilmot call for balancing power as a key strategy, but they define power and how to balance it broadly, thus I see their argument as compatible with Rasmussen’s.

<sup>20</sup> James Laue and Gerald Cormick, “The Ethics of Intervention in Community Disputes”, from *The Ethics of Social Intervention*, edited by Gordan Bermant, Herbert C. Kelman, and Donald P. Warwick (Washington DC: Halsted Press, 1978), 205-232.

Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict. Another is that peacebuilders need language and communication skills that make talking about weakness, fear, and vulnerability a natural part of interaction with others. Because such topics are often avoided, this means that the peacebuilders themselves will likely be required to initiate discussion at this level. They need to be able to do this in ways that are credible and have integrity in the eyes of others. In the second part of the thesis I will describe ways in which the Quakers, Catholics and Moral Re-Armament accomplished this.

But the most important implication addresses the structure of relationships through which peacebuilders seek to relate to parties. To the extent that peacebuilders operate from structures which appear distant, powerful, and invulnerable to the parties they are unlikely to be able to access the weakness and fear of the antagonists. The next chapter examines this critical factor in greater question.

## Chapter Four

# Engagement as Basis for Peacebuilding

The last chapter proposed that peacebuilders use the concept of vulnerability to guide their decisionmaking regarding whom to seek out and what topics to give special weight to in pursuing an understanding of the realities of conflict. However vulnerability, as one group of authors put it, is a “two-way street”<sup>1</sup>. People typically hide their vulnerabilities from others if at all possible. To reveal fear, insecurity and weakness requires an unusual kind of relationship. Thus this section examines the nature of the relationship between peacebuilders and conflicting parties and argues that peacebuilding requires a particular kind of relationship that differs from that held in common understandings of peacebuilding.

### **The Peacebuilder as Neutral**

One common understanding of peacebuilding regards the third-party as a neutral, who seeks at all times to keep his or her own values hidden from the parties and detached from the discussion at hand. The following quotes from people in situations of conflict illustrate this understanding:

Keep your opinions to yourself. What the parties decide to do is their responsibility. You should be entirely neutral at all times. (*Advice from a labor mediator to a student intern*)

The duty of the churches is to be agents of reconciliation. That means we must avoid taking sides and be neutral. (*Statement by a church leader about a community conflict*)

Yes, I am aware that one side has launched most of the attacks against the other side. But we are trying to make peace here and that means we must maintain our neutrality. (*Mediator responding to concerns raised by community leaders about violence initiated by one party to an on-going negotiation*)

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<sup>1</sup> Donald P. McNeill, Douglas A. Morrison, and Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1982), 69.

Paul Wehr and John Paul Lederach characterize this understanding of the peacebuilder as that of an “outsider-neutral”. The mediator’s effectiveness is understood as rooted in

externality (coming from outside the conflict situation) and neutrality (having no connection or commitment to either side in the conflict.) In the North American field of intergroup and interpersonal conflict management, for example, mediation is commonly defined as a rather narrow, formal activity in which an impartial, neutral third party facilitates direct negotiation. Mediator neutrality is reinforced by their coming from outside the conflict, facilitating settlement, then leaving.”<sup>2</sup>

### ***Critique of Neutrality***

Is neutrality ever a constructive goal in conflict? I believe the answer is no; that in fact the notion of neutrality has caused much injury to the cause of peacebuilding. It confuses many mediators with a false understanding of their task; it blocks many sincere leaders from acting on their own deeply-held principles of justice; it damages the credibility of the entire enterprise of peacebuilding in the larger community.

The notion of neutrality assumes a Newtonian world in which humans are capable of standing outside time and space and making judgments untainted by their own location in reality. However across a variety of disciplines a growing consensus holds that the Einsteinian awareness of the physical universe applies to the social realm as well.<sup>3</sup> This view asserts that the concept of neutrality is an illusion, that there is no such thing as a detached or objective observer. In the field of mediation such awareness leads to the conclusion that “mediators participate in the construction and consolidation of interpretive frames and relational patterns, forever enmeshed and emersed within communicative patterns that, in turn, structure the participation of disputants and mediators alike.”<sup>4</sup>

A vigorous philosophical critique of neutrality is found in Alasdair MacIntyre’s study *Whose Justice? Whose Rationality?* in which the author demonstrates the role of “traditions of enquiry” in philosophical debate. MacIntyre shows that understandings of justice and rationality are tautological in that every position in the time-worn philosophical debate on these issues assumes a particular understanding of the nature of social order and the good life, an understanding based on a particular set of historical experiences and conveyed in a particular set of linguistic terms.

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<sup>2</sup>Paul Wehr and John Paul Lederach, “Mediating Conflict in Central America”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (February 1991): 86.

<sup>3</sup>A friend tells me that in fact it was Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle which proposed that it is not possible to make a sharp distinction at the sub-atomic level between the observer, his observation, and the system observed. Einstein himself refused to accept the philosophy of complementarity, he says, i.e.: a scientist in making measurements interacted with the observed object and thus caused it to be revealed not in itself but as a function of measurement. Whatever the actual case may be, I use the term “Einsteinian awareness” in its popular understanding as defined in the text. Cf. Sara Cobb, “Einsteinian Practice and Newtownian Discourse: An Ethical Crisis in Mediation.” *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 7, Number 1 (January 1991): 90.

<sup>4</sup>Cobb, *ibid.* Any reader who like me thought that “emersed” is a misprint is to consult a dictionary!

MacIntyre goes further to argue that the very ability to come up with answers to key questions requires being rooted in one or another such tradition of enquiry.

The person outside all traditions lacks sufficient rational resources for enquiry and *a fortiori* for enquiry into what tradition is to be rationally preferred. He or she has not adequate relevant means of rational evaluation and hence can come to no well-grounded conclusion, including the conclusion that no tradition can vindicate itself against any other. To be outside all traditions is to be a stranger to enquiry; it is to be in a state of intellectual and moral destitution....<sup>5</sup>

Similarly

We, whoever we are, can only begin enquiry from the vantage point afforded by our relationship to some specific social and intellectual past through which we have affiliated ourselves to some particular tradition of enquiry, extending the history of that enquiry into the present....<sup>6</sup>

MacIntyre is particularly critical of the liberal tradition which in the debate about justice and rationality posits the existence of “a neutral tradition-independent ground from which a verdict may be passed upon the rival claims of conflicting traditions....” While acknowledging that liberalism is “by far the strongest claimant” on the horizon to providing such grounds, MacIntyre demonstrates its failure to do so, and faults liberalism for never recognizing that it “turns out itself to be just one more such tradition with its own highly contestable conceptions of practical rationality and justice....”<sup>7</sup>

Without claiming that MacIntyre’s argument made in the context of philosophical enquiry transposes fully into a discussion of negotiations, we must nevertheless recognize it as an insightful one for the task of peacebuilding. Of course, advocates of neutrality in mediation might claim immunity from MacIntyre’s assertions, insisting that they avoid “passing verdicts” on the issues under debate in conflict. But in fact the decision to take a stance of neutrality itself presupposes numerous assumptions on the part of the “neutral”. Perhaps the most important is the assumption that the best way to resolve the conflict is through engagement between the present protagonists rather than others who are invariably implicated in one way or another. This rules out the possibility of confronting negotiators with the need to bring people to the table who may not be there but ought to be. Political parties at the bargaining table often seek to work out deals between them so as to enable a cease-fire, for example, but fail to take into account the daily needs of civilians in the affected area.

<sup>5</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Whose Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1988), 367.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 401.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 346. MacIntyre comments intriguingly on mechanisms of conflict resolution: “And the mark of a liberal order is to refer its conflicts for their resolution, not to those debates, but to the verdicts of its legal system. The lawyers, not the philosophers, are the clergy of liberalism.” *Ibid.*, 344. I suspect that the current conflict resolution “fad” is deeply rooted in the liberal vision of society. This would help to account for the superficiality of many approaches to conflict, particularly the facile assumption that “win/win” techniques of conflict resolution are adequate to addressing conflicts with profound social, economic, and political roots. I understand MacIntyre’s comment to be highlighting the inclination of liberal societies to apply technical or situation-specific responses to problems rather than to wrestle with the deeper issues at stake, a proclivity widely apparent in the field of conflict resolution.

A related assumption of those who advocate neutrality is that the negotiators present at the table are willing to and capable of addressing the issues which ought to be addressed in resolving the conflict. Peace researcher Maire Dugan provides an illustration of violent conflict at a local school between gangs of black and white youths which opens our awareness to the limitations of this assumption. Response to such a conflict could focus on at least four levels, Dugan points out. One would be an *issue* focus: resolve the issue, whether turf or property or behavior, which sparked the fight. Another response would be a *relationship* focus: address the underlying relationship between the youth with prejudice reduction training, relationship-building, etc. A third response might focus on *subsystem*: address the fact that teachers and staff are intolerant of cultures different from their own and foster similar attitudes in students. A fourth response might focus on *system*: address the racism in the larger community and society of which this incident is only one small symptom.<sup>8</sup>

A consistent “neutral” stance in a conflict such as this would require mediators to simply work with the conflict in the terms presented by the people in immediate confrontation. In the example Dugan cites this would probably mean responding at the level of the issue or relationship. But if problems in the larger system and subsystem are ignored, work at lower levels may be futile. Does the mediator pay attention to this fact or ignore it? Awarely or not, mediators are grounded in a “tradition of enquiry” which enables them to make decisions about such issues.

Another objection to neutrality is that, in the words of Albert Nolan of the Institute for Contextual Theology in Johannesburg, “it makes reconciliation an absolute principle that must be applied in all cases of conflict.” Neutrality, says Nolan, assumes that all conflicts are based on misunderstandings, that blame lies equally on both sides, and that all that is needed is to bring the two parties together and the misunderstanding will be rectified. In fact, Nolan points out, these assumptions are wrong in some conflicts. Sometimes “one side is right and the other wrong, one side is being unjust and oppressive and the other is suffering injustice and oppression. In such a case...not taking sides would be quite wrong.”<sup>9</sup>

Michael Lapsley provides a case study of such a situation in his study of the response of the Anglican Church in Rhodesia to the civil war there.<sup>10</sup> The stance of the Anglican church throughout the war was “neutrality”. The text of one church pronouncement issued in 1972, for example, asserted that

<sup>8</sup> Maire Dugan, *Making the Connection: Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution* (Unpublished Manuscript, 1994). Cited in Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Development in Divided Societies*, 30-32.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Nolan, OP, in “Taking Sides”, an essay distributed in a variety of forms by the Catholic Institute for International Relations in London. A copy can be obtained from the Institute for Contextual Theology, Braamfontein.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Lapsley, *Neutrality or Cooption? Anglican Church and State from 1964 until the Independence of Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1986).

“The Church should on no account be partisan in its statements, it should not support one political party or race to the exclusion of the others.”<sup>11</sup> Although such a statement appears reasonable, in the context, its practical result was iniquitous. The *status quo* in Rhodesia was a situation where the existing economic, political, and legislative structures were unjust, and the Anglican Church was deeply invested in this reality through its unquestioned recognition of the legitimacy of the state, its concern for “order” at a time when justice called for disorder, its patronage of Armed Forces through provision of chaplains, etc. To take a stance of “neutrality” in such a setting in fact amounted to partisanship, for it only prolonged the existence of highly prejudicial structures.

Writing in the South African context, Anthony Balcomb in *Third Way Theology* draws similar conclusion about efforts in South Africa theology in the 1980s to articulate a “third way”.

[The South African church in the 1980s] attempted to follow the narrow way between the forces of liberation on the one hand and the forces of preservation on the other. To do this it constructed its own myth of neutrality. It believed and hoped that it could somehow escape the power struggle that was raging between state and revolution. [But] it could not. It failed to understand the political implications of the third way within the particular context of the South African situation during the decade of the eighties and beyond. This caused it to play a role in the political power game without acknowledging this role.<sup>12</sup>

Reasons exist, of course, for seeking a “neutral” stance in conflict. The most compelling argument is based on the essential need for credibility and trust. If either party believe mediators favor the other side, they may reject the mediators and refuse to work with them. However credibility and trust derive from a variety of sources. Neutrality is but one possible source of credibility that has emerged in a particular historical context - western, urban, professional culture - where relationships are often narrowly defined according to task and expertise rather than broader identity and relationships.

As an alternative, I propose *engagement* later in this chapter as a source of credibility and trust, a source that in many settings is more effective and appropriate than neutrality, that enables a transparent and consistent moral posture on the part of peacebuilders, and that capitalizes on identity, one of the most important resources of religiously-based peacebuilders.

### The “Clout” Mediator

Another understanding of relationship common particularly in peacebuilding efforts in international settings places the mediator in a position of power over the parties. Whether formally acknowledged or not, the “clout” mediator almost always represents a nation or group of nations, and this status provides a means to pressure the parties into agreements. Lord Carrington, who mediated the

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>12</sup> Anthony Balcomb, *Third Way Theology*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1993), 247.

Lancaster House talks examined later in this study provides a rather extreme example of a clout mediator operating formally in the name of a government. Because the British government held legal authority as the colonial ruler of Rhodesia, the Lancaster House talks were convened by the British government and Lord Carrington was appointed by the British Prime Minister to facilitate the talks. Carrington repeatedly used the power this gave him to cudgel the parties at points of impasse, threatening on several occasions to throw the weight of the UK government behind the position of one party, leaving the other party in the cold.<sup>13</sup>

Former US President Jimmy Carter provides an illustration of a “clout mediator” operating as an informal representative of a nation. In his recent mediation efforts in Ethiopia, Haiti, Korea, Bosnia, and other places, Carter bore no official mandate from the United States government. Nevertheless, due to his status as a former US president, his ready access to current US policy makers, and his high visibility in the international media, Carter wields enormous influence over parties.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Critique of the Clout Mediator***

The clout mediator displays a number of unique characteristics that to its proponents are valuable assets in peacebuilding: easy access to leaders and to data, an ability to borrow infrastructure support from other organizations that would be much less inclined to offer support to a less-imminent person, and ready access to media attention.<sup>15</sup> In their summary of Carter’s mediation efforts in the Ethiopia/Eritrea conflict, his mediation colleagues concluded that “the influence of former President Carter was most likely a major determinant for why we got as far as we did, even though ultimately we were not successful in resolving the conflict.”<sup>16</sup>

But from the standpoint of the vision of shalom clout mediation carries more liabilities than assets. In an analysis of Carter’s efforts in Ethiopia/Eritrea, Nairobi-based mediator Hezkias Assefa questions the assertion that the characteristics of the clout mediator had a positive influence on that mediation effort. The intense media attention to the work of a former United States president - attention that was further heightened by press interviews by members of Carter’s team before the mediation effort began - was in Assefa’s assessment a detriment to the negotiation process. Standing in the limelight

<sup>13</sup> See S.J. Stedman’s analysis of Carrington’s role in *Peacebuilding in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1991), 165-204. See also Jeffrey Davidow, “The Lancaster House Negotiations” in Diane B. Bendaahmane and John W. McDonald, Jr., *Perspectives on Negotiation: Four Case Studies and Interpretations* (Washington DC: Foreign Service Institute, 1986), 170-187.

<sup>14</sup> See “Closing the Mediation Gap: The Ethiopia/Eritrea Experience” by Dayle E. Spencer and William J. Spencer with Honggang Yang, in *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 23[3] (1992): 89-99, for a description of Carter’s involvement in the Ethiopia/Eritrea conflict.

<sup>15</sup> Spencer and Spencer view these three assets as “unique characteristics” of the “eminent-persons strategy” which former US President Jimmy Carter uses in his work with the International Negotiation Network, formed by Carter to deploy “eminent persons” in international conflicts. Spencer and Spencer, 95.

<sup>16</sup> Spencer and Spencer, 95.

of world attention, “it became impossible to create ‘safe space’ for the parties to bare their souls, get to the bottom of the conflict and address the real issues or to admit their faults and recognize the possible legitimacy of the adversary’s claims.”<sup>17</sup> Media attention increased intransigence by providing strong incentives for the parties to score propaganda points and engage in posturing designed to impress constituencies back home.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, it heightened the mediators’ own stake in the conflict, increasing the danger that their own desire for gaining maximum positive public exposure for themselves or their own institution became a significant matter in their handling of the conflict.<sup>19</sup>

In Assefa’s view, involvement of highly influential persons also increases the likelihood that the parties may participate for the sake of good appearance and the tactical advantages of cooperating with a renowned personage rather than out of a sincere desire to solve conflict. The presence of such ulterior motives is in itself not objectionable “as an entry point to start the conciliation process.”<sup>20</sup> But no serious progress is likely in such a scenario until trust is established between the parties and mediator. Such trust is difficult to build when the pressures of limited time, busy schedules, and intense media scrutiny are great, pressures which almost inevitably accompany the presence of imminent persons.<sup>21</sup>

Spencer and Spencer reported with satisfaction that “with President Carter at the helm of the INN, we are able to have direct contact with heads of state, ambassadors, political party leaders, religious leaders and many others who can influence mediation initiatives as well as affect global opinions.”<sup>22</sup> But Assefa challenges the value of such leverage, suggesting that the mediator’s leverage might have created “distance and suspicion rather than the necessary trust and openness.”<sup>23</sup> The carefully managed links held by the Carter team “with powerful international actors who have their own agendas and preferred outcomes” may have aroused suspicion about its motives and neutrality and caused fears of manipulation. Such fears reduce the willingness of parties to be open and trusting, thus impeding prospects for progress.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hezkias Assefa, “The Challenge of Mediation in Internal Wars: Reflections on the INN Experience in the Ethiopian/Eritrean Conflict”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 23(3) [1992]: 102.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>21</sup> Assefa suggests that at a minimum eminent persons need to engage in extensive pre-negotiation talks so as to shield as much of the negotiation process as possible from these pressures. But he also stresses the need for clout mediators to be prepared to withdraw from their role at the end of the pre-negotiation stage if it becomes apparent that a different mediator might be able to function more effectively. *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>22</sup> Spencer and Spencer, 33.

<sup>23</sup> Assefa, 104.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

In addition to Assefa's concerns, points made in the last chapter on "Vulnerability" could be made regarding clout mediation as well. Namely, by its very definition, clout mediation trades on positional power as its primary resource in attempting broker agreements. This means that almost invariably it is conducted exclusively through arranging encounters among those who hold political or military power. The likelihood that the self-perpetuating interests of those persons and structures define the dynamics of such encounters and their outcomes is high.

In summary, then, the features which make "clout" mediation model attractive on the surface, turn out to present serious problems as well. These problems do not rule out the possibility that clout mediation may in some circumstances contribute to important breakthroughs. But if our goal is transformation, they point us towards finding a way of conceptualizing relationships with the parties that supports the highest possible levels of understanding and trust, that fosters decisionmaking based on principle and mutuality rather than on concession to power, and that works as much as possible through free choice by the parties rather than through pressure.

### **Engagement: The Peacebuilder as Connected, Located, and Vulnerable**

I now outline a conception of the peacebuilder which combines features of the neutrality and clout models of peacebuilding in forming an alternative which I call the "engaged" peacebuilder. Unlike the "neutral" but like the "clout" mediator, the "engaged" peacebuilder operates from a known identity and values. Like the "neutral" but unlike the "clout" mediator, the engaged peacebuilder refuses to impose his or her own solutions to the conflict on the parties. He or she instead is a process advocate, advocating a particular way of interacting between the parties which is based on values of justice and peace. By operating from a clear base of values but holding open the element of choice at all times to the parties, the engaged peacebuilder is able to maximize the possibility of transformation of the parties.

Three essential attributes characterize the engaged peacebuilder: connection, location, and vulnerability.

#### ***Peacebuilding through Connection***

Rather than seeking a distant, narrowly-defined professional relationship to the parties, the vision of shalom suggests that peacebuilders view close relationships with the parties as one of their primary assets.

Why emphasize connection and relationship? If peacebuilders are to comprehend the nature of the conflicts they seek to address, they have no choice but to connect closely to the communities affected by those conflicts. Only through in-depth understanding of the needs driving the parties are

peacebuilders in a position to assist them in shifting from the dynamics of posturing and polarization to a deeper analysis which can ultimately enable cooperation. Conflicts normally focus at surface level on demands for land, power, or resources, but in fact the parties are often driven by deeper needs for identity, recognition, respect, security, etc.<sup>25</sup> Only in a context of safety and trust are parties likely to divulge these deeper needs and be open to exploration of ways to meet them that differ from their publicly stated demands.

Secondly, trust is an essential prerequisite to the possibility of facilitating transformation in others. In terms of Bush and Folger's model, no party is likely to take offers of empowerment or recognition of others seriously if they come from a third-party they do not trust. Parties need to know that peacebuilders understand their suffering, hopes, fears, and dilemmas if there is to be any possibility for them to respond positively to opportunities for transformation offered by peacebuilders.

Thirdly, at a symbolic level the relationship between the peacebuilder and disputing parties makes an important statement of hope about human relationships. A critical assumption underlying peacebuilding efforts, after all, is that human beings can bridge significant gaps and find common meaning. War might be viewed as the consequence of loss of this hope. Wherever there is violent conflict, hope in this possibility is severely tested. Thus an important part of the peacebuilder's task is to restore hope in the possibility of human community. No act on the part of peacebuilders is likely to have greater impact on the parties in this regard than establishing a relationship with the parties which demonstrates genuine interest in their well-being. An illustration of this impact is found in the comment of a Burundian Quaker regarding the visit of a group of international Quakers to his country in the wake of the first round of violence in 1994: "Since they came I've never returned to hiding. We felt somebody, somewhere, loved us."<sup>26</sup>

Finally, an understanding of peacebuilders as engaged relationally with the parties is culturally the only acceptable basis of peacebuilding in many cultures. In the Latin American setting for example, there is a preference for what John Paul Lederach calls the "insider-partial", "whose acceptability to the conflictants is rooted not in distance from the conflict or objectivity regarding the issues, but rather in connectedness and trusted relationships with the conflict parties."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> John Burton has been at the forefront of efforts to articulate a theory of conflict and practitioner response to "deep-rooted conflicts". See his *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict: A Handbook* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987). See also his later trilogy which substantially expands on the ideas first laid out in rudimentary form in the 1987 handbook: *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

<sup>26</sup> "Let Go of Fear", August 5, 1994 edition of the Quaker magazine *The Friend*.

<sup>27</sup> Wehr and Lederach, 87.

The trust which is the primary asset of the engaged peacebuilder can emerge from a variety of sources:

#### *Long-standing Relationships*

Whereas the “neutral” peacebuilder often views it as undesirable to have known the parties well prior to mediation, for the engaged peacebuilder this is an asset. Only because one or both parties have known and respected the mediator for a period of years and therefore have come to trust in his or her integrity is there willingness to work with the peacebuilder in an intermediary capacity. We will see in the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe case study how important this factor was in the ability of the religious peacemakers to contribute to the resolution of the conflict.

#### *Holistic relationships*

Whereas the “neutral” peacebuilder usually prefers to keep the relationship narrowly focused around the content of negotiations, the engaged peacebuilder relates to the parties in a holistic way, often providing assistance or counsel in things that are unrelated to the substance of negotiations. The engaged peacebuilder does not view the disputants primarily as parties to a conflict which requires mediation, but rather as human beings who deserve respect and support in wrestling with a painful struggle.

Expressed in the well-known categories of Martin Buber, the neutral mediator relates to the disputants in an “I/It” relationship where the disputants are objects in the mediators’ larger project of mediating a conflict. The engaged mediator in contrast seeks an “I/Thou” relationship with each party and holds a genuine concern for the general well-being of each party regardless of the outcome of the mediation effort.<sup>28</sup> This factor also characterized the relationship of the religiously-based peacemakers in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

#### *Vulnerability*

The “neutral” mediator maintains a distance not only from too-close engagement with the parties, but usually also from the dangers and costs of the conflict as well. For the engaged mediator, it would be impossible to do this and maintain integrity for he or she is committed to a deep relationship with the people involved in conflict. This commitment makes it impossible to stand in isolation from the hurts, dangers, and costs of the conflict. I develop this further later in the chapter, but note it now as an important dimension in building trust. We will see that some of the religiously-based peacemakers in this study were extremely vulnerable and in fact lost their lives.

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<sup>28</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1970). Buber’s postscript comments on 178-179 are particularly illuminating in this regard.

### *Compassionate Listening*

A common characteristic of the engaged peacebuilder is a profound commitment to engaging the disputing parties and their constituencies through listening. This commitment grows out of the desire to be in long-standing, holistic, supportive relationships with people<sup>29</sup> and reflects a further understanding as well: Suffering people need to speak about their suffering in order to gain healing. Listening therefore is one of the most powerful tools available for drawing people into internal healing processes.<sup>30</sup> I point out later that listening formed the primary strategy for “entry” of all three of the religiously-based actors in the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe study.

### *Examples of Peacebuilding on the Basis of Connection*

An example of the insider-partial described by Wehr and Lederach is the role of Roman Catholic Cardinal Obando y Bravo who was chosen to head a National Reconciliation Commission which mediated between Nicaragua’s Sandinistas and Contras in the years 1988-1990. The Cardinal “was not selected for his neutrality,” Wehr and Lederach point out. “His hostility toward the Sandinistas was well known. But his status as spiritual leader, his close connections with resistance elements and his visibility as a national symbol all suggested his usefulness as intermediary....Each time he intervened...a major, durable agreement issued from the negotiation.”<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Adam Curle, *Tools for Transformation: A Personal Study* (Stroud: Hawthorn Press, 1990), 49-51. Curle views listening as a powerful tool in enabling us to communicate with others “through our true nature”, and to “reach the part of the other person that is really able to make peace....” *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>30</sup>Carl Rogers of course is the father of listening as a therapeutic tool. Cf. his *Client-Centered Therapy, its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951). Of the many authors and schools of thought which advocate the importance and power of listening as a tool for healing, none is more cogent than the writings of Harvey Jackins, pioneer in an approach to personal and social healing known as *Re-Evaluation Counseling*. Because Jackins’ connection between personal and social healing supports arguments I have made elsewhere I summarize his approach here. Jackins says that within each individual reside powerful natural healing processes, namely, laughing, crying, angry raging, cold sweating (which results from and heals fear), flushing (which results from and heals embarrassment), yawning, and animated talking. Children, who have not yet learned from social conditioning to close down these natural healing processes, can be reliably observed to engage them whenever they experience distress. This demonstrates what Jackins says is a natural, spontaneous, healthy, and universal healing process. Children also demonstrate another key requirement for this healing process to work: invariably they seek the attention of another human being as they begin “discharging” their distress. Based on these observations Jackins develops a model of healing whose foundation is listening, or as he would put it, offering “complete attention” to a person whom one wishes to assist in healing. This provides the safe space required for a “client” (not a professional client but anyone whom one chooses to support), to encounter inner distress and engage the natural healing mechanism. Jackins is similar to Rogers in his commitment to listening as a fundamental strategy of healing, but he goes well beyond Rogers: in proposing a number of additional techniques for working with material that emerges in listening and in his insistence on a direct link between the realm of the personal and the social/political/economic/class spheres. In Jackin’s view it is impossible to experience complete personal healing without explicitly dealing with and responding to the traumas inflicted by the structures of society. If personal “healing” does not lead to awareness of and commitment to addressing structural injustices, it is a sign that it has not been successful. See Harvey Jackins, *The Art of Listening* (Seattle: Rational Island Publishers, 1981), and *The Upward Trend* (Seattle: Rational Island Publishers, 1977). See also Gwen Brown, “We Who Were Raised Poor: Ending the Oppression of Classism” (Seattle: Rational Island Publishers, 1994).

Finally, Stephen R. Covey’s insights on the importance of listening and how to do it are particularly useful. Covey, *The Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1990), 7, 237-260.

<sup>31</sup>Wehr and Lederach, 91.

In another example of the insider-partial model from Nicaragua, Wehr and Lederach recount the work of the Moravian Church in mediating negotiations between the Sandinista government and YATAMA, an armed resistance movement whose members came from Indian communities on the Atlantic Coast. Due to the extensive, long-standing relationships the Moravians had built up with the Indians of the Atlantic Coast through years of work there, YATAMA asked the Moravian Church to serve as an intermediary in extensive talks with the Sandinista government that began in 1988. The government "accepted the Moravians in this role, while acknowledging that they were neither neutral nor impartial."<sup>32</sup> The success of these talks

depended not on neutrality or externality but on continuing relationships of trust its members had with the conflictants. Commission members lived side by side with YATAMA leaders. They ate and relaxed with both sides together. Their knowledge and connections were used by each side to explain its views and objectives to the other. The Commission, therefore, was much more connected to disputants than in neutrality-based mediation. Its functions were broad rather than narrow. Its range of tasks stretched from arranging travel and daily schedules for disputants and resolving their family problems to negotiating a cease-fire in a war involving several national governments."<sup>33</sup>

South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu often functioned as a mediator in the "insider partial" model. In the years of unrest prior to the 1994 elections, he was frequently called upon to mediate discussions between protesters and police or other authorities. As a leading voice in the national anti-apartheid struggle, the Archbishop openly identified with the cause of the protesters. His success in defusing numerous potentially violent situations doubtless happened not in spite of but because of this engagement with one side. It is unlikely that demonstrators would have agreed to enter into negotiations with authorities had they not been encouraged to do so by someone they trusted as fully as the Archbishop.

The churches of East Germany in the changes of 1989-90 provide yet another example of the insider-partial mediation role. In the period 1987-89, the church had increasingly become a voice for protest against the moribund state with the consequence that church-state relations stood at one of the chilliest points since 1978. Nevertheless church representatives were extensively involved in facilitating discussions between opposition groups and officials at local and national levels.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Wehr and Lederach, 92. Cf. John de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 152-156, which parallels Wehr and Lederach's assessment and additionally enumerates the ways in which the Cardinal had established his partiality against the Sandinistas and for the Contras.

<sup>33</sup> Wehr and Lederach, 94.

<sup>34</sup> David Steele, "At the Front Lines of the Revolution: East Germany's Churches Give Sanctuary and Succor to the Purveyors of Change", in Johnston and Sampson, 119-154. See also John de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy: A Theology for a Just World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 194-204. De Gruchy highlights the role of the Lutheran Church in "creating space" for the revolution by keeping alive a vision of a just, human society and

### ***Peacebuilding through Location***

Rather than pretending to have no values or to be unconcerned about their application, peacebuilders should “locate” themselves in terms of their values in the context of the conflicts they operate in.

This requires peacebuilders to be conscious of and reflective about: 1) why they seek involvement in conflict in general and what values they hope to serve; and 2) why they have chosen a particular role in each conflict in which they are involved and what values they hope to serve with that role.

Why emphasize location? One answer is credibility. In 1990, in the still early days of the South African political transition, I was invited to lead a workshop for local members of the youth organization of the South African Pan Africanist Congress. I began the workshop as I was accustomed in the United States, with introductions. I asked each of the twenty people present to introduce themselves, gave a five minute introduction of myself as trainer, and then proceeded to a sheet of newsprint to review the contents of the workshop. But before I had completed my first sentence about the workshop a senior member of the group interrupted me. In a voice firm to the point of hostility he said, “Excuse me, but we have some questions for you.” There was an awkward pause, then in an unfriendly voice someone asked, “Why did you come to South Africa?” No sooner had I responded than someone else asked in a skeptical voice what I thought about violence as a tool of liberation. Someone wondered what I thought about Ronald Reagan. For a chilly half hour I was grilled about who I was, what I had done, and what I believed. Then as unexpectedly as he had begun the interrogation, the apparent leader turned to his colleagues, “Hey, let’s get on with the workshop....” The mood changed from skepticism to intense interest, and for the rest of the workshop I was treated as an “insider.”

I experienced this ritual repeatedly in South Africa whenever I led workshops predominated by black activists. Though I found it initially somewhat unnerving, I eventually came to appreciate the upfront nature of the questions raised by people who had every reason to be suspicious of me, for I learned that when the questions were finished, a bond of trust and acceptance followed that took much longer to earn in other settings. I also discovered that I could to a substantial extent pre-empt the interrogation by taking more time to introduce myself. By telling stories about myself and my own formative experiences I discovered that I could provide groups with what they clearly viewed as of pivotal importance to my credibility: some understanding of my values and commitments.

In settings where trust is less an issue than in South Africa, such questions may not have mattered a great deal to the participants of workshops. But many situations of conflict are like South Africa.

People want to know about more than a facilitator's professional credentials, they want to know who he or she is, and what he or she believes in.

Another reason why location is important is the philosophical one already outlined earlier in this chapter, that we cannot escape being located. Therefore we are most honest and more capable of facilitating insightful dialogue among others if we openly acknowledge our own values.

A third reason why location is important is that it is not possible to support transformation in others unless we ourselves are clear about our own values. A peacebuilder, for example, who values harmony and stability more than transformation may contentedly assist the parties in a conflict to settle on terms which are manifestly disempowering to one of the parties because this settlement seems likely to bring peace. But if she believes that transformation through creating opportunities for empowerment and recognition is the most important value in mediation, she will actively seek ways to ensure that both parties are able to examine the full range of options available to them and that take seriously the legitimate concerns of the other.

Two strategies deserve particular attention as means for locating peacebuilders: role selection and process advocacy.

#### *Role Selection as a Strategy for Location*

In a seminal 1978 essay, American conflict practitioners James Laue and Gerald Cormick suggest that any social intervention should be guided by core values of freedom, justice, and empowerment. Of these criteria, justice is the primary one, since freedom and empowerment are actually instrumental values leading to the creation of justice. For Laue and Cormick, "the single ethical question that must be asked of every intervenor in community disputes at every decision-making point in the intervention is: Does the intervention contribute to the ability of relatively powerless individuals and groups in the situation to determine their own destinies to the greatest extent consistent with the common good?"<sup>35</sup>

This is a fundamentally different starting point than "neutrality" and the accompanying assumption identified by Nolan that all conflicts are the same. From Laue and Cormick's perspective, every conflict is different and must be approached with circumspection to determine the dynamics at work. Because conflicts differ from one another, appropriate intervenor response also varies. Laue and

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<sup>35</sup> James Laue and Gerald Cormick, "The Ethics of Intervention in Community Disputes", in Gordan Bermant, Herbert C. Kelman, and Donald P. Warwick, editors, *The Ethics of Social Intervention* (Washington DC: Halsted Press, 1978), 205-232.

Cormick identify five roles played by intervenors: activist, advocate, mediator, researcher, and enforcer.<sup>36</sup>

The *activist* works closely with the powerless or non-establishment party in a conflict. He or she is usually either a member of the non-establishment group<sup>37</sup> or is so closely aligned that he or she “fully merges his or her identity with the powerless party.” Activists’ skills typically include organizing, public speaking, devising strategy, and the ability to rally a following.

The *advocate* plays a similar role to the activist in the sense that he or she promotes the interests of a particular side. But the advocate functions from a more detached standpoint, serving as an advisor or consultant to the group, rather than identifying personally with the group he or she serves. “The typical advocate for the establishment party is the management consultant, while the community organizer is the most frequent type of out-party advocate. A negotiator representing any of the parties also exemplifies this role type.”

*Mediators* “do not have their base in any of the disputing parties and thus have a more general, less party-parochial view of the conflict.” The mediator is also “acceptable at some level of confidence to all of the disputing parties.”<sup>38</sup>

The *researcher* may be “a social scientist, a policy analyst, a media representative, or a trained lay observer, who provides an independent evaluation of a given conflict situation. The researcher perceives the conflict in its broadest context and is able to empathize with all positions”<sup>39</sup>

The *enforcer* brings formal coercive power to the conflict. The enforcer is often “a formal agency of social control in the larger system within which the conflict is set - the police or the courts - or perhaps...a funding agency or an arbitrator.” Though elements of this role appear in many conflicts, one rarely sees it in pure form. “The web of issues and parties usually is so complex that no single person or agency has an appropriate base to command allegiance to an imposed solution...”<sup>40</sup>

The challenge from this perspective, then, is to choose the role most likely to lead to justice, freedom, and empowerment. Mediation may often be the role needed, but in some situations a greater need exists for an activist or advocate. Laue and Cormick observe that people performing other roles often

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 212ff

<sup>37</sup> Establishment groups of course also have people who play a role in counterpart to that of activists. Laue and Cormick designate them as “re-activists”.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

call themselves “mediators”, thus perpetuating the widespread misperception that mediation is the only useful intervention role. They also believe that at times mediators can combine several roles, functioning even while mediating as advocates for one side in order to ensure that the real issues at the root of a conflict are addressed.

No intervenor then should assume that the only constructive response to conflict is to mediate. The question peacebuilders in conflict situations should ask themselves is not - how can we mediate in this situation, but rather - what roles are most needed here to move this situation towards a just resolution acquired through free choice and empowerment of those involved? This calls for recognizing that mediation is by no means the only legitimate role for people seeking to contribute to the reconciliation of communities. In fact, one of the questions that we must place of any effort at mediation will be: was this the most effective role in the situation? Or do the outcomes suggest that intervenors made the wrong response by attempting to mediate?

Even in the instances when mediation is deemed the best response, it is critical to get beyond the stereotype of the mediator as a “neutral.” Neutral implies having no values, which as liberation theologians and critics of neutrality like Nolan rightly point out, is surely the antithesis of what Christian faith is about. Quite the opposite of being neutral, intervenors must at all times make decisions and under-take actions which reflect a clear set of values. If intervenors are not clear in their own values nor self-critical in assessing what values their actions actually support in a situation, they are vulnerable to being used by the more powerful party to serve unjust purposes. The goal should not be to be neutral, but rather to be ethical: to be conscious of one’s own values and the likely outcome of one’s action so that the intervenor can make appropriate choices.

How to determine what is ethical? Laue and Cormick say that justice should be the end goal of all social intervention. But Bush and Folger make us aware that justice is not adequate as a sole criteria, for if the parties themselves remain unchanged, any progress towards justice is likely to be temporary. Thus we must add an important set of questions to Laue and Cormick’s framework of roles. Not only should peacebuilders ask themselves which role is most likely to contribute to justice in the situation under scrutiny. They should additionally ask: which role is most likely to contribute to the possibility of transformation of the people involved in this situation and how can we go about relating to the parties within the role we have chosen in ways that maximize possibilities for transformation?

This may require, for example, that if peacebuilders have chosen the role of advocate they may choose to conduct their advocacy in special ways. Rather than intentionally antagonizing opponents, for example, in order to prod them into an over-reaction which will then make it easier to organize

one's own side, as advocated by classic Alinsky strategists<sup>41</sup>, an advocate committed to transformation may seek to maintain open lines of communication even with an "oppressive" opponent, in hopes of "converting" the opponent.

If peacebuilders have chosen a mediating role, their commitment to transformation may lead them to do things which a "neutral" peacebuilder would never do. If one of the parties is much weaker than the other party, for example, and is unaware of resources and alternatives available to them, mediators committed to transformation should feel ethically compelled to assist that party in identifying resources and alternatives. The mediators would make no secret or apologies for such actions, for they would already have "located" themselves ethically in the eyes of the parties: Their goal is justice achieved via transformation and one of the requirements for this is that the parties be fully aware of resources and alternatives available to them.

#### *Process Advocacy as a Strategy for Location*

Another strategy for locating the peacebuilder in terms of values begins with the definition of advocacy and is particularly useful in providing a framework for peacebuilders who are in the role of mediation. Beginning with the same assertion made earlier in this chapter, author Jim Laue says that "every act of intervention alters the power configuration in the social system in which it occurs, and therefore every intervenor is an advocate - for party, outcome, and/or process."<sup>42</sup>

A *party advocate* takes the side of one party and loyally pushes for its advantage. "My party right or wrong." An *outcome advocate* champions an outcome he or she deems desirable, without regard as to who happens to benefit from this outcome. A *process advocate* promotes neither party nor outcome, but rather a particular way of deciding things or getting things done.

From this perspective mediators should view themselves as process advocates. Any time negotiations take place or decisions are made in any setting, key choices must be made that reflect important values. An example of one such process choice would be: Who is deemed an adequate representative of the people affected by issues under negotiation? What levels of consultation with and accountability to those people are required? In order to maintain the trust of the parties in the conflict, mediators often need to avoid "taking sides" in the sense of advocating the solutions of one side over the other side. But the discussion process is deeply value-laden and this presents mediators

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Saul Alinsky's classic work, *Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971).

<sup>42</sup> James Laue, "Ethical Considerations in Choosing Intervention Roles", *Peace and Change*, Vol. VIII, No. 2/3 (Summer, 1992): 30.

with not only an opportunity but also an obligation to clearly state and advocate values supporting transformation.

This requires first of all internal clarity on the part of mediators regarding the nature of the processes they seek to facilitate. After all, if mediators are unclear about what they view as important components in negotiation processes, they will be unable to make clear choices or advocate them effectively. They should be prepared to walk away decisively, if necessary, from any situation which does not support the values they stand for. Their commitment to justice, freedom, and empowerment will enable them to take a clear and explicit stand on a variety of principles regarding any process which they facilitate.

As a way of demonstrating the significance of this approach in practical terms, I review a number of specific process issues which typically arise in mediation and suggest guidelines reflecting values I see as important.

- **Conduct of participants:** Negotiations should take place in ways that respect the dignity and equality of all persons in the negotiations as well as those effected by the negotiations. By ensuring these conditions, mediators contribute to the goals of empowerment and recognition.
- **Parties represented at the table:** No negotiations should proceed if serious effort has not been made to involve all parties with a legitimate interest at stake.
- **Negotiator mandates:** Negotiators must hold a genuine mandate to negotiate on behalf of the people they claim to represent.
- **Access of constituencies to decision-making:** Negotiations must place final decision-making power in the hands of the people most affected by decisions taken at the mediation table, either by direct involvement in decision-making processes or through legitimate forms of representation.
- **Access of negotiators to constituencies:** Negotiators must have free access to the people they are representing.
- **Power:** Must be relatively equal if conflicts are to be genuinely resolved rather than merely temporarily suppressed. Mediators must acknowledge the realities of power and recognize that power is a relative and constantly changing phenomenon deriving from many sources. (Sometimes, for example, apparently “powerless” groups actually have a great deal of power.) Mediators should analyze carefully the timing of their efforts so as to ensure relatively equal

power. They should also recognize and support the necessary role of activists and advocates, and be ready to decline to mediate if power imbalances are too high.

- **Problem-Solving Approaches:** Mediators should be articulate and persuasive in advocating processes of negotiation and decision-making that shift the dynamics of interaction between the parties from simple positional power maneuvering (which only postpone real resolution) to genuine grappling with the legitimate needs of each side. For example, the mediator can guide the parties through analytical exercises which raise the issues of basic human needs which underlie most social and political conflicts, and which enable the parties to reflect on the long-term consequences of not meeting these needs.
- **Information:** All parties should have equal access to critical information.
- **Accountability:** A mediator should hold all parties accountable: to other parties at the table in living up to agreements and in being honest about extent to which they can make binding commitments; also to their own constituencies in accurately and competently representing constituency concerns and interests, and in keeping constituencies informed and appropriately involved in the decision-making process.

Mediators wield enormous influence regarding how all of these process issues are dealt with by parties engaged in negotiations. By advocating approaches which support both empowerment and recognition of all parties, mediators can contribute significantly to opportunities for justice through transformation of the parties. Thus process advocacy offers a potent strategy for transformation and gives mediators many opportunities to locate themselves in terms of deeper values.

### ***Peacebuilding through Vulnerability***

One of the most critical issues for any actor in the social and political arena is power. By what means does one seek to accomplish the goals one views as important? In this section I argue that peacebuilders can contribute to the possibility of transformation by consciously choosing vulnerability on their part in their relationships with people in conflict.

One expression of vulnerability is *positional powerlessness*, that is, an inability or refusal to impose solutions on the people in conflict without their consent. This by no means rules out influence. On the contrary, the goal is to influence others in the most ambitious way possible, by changing the way they think and make decisions. However this is accomplished not by dominating people or forcing compromise, but rather by moral suasion through example, good communication, appeals to conscience, ethical reasoning, and good relationships.

Another expression of vulnerability is *voluntary exposure to danger*. Mennonite Central Committee in 1995 placed North American church workers in Burundian villages susceptible to armed attacks. This proposal drew skepticism from some who pointed out the dangers in a country teetering on civil war. But MCC staff believe that this form of vulnerability sends an important message of solidarity to people in the villages and empowers Burundians to “come out of hiding.”<sup>43</sup>

Why would any organization choose to place the lives of its personnel at risk by intentionally sending them without armed security into dangerous places? The most important answer is that voluntarily-chosen vulnerability is a powerful symbolic statement of hope in the possibility of transformation. In the last section I said that from the standpoint of shalom, the most tragic casualty of violence is loss of faith in the possibility of resolving conflicts through moral community, that is, through principled discussion between people in conflict. For anyone to voluntarily enter a situation of armed conflict unarmed is a bold re-assertion of hope in such a possibility. The implication is: “We believe that the people in this situation are moral enough to recognize our good will and not to kill us. We are so committed to and hopeful about the possibility of grounding human interaction in morality rather than hatred that we are prepared to risk our own lives for this possibility.”

When peacebuilders become vulnerable they assert that the apparent existing reality of hatred and fear is not the highest reality. By giving people in conflict a chance to respond to them as moral beings rather than as murderers, they invite them to join in one dimension of that new reality where transformation is indeed possible, the circle of principled moral reflection as a response to conflict.

Change that is based on coercion, after all, is not transformation, rather it is accommodation and as such is likely to be unsustainable or even lead to exacerbated conflict on the long term. In order to enable transformation, peacebuilders must find ways of communicating with the parties about the issues and underlying values in ways that preserve the parties’ freedom of choice. The only position from which they can effectively pursue this goal is from a position of powerlessness.

Chapter Three pointed to vulnerability as a source of hope, arguing that only to the extent that people are capable of letting go of their desire to control the situation of conflict do they become open to the possibility of new insights and possibilities that transcend old competition and resentment. By choosing powerlessness in relationship to the parties, peacebuilders acknowledge this reality and in effect invite the parties to do so as well.<sup>44</sup> Conversely, if peacebuilders operate from a base of

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<sup>43</sup> Personal conversation with Harold Otto, former MCC worker in Burundi, Harrisonburg, VA, 8/22/96.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community*, 160.

coercive power, they reinforce the assumption that coercion is the only way of addressing problems, and thus they strengthen precisely the forces which have led to violence in the first place.

Peacebuilding from the standpoint of vulnerability also flows logically from the commitment to relationship discussed in a preceding section of this chapter. Relationships of deep encounter, in the mold of Buber's "I/Thou" relationships, cannot result from coercion, which makes one party an object of the wishes or commitments of the other. They can flow only from mutual choice and reciprocity.<sup>45</sup> Jurgen Moltman takes the point a step further, arguing that the powerlessness of Jesus in the divine/human relationship was the ultimate expression of solidarity with the human condition: "The passionately loving Christ, the persecuted Christ, the lonely Christ, the Christ despairing over God's silence, the Christ who in dying was so totally forsaken, for us and for our sakes, is like the brother or the friend to whom one can confide *everything*, because he knows everything and has suffered everything that can happen to us - and more."<sup>46</sup>

To draw on one of Bush and Folger's categories, conducting peacebuilding from a position of vulnerability is a potent display of *recognition*. When peacebuilders are power-laden, their motives can be easily assessed and dismissed. But when they place the success of their efforts, and quite possibly their lives as well, in the hands of others, purely for the sake of others, they model recognition of the legitimacy of the needs of others in the purest way possible. The Christian story makes clear that to enter the arena of human alienation from a stance of vulnerability is costly. Thus to choose this stance, is more than an act of recognition, it is an act of love, for in so doing peacebuilders choose to put the well-being of others ahead of their own<sup>47</sup>.

If there is one act or strategy on the part of peacebuilders which is capable, then, of qualitatively transforming the atmosphere of their relationships with the parties, it is a choice to act from a position of vulnerability. In this moment, peacebuilding in the vision of shalom moves beyond the reliance on facilitation exercises and negotiation strategies which characterizes most other understandings of peacebuilding. What does it look like in practice? Later examination of the work of the religious actors in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe will yield some specific examples. But for purposes of generic overview, Larry Rasmussen's catalog of what he terms "weapons of the weak" is insightful:

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<sup>45</sup> Buber says relationships are characterized by "reciprocity": "My You acts on me as I act on it." Buber, 66-67. Similarly, "Every means is an obstacle. Only where all means have disintegrated encounters occur." Buber, 63.

<sup>46</sup> Jurgen Moltman, *The Power of the Powerless* (New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1987), 120.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. the definition of love by Scott Peck later in this thesis in the chapter on Community.

other-regarding morality (the community, not the individual self, is the primary moral unit); a 'subversive' memory; projection of a powerful vision, the presence of persons of such integrity and depth they will extend themselves to the point of sacrifice, even risking death, to live toward the vision and keep faith with the remembered; a set of alternative institutions..., and an ability, when conditions permit, to leverage even towering institutions.<sup>48</sup>

So long as the parties are surrounded by actors who perform according to the calculus of power they are in familiar terrain which leaves unchallenged their most fundamental assumptions about the human community. But the presence of people whose actions are based on love rather than power introduces an unfamiliar and unpredictable factor into conflict. The experience of the religious actors in the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict suggests that the parties were sometimes uncomfortable with such a factor. But to a surprising degree, they were open to conversations with religious actors, and as we shall see, at key moments were significantly influenced by its presence.

### Summary

In addressing the relationship between peacebuilders and people in conflict I examined and discarded two common approaches to mediation: "clout" mediation and "neutral" mediation. As an alternative, I proposed peacebuilding from a standpoint of engagement. Mediators can enter into a relationship of engagement with those in conflict by *locating* themselves in terms of their own values, by *connecting* with people in conflict through deep relationship, and by accepting personal *vulnerability* as an inescapable dimension of their role.

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<sup>48</sup> Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community*, 160-161.

## Chapter Five

# Transformation and Structures

The vision of shalom requires peacebuilders to understand their task more broadly, I have argued, than negotiating agreements between powerholders. Shalom holds out the possibility of a holistic state of human well-being that is not dependent on coercion but that is rather attained through *transformation*, that is, social change accomplished through moral discernment and decisionmaking. Such a goal has important implications for how to proceed in the task of peacebuilding. In this chapter I explore these in the context of the relationship of peacebuilding efforts to social and political structures:

- 1) The Social Location of Peacebuilding Activities
- 2) Ownership of Peacebuilding Activities
- 3) Timeframe of Peacebuilding Activities

The question I seek to address is how to conceptualize peacebuilding efforts in ways that maximize the possibilities for interacting transformationally with the social and political structures present in situations of conflict.

### **The Social Location of Peacebuilding Activities**

Who counts? Who is deemed worthy of fullest recognition as a human being? The question cuts to the heart of much human conflict and suffering, for a common thread in many situations of struggle and violence is that parties do not count each other as human equals and at the same time resent that others do not count them as such. The field of conflict resolution has captured an important insight in this regard with the maxim “process matters more than outcome.” In many situations, what people care about most is not the final decision or *outcome*, rather they are concerned about the way in which that outcome is reached, about the *process*. So long as they feel that they have been consulted in appropriate ways about plans to construct new houses or schools in their community, for example, people often will accept a wide variety of possible decisions about housing and education, including decisions which they dislike. Conversely, they may object strenuously to plans for their community which in practical terms offer much benefit, because a process of decisionmaking was used in which they felt they were not consulted about decisions that affect their lives.

The reason people often care more about process than about outcome is that embedded in process are implicit statements about human worth, about who counts. People who are not consulted feel for good reasons that they do not count, and it is this belief that accounts for reactions which are sometimes explosive.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately peacebuilding as it is widely attempted is an exercise in elitism, paying little attention to the implications of the way in which peace is pursued for social and political ethics. Typical negotiation efforts concentrate on getting top-level leadership around a bargaining table, assuming that peace there is sufficient to bring peace for everyone affected by the conflict. The underlying assumption is a “trickle down” theory of negotiations, a theory based on several key assumptions:

- \* That representative leaders *can* be identified;<sup>2</sup>
- \* That they *will* articulate and advocate for the concerns of those they purport to represent;<sup>3</sup>
- That each side is monolithic; that is, that no significant differences exist within each side or that to the extent that they do leaders possess the power and influence to secure support for agreements worked out at the table; or
  - That decisionmaking is hierarchical; that is, that commitments made by negotiators at the table and/or the leaders they represent will reliably be accepted by their constituencies at home;
  - That the key requirement for peace is a product in the form of agreements which satisfy key demands of the parties.

On examination these assumptions prove unreliable. Whether we consider the Middle East, South Africa, Ireland, or Bosnia, a common feature of all is serious internal conflict within each party to the conflict. In reality, each party to a conflict is made up of many different and complex groupings with diverse needs and perceptions of the conflict. Even in the most authoritarian setting, decision making is rarely hierarchical. Rather, a complex power struggle is almost always at work within each party and this power struggle invariably intensifies at the point that resolution of conflict with an external enemy appears imminent. Finally, peace is about more than satisfying material demands of parties. It

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<sup>1</sup> See my book *Development, Conflict, and the RDP: A Handbook on Process-Centred Development* (Pretoria: HSRC Publishers, 1996, In Press), which explores this question in substantial depth in the context of community development.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Lederach, *Building Peace*, 22, who identifies a somewhat different but related set of assumptions that he believes accompany “trickle-down” understandings of negotiation: 1), that representative leaders *can* be identified; 2), that they *will* articulate and advocate for the concerns of those they purport to represent; and 3), that they possess the power or influence within their own constituencies required for implementation of agreements.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

is equally about meeting basic needs for recognition, identity, and participation in decisions affecting one's own future - even if only vicariously through trusted representatives.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps most objectionable of all in the terms of this thesis, the "trickle down" theory prevents the possibility of transformation of groups and societies at war with each other. Because peace efforts are confined to discussion among elites who act on behalf of or impose their decisions on their own constituencies, the element of involvement and choice is removed from the masses. For the masses within each party, "peace" is at best an unearned outcome handed from above. It may also be something much worse, the result of coercion by their own leaders. In either case "peace" is unlikely to reflect any increase in the moral capacity of the societies involved to reflect on their own deepest values and their implications for the conflict, to recognize the needs and concerns of opponents or to make conscious choices about their own future.

The vision of shalom calls us to approach peacebuilding in ways that address not only the reality of most conflicts in today's world, but which also provide maximum opportunity for transformation at broad levels of the societies involved. This points beyond exercises in high-level negotiations towards more comprehensive approaches, towards processes that value all people equally and support the possibility of broad social transformation.

In *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*<sup>5</sup>, the Mennonite practitioner and theoretician of conflict resolution John Paul Lederach outlines a multi-tiered approach to conflict resolution and proposes to accomplish this through what he calls "middle range approaches to peace". Lederach points out three levels in a triangle of leadership which could provide the location for peacebuilding efforts: at the pinnacle is top level leadership, at the base is grassroots leadership; between the two is middle range leadership.<sup>6</sup> Top level leaders, the ruling political and military elites, are highly visible and for this reason are often limited in their ability to actively support peace initiatives for fear of being perceived as weak or compromising. Equally problematic, they usually understand society in hierarchical terms and have little understanding or patience for the need for involving other levels of society in peace processes.

Grassroots leadership are in touch with the masses at the base of society. They usually have direct personal experience of the suffering and bitterness of war and an immediate understanding of the

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. the discussion in my chapter on "Reconciliation" on the work of John Burton, who argues for the "ontological priority" of what he calls "basic human needs" such as recognition, identity, and participation as a driving force in human motivation over material desires such as wealth or comfort.

<sup>5</sup> Lederach, *Building Peace*, 22.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-29.

aspirations, needs and prejudices of the masses. But they are often trapped in the daily struggle for survival and have little access to information about the bigger picture in the struggle.

Middle Range leadership hold significant positions of leadership which are not necessarily controlled by top level leaders. They are respected for their leadership in sectors like education, business, agriculture, health, religion, etc. For several reasons they offer a highly effective entry point for peacebuilding initiatives. For one, they are likely to know and be known by the top level leadership as well as grassroots level leadership. For another, their own position is usually not based on military or political power, nor do they aspire to this. Rather they operate on the basis of relationships and professional interest which often extend across the lines of conflict to counterparts on the other side. For these reasons middle range leaders tend to be more flexible in their openness to exploring options for settlement, in their ability to physically move around without immediately drawing attention, and in their capacity to interact with people on the other side of the conflict.

For reasons similar to those outlined above regarding “trickle down” approaches to negotiations, Lederach is skeptical about the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives which focus exclusively on the top level of leadership. On the other hand, he is keenly interested in initiatives focusing on a “bottom-up approach”, suggesting that “virtually all of the recent transitions toward peace such as those in El Salvador, Ethiopia, or the earlier one in the Philippines were due in large part to the pressure for change that was bubbling up from the grassroots.”<sup>7</sup>

He offers as an example of such an approach an initiative taken in Somaliland:

In brief, the bottom-up approach involved a process of first achieving agreements to end the fighting at local peace conferences, which brought together and were guided by the elders of contiguous and interdependent sub-clans. These conferences not only dealt with immediate issues of concern at local levels, but also served to place responsibility for interclan fighting on the shoulders of local leaders and helped identify the persons who are considered to be rightful representatives of those clans' concerns. Having achieved this initial agreement, it was then possible to repeat the same process at a higher level with a broader set of clans. Characteristic of these processes were the reliance on elders, lengthy oral deliberations (often months on end), the creation of a forum or assembly of elders (known in some parts of the country as *guurti*), and the careful negotiation over access to resources and payments for deaths that would reestablish a balance among the clans.<sup>8</sup>

Lederach also cites examples of “bottom-up peacebuilding” from Mozambique. In one, the Christian Council of Mozambique initiated a program entitled “Preparing People for Peace” in the early 1990s which brought church representatives together from all the provinces in a series of 2 weeks of

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

workshops on a variety of topics related to war and peace. Over the course of 16 months more than 700 people participated.<sup>9</sup> Another example from Mozambique is found in a UNICEF project, "Circus of Peace", which fielded a traveling show and "wove drama and arts into community fora to express the nature and challenges of war and conflict and the possibilities of reconciliation, including the skills of resolving conflict. The traveling show had not only captivated audiences, but served as a way for them to publicly grieve over the tragic losses their country had suffered, address the people's concerns and set the stage for changes and movement toward peace."<sup>10</sup>

But it is the middle level which holds "the most potential for establishing an *infrastructure* that sustains the peace building process over the long term...." Approaches at this level

are informed by deeper systemic analysis but provide practical initiatives for addressing immediate issues, and are able to draw on human resources, tap into and take maximum benefit from institutional, cultural and informal networks that cut across the lines of conflict, and connect the levels of peace activity within the population....[M]iddle range actors ...hold the most potential for practical, immediate action and sustainable long term transformation in the setting."<sup>11</sup>

One of the most commonly used examples of peacebuilding conducted at this level cited by Lederach is the *problem-solving workshop*. Used extensively in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, as well as Cypress, the Basque region in Spain, and other places, problem-solving workshops typically bring together second-tier leadership from all sides of a conflict for week-long off-the-record meetings in an informal or academic environment. The goal is not to resolve the conflict by negotiating agreements then and there, but rather to enable thoughtful, in-depth analysis of the issues at stake.<sup>12</sup>

Another strategy which Lederach believes is particularly effective in conducting mid-level peacebuilding is *conflict resolution training*. In South Africa the National Peace Accord provided auspices under which thousands of people from a wide variety of political backgrounds participated in workshops designed to introduce concepts of negotiation and mediation at local and regional levels.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-29.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>12</sup> See John Burton, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict: A Handbook* (University Press of America, 1987; Jay Rothman, "Supplementing Tradition: A Theoretical and Practical Typology for International Conflict Management", *Negotiation Journal*, July 1989; Michael Banks and Chris Mitchell, *A Handbook of the Analytical Problem-Solving Approach* (Fairfax, VA: Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, 1992).

<sup>13</sup> In my view one of the mostly unrecognized tragedies of the South African transition was the abandonment of the structures of the National Peace Accord which represented the world's largest conflict resolution organization and the only national bipartisan mechanism ever created for dealing with political violence. In my assessment the primary blame for this lies with senior staff of the organization who despite repeated efforts on the part of people deeply committed to the NPA refused to recognize important but by no means fatal weaknesses in the structure. The incoming coalition government responded by cutting off funding. For this and other reasons little documentation is available regarding the efforts of the NPA. I make the assertion in the text above in my own capacity as a former member of the NPA's Training Committee, on which I served from 1992 till the demise of the NPA in 1995.

Elsewhere in Africa, “middle-range leaders from the church communities who found themselves on different sides of the conflicts in countries such as Mozambique and Angola, were brought together to share their perceptions and experiences of the conflict and their role in it, and develop approaches for encouraging and supporting reconciliation in their countries.”<sup>14</sup> In Northern Ireland a wide variety of training workshops have been held for similar purposes.

*Peace commissions* offer yet a third model for pursuing peace through mid-level efforts.<sup>15</sup> Lederach cites the work of the National Peace Accord in South Africa as one example here, an institution which created a dozen regional Peace Committees and over 50 local ones to address political violence from 1992 to 1994. He also points to the work of a Conciliation Commission established in Nicaragua in the late 1980s to prepare and facilitate negotiations between the Sandinista government and Yatama, one of the resistance movements on the East Coast. This Commission consisted of top leadership from two Nicaraguan religious bodies and facilitated a lengthy series of negotiations between Yatama and the government.<sup>16</sup>

Lederach’s “theory of the middle-range” offers important insights in addressing the question of where to locate peacebuilding initiatives. His bias towards grassroots and mid-range locations supports our commitment to maximizing the possibility of transformation in the broader society by increasing the number of people who are involved in peace initiatives. While recognizing that no single model of response can be prescribed for every situation, his suggestion that the mid-range offers the greatest potential for transformation provides a valuable starting point in planning peace strategies.

### ***Ownership of Peacebuilding Activities***

The vision of shalom implies an understanding of peacebuilding that is holistic and addresses all aspects of social and political reality. I have argued that peace defined in this way is possible only as a consequence of transformation, that is, as a result of changes in the way the warring parties think about themselves and others. Obviously, such a peace cannot be imposed or constructed by outsiders. It is a possibility only to the extent that the parties themselves choose it. In the absence of free choice, after all, “good” behavior is merely yielding to pressure. Thus a fundamental concern for the peacebuilder must be how to operate in ways that maximize the element of choice for peace by the parties and how to create institutions which continue to support transformation on an ongoing basis.

To a certain extent, commitment to involving those in conflict in choices about the conflict is widely held in the broader field of peacebuilding. For example, mediators often work hard to find and

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<sup>14</sup> Lederach, *Building Peace*, 25.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 26

present attractive choices to parties about how to resolve political conflicts. This strategy is based on classic “win/win” bargaining theory which seeks to maximize the benefits for both sides so that everyone wins.

This is constructive so far as it goes. But if peacebuilders focus only on peaceful *outcomes*, their ability to contribute to transformation is limited. They can introduce a substantially greater element of choice - and hence responsibility and greater possibility for transformation - by placing ownership of the peacebuilding enterprise itself in the hands of conflicting parties. In other words, to build shalom, the parties need to take responsibility themselves for maintaining the processes and structures which work for peace.

One obvious limitation makes this difficult in the early stages of peacebuilding. Warring parties engaged in hostilities are unlikely to be interested in jointly sponsoring peace initiatives. Even if leaders are interested in supporting peace initiatives, to admit this is often politically impossible. For this reason, “deniability” is one of the greatest assets of externally initiated peace efforts. This allows leaders to engage in serious exploration of prospects for peace in private discussion with external initiators, yet publicly deny any responsibility for or interest in peace efforts, if required to do so to remain politically credible with their own constituencies. For this reason, it is often desirable or unavoidable that peace efforts begin at the initiative of outsiders.

However if peace efforts must sometimes begin under external initiative, they need not and should not end there. As a guiding principle, peacebuilding should be conducted under auspices as close to local ownership as possible. This principle has several ramifications.

#### *Use Locally Based Peacemakers*

The ideal situation would be one where no outside personnel are required at all. Rather than sending in external facilitators, for example, moderates on both sides of a conflict could be encouraged or supported to initiate peace efforts. Thus the first line of response on the part of peacebuilders in any situation of conflict ought to be to explore the availability of internally-based peacebuilders. Lederach has commented in this regard, “I have never been in any setting, no matter how severe, from Central America to the Horn of Africa, where there have not been people who had a vision for peace, emerging often from their own experience of pain. However, far too often, these same people are overlooked and disempowered...”<sup>17</sup>

This point also underscores the priority of training and consultancy work in peacebuilding. If the goal of peacebuilders is to support the emergence of peacebuilding initiatives controlled by others, a major

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

task then must be to direct peacebuilding resources towards the preparation and support of such initiatives rather than towards the front-line work of mediating itself.

*Use Regional Resources*

If it proves impossible to initiate peace efforts except via external actors, the next line of response should be to explore the possibility of initiating peace efforts under the auspices of external actors who are located near the scene of conflict.

Let us say we are concerned about conflict in Burundi but it is apparent that the Burundians are too polarized to initiate peace efforts. Other considerations being equal, it is better for peace initiatives to emerge from South Africa than from London, for this brings the element of choice for and commitment to peacebuilding, and hence the capacity for transformation, much closer to Burundi, within the continent of Africa. But it would be much better yet were the initiative to emerge from a base within the region itself, thus bringing the opportunities and responsibilities of peacebuilding closer home.

Where regional organizations lack the staff and expertise to mount a peace initiative, if their profile and reputation make them a strong candidate for peace initiatives, even peace initiative initiatives staffed by “outsiders” might still be conducted under the *auspices* of a regional organization so that credit accrues to regional organizations.

*When Beginning Externally, Seek Opportunities to Shift to Local Ownership*

Regardless of who the initiator is, peacebuilders should at all times seek and capitalize upon opportunities to move the ownership of peace processes and structures as close to the conflict parties as possible, and ideally into their hands.

To return to the Burundi example, initial peace talks might be undertaken by a team of South Africans and Kenyans operating under auspices of the All-Africa Council of Churches. But after working out the terms of a cease-fire between rival Burundian factions, they might encourage the factions to establish a National Peace Commission to coordinate on-going peace efforts. The expatriates would remain involved behind the scenes, providing training and on-going consultation for key people in the Burundian National Peace Commission, assisting with regional workshops, and helping to raise funds to support the Burundian Commission. But the control of and credit for the initiative would be directed towards the national body.

### ***Creating Institutional Bases for Peacebuilding.***

One implication of the above is that creating new institutions for peace is a central part of the task of peacebuilding. Such an emphasis contradicts common patterns of international aid and development. One veteran US diplomat reported recently that in the last several years the US government had invested more than one billion dollars of aid in the Horn of Africa, but had not created one institution to facilitate the ongoing impact of this aid.<sup>18</sup>

Obviously there are dangers in emphasizing the importance of institution-building. Institutions often become more concerned with their own survival than with carrying out the mission for which they were created. But nothing survives on the long-term unless people and money are allocated specifically to it. If we believe that peacebuilding is important and that it is a task that needs ongoing attention, we have no choice but to create institutions to sustain it.

The matter of institution-building highlights previous points in this section. Societies are unlikely to invest in institutions perceived to be created by or serving the interests of outsiders. Thus it becomes apparent that structuring peace initiatives so that they are “owned” locally is a critical step towards building structures for peacebuilding. Similarly, a commitment to institution-building highlights the significance of training as a central part of the overall mission of peacebuilding. Institutions cannot thrive unless people are available with vision and skills to carry out the mission of the institution.

Gathering the resources necessary for building institutions of peace thus is an essential task for peacebuilders. Lederach suggests that there are two key dimensions of this task, socio-economic and socio-cultural.

#### ***Socio-Economic Resources***

Much of the challenge in addressing the socio-economic dimension of gathering resources for peacebuilding is changing the way people think. Planners and funders have had so little understanding of or commitment to peacebuilding that they aren’t even aware of the possibilities. Thus, for example, part of the task is to get intergovernmental and nongovernmental agencies to “create specific categories of funding related to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.”<sup>19</sup>

This presents several challenges to peacebuilders. One is that the response of international organizations to conflict has been dominated by a “‘natural disaster’ understanding of need and outcome.”<sup>20</sup> This model is reactive rather than proactive, short-term in timeframe, and oriented

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<sup>18</sup> Ambassador John McDonald, of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy in Washington DC, speaking at a workshop on conflict and reconciliation convened by his organization in Washington in July, 1995.

<sup>19</sup> Lederach, *Building Peace*, 59.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

towards centralizing vulnerable people. These characteristics are unsuited to conflict resolution. Lederach argues, for example, that bringing people in the Somalia conflict into central locations might have initially facilitated the delivery of relief supplies, but ultimately this strategy exacerbated the conflict when protected corridors of travel had to be created, displacing militias and increasing instability in areas not previously affected. Thus, peacebuilders need to assist organizations who often mobilize massive resources in meeting the humanitarian crises created by war to allocate their resources in ways which are sensitive to the requirements of peacebuilding.

Another challenge is funding priorities. Lederach notes that funding is often relatively easy to secure for formal, top-level initiatives and observes that military peacekeeping has also attracted substantial funding. "Far more difficult is the funding of middle-range initiatives, capacity-and infrastructure-building for conflict resolution and grassroots projects...."<sup>21</sup> This suggests that the problem is less a lack of resources for responding to the problems of war and conflict, rather it is a lack of understanding of and commitment to, broadly-based peace processes. He suggests that relief organizations create a "self-tax" of five percent of relief budgets, designated for conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities in the areas in which they operate.

#### *Socio-Cultural Resources*

A second critical dimension of resource gathering is socio-cultural resources. Lederach observes that "the general tendency is to think of peacebuilding being initiated with outside resources, whether money or personnel. But the inverse is true. The greatest resource for sustaining peace in the long-term is always rooted in the people and their culture."<sup>22</sup> A basic shift in thinking needs to happen here, says Lederach, from viewing people in the setting of conflict as *recipients* to *resources*.

An important task in drawing on the resources of local people is *building a peace constituency*. This begins by identifying local resource people who already have a vision for peace. These people need to be assisted in connecting with others like themselves both within their side of the conflict as well as across the lines of conflict. Equally important, the international community needs to recognize the validity of these actors and in so doing, provide the legitimation necessary for them to operate.

Another important task is *mobilizing cultural resources* for peacebuilding, that is, identifying concepts, structures, and institutions for peacebuilding that exist within every culture and building upon them. The conflict resolution movement as a whole has been characterized by powerful tendencies to package techniques and skills in Western, urban settings and impose them prescriptively

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

worldwide in training workshops. In contrast to this, Lederach calls for *elicitive* approaches to training which engage workshop participants in reflection on their cultural understandings of how to deal with conflict.<sup>23</sup>

### **Peacebuilding as an Activity Extended over Time**

Scholars of conflict have long recognized that conflict unfolds in stages and that this suggests that each stage calls for a different response on the part of peacebuilders.<sup>24</sup> However there is little evidence that this awareness informs many peacebuilding efforts. Often peacebuilding is undertaken only after a conflict has reached crisis proportion and an urgent humanitarian response is called for to cope with the victims of a war. The requirements of meeting a large-scale humanitarian disaster then often dominate the framework of peacebuilding efforts. The result is not peacebuilding capable of bringing transformation of the conflict, but rather crisis management: “[W]aiting until a situation has reached the proportions of a humanitarian disaster...creates a crisis mentality that is driven by a disaster-management frame of reference and the urgent need to find a quick-fix political solution.”<sup>25</sup>

As a result, in part, of decades of experience in a wide variety of conflict situations worldwide, a strong bias has developed among Mennonite development and peace workers away from short-term, episodic interventions, towards projects that enable extensive relationship building and sustain peace efforts through several stages of transformation. Lederach captures this bias diagrammatically in what he calls a “nested paradigm” linking time frame with suggested peacebuilding activities.<sup>26</sup>

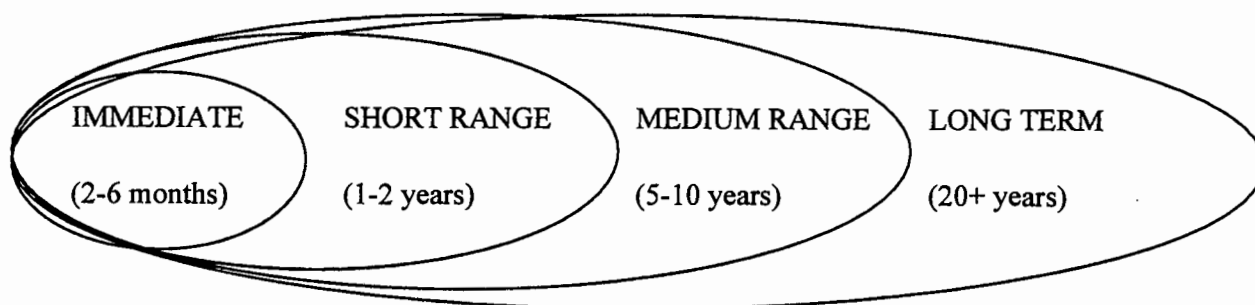
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<sup>23</sup> Lederach’s book *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995), lays out a theoretical base for elicitive training and offers practical suggestions for how to conduct it. This approach to training has been employed for some years by the Mennonite Central Committee in training initiatives in a number of places worldwide, including Ireland, the Philippines, several African countries, and numerous Latin and Central American countries.

<sup>24</sup> Louis Kriesberg, *The Sociology of Social Conflicts* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973); Adam Curle, *ibid.*; Laue and Cormick; *ibid.*, Lederach, *Building Peace*, *ibid.*; Chris Mitchell, “The Process and Stages of Mediation: Two Sudanese Cases” in David Smock, editor, *Making Peace and Waging War* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1993), 139-159.

<sup>25</sup> Lederach, *Building Peace*, 38.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.



*Approach* (peacebuilding activities appropriate to each corresponding dimension of timeframe above)

**Crisis Intervention    Preparation/Training    Social-Change Design    System/Relationship  
Goals/Outcome**

Crisis intervention concerns itself with a time frame of weeks or months and addresses questions such as: How can we alleviate the excruciating suffering? How can we get a cease-fire agreement to open up space for negotiations? Lederach supports the legitimacy of such efforts, but stresses that they “must not be viewed separately from the longer-term goals of sustainable outcome.”<sup>27</sup> The choice of a “nested” paradigm underscores this concern. Crisis intervention, like each other activity in the paradigm, is likely to be successful only if it is viewed as the more immediate expression of a project that ultimately addresses the many issues at stake in building peace. In Lederach’s words, “..while achieving a cease-fire and feeding and sheltering fleeing refugees are immediate necessities, these goals must not be mistaken for, nor replace the broader framework of peacebuilding activity. Rather, a sustainable transformative approach suggests that the key lies in transforming the *relationship* of the conflicting parties, with all that the term encompasses at the spiritual, psychological, social, economic, political, and military levels.”<sup>28</sup>

The preparation/training response moves beyond urgent pain-reduction measures and seeks to equip people who are in or very close to the crisis situation with concepts and skills for assessing and responding to the situation they face.

At the far right of the paradigm lies a long-term perspective “driven by a vision of socially desirable outcomes, such as a significant structural and systemic change”.<sup>29</sup> Questions often asked in this response are: what type of future will we leave our children? What type of change is necessary to prevent a similar crisis from happening again? Goals typically include sustainable development, self-

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

sufficiency, equitable social structures that meet basic human needs, establishing respectful and interdependent relationships among the diverse groups affected by the conflict.

Between the long-term vision of structural change and the short-term capacity-building emphasis of preparation and training lies the medium range concern of designing social change. The focus is on putting in place mechanisms or a sustainable process that will enable a transition from the current state of crisis or conflict or injustice to the desired state. Lederach views this stage as a key “bridging” point that poses a question linking present and future: “How do we get the desired change from this crisis?”<sup>30</sup> Because of its capacity to provide guidance in responding to both the immediate crisis as well as to problems, Lederach views the middle range time frame as the most useful lens through which to focus analysis of a conflict.

However, to employ a middle-range analysis requires several things of peacebuilders. For one, they need to develop the capacity to design and implement social change over a long period of time, a period which Lederach says needs to be counted “in time-units of decades” in order to “derive and translate the lessons of the crisis into a constructive process of sustainable transformation”<sup>31</sup>

Secondly, they must learn to recognize the systemic roots of many crises and develop approaches to crises that address those roots. Thirdly, they need to work with middle range actors whose locus within the affected populace make them particularly effective in and important systemic changes on the.

## Summary

In order to work for shalom through transformation, peacebuilding needs to be undertaken in ways that maximize opportunities to penetrate all levels of societies in conflict, that place ownership of peacebuilding initiatives as close as possible to the conflicting parties themselves, and that create on-going institutional bases to support peacebuilding on the long-term. Only by going about peacebuilding in ways that plant the seeds of involvement in and ownership of peacebuilding in the hands of large numbers of people, and which direct resources towards the sustenance of on-going peace efforts is it possible to move towards the comprehensive vision of shalom. Peacebuilding is by necessity a protracted effort and peacebuilders need to conceptualize even short-term crisis responses within the context of long-range structures.

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 47

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

## Chapter Six

# Reconciliation

Central to the vision of shalom is an understanding of human beings living in one community. In the new heaven and earth, all are members of the same family, united by a common commitment to care for creation.<sup>1</sup> This vision requires that strategies for creating peace do more than eliminate conflict and violence, impose justice, or broker deals, none of which can alone create bonds of community. Rather peacebuilders must invite and support people in conflict to enter a process of ongoing, joint moral discernment as a means of addressing their differences.

War exacts a staggering toll, not only physically and economically, but also socially, morally, and spiritually, leaving a vast wake of alienation and hatred. Strategies for dealing with conflict which address only the dimensions of disputed physical resources and power are incapable of addressing this bitter legacy. This requires that peacebuilding efforts consciously strategize efforts to enable social and relational healing from the trauma of violence and war. This chapter reviews the limits of bargaining in peacebuilding and explore *reconciliation* as a more comprehensive model for peacebuilding

### **The Limits of Bargaining**

Almost all conflicts are played out as a contest for control over power and resources. Whether the issues being fought over are land, ideology, ethnic identity, or human rights, invariably they express themselves in a struggle for control over power and resources. The latter, after all, are the means by which people attain the things they desire. The dominance of *realpolitik* as the defining basis for international conduct elevates this instrumental reality to a normative political theory, legitimizing reliance on coercive power alone as the basis for behavior by political actors.

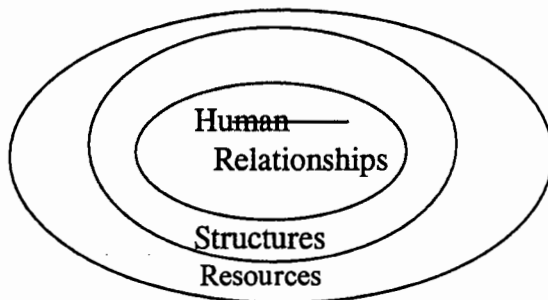
It should come as no surprise then that conventional understandings of peacebuilding and diplomacy focus almost exclusively on division of power and resources. The Lancaster House negotiations examined in the Zimbabwe case study later offer a classic illustration here. Peace talks centered on the contents of a new constitution, arrangements for the transitional period between the end of talks

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. D.P. Niles, *Between the Flood and the Rainbow*, 164-190.

and the holding of elections, and the details of a cease-fire. Although a variety of accounts now document the content of these discussions, there is no evidence that any formal discussion ever took place at Lancaster House acknowledging the social and relational damage of the war, much less the question of how the realities of bitterness and hatred that separated blacks from whites might be addressed in order to enable people to work together in the new political dispensation being hammered out by negotiators. The new government of Robert Mugabe took important steps, of course, towards reconciliation later, after the elections.<sup>2</sup> But the people who gathered at Lancaster House for peace talks apparently assumed that the only task facing them was working out a new division of power and resources.

It is true of course that issues of power and resources sometimes have to be dealt with first before discussion of relationships. It is difficult to imagine significant progress on restoration of relationships at Lancaster House before a new division of power had been worked out. In this instance the peace talks probably began at the right place. But did they end at the right place? Without denying the fundamental importance of bargaining over power and resources, the vision of shalom points beyond them to the human community and the quality of relationships there. We might view this schematically as follows:



This diagram places *human relationships* at the center of the peacebuilding task. *Structures* - by which I refer to the human institutions which formalize power to make decisions and mobilize resources - are here viewed as an outgrowth and expression of the nature of the relationships between people. *Resources* of wealth, land, property, information are viewed as the means by which structures are able to accomplish the things deemed important by the people controlling them.

Conflicts tend to focus on allocation of resources and control of structures; these are the things that people in conflict fight over. Consequently, peace talks often focus here too, for this appears to be the source of the problem. While acknowledging that these are critical dimensions of human life, by

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Victor de Waal, "The Quest for Unity", in his *The Politics of Reconciliation: Zimbabwe's First Decade* (London: Hurst and Co., 1990), 89-99.

beginning with an ontological statement about the familiness of all people, the vision of shalom points us beyond them to the nature of relationships with others as the heart of the problem needing to be addressed. Resources and structures are secondary expressions of the relationships which lie at the center of conflict; problems in these outer spheres are mere symptoms of underlying causes in the inner sphere. They are painful and extremely costly symptoms to be sure, and sometimes they are the only place accessible to efforts to begin addressing the central problem. But if the problem of alienation and exclusion at the relationship level is not somehow addressed, discussions about structures and resources are incapable of leading to shalom.

The nature of human interaction required to constructively address each sphere varies. As an instrumental realm expressing the values and commitments of the inner spheres, the realm of resources lends itself well to classic *bargaining* approaches, by which I refer to pragmatic, object-focused discussion about how to allocate goods or power, such as was used at Lancaster House.<sup>3</sup> The realm of structures calls for the three-fold activities of *transformation* discussed earlier: empowerment, recognition, and discernment. But neither set of activities is capable of addressing the emotional and spiritual damage of conflict which stand in the way of relationships. This realm calls for a set of activities which I call *reconciliation*.

Like negotiators at most political bargaining tables, the negotiators at Lancaster seemed to assume that reconciliation would take place naturally without the kind of joint planning and discussion required to alter the structures of power. Clearly they assumed this was not their current brief, and nothing suggests they viewed it as important to make it anybody else's brief later. Both the people in the conflict and those facilitating the negotiations appear to have assumed that politics was both the problem and the solution, and that addressing relationships was not a part of doing politics.

The vision of shalom reverses these assumptions. The purpose of politics is relationships. Politics must concern itself with allocation of resources and structures of power, of course, for these influence the possibilities for relationships in fundamental ways. But they are not ends in themselves, their purpose is to support just and satisfying relationships. Peacebuilding then, like all political activities, ought never be conducted in the assumption that relationships will "take care of themselves".

Shalom calls for us to consciously conduct politics in the service of relationships. This means that *formal, joint, proactive* attention to the question of reconciliation in relationships is a matter of

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. John Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 1-3, who differentiates between disputes and conflicts. Disputes are relatively uncomplicated matters, in Burton's view, amenable to division of resources through classic bargaining strategies. Conflicts are more complicated for they are "deeply rooted in basic human needs" and thus require complex strategies to analyze and address.

highest on-going priority in peacebuilding. To the extent that people in conflict recognize the importance of reconciliation, genuine social transformation is possible. To the extent that they ignore it, even “revolutionary” changes in the structures of political power are unlikely to lead to significant improvement in the lives of people in societies affected by conflict.<sup>4</sup>

### **Why Reconciliation?**

The discussion thus far is presented in terms of the vision of shalom. But the case can be made on the grounds of practical realities of peacebuilding as well.

#### ***Viability of Settlements***

Daniel Smith, a student of the conflict in the Middle East, concludes that some sort of healing processes are essential to the viability of any agreements addressing the conflict there: “The language of forgiveness and reconciliation expresses the inevitable fact that the parties involved not only need to ‘resolve a conflict’ or ‘reach a settlement’ but must also live together in some form of socio-political relationship that is on-going and continuous.”<sup>5</sup>

From his experiences in Africa, where the majority of conflicts have been civil wars, Hezkias Assefa makes a similar point:

“Although the antagonists in civil wars may be bitterly alienated by conflict, their lives are inextricably intertwined with each other through ties in culture, geographic proximity, social interdependence, etc. Under those conditions, it is not enough for the mediator to aim merely for the cessation of violence between the protagonists, or for management of the conflict so that it does not get out of hand. The mediator must aim as much as possible towards a reconciliation where the parties are helped not only to stop the violence but also to feel positively towards each other so that their disrupted but inescapable relationship can begin to function amicably again.”<sup>6</sup>

Traditional diplomacy pays little attention to the reality of on-going relationships and the need for healing within these relationships from the emotional and relational damage of conflicts. This seems a remarkable oversight, given the obvious need of those in conflict to cooperate in an ongoing way in the implementation of many settlements. We might speculate that the inclination to ignore the need for reconciliation is an anachronism that lingers from an era when conflicts were less complicated and the parties had fewer options for prolonging hostilities than today. As a consequence of global interdependence, parties in conflict today wage battles not only on military fronts, but also on

<sup>4</sup> Crane Brinton’s classic study of the English, American, French, and Russian revolutions documents the ambiguous, largely unforeseen, and often overstated results of “revolutionary” change. See his *Anatomy of a Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965).

<sup>5</sup> Daniel L. Smith, “The Rewards of Allah,” *Journal of Peace Research* 26, No. 4 (1989): 386. Quoted by Alice Ackerman, in “Reconciliation as a Peace-Building Process in Postwar Europe: The Franco-German Case”, *Peace and Change*, Vol. 19, Number 3, July 1994: 230.

<sup>6</sup> Hezkias Assefa, “The Challenge of Mediation in Internal Wars: Reflections on the INN Experience in the Ethiopian/Eritrean Conflict”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 23(3), 1992: 101-106

economic and propaganda fronts. It is no longer remarkable for a party which is weak in military power to sustain and even win a lengthy contest with an opponent that is far stronger militarily. Because parties in conflict have more options available at all stages of hostilities, hostilities can more easily be prolonged or resumed in the event of breakdown in agreements than in the past. Consequently, truly resolving a conflict and establishing the basis for cooperation between the parties is even more important than in the past.

Not only do the parties have more options for continuation of conflict available, they also have less opportunity to avoid each other than in the past. The interdependence of trade, communication, technology, transport, and labor make it impossible for the parties in most serious conflicts today to simply withdraw and ignore their opponent. They *must* relate to each other if they wish to prosper.

### ***Reconciliation as Essential to Settlement***

In some situations even short-term agreements are unlikely to be reached unless the parties are assisted in experiencing a reconciliation process enabling at least some release from the trauma of extended violence. A veteran observer of the devastation in the former Yugoslavia describes the current war there as a “repetition of archetypic epic warfare” in which all rationality has been destroyed. Reviewing the many rounds of violence that have shattered the region and the way in which this history of devastation has pervaded and now shapes social consciousness through poetry, mythology, and song, Thomas Butler concludes: “If anything in this terrible picture is clear to me, after years of studying these cultures, it is that the vicious conflict we are witnessing cannot be explained solely in terms of history, or of competing economic needs. I think we have to turn to psychiatry for insight.”<sup>7</sup>

Reflecting on the situation in light of Carl Jung’s concept of the archetypal Shadow in human consciousness, Butler asks: “Is there any way to lead these modern-day epic warriors out of their narcissism, their obsession with past tribal losses, their feeling of being eternal victims?” It won’t be easy, he says, quoting Joseph Montville, a well-known political scientist and founder of the International Society for Political Psychology: “Victimhood and the violence associated with it usually defy traditional diplomatic attempts to resolve it. There is a strong case to be made that the sense of victimhood can only be relieved through the experience of profound psychological processes.” Butler agrees with Montville’s assessment, adding: “In such an irrational situation as prevails in Bosnia today, the only cure can be the *irrational* - a homeopathy for sick souls, with mutual forgiveness as its goal.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas Butler, “Forgiveness in Bosnia”, *The Boston Book Review*, September 5, 1994

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Like the concept of deterrence, most bargaining theories take it for granted that a basic strata of rationality governs the behavior of combatants. The underlying assumption is that opponents in battle make rational analyses of the costs and benefits of the strategic choices they face and respond accordingly. Leaders faced with the likelihood of losses in battle are expected to shrink from warfare and choose peace, even at unfavorable terms, for the costs of war would be higher than the benefits.

But if anything has become apparent in the ethnic struggles of recent decades, it is that parties in such conflicts ignore what to others seems obvious, and they plunge into battle heedless of the costs. They are driven, not by rational reflection on material issues, but rather by what the noted conflict resolution theorist John Burton calls “basic human needs”,<sup>9</sup> needs for identity, respect, participation, and a sense of security. Such needs are fundamental to human well-being and they drive people at levels not vulnerable to rational analysis. When their basic human needs are blocked, people in Ireland, the Middle East, and other situations of deep-rooted conflict have repeatedly demonstrated they are prepared to sacrifice everything in order to attack what they see as obstacles to meeting these needs, with little regard to the balance of costs and benefits.

In such situations, processes capable of leading to peace need to be implemented that function at levels other than the rationally-based give-and-take bargaining which typically characterizes the quest for negotiated settlements. Rational bargaining must of course enter the picture at some point, but often it needs to be preceded with, or at least accompanied by, reconciliation processes that operate at an entirely different level than bargaining.

### **The Damage of Violence and the Nature of Reconciliation**

The damage of violence between groups in immediate terms of lives, property, and disruption is devastating. But the most enduring damage is the destruction it causes to moral vision and capacity for the creation of human community. At best, to use violence is to give up, even if only temporarily, on the possibility of transformation as a means of addressing problems and effecting change in a particular situation. More commonly, violence represents a reckless insistence on the priority of its own interests by one group of people over against those of another.

At a symbolic level, then, violence represents a fundamental attack on the vision for human co-habitation. In a world of diversity, after all, the only hope for working together is if people can agree to be accountable to some form of problem solving higher than mere pursuit of self-interest. This willingness to be governed by an at least implicit, voluntary social contract lies at the heart of modern understandings of society. Beyond the fears for immediate security that accompany violence, then,

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<sup>9</sup> Burton, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflicts*. Cf. my description of Burton in the chapter on “Engagement”.

human beings intuitively sense the deeper threat which it represents. By setting aside or rejecting the possibility of moral discernment as the basis for problem-solving, violence poses the threat of the descent of the larger human community into chaos.

If we are guided by the vision of shalom, a number of things must happen in enabling healing from conflict. At a most obvious level, people need healing from the trauma of anger and grief which inevitably accompany large-scale violence. But more is needed: the recovery of hope for the possibility of human community, which is a possibility only when people are willing to be governed by moral vision rather than unbridled self-interest. The significance of this point will be evident in the latter stages of the reconciliation process outlined below.

### **Forgiveness and Reconciliation as Process**

One of the most important and least understood dimensions of reconciliation is that it is a process, not an event. The following recounts a personal experience in South Africa which taught me a great deal about the importance of viewing reconciliation in this way.

“I wish to ask forgiveness for my role in the creation of apartheid, a system which I now believe to be sinful.” The speaker was a well-known white professor of theology and dominee in the Dutch Reformed Church addressing a multi-racial gathering of church leaders at Rustenburg in 1991. A few minutes later delegates broke up for small group discussion of the morning’s events. I joined with eagerness the group to which I had been assigned, feeling that a major watershed had just been passed.

“Wasn’t that terrible!” said a “colored” woman as we sat down. “I knew this was going to happen,” agreed an African pastor sitting next to me to headnodding all around. Stunned, I listened in silence as the mostly black members of my group criticized a confession which I had thought to be a constructive step forward.

As I listened, I learned much about the complex nature of the task of reconciliation from bitter conflict. My colleagues in the group viewed the confession as a bid for cheap grace. “They’ve taken everything from us,” one member put it, “now they think that all they need to do is say they’re sorry, and we’ll say ‘you’re forgiven’ and then they can go their merry way, released of all further obligations.” Another said, “I don’t want nice apologies so white people can feel good. What I want is for whites to join us in the struggle to dismantle apartheid and create justice.”<sup>10</sup>

Exactly what understanding of reconciliation the professor of theology held was unclear. But the skeptics in the discussion group thought that he sought an easy way out. They feared that having created a comfortable life for themselves at the cost of the blacks, whites would now offer hasty apologies, request forgiveness, and turn their backs to the cost of their action. They knew that the shattered foundations of education, employment, and self-esteem which undergird the well-being of modern people would take many decades to re-build, and their sense of justice required that whites

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<sup>10</sup> Ron Kraybill, “‘Neutralising History’: Moving Past Old Hurt,” *Track Two*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (May/September 1994): 40.

share their wealth in accomplishing this. In short, they intuitively understood that for them to experience reconciliation with former oppressors, a series of actions needed to take place that involved much more than apologies and forgiveness.

Rather than appearing “magically” from a profound event, reconciliation is accomplished only through hard work, that unfolds in stages over time. The following “stage model” represents an effort to identify key stages of such a process. Of course, reality almost never corresponds to models such as this one and it would be unrealistic to view this model as offering a formula for reconciliation in all circumstances. Nevertheless, it enables us to dissect the complex nature of reconciliation and to reflect on the range of needs encountered by people moving through a process of healing from the trauma of bitter conflict.

### **1. Vulnerable Relationship**

Before considering hurt and healing from it, we do well to consider the nature of “normal” relationships which are healthy by the standards of shalom. The key point for this discussion is that vulnerability is an essential part of such relationships. This is so because in order to experience the fullest potential in relationships, there needs to be trust, which enables people to share openly about themselves, make and accept promises without fear, share resources, etc. Trust takes time and effort to build, and the only way to build it is through taking risks. In the beginning, trust may be low, so risks that are taken are low too. But as trust grows, bigger risks are taken, leading to increased trust. Where people live in a state of shalom, risk and trust expand in an on-going cycle, and the relationship moves to an ever deepening plane.

To choose to enter a state of risk in relationship to others makes a symbolic statement about vision for human community and resolution of differences. Persons or groups which choose to place themselves at the risk of injury or disappointment by others in hopes of moving towards peace in the context of a conflict state, by implication, that relationships (and thereby, accountability and moral discernment which become the basis for resolving differences when relationships are good) are important as the basis for working out differences, so important as to merit taking this risk.

From this perspective, the only way to “enter” the reality of shalom is through voluntarily-chosen vulnerability, and insistence on absolute “security” is an obstacle to shalom. Wild leaps of risk are not the goal, but the reconciliation process can move faster and farther if people accept the *principle* of vulnerability as an essential dimension of all constructive relationships.<sup>11</sup> This is difficult, for

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Stanley Hauerwas’ argument that trust is the basis of true moral community. Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 11. See also J. Peter Cordella, “Reconciliation and the Mutualist Model of Community” in Harold E. Pepinsky and Richard Quinney, editors, *Criminology as Peacemaking* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), who sees lack of

people who have been injured by others understandably wish to avoid risk. I will return later to this question.

## **2. Injury**

At some point expectations are not met. One party insults, exploits, betrays, attacks, invades the other, or is perceived as having done so. Risk has been rewarded, not with good outcomes and greater trust, but with injury.

## **3. Withdrawal to Safety**

Withdrawal from risk follows injury. Frequently the withdrawal is physical: Individuals may turn their back or leave the room; groups may depart the region or the nation. Even when withdrawal is not physical, emotional withdrawal always takes place as people pull back into themselves to escape further injury and assess. Withdrawal may last for a second or a century. If people stay stuck in withdrawal it means the loss of relationships and opportunities for human and growth, but as a preliminary response to injury, it represents health and life, and often provides the first signal that something is not right.

What happens after people are in the withdrawal stage is pivotal if genuine reconciliation is to occur. People are particularly vulnerable in this stage to the desire to take short-cuts that appear to bypass the hard work essential to return to shalom. In her work with individuals who had been victims of violence, author Judith Lewis Herman concluded that the “fantasy of magical resolution” is one of the most common causes of stagnation in the recovery process of such individuals.<sup>12</sup> Herman believes this fantasy takes 3 common forms: the fantasy of revenge, the fantasy of forgiveness, and the fantasy of compensation, each of which are often thought to be capable of freeing victims from the lingering trauma of violence. So long as victims cling to the belief that any of these fantasies can accomplish the healing they seek, they remain frozen in the recovery process.

The fantasy of revenge suggests that if like suffering is inflicted on the perpetrator of injury, victims will be freed from the trauma of the harm they have been dealt. But in fact, the opposite is true. Herman cites research showing that people who actually commit acts of revenge do not rid themselves of their pain, “rather, they seem to suffer the most severe and intractable disturbances.”<sup>13</sup>

We should note that the fantasy of revenge often comes cloaked in the language of justice. Sometimes calls for justice imply the existence of metaphysical laws approving the rightness of

trust as a consequence of contractual understandings of society (33), and believes that “the first and foremost task of reconciliation is to restore trust.” (42).

<sup>12</sup> Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (Basic Books, 1992), 189.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

retribution; sometimes they appeal to the common wisdom that punishment is necessary as a deterrent. From the standpoint of shalom, neither understanding of justice is helpful. Shalom does not assert the existence of metaphysical rights to maintain a balance of wrong, rather it calls people into a new way of relating to each other. Far from leading people into this new way, revenge locks people into the old in an escalating spiral of violence.

The theory that punishment is necessary to deter future bad behavior undergirds the criminal justice system operating in most countries of the world today but the evidence supporting such an assertion is limited. Some evidence exists to show that the use of the death penalty, in fact, actually increases the inclination of people to kill. Apparently the message heard by some potential offenders when capital punishment is practiced “is not that killing is wrong, but that those who wrong us deserve to die. The message that offenders must get their due, and that what they are due is punishment, may teach a lesson quite different than what we intend.”<sup>14</sup>

To challenge revenge and its civilized cousin, punitive justice, is in no sense to give up on holding people responsible for their action and on the commitment to justice. The goal is rather to work for justice in ways that are transformative, that yield people and societies that are genuinely better and therefore no longer locked into cycles of violence.

In a very different way from revenge, the fantasy of forgiveness is also often invoked by people in the withdrawal stage as a short-cut to reconciliation. Herman views forgiveness as an effort to “transcend...rage and erase the impact of the trauma through a willful, defiant act of love.” But forgiveness often becomes “a cruel torture”, she says, because “it remains out of reach of most ordinary human beings. Folk wisdom recognizes that to forgive is divine. And even divine forgiveness, in most religious systems, is not unconditional. True forgiveness cannot be granted until the perpetrator has sought and earned it through confession, repentance, and restitution.”<sup>15</sup> Later I will argue for the importance of forgiveness as an essential part of reconciliation at the appropriate point in the process. But as the initial response to violence it belongs in the category of fantasy where Herman puts it.

The fantasy of compensation is another common block to reconciliation. Herman identifies it as a potential trap because it is often a form of denial. “Prolonged, fruitless struggles to wrest compensation from the perpetrator or from others may represent a defense against facing the full reality of what was lost. Mourning is the only way to give due honor to loss; there is no adequate

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<sup>14</sup> Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice* (Scottsdale PA: Herald Press, 1990), 77.

<sup>15</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 190.

compensation.”<sup>16</sup> Again, I will later call for the possibility of compensation at a subsequent point in the reconciliation process, but if it is viewed in itself as the answer to injury, it blocks true reconciliation and the possibility of shalom.

What can peacebuilders contribute to people needing reconciliation who are at the stage of withdrawal? The primary requirement is creating safety so that people are able to respond to the powerful drive present in all traumatized people to tell the story of their experience and wrestle with its meaning. At the most basic level, creating physical safety is a first step towards reconciliation.

Ways in which peacebuilders have sought to create this include:

- removing people from the site of conflict
- inter-positioning themselves between warring parties
- living with one or both sides of a conflict in order to reduce the likelihood of attack
- arranging for visits by outsiders from media or other influential organizations

Once safe from the threat of immediate harm, people need to experience “social safety”, offered by relationships where they are supported in talking about traumatic experiences without fear of judgment or rejection. This kind of safety addresses the fundamental human need for recognition and respect by others<sup>17</sup>. Without it, people “freeze” at emotional and moral levels, withdrawing into isolation and removing themselves from the kinds of interaction which might bring true reconciliation. Peacebuilders have sought to offer this kind of safe social space to parties in conflict in a variety of ways:

- by developing close relationships with key leaders in situations of conflict
- by conducting off-the-record workshops for leaders that give them opportunity to reflect on issues related to their conflict situation, but which are removed from the scrutiny of the press and the public
- by meeting with victims of violent conflict in a setting where they are free to speak about the trauma of their experience without fear of derision or reprisal

Providing safety is something which many religious organizations are good at. Religious institutions are rarely perceived as powerful or dangerous or as competitors for political power. They also often represent priestly qualities of acceptance, grace and forgiveness, and they rarely have power to punish. Additionally, religious leader are often well-situated to help people in conflict to see through

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Burton, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict*, 11-28.

the fantasies of forgiveness, revenge, and compensation because calls for revenge and forgiveness frequently appeal to the realm of the divine. Religiously-based peacebuilders may hold special credibility in such discussions.

#### **4. Truth-Telling: Naming and Knowing the Experience of Suffering**

If people are to move beyond the grip of grief, anger and trauma, they must go through the stage of *truth-telling* and tell the truth as they experienced it. This is a different exercise than “establishing the truth.” By “truth-telling” I refer to a narrative endeavor whose focus is on documenting and conveying reality *as experienced by the narrator* or those on whose behalf the narrator speaks. That reality is unique to them, for it consists of more than the “facts” of what happened, it also includes the emotional impact and social and spiritual significance of the events in question.

“Establishing the truth” is a different enterprise whose purpose is to determine “objective” truth in a setting where facts are contested and it is deemed necessary to determine factuality. Its focus is less on the *impact and significance* of the events in question for those who experienced them, and more on the events themselves. While not ruling out the possibility that establishing the truth may assist reconciliation in some settings, truth-telling is *always* a necessary step in reconciliation and often obviates the need for establishing the truth. Establishing the truth, on the other hand, is often unnecessary, so long as truth-telling takes place<sup>18</sup>. Indeed, it may block reconciliation because it so easily becomes a substitute for truth-telling. That this is so becomes apparent when we understand fully the requirements of healing.

In order to experience healing from past trauma, human beings need not only to remember, but also to *integrate* those memories and their implications into the present. Herman says, “The goal of recounting the trauma story is integration, not exorcism. In the process of reconstruction, the trauma story does undergo a transformation, but only in the sense of becoming more present and more real.” She quotes trauma counselor Richard Mollica who describes the integrated and transformed trauma story as “a new story” which is “no longer about shame and humiliation” but rather “about dignity and virtue.” Through the process of storytelling, Mollica says his refugee patients “regain the world they have lost.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> An important exception to this is situations where many people have “disappeared”, and no specific information is available about what happened to them. In this case relatives and friends have powerful needs for information about the fate of their loved ones in order to make sense of their loss and properly mourn. Thus in South Africa and Argentine “truth commissions” have been established with power to grant immunity to individuals coming forward to testify about their involvement in atrocities. I believe that such commissions can be an important step in moving a society towards the essential task of truth-telling at many levels, so long as it is recognized that their work is a prelude or catalyst for a task that belongs to everyone, and cannot be a substitute for it.

<sup>19</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 181, quoting Richard Mollica, “The Trauma Story: The Psychiatric Care of Refugee Survivors of Violence and Torture” in F. Ochberg, editor, *Post-Traumatic Therapy and Victims of Violence* (New York:

Healing capable of bringing shalom requires people to grapple with the meaning of the experience of trauma and pain for their life and beliefs, and by definition this is an exercise in truth-telling. The forensic enterprise of establishing the truth is less demanding and less painful than truth-telling, for it locates the quest for meaning in a new and current conflict that is external to each party, in the hearing chambers of a "truth commission". To be sure, the struggle for meaning can be informed and even assisted by the findings of such a commission, but it can never be replaced by it.

*Truth-telling as Remembering, Reconstructing, and Integrating*

Truth-telling may involve a number of tasks. At a minimum, it requires *remembering and reconstructing* the events of trauma in a narrative account to attentive and supportive listeners.<sup>20</sup> The deepest psychic destruction of violence lies in its capacity to destroy the sense of trust and security which lies at the heart of human community, thereby separating and isolating the victim from others.<sup>21</sup> By telling their story to attentive and supportive others, victims reduce its power to isolate them, and begin the slow and difficult task of reestablishing bonds of community in the face of their trauma.

When people remember and tell traumatic stories, they begin *encountering deep emotions, particularly anger and grief*. Sometimes they resist this. Herman notes that although "the descent into mourning" is the most necessary task at this stage of recovery, it is also the most dreaded. Her patients often fear that "the task is insurmountable, that once they allow themselves to start grieving, they will never stop."<sup>22</sup> For some, to resist mourning is a way of denying victory to the perpetrator. In this case Herman seeks to "reframe the patient's mourning as an act of courage rather than humiliation. "To the extent that the patient is unable to grieve, she is cut off from a part of herself and robbed of an important part of her healing. Reclaiming the ability to feel the full range of emotions, including grief, must be understood as an act of resistance rather than submission to the perpetrator's intent. Only through mourning everything she has lost can the patient discover her indestructible inner life."<sup>23</sup>

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Brunner/Mazel, 1988), 295-314. Cf. Robert Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992), 34ff., who says that the destructive power of violence lies in its ability to destroy the narratives through which people sustain their life and faith and replace them with narratives of its own, which he calls "narratives of the lie". Schreiter's understanding of healing is similar to parallels that Herman's. The goal is to disengage the original, true narrative from the acts of violence. This is done by "repeating the narrative of the violence over and over again to ease the burden of trauma that it carries. Such an activity begins to put a boundary around the violence, as it were, to separate it from memory." (p. 38)

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 176ff.

<sup>21</sup> Schreiter, 37-38.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

Inviting story-telling and listening uncritically are the foundation of any effort to enable truth-telling. Traumatized people presented with such an offer carefully monitor and determine the amount of social safety being offered by the listener as they speak. To the extent that they feel that the social space is “safe” they are likely to go deeper with their narrative. Thus inviting truth-telling and responding supportively to it are closely linked to the needs for safety discussed in the previous stage.

One important way to provide safety is through “group mourning.” Walter Brueggemann has highlighted for the field of biblical studies the role that sacred rituals of lament and rage played in the life of the Hebrew people.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, psychiatrist Vamik Volkan has documented the power of collective mourning through public rituals to legitimize grieving, thereby enabling traumatized societies to move beyond the past.<sup>25</sup>

Truth-telling is facilitated by *truth-hearing*, that is, an ability to listen well coupled with a keen sense of the deeper issues behind the stories being told, and an ability to ask questions that invite further truth-telling about those issues. Behind an account of imprisonment, for example, might lie a deeper truth, about the prisoner’s loss of faith in family and friends, about a struggle with the use of violence as a means of resisting evil, about loss of faith in a deeply held vision for a multi-ethnic society, about an inner conflict over the role of the divine in history.

The need to wrestle with such issues is another task often required in truth-telling. Herman says that many people need to *conduct a systematic review of the meaning of the events* both to the victim and to the important people in the victim’s life. Where the trauma is particularly deep, the experience of remembering present a victim with the need

to articulate the values and beliefs that she once held and that the trauma destroyed. She stands mute before the emptiness of evil, feeling the insufficiency of any known system of explanation. Survivors of atrocity of every age and every culture come to a point in their testimony where all questions are reduced to one, spoken more in bewilderment than in outrage: Why? The answer is beyond human understanding.

Beyond this unfathomable question, the survivor confronts another, equally incomprehensible question: Why me? The arbitrary, random quality of her fate defies the basic human faith in a just or even predictable world order. In order to develop a full understanding of the trauma story, the survivor must examine the moral questions of guilt and responsibility and reconstruct a system of belief that makes sense of her undeserved suffering. Finally, the survivor cannot reconstruct a sense of meaning by

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg House, 1984), particularly his section on “Communal Laments”, 67ff.

<sup>25</sup> Vamik Volkan, “Psychological Concepts Useful in the Building of Political Foundations”, *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 35: 903-935. See also Joseph Montville, “Psychoanalytic Enlightenment and the Greening of Diplomacy”, in Volkan, Montville, and Demetrios Julius, *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1991), 177-192.

the exercise of thought alone. The remedy for injustice also requires action. The survivor must decide what is to be done.<sup>26</sup>

Such questions invariably lurk beneath the surface of bitter conflict. A listener who is aware that wrestling with these questions is an important part of healing for individuals and groups, and who listens carefully for them, can often bring them to the surface for explicit discussion. The point is not to *answer* the questions, but to assist in articulating them.

### *Truth-telling as Knowing the Truth*

In addition to remembering and reintegrating, another requirement common among people who have been victimized is the need to *know* the truth. Many victims of crime demonstrate strong desires to know more information about the crime itself as they seek to work through the trauma of the experience. "Why was I picked? How did the offender get into my house? What did he do with the stolen items?" Information about such practical questions seems to meet an important need in victims of crimes in recuperating.<sup>27</sup>

It seems reasonable to expect that a similar need is likely to be present among victims of political violence as well. The obsession of many in the United States with determining the fate of unaccounted-for American servicemen who disappeared during the Viet Nam war as well as the phenomenon of American servicemen returning in substantial numbers in the 1990s to visit Viet Nam and sites of battles and imprisonment might be viewed as evidence of such a need. Simply providing accurate information to such persons may thus be an important step towards healing. More ambitiously, peacebuilders might seek to arrange opportunities for victims of trauma to meet people from "the other side" to assist in providing such information.

In summary, although it is not adequate in itself to accomplish reconciliation, truth-telling is one of the most important steps in the journey of healing. By helping victims to begin regaining a sense of inner security it opens the possibility of reclaiming hope, re-establishing deep connections with other human beings, and even entering a constructive relationship with the enemy. It accomplishes this by giving people linguistic expression and control over reality as they narrate their experience to sympathetic listeners, thereby incorporating terrifying experiences into the safety of current reality and existing relationships.

<sup>26</sup> Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 178.

<sup>27</sup> Howard Zehr, in lectures given at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA, November 2, 1995 and January 24, 1996. Zehr identifies six key questions which recur among victims of crimes in their recovery from the trauma of their experiences: 1) What happened? 2) Why did it happen? 3) Why did I react as I did at the time? 4) Why have I acted as I have acted since the incident? 5) What will I do if this happens again? 6) What does this experience mean for my outlook on life? See also Herman, *ibid.*, 158.

### 5. Identity Work

Truth-telling reduces the power of trauma by giving its victims narrative control over chaos, but it still leaves much work to be done. The challenge is to move beyond the wreckage of the past remembered in truth-telling. This requires a sense of identity that includes the past but also transcends it. This is difficult, for prolonged, intensive conflict alters people's sense of reality and of their own role in it, to a point that their own identity is shaped largely by the struggle with an opponent.

A common characteristic of such a situation is that parties are far more articulate about what they are *against* than about what they are *for*. In post-apartheid South Africa, for example, it has become apparent that the primary identity of many groups and organizations was that they were *anti-apartheid*. As soon as the apartheid government was dissolved, the majority of such groups fell into disarray and conflict over their new identity. Their identity was, in effect, rooted in the past and depended in substantial part on the old conflict. Until a new identity is worked out, such groups are able to accomplish little; they are prone in fact to seek to re-create the dynamics of the old conflict as a way of perpetuating unity within themselves.

Violent conflict is devastating to the identity of all parties, and the primary task of peacebuilders at this stage will almost always be to strengthen a sense of healthy group identity. The point seems obvious enough with those who have been deeply oppressed over a period of decades such as blacks in South Africa or Palestinians in the West Bank. It also seems obvious in regards to those who "lose" in a protracted struggle as they could be expected to suffer a deep crisis in identity as they come to grips with the reality of having wagered everything and lost.

But what about "winners"? The truth is that the majority of the wars fought in today's world are between parties who are highly interdependent and therefore unable to attain a decisive win. In most conflicts the economic, social, and political costs are staggeringly high, and even that which is "won" is ambiguous. An internal crisis of identity is thus likely for both sides in the transition from hostilities to peace.

Reclaiming identity must begin in caucus, with each group gathering within the safety of a closed circle of those who share common perceptions. Victims of rape are not expected to work through the pain of this tragedy in the presence of the public, let alone the rapist. Neither should groups of people who have been deeply damaged as a collective be expected to work through the meaning of this experience in the presence of other groups. In this sense, it is a paradoxical phase, for it appears to be retrogressive, moving in the opposite direction of the ultimate goal of open interaction with other groups. But any group which neglects this essential stage, or is denied the social space,

understanding, and respect necessary to go through it, is likely to become frozen in a permanent quest for identity that often expresses itself eventually in rigid and aggressive forms of ethnicism or nationalism. Eastern Europe today, where expressions of ethnic identity were repressed for decades, is a case in point.

From this perspective we can see that Black Consciousness as known in South Africa and some other African settings in fact represents a necessary and healthy phase in the healing process of blacks from the devastation of colonialism. Similarly, the efforts of some whites in South Africa to withdraw into white enclaves represents a necessary stage in the process of developing a new identity there. What separatists of all stripes require to move beyond dogmatic isolation is not sneers or admonition about tolerance and pluralism. Rather they need uncritical support in reclaiming their threatened identity. Support does *not* mean tolerating abuse by one group of other groups, or acceding to demands to institutionalize isolation in every phase of life but it *does* mean giving space for withdrawal at some levels. Above all, it means social and physical safety and complete, authentic respect for the identity and basic human needs of the group in question.

One of the most important dimensions of this stage is acknowledging and wrestling with the dark side of group identity. Lurking in the historical background of virtually every group involved in significant conflict are experiences which inflicted a great deal of pain or self-doubt, often both. It is widely recognized by historians, for example, that the roots of Nazism lay in the humiliation experienced by Germany at the end of World War One, leading to a deep desire on the part of German citizens to reclaim their shattered identity as a people.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, apartheid in South Africa can be understood in part as a determined effort on the part of white Afrikaaners to recover their sense of pride as a people after being humiliated by the British in the Boer Wars at the turn of the twentieth century.

Such experiences of collective trauma deeply damage the psyche of a people, leaving self-doubt, guilt, and insecurity in their wake. If these feelings are acknowledged openly they are likely to lose their power. If they are not - as they were not in Germany and South Africa - they root themselves in the hidden recesses of group awareness and often grow with time to monstrous proportions, expressing themselves in negative attitudes towards other groups, stereotyping, and hostility that can easily be transmuted into hatred, bellicosity, and aggressiveness.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See for example, Donald W. Shriver, Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 12.

<sup>29</sup> See Ronald J. Fisher, *The Social Psychology of Intergroup and International Conflict Resolution* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990), 59-85, for a review of the substantial body of literature supporting this assertion. See also Eileen Borris, -

One of the most useful psychological concepts for understanding the power of past pain to block peace is that of *projection*, a process whereby people attribute to others those feelings or desires which they prefer not to recognize or admit. In projection we “deny our feelings of guilt, those painful negative thoughts and feelings we have about ourselves, and instead only see them in someone else. Thus we attack and blame others for the weaknesses we cannot accept in ourselves, becoming blind to our own shortcoming.”<sup>30</sup> The consequence, in Jung’s words, is that “projections change the world into replicas of one’s own face”.<sup>31</sup>

Projection depends on denial and lack of awareness for its power. By acknowledging the existence of self-doubt or guilt, a group decreases its tendency to project negative images onto others. Old hatreds are likely to dissipate and new hostilities are less likely to develop.<sup>32</sup>

Supporting the struggle for identity, then, is an essential dimension of peacebuilding in the vision of shalom. Rather than planting deep seeds of future conflict by pushing painful dimensions of the struggle for meaning underground, identity work prepares the way for peace by wrestling openly with them. To the extent that both parties take seriously the need to do identity work, the possibilities for transformation are greatly enhanced.

In many respects facilitating identity work in the context of group conflict resembles the effort to reach what western psychology in the context of individual therapy calls “self-awareness” and calls for similar skills. A major goal is to explore and bring to conscious awareness the diverse realities of the group’s collective “self”. By exploring its strengths and weaknesses, its faces of darkness and light, a group comes to understand itself better, arrives at a point where it is more able to make conscious choices, and thus for the first time is able to take full, conscious moral responsibility for its actions. The widely recognized skills of thoughtful query, careful listening, and interaction as a “non-

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“The Healing Power of Forgiveness”, unpublished paper distributed by Peace Initiatives (6450 East Hummingbird Lane, Paradise Valley, Arizona, US 85253), for an insightful discussion of projection as the mechanism underlying this link.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>32</sup> Ken Wapnick suggests that forgiveness is a matter of reversing the process of projection. Instead of projecting negative feelings about self onto others, in forgiveness we recognize the source of those bad feelings within ourselves and thus “own” them. Ken Wapnick, *Forgiveness and Jesus* (Farmingdale, NY: Coleman Publishing, 1983), quoted in Borris, - “The Healing Power of Forgiveness”, 12. This proposal need not be understood as implying that all source of injustice lies within, but rather that we often fail to see clearly what is happening, to grasp all the options for response available to us, or to understand the motivations and needs of others because we project our bad feelings about self onto others. Rather than understand others as human beings with weaknesses and vulnerabilities, we demonize them and develop deep hatreds. By coming to greater clarity about its own identity, and particularly in addressing its guilt, a group decreases its tendency to project negative images onto others and cling to hatred. This allows the group to interact more openly with former opponents and also opens the possibility of forgiveness.

anxious presence”<sup>33</sup> employed by counselors seeking to facilitate self-awareness in individuals will go a long way towards supporting the struggle for collective identity or awareness.

But to become “aware” at the level of the collective requires reflection at a level of existential depth rarely implied by western notions of individual “awareness”. In terms of Berger’s framework described in the Introduction, individuals exist in a larger social context which provides a collective framework of cosmic meaning. The popular concept of “self-awareness” is often content to focus on individual behavior and emotions and ignores deeper issues. If a group or nation is to reflect on and grow from the experience of large scale violence, it cannot evade these larger cosmic questions. Again we see the peacebuilder called upon to assist in “doing theology”.

As in doing theology anywhere, half of the challenge in doing theology in the context of identity work is to identify the critical questions and frame them in ways that those most in need of such reflection see the relevance of the exercise. Thus truth-hearing is the starting place for the “peacebuilder as theologian”. The challenge is to recognize the issues of identity which every violent conflict poses for those involved, and to pose them for discussion at the moment when people are ready to wrestle with them. The deeper truth, for example, behind a leader’s long account of atrocities, may be an existential crisis of survival for his people. Acknowledging and naming this crisis may give that leader the sense that for the first time someone outside his own party “understands” what is happening to them and that in fact his people still exist in the eyes of others. Alternatively, it might lead to discussion about what is fueling his massive buildup in arms, or set the stage for discussion about how the survival of his people might better be ensured through peaceful means.

One set of potentially useful questions has to do with the group’s identity in relation to other groups:

How are we perceived in the eyes of others outside the conflict?

What is our role in the post-conflict era in relation both to former enemies as well as to other groups or nations?

Who are we; what beyond our struggle against an “enemy” defines us as a group?

To the extent that the parties are interdependent (and the chances are high that this will be the case), what aspects of our identity support the validity of cooperating with someone we previously viewed as an enemy? What aspects of our previous identity may we need to relinquish?

But these questions point to a deeper level of often unconscious assumptions about the nature of reality and meaning which are fundamentally religious in nature.

What is the meaning of history?

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York: Guilford Press, 1985), 208; and C. Margaret Hall, *The Bowen Family Theory and Its Use* (New York: Jason Aronson, 1983).

How do we explain the reality of darkness - pain, tragedy, evil, etc.?

What is our vision for humanity and particularly, how is humanity to be freed from the reality of darkness?

What is our role/status as a group in history? How are we called upon to respond to the reality of darkness? How are we to participate in gaining freedom from the darkness? What resources do our deepest traditions of faith offer as we respond?

The answers to these questions “write the map” of group identity and substantially determine how people respond to those whom they encounter, particularly in the setting of conflict. If, for example, the meaning of history is understood to be that some god of divinity or economics must conquer all, the reality of darkness is understood as due to a particular category of humanity (sinners, elites, communists, capitalists, etc.) and freedom from darkness is believed to come only by defeating and eliminating people belonging to this category, the identity of the group holding such beliefs is likely to be deeply invested in war, violence, and weapons.

Are these truly the understandings of meaning, history and the role of humanity in them required by your god? This is a question a peacebuilder might ask of such a group. If the answer were affirmative, the task is to find ways to challenge such understandings.<sup>34</sup>

What militia leader in Liberia, what politician in Ireland, what freedom fighter from anywhere will participate in such discussion? It is important to acknowledge that discussion of this kind may take place infrequently and only in the context of intensive relationship. Obviously interaction of this nature is not the only goal of peacebuilders. But to experience transformation, individuals and societies must at some point wrestle with questions at this level. As peacebuilders we seek to move in this direction, in full knowledge that in any given interaction we may not be able to go as far as desirable.

The goal of discernment underscores a previous point that peacebuilding capable of yielding shalom, by definition, needs to move beyond the narrow circles of political and military elites who usually control power but hold the least interest in such issues. The gods, after all, have often dealt kindly with such people, and they may have no reason to question them. To be catalysts of discernment presses peacebuilders, figuratively speaking, into the marketplace of societies in conflict. Here

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<sup>34</sup> This underscores a point made previously about discernment. To contribute to reflection at this level peacebuilders cannot enter a conflict as “neutrals” defined only by professional values. Partly this is a matter of having some grounds from which to recognize issues: Unless we hold our own deeply-rooted identity we have no standpoint from which to raise questions that ought to be raised. Partly also this is a matter of credibility. To ask questions of this nature implies values on the part of the questioner. The deeper our interaction becomes, the more likely others are to sense that our attention to these issues reflects our own deep interest in the agendas at hand. Claims to being neutral would thus rightly be perceived as disingenuous and manipulative. The only credible stance on the part of peacebuilders is to approach such questions openly as people with their own clear values who are nevertheless keenly interested in reflection in a joint quest for further insight.

matters of meaning, like everything else, are openly up for grabs and people with unusual questions are more likely to arouse interest rather than suspicion.

Then too, we can take a cue from Folger and Bush. In their discussion of transformation, the recurring phrase which brings their strategies for human transformation within reach of mediators at work in the grim realities of 1995 is “presenting opportunities.” For them, mediators do not “empower” others or engage in recognition “for” them, they merely “present opportunities” for others to grasp if they so choose. The task for the “peacebuilder as theologian” is not to force theological reflection down anybody’s throat, but rather to seek to do theology in ways that articulate the unspoken but deeply-felt questions burning in the hearts of all, most of all those trapped in the devastation of conflict.

#### **6. *Re-Connection: Acknowledgment of Interdependence and Return of Risk***

As questions of meaning and their own identity are dealt with, people in conflict move to a more secure level of awareness. This enables them to begin shifting from the purely defensive postures which have characterized them up to this point, and to begin expanding their horizons. In most conflicts one of the first outcomes will be an awareness that they do not exist independently of their opponent and cannot thrive without cooperation.

This raises a difficult reality which often demands a courageous choice to overcome. To pursue their own well-being requires people to cooperate with opponents, and this inevitably means taking risks. Such risks might include loss of face and influence within one’s own camp for being “soft” on the enemy, the possibility of being outmaneuvered or deceived at the bargaining table, the possibility of losing military advantage while engaged in bargaining, etc.

Having suffered in the past, injured parties are understandably wary of risking further loss at the hands of opponents. But as we saw in the first stage of the cycle, risk is the foundation of all relationships. If people are to proceed further in the reconciliation process they must accept the reality of risk. The hardest part is often accepting the principle of risk. Once this is done, the specific choice regarding what risk to take is often easier. Initially, of course, the risk should be small. But if there is openness to reconciliation on both sides, a small risk can lead to sufficient trust to undertake a somewhat larger risk, and the possibility now exists for constructing high levels of trust over time.

#### **7. *Restorative Negotiations***

So far we have addressed the social and relational dimensions of reconciliation. But practical issues are at stake as well. By this I refer not to the routine list of issues requiring negotiation in any major conflict, such as cease-fires, boundaries, political arrangements, etc. A variety of texts already

address the challenge of negotiating these matters from the standpoint of classic bargaining theory. My concern is rather with demands to right the wrongs of the past, calls for “justice”, “reparations”, compensation. How can we respond to these?

As a starting point, it is important to acknowledge that the paradigm usually dominating understandings of “justice” in such conversations is the western legal model of criminal justice. This model of “retributive justice” is punitive in nature. Its primary concerns are determining blame about past events and allocating punishment, and doing this in ways that are fair, impartial, and “rational”<sup>35</sup>. Current and future needs of the parties are secondary. Rather than “raising” either party, the goal is to establish a sense of balance by “lowering” the offender through punishment.<sup>36</sup> The relationship between the individuals involved is of no concern; the goal is simply to determine blame and administer pain fairly.

This paradigm depends heavily, of course, on post-enlightenment liberal thought which looks to well-crafted, impartial social institutions as the key to a just society in which individuals are free to pursue self-interest. In this view of society, people do not need a shared history or a shared future, “all they need is a system of rules that will constitute procedures for resolving disputes as they pursue their various interests.”<sup>37</sup> Responsibility for justice resides solely with society. Thus when, for example, a robber is prosecuted, his prosecutor is not the individual whom he robbed, but rather the state. The individuals affected by a crime have a role only to the extent that they are needed to present evidence for prosecution by the state.

In contrast to retributive justice, criminologist Howard Zehr develops a proposal for what he calls “restorative justice”. Rather than punishing, restorative justice is primarily concerned with *problem-solving*. The focus is on *addressing present and future needs* of the people connected to a crime, rather than on allocating blame regarding events of the past. Restitution is a part of the picture in restoring a sense of balance between the parties, but its purpose is not punitive, rather it is undertaken as part of a larger effort to “raise” both victim and offender.<sup>38</sup> The context and the goal of restorative justice, in short, is relationships. The criteria for success is not whether a previously-agreed system

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<sup>35</sup> In its emphasis on impartial, rational imposition of punishment, retributive justice is heavily indebted to the influence of liberalism on legal thought. John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971) is the best-known exposition of this tradition. See Jonathan Burnside, “Tension and Tradition in the Pursuit of Justice” in Jonathan Burnside and Nicola Baker, editors, *Relational Justice: Repairing the Breach* (Winchester, UK: Waterside Press, 1994), 42-52, for a summary of understandings of justice at work in the field of criminal justice.

<sup>36</sup> These are Howard Zehr's terms. Cf. his *Changing Lenses: A New Focus in Crime and Justice* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 191-214.

<sup>37</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), 78.

<sup>38</sup> Zehr, 191-214.

has been fairly applied but whether the needs of the people involved have been met in the best way possible.

For a variety of reasons, “restorative justice” offers a more appropriate model of re-dressing wrong in the context of many political and international conflicts than retributive justice.<sup>39</sup> Retribution has limited ability to change behavior and even less to improve the moral capacity of human beings.<sup>40</sup> At best, it deters bad behavior. But even where it succeeds in this, by institutionalizing deterrence rather than calling people to the more difficult responses of empowerment, recognition, and ethical reflection, it freezes societies at the lowest levels of moral functioning. Almost without exception, retribution increases levels of bitterness and hostility, leading to more conflict and reduced moral reflectivity. From the standpoint of the transformative vision of shalom, retribution only prolongs the dawn of a new era.

What is more, the nature of the relationship between parties in most violent conflicts differs profoundly from that envisioned by modern legal theory. At one level they are *less committed*, less bound by a sense of common consent to a social contract recognized by all to provide the essential framework for public well-being, a loyalty taken for granted by liberal democracy. Groups and nations go to war because they lack such a contract.

At the same time, groups locked in communal conflict are usually more *interdependent*, less capable of ignoring each other and pursuing their own interests unilaterally than individuals are assumed to be in the vision of liberal democracy. Recent scholarly reflection on “deep-rooted” or “protracted” conflict supports this assertion, high-lighting inter-dependency as a prominent feature of the world’s most notorious conflicts. Such conflicts are bitter and prolonged partly because the groups involved are deeply inter-twined historically, economically, geographically, etc. For better or for worse, the fates of the diverse groups that make up Ireland, South Africa, or the former Yugoslavia are profoundly linked. No single group is likely to be able to sustain a secure and prosperous life for a lengthy period of time so long as any other group in this settings is deprived of the means to meet its basic human needs.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Cf. the long-standing effort to establish a United Nations War Tribunal which would presumably operate in the same kinds of conflict situations we here envision. This effort, misguidedly I believe, assumes the model of Western criminal justice systems in its approach, proposing a system of judges, prosecutors, rules of evidence, a specified range of penalties, etc. Conversation with Howard Zehr, November 2, 1995, in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

<sup>40</sup> Zehr, *Changing Lenses*, 63-82.

<sup>41</sup> This assumption pervades the writings of John Burton. See also Ron Kraybill, “Negotiating to Meet Basic Human Needs”, paper presented at the Conference on Conflicts and Negotiations, University of South Africa, Pretoria, August 29-31, 1991; and Jay Rothman, “Supplementing Tradition: A Theoretical and Practical Typology for International Conflict Management”, *Negotiation Journal*, Vol. 5., Number 3 (July 1989): 265-277.

We already know that the infliction of punishment in current criminal justice systems results in enormous amounts of bitterness on the part of those “punished”. Societies are able to ignore the costs of this bitterness because they are dispersed and borne by the entire society. But bitterness on the part of a large group of people towards those “punishing” them could not be ignored, particularly when “punisher” and “punished” are interdependent.

The interests of all are likely to be served best by an understanding of justice which focuses on meeting real and current needs rather than on inflicting pain. Restoration seeks to address the cry for righting the wrongs of the past by calling people into face-to-face encounter to negotiate ways to do this. Such “restorative negotiations” might at key points look familiar. For example, financial reparations for war damage might be a part of the agenda, a Truth Commission might be established to verify reports of atrocities. But restorative negotiations would be distinguished by several features:

- Restoration of relationships would be recognized as the primary goal of justice and serve as the yardstick for evaluating proposals.
- Transformation of the people and societies involved would provide a related, secondary criteria, pointing beyond mere deterrence of future bad behavior.
- It would be recognized that the people in conflict need to work out their own answers regarding how to serve justice in response to a particular conflict, that no independent external criteria or mechanisms are capable of determining this. Of course, where they exist, standards of law could be recognized as of value in determining a just response. But these would serve as useful strands in a larger process of dialogue and discernment undertaken by those in conflict, not as final arbiters of justice.
- As a relational process, other tasks described in this chapter would play an important, strategic role. If the requirements of justice are determined by the people involved in conflict, they are likely to be significantly affected by truth-telling, identity work, or apologies.

### **8. *Apology and Forgiveness***

Violent conflict imposes irreparable losses on all it touches in terms of disruption, fear and anxiety, and most of all the loss of human life. No material compensation is capable of addressing these losses. Yet former enemies have enormous power to assist each other in healing the gaping wounds of violence they have inflicted upon each other. By choosing to participate in acts of apology and forgiveness they can cooperate in enabling the healing of that which is unrestorable.

Those who have inflicted tragic losses on others can acknowledge the hurt that their actions have caused, even if they continue to feel that they had no other choice at the time. If they engage in activities of the nature described in this chapter they are likely to have become aware of mistakes

which their side made. Confessing these is likely to have a profound affect on the other party, particularly if there has been progress in restorative negotiations.

#### *Forgiveness as Openness to Risk*

As the receiving side of apology, forgiveness indicates the willingness of the forgiver not to be bound in future relationships by memories of the past. One of its costliest requirements is willingness to entertain risk at the hands of people who in the past have inflicted deep injury. “We can forgive but we cannot forget,” people sometimes say. In essence, such a stance usually means, “We are not prepared to become vulnerable again”. Where this is so, forgiveness has not yet been achieved.

The timing of apologies thus becomes essential in order to recognize that to forgive requires people to return to a state of vulnerability. Apologies have the greatest capacity to move a conflict towards shalom if they *follow* restorative negotiations. This sequence enables them to accomplish their fullest potential as a symbolic extension of previous hard work on practical issues into the realm of that which is no longer accessible to negotiations. If apology is offered without any experience to suggest that the apologizers recognize the cost of their actions to others, how can “forgivers” be expected to entertain risks in the future?

#### *Apology as Commitment to Moral Vision*

In the chapter on Transformation I suggested that the power of apology is due in part to the implicit statement that the apologizers intend to guide their conduct by moral vision and principle rather than expedient self-interest. To apologize is to affirm a central dimension of the vision of shalom, namely, that it is possible to guide human behavior by moral discernment, by “what is right” rather than “what is expedient”. It is the assertion of such a hope in the context of human brokenness which makes apology powerful.

Asserting that hope invokes potent moral claims on others. Earlier I recounted an experience of black South Africans who reacted with anger to the apology of a white theology professor for apartheid, because they suspected he sought easy release for his people from the damages of apartheid. We can now describe their response in different terms: They were angry because they intuitively recognized the power of apology to lay moral claims on them to do something they were not yet ready to do. The professor’s apology, though well-intended, came too early. His listeners had no way of assessing his commitment to engaging in the difficult work of restoration which ought to have preceded apology. Though this incident for this reason didn’t “succeed” in creating a strong immediate sense of hope for reconciliation, it nevertheless offers strong witness to the power of apology to evoke encounter at the level of moral discernment.

In my view then, apology is the supreme strategic move towards reconciliation, capturing better than any other human response the potential for transformation towards shalom. In one symbolic maneuver it recognizes the realm of moral discernment as the desired grounds for response to conflict, expresses hope in the possibility that such a realm could become the dominant realm of encounter for addressing the conflict at hand, makes a noncontingent offer on the part of apologizer to enter that realm and be judged by it, and invites the opponent to respond by entering that realm as well.

*Apology and Forgiveness in International Politics?*

Are apology and forgiveness realistic possibilities in the world of international politics? The question can be answered in several ways. At a rhetorical level, we might reply that they are the only realistic solution to situations where the devastation of conflict is great. Pursuit of revenge or retributive justice implies that the losses can somehow be made up for or made right, an obvious illusion when human lives are destroyed. If the criteria for action is realism and pragmatism, then the case for forgiveness already seems adequately established by the irreversibility of the most costly losses of war.

At a historical level, we can point out that confession and forgiveness, while almost non-existent as categories of political behavior, are nevertheless well-documented in political affairs and international relations.<sup>42</sup> In the case which we will examine later, they in fact played an important role in the lives of individuals with access to key figures on both sides of the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe negotiations and implicitly at least, in exchanges between the leading protagonists, Ian Smith and Robert Mugabe.

At a procedural level, confession and forgiveness become more realistic responses when they are understood as an integral part of a larger framework of reconciliation tasks such as that sketched above. Within such a framework we are able to recognize that contrary to common misperception, these acts of the heart are possible only as a culmination of other practical work. While magic and transcendent grace often accompany them, confession and forgiveness begin at a much more mundane level, with the gritty tasks of truth-telling, identity work, and restorative negotiations.

*Forgiveness as Gift*

The above notwithstanding, it would be less than fair to human experience not to point out that people who achieve forgiveness often report an awareness of the necessity of what Eileen Borris calls a

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Bryan Hamlin, *Forgiveness in International Affairs* (London: Grosvenor Books, 1992), a 36 page pamphlet describing experiences of forgiveness in international politics in which Moral Re-Armament has been involved. See also Shriver, *ibid.*, who develops three in-depth case studies of reconciliation involving the US. Nicholas Tavuchis' thoughtful work, *ibid.*, contains many examples of apologies in a wide variety of contexts. Brian Frost in *The Politics of Peace* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1991) recounts experiences from throughout the world.

“third factor”, an external force capable of empowering the forgiver. “Because we are so enmeshed in our ego we need an outside ‘third factor’”, writes Borris, “which enables us to step out of one system of thinking based in fear and guilt to a new system of thinking which enables us to see the world differently.”<sup>43</sup> The “third factor”

may be a specific element of strength, faith, or trust which makes us sufficiently free from the feelings of guilt, shame, anger, and distrust so we can be at peace with ourselves. [It] may be characterized as the transcending and contingent element in interpersonal relationships, the spark of courage to jump over the barrier. It is this surprising energy which dismantles the dividing walls between us. Call it God, or the Holy Spirit, or compassion, or faith in our common humanity, we need this factor to complete the forgiveness process. We can only prepare our mind by recognizing what we do not want, and then invite this third factor to help us transcend our fearful ways of thinking and acting. It is in our communion with this third force that we experience an internal emotional release which frees us from the past and brings inner peace to our lives.”<sup>44</sup>

Part of the task for peacebuilders is to present the concept of forgiveness in ways that people in conflicts see its relevance for them. Borris’ concept of a “third factor” is useful in accomplishing this, for it points to the possible of transcendence without prescribing the source. Her proposal also points towards discernment as an essential task in reconciliation. To rise above the past, people in conflict need to explore their own faith and values for those dimensions capable of bringing transcendence.

## Conclusion

At the heart of shalom lies a vision for human beings to address their conflicts through collective moral discernment for human life rather than through unprincipled self-interest. The first casualty of violence is faith in the possibility of such a vision. Ultimately this is the most tragic casualty as well for its loss undermines the only basis on which it is possible for human beings to build the kind of community required for survival and prosperity. The task of peacebuilders is to interact with people in conflict in ways that enables restoration of this hope and assists them to act on it.

Bargaining alone is incapable of doing this, for it ignores the powerful emotional and social injuries inflicted by violence, injuries which block the wells of trust and faith essential for any community to commit itself to moral discernment with opponents as the strategy for dealing with conflict.

Healing of such injuries is a process involving numerous activities. Some, such as some dimensions of truth-telling and identity work, may appear to contradict the goal of reconciliation. But if peacebuilders grasp the processual nature of reconciliation and the importance of supporting people in

<sup>43</sup> Borris, “The Healing Power of Forgiveness”, 15.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-16. Cf. Geiko Muller-Fahrenholtz, “Is Forgiveness in Politics Possible”, presentation to 25th Anniversary Conference of the International Peace Research Association, July, 1990, Groningen, Netherlands, who says “Although forgiveness is a process between two conflictive partners it is dependent on a third factor which can be called the

conflict in accomplishing key reconciliation tasks, they are in a better position to assist. They may also be better equipped to help convince those who argue for purely “political” solutions to conflicts - meaning bargaining and other structurally-oriented approaches - to recognize the importance of broadening their understanding of “political”. The goal should be the reconciliation of the entire *polis*, and that requires strategies which acknowledge the complex nature of the reality of conflict and of the steps needed for healing from it.

## Chapter Seven

# Community

Earlier I said that the shalom vision is eschatological in that it develops strategy in light of a reality that is begun but not yet fully present. To say that this is an ambitious agenda is an understatement. Paul, the first Christian theologian, acknowledged that the Christian vision which understood divine nature as operating through solidarity, vulnerability, invitation, creative initiatives to restore relationships, and willingness to suffer to the point of death while accomplishing these was sheer “foolishness”.<sup>1</sup> Although I have attempted to demonstrate that these understandings in fact make sense as guiding themes in the task of peacebuilding, it would probably be a betrayal of the vision itself to try to make the whole project look “sensible” in terms of current understandings of politics and society. If we believe that the world around us is sick and destructive - a conclusion which seems inescapable just from the number of children who daily die of hunger or toil as slave laborers not to mention the many other indexes of suffering available - we can hardly expect to judge the reconciling potential of a proposed response according to whether or not it seems “sensible” by the lights of the ideologies of domination which govern current political and economic thinking.

My proposal is that the vision of shalom cannot be understood except in the context of community of reconciliation; that is, a group of people bonded by a common vision for shalom and accountable to each other in decisionmaking about the meaning of that vision.<sup>2</sup> In the following sections I expand this proposal with the following assertions:

That it is impossible to sustain a vision for the possibility of a “new world” or for genuinely transformed people and structures without community;

That community is essential in the development and preparation of peacebuilders.

That the realities in which conflicts are rooted are community realities and that this requires that peacebuilders likewise be rooted in community.

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<sup>1</sup> I Corinthians 1 and 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. John Paul Lederach and Ron Kraybill, “The Paradox of Popular Justice: A Practitioner’s View”, in Sally Merry and Neal Milner, *The Possibility of Popular Justice: A Case Study of Community Mediation in the United States* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 359.

That the concept of community provides important insights in guiding the strategizing of peacebuilders.

As background I begin by critiquing an approach widely visible in the field of conflict resolution which exemplifies part of the problem I seek to address in this section.

### **The Peacebuilder as Lone Cowboy**

A common approach to peacebuilding might be characterized as the *lone cowboy model of peacebuilding*. More a frame of mind than a description of actual practice or social form<sup>3</sup>, the lone cowboy phenomenon appears in several variations. It appears commonly among the ranks of *professional short-term service providers*, those individuals who carry a package of skills into situations of conflict and seek places to market them, often at substantial fees. It also appears among the ranks of *service workers*, who take up residence in a conflicted area for a period of time, but who in some cases nevertheless function atomistically, with little counsel or support from others. The cowboy phenomenon is often evident among the ranks of *famous personages* who trade on personal reputation to intervene in conflict situations. Finally it makes its appearance in a different social form in the world of *large professional organizations*, in the shape of organizations (whose values are shaped of course by the individuals prominent in them) for whom a desire to gain prestige, pre-eminence, a “corner on the market”, in a given sector of the field or a specific region of the world is nearly as strong and sometimes stronger than the commitment to serve the needs of others.

In whatever setting it appears, the marks of the lone cowboy mentality are individualism, self-interested conduct, and often competitiveness towards others. As professional service provider or famous personage, the cowboy is often self-anointed and frequently spends a great deal of time marketing himself or his skills to others<sup>4</sup>. He is often accountable to no one other than perhaps an organization which he founded and controls. Often the cowboy works alone. Support staff may accompany and assist or even carry out important activities in his name, but the enterprise often trades on the name of an individual. Organizations run on the cowboy model may have several strong leaders, but are opportunistic, competitive in attitude towards other organizations, and

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<sup>3</sup> I stress this point for I do not wish to suggest that every solo peacebuilder is by definition a lone cowboy.

<sup>4</sup> I use the male pronoun here without apology because in fact it is most commonly men who are described by this caricature.

aggressively expansionist, flitting from one arena of activity to another in breathless pursuit of funds.

The lone cowboy is a representative in the field of peacebuilding of the processes of modernization which have been at work in our world since at least the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, which marks the beginning of the modern experiment to replace community with the nation-state as the reference point for political life.<sup>5</sup> A key dimension of this complex process has been a shift in understanding away from accountability to a collective or community as the object of life towards viewing the individual as the primary unit and goal of human consciousness. Larry Rasmussen points out that by the end of the twentieth century this shift in understanding had culminated in a way of life and style of thinking “that regarded persons in largely economic terms; that is, as autonomous creatures who, on the basis of their own wants and preferences, fashion their own world in a series of relationships they themselves make and unmake.”<sup>6</sup> The consequence of this shift in attention from communities to individuals, Rasmussen says, has been the dissolution of communities in modern society and the destruction of the only means for developing citizens capable of moral reflection and behavior. It has also led to a loss of concern for the collective good and for public life itself.

Rasmussen’s analysis suggests that the modern understanding of human beings is inimical to the vision of shalom, which understands human beings as accountable to each other and guides human behavior by a vision that includes the needs of all. It also suggests that the “peacebuilder as lone cowboy” is a contradiction in terms, for the cowboy’s understanding of the world is rooted in precisely the forces of atomization which are so disastrously dividing our world.<sup>7</sup> Peacebuilders need an alternative understanding of the essence of human reality and the basis of human action if we seek to build shalom. In my view, that understanding is *community*, a collective social reality whose function and ideal character in peacebuilding are described in the remainder of this chapter.

## **Community as Sustainer of the Vision of Peace**

### **Shalom as *Alternative Reality***

The possibility towards which shalom points is community, a place, in broadest terms, where decisions are made with commitment to the welfare of all. Shalom not only begins with a vision for life in community, it leads to community, which in turn carries the vision and sustains those

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<sup>5</sup> Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community*, 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 37.

who seek to live by it. This becomes apparent as we realize that one of the immediate consequences of efforts to live out the vision is the creation of practices and institutions based on values that differ significantly from existing society. Those committed to these practices and institutions have an alternative reading of history, a different set of stories through which they convey their own understanding of life and its meaning, and it is these stories which preserve the vision for community.

As an alternative reading of history, the vision of shalom directly challenges dominant understandings. It subverts nationalism and the claims of absolute loyalty to citizenship on which nations worldwide rely for their strength, by calling for people to give highest loyalty to a global peoplehood rather than to the parochial self-interest of individual nation states. Similarly, it challenges ethnic and local identity. At a different level, by insisting that means and ends are indivisible, shalom challenges the reliance on coercion and competition which characterize political and economic structures.

To hold out for the possibility of genuine transformation of the people in conflict rather than merely restraining or eliminating them, to seek to view reality through the experience of those who are weak and vulnerable rather than those who are powerful and dominant, to seek not only to work in solidarity with those in need but to reduce their dependency on outside help, to point beyond political settlements to the messy reality of reconciling relationships through truth-telling, identity work, and forgiveness - all contradict the visions of reality held not only by people engaged in armed combat but also by most political leaders worldwide.

The costs of living in ways that contradict and threaten the most basic assumptions of social and political structures can be high, higher than any individual can alone absorb. To live under the call of shalom is to live out of step with the ethos of most societies, and the result may be marginalization and ostracism. At extremes, people who resist the claims of identity placed upon them by dominant society may be viewed as traitors, a status which often evokes harsh measures of ostracism and retaliation. Only in the context of a community does it become conceivable to absorb these costs.

### ***Community as Source of Alternative Imagination***

To live by the vision for shalom requires powerful imagination, the capacity to conceive of human life in ways that are rarely thought of by others and to live practically in light of the imagined possibilities. To sustain a vision sufficiently powerful to accomplish this requires community.

Like all images of reality, the shalom image is socially constituted through the processes by which people erect structures of meaning to interact with and ultimately create the world they live in.<sup>8</sup> The key word here is “socially”. Individuals are not capable of creating or sustaining such structures of meaning for the processes of “constructing a world”<sup>9</sup> are complex, lengthy, and intrinsically social in nature.

The work of Stanley Hauerwas in articulating the need for narrative in doing ethics is illuminating here. Understandings of reality, Hauerwas says, are “narrative dependent”.<sup>10</sup> They exist only as a result of the effort of particular groups of people to express the meaning of their experiences through stories and images, thereby remembering their origins and sustaining their identity. To the extent that a given individual or group lack their own “master story” their life is likely to be “written” by the story of the dominant culture in which they live. Hauerwas sounds a particular note of alarm in regards to the inability of professional values to provide an adequate framework from which to address the moral issues presented by life. He recalls that Alfred Speer, the German architect who ended up in charge of public works under Hitler, concluded in a 1970 autobiography that it was his desire to simply be an architect and to avoid political issues that led to his failure to address the moral issues presented by the Third Reich.

Becoming a human being, Hauerwas says, “requires stories and images a good deal richer than professional ones, if we are to be equipped to deal with the powers of this ‘world.’”<sup>11</sup> This is so, he says, for we need a master story that is capable of subordinating all else in our lives. Not to have a master story puts us in danger of being overtaken, like Speer, by a highly destructive story. People who think “they need no story or skills beyond their profession...are open to manipulation by anyone who offers them a compelling vision of how that skill can be used. We all require a sense of worth, a sense of place in the human enterprise, and the person with no story beyond his or her role yearns to be so placed by another. We yearn for a cause in which we can lose ourselves.”<sup>12</sup> Hauerwas is concerned most of all by those who are content with conventional roles and professions: “...The warning is directed more accurately against those who feel they need no images and symbols beyond those offered by conventional roles to give coherence to their lives.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. my discussion of Peter Berger in the Introduction.

<sup>9</sup> I refer here to the ideas of Peter Berger summarized in the Introduction to this thesis.

<sup>10</sup> Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 10.

<sup>11</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, “Self-Deception and Autobiography: Reflections on Speer’s *Inside the Third Reich*”, in Hauerwas, *Tragedy and Truthfulness* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 93.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

We have thought that the way to drive out the evil gods was to deny the existence of all gods. In fact, however, we have found ourselves serving a false god that is all the more powerful because we fail to recognize it as a god.”<sup>13</sup>

The stories waiting to “write” the efforts of peacebuilders by shaping how we respond to conflicts are many. The story of modern professionalism asserts that all that is required to address human problems is the organized application of technical knowledge and skill, without critical examination of the underlying political and economic interests and the values which they serve.<sup>14</sup> The story of liberal democracy suggests that the only significant goal is the creation of a society where individuals are free to do as they please, particularly to pursue material acquisitions.<sup>15</sup> The Babylonian creation myth which Walter Wink believes underlies the political consciousness of most people in the world today asserts that peace is not actually possible, that the only solution to conflict is the application of force by “good” people.<sup>16</sup>

In summary then, the vision for transformation and the capacity to sustain it while engaged intensively with conflict require the existence of a story which is at least as profound and meaningful as any at work in our world today. Not to have such a story places peacebuilders in constant danger of having the story of their own life and values constantly re-written by others. Such a story emerges and is sustainable only through the collective experience of a community.

## **Community as Preparation for Peacebuilding**

### ***Peacebuilding as an Exercise in Love***

Chapter Two called for activities designed to enable people in conflict to reflect consciously on the deeper values in their understanding of life and meaning. I called this discernment, for the intention is to draw on the deepest resources of people in conflict in reflecting on what is taking place, on what they would like to take place, and on their current options for responding. The purpose of providing opportunities for empowerment, recognition, and theological discernment is to contribute to fundamental moral changes in the people and social structures involved in conflict enabling genuine resolution of the conflict

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Hauerwas, *Truthfulness...*, 82-98.

<sup>15</sup> Hauerwas, “The Church and Liberal Democracy: The Moral Limits of a Secular Polity”, *Community...*, 72-86.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. my summary of Wink in Chapter One.

To do this requires peacebuilders to stand close to people who are likely to be in a great struggle of the mind, heart, and spirit. This is true of course for any kind of negotiations, but peacebuilding as understood here engages peacebuilders more deeply in the perceptions and responses of the people involved in conflict than most forms of mediation..

To be a resource to people in conflict who face this struggle, the outcome of which has such great import for themselves and others is one of the most difficult tasks any human being can undertake. It requires awareness of self, sensitivity and interpersonal skill. Most of all, it requires love, love as defined by Scott Peck as “the will to extend oneself for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or the spiritual growth of another”<sup>17</sup> To love others in this way, Peck says, is not a matter of good feelings or attraction, rather it is demanding, self-giving, and often painful. “Since it requires the extension of ourselves, love is always either work or courage.”

Peck’s outline of the costs and demands of love merits study in grasping the complexity of the task of transformation of conflict, for all the demands of love are found in peacebuilding as well. One of the first requirements of love as he defines it, Peck says, is *attention*. To nurture spiritual growth in others requires that we pay careful attention to them in order to understand their situation, the dilemmas they are wrestling with, the perspectives they hold, the opportunities and limitations they face. Listening is the form of attention which Peck sees as one of the most important and difficult expressions of love. One reason listening is so difficult is that it requires setting aside one’s own thoughts and perceptions in order to truly encounter those of another. In Peck’s words:

An essential part of true listening is the discipline of bracketing, the temporary giving up or setting aside of one’s own prejudices, frames of reference and desires so as to experience as far as possible the speaker’s world from the inside, stepping inside his or her shoes. This unification of speaker and listener is actually an extension and enlargement of oneself, and new knowledge is always gained from this....The energy required for the discipline of bracketing and the focusing of total attention is so great that it can be accomplished only through love, by the will to extend oneself for mutual growth.<sup>18</sup>

Another cost of love is *commitment*, which Peck sees as inherent in any loving relationship. “Anyone who is truly concerned for the spiritual growth of another knows, consciously or instinctively, that he or she can significantly foster that growth only through a relationship of

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<sup>17</sup> Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled* (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1978), 83.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

constancy.”<sup>19</sup> Commitment is a matter not only of being physically and emotionally available to others, it is also a matter of being committed to taking risks with others.

An important risk which we must be prepared to take in order to love others is the *risk of confrontation* which Peck also characterizes as the *risk of exercising power with humility*. In order to contribute to the moral or spiritual growth of others we must be prepared to confront them at times. Such confrontation may come in the form of direct criticism, but it can also come in other ways such as seeking to change people through story-telling or other forms of persuasion. At root confrontation involves the exercise of power, for it is an attempt to influence the course of actions or events according to directions that we believe appropriate.

Peck points out that to do this is in effect to say “I am right and you are wrong.” To take such a posture does not come easily for a loving person, for such a person is fully aware of the grave risk of arrogance.

The truly loving person, valuing the uniqueness and differentness of [the other] will be reluctant indeed to assume, ‘I am right, you are wrong; I know better than you what is good for you.’ But the reality of life is such that at times one person does know better than the other what is good for the other, and in actuality is in a position of superior knowledge or wisdom in regard to the matter at hand. Under these circumstances the wiser of the two does in fact have an obligation out of loving concern for the spiritual growth of the other to confront the other with the problem.<sup>20</sup>

To love another, then, often places the loving person in a difficult dilemma, between “loving respect for the [other’s] own path in life and a responsibility to exercise loving leadership when the beloved appears to need such leadership.” The only way out of the dilemma, Peck says, is painful self-scrutiny, in which the loving person “stringently examines” the worth of his or her own “wisdom”, and the motives behind the need to confront.<sup>21</sup>

Even when such examination confirms the rightness and the appropriateness of confrontation, the loving person still faces the difficult question of how to confront in ways most likely to be effective. This requires careful thought about the character of the person involved, about the context in which to confront, about how to act or speak in ways that are most likely to be heard and understood, etc. Furthermore, in the course of confrontation, a truly loving person must

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

constantly be open to gaining new information and insight which would reveal that the confrontation is in fact unnecessary, misdirected, or counter-productive.

Peck returns repeatedly to the danger of arrogance.

The problem is, the more loving one is, the more humble one is; yet the more humble one is, the more one is awed by the potential for arrogance in exercising power. Who am I to influence the course of human events? By what authority am I entitled to decide what is best for my child, my spouse, my country or the human race?....Who am I to play God?" But in the end, he says, there is no alternative to playing God other than inaction and impotence. "Love compels us to play God with full consciousness of the enormity of the fact that that is just what we are doing. With this consciousness the loving person assumes the responsibility of attempting to be God and not to carelessly play God, to fulfill God's will without mistake. We arrive, then, at yet another paradox: only out of the humility of love can humans dare to be God.<sup>22</sup>

Although Peck's comments are addressed primarily to the realm of personal and interpersonal growth, they are equally if not more relevant to the task of peacebuilding where the issues are often systemic and structural. The risks and costs of love in the exercise of peacebuilding are substantially higher than those envisioned by Peck, for peacebuilders face the same issues on larger scale in a far more insecure environment. Typically peacebuilders must interact with substantial numbers of people within a fairly narrow timeframe. Frequently these people are skeptical of the possibilities of peace; sometimes they are hostile towards the peacebuilders themselves. Their objective is not personal or social growth, but rather to defeat a bitter opponent. They often view the world in highly polarized fashion and feel "either you are for us or against us." Any words or actions on the part of peacebuilders which challenge their usually simplistic and one-sided analysis of the conflict may bring an explosive reaction.

Peck rightly prescribes self-awareness and self-scrutiny as essentials in dealing with the risks and costs of loving engagement with others. But for those operating in the arena of peacebuilding such a prescription is superficial. The volume and intensity of demands on time and attention, the complexity of the issues, and the power of the emotional fields which surround each party to draw an isolated individual into their own reality-shaping vortex make it impossible for any individual to sustain loving attention over a long period of time.

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

### ***Peacebuilding as a Spiritual Journey***

This has several important implications. One is that peacebuilding as understood here is unlikely to be undertaken except by people committed to a deep spiritual journey. The only motivation powerful enough to sustain peacebuilders is a conviction that their deepest commitments call them into the work in which they are engaged, and that hence their own spiritual integrity is at stake in the choice to enter the disciplines of extending themselves in love to others.

We can make the point more starkly yet. Peacebuilding as here understood *cannot* be undertaken except by people committed to themselves participating in a deep personal spiritual journey. To love others in the ways outlined by Peck by definition places us in the path of spiritual struggle in the best of circumstances. But in situations of conflict, the struggle is particularly poignant. To love people who have lost family members to violence is to be brokenhearted with them; to love people who are suspicious of all outsiders is to be prepared to be misunderstood and rejected; to love people who have grown hateful and bitter and prejudiced requires constant watchfulness for ways to help them see the humanity of their enemies.

Only if peacebuilders are prepared to enter into this struggle, to appreciate and value it because of its potential to heal and for its intrinsic worth for the growth of their own souls,<sup>23</sup> are they capable of loving others fully and contributing to their transformation. There are many paths by which to take the spiritual journey and we cannot prescribe the path required. But we fail to grasp the nature of peacebuilding itself if we do not acknowledge the struggle imposed by a commitment to transformation on those who seek to facilitate it in others.

### ***Community as Essential for the Spiritual Journey***

The only place it is possible to undertake the spiritual journey required of peacebuilders is in community, for only in community are we faced with something similar to the challenge peacebuilders face, the requirement to act in ways that are loving while being connected, located, and vulnerable to a group of people over an extended period of time.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Thomas Moore, *Care of the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992). Moore observes that western society has adopted a quick-fix attitude towards every human dilemma, an obsession with “working through” and grasping solutions to life’s difficult issues as a way of avoiding pain. Moore argues that many human problems cannot and should not be solved, that rather they present issues intrinsic to the human condition and more importantly, opportunities for growth of the soul. By entering into these problems, experiencing and accepting the pain we encounter there, and waiting for answers to emerge from within the problem situation itself, Moore argues, humans grow spiritually. Paradoxically, when we take this response, many problems turn out not to be problems after all. Moore’s concern is with personal problems and I do not mean to suggest that merely waiting for solutions to emerge is an appropriate response for typical situations of violence. Nevertheless I think his point is insightful for coping with the inevitable spiritual pain and struggle at a personal level that people deeply involved in conflict situations as peacebuilders universally experience.

Learning to be loving in such a setting requires enormous effort and maturity. Peck says the struggle for growth is difficult because it is conducted “against a natural resistance, against a natural inclination to keep things the way they were, to cling to the old maps and old ways of doing things, to take the easy path.”<sup>24</sup> Learning to love involves a lifelong growth process that continues only if people are deeply committed to others and are willing to repeatedly pay the costs demanded by loving behavior.

It is not surprising then that according to sociologist Robert Wuthnow, studies suggest that religious motivation per se is not a decisive predictor of other-regarding behavior. Such studies indicate that “spirituality begins to move people toward being compassionate only when a threshold of involvement in some kind of collective religious activity has been reached.”<sup>25</sup> The significance for this discussion is that religious vision alone is incapable to equip peacebuilders with the love required by the vision of shalom.. Only when religious vision occurs in the context of community is it capable of fostering a commitment beyond self-centeredness to the welfare of others. In Larry Rasmussen’s words, “privatized religion apparently dampens concern for others, while commitment to a community sets in motion those dynamics that draw us into the webs of association that bind us together, sensitize us to needs beyond our own, and call forth active response to and with others.”<sup>26</sup>

There are many forms of community, and it would be arrogant to prescribe one form of community as *the* correct form. However I wish to describe characteristics of the kind of community which is most likely to support peacebuilders in building shalom.

### ***The Nature of Community Required***

What is the nature of the community required to sustain and act upon the alternative understanding of reality offered by shalom? Firstly, it must be a *story-telling* community, in order to sustain the awareness that it was formed in ways that make it different from most other communities. My interest here is not to create barriers or encourage isolation, but rather to highlight that the power of such a community resides in the fact that it adheres to a different reality than that widely held in the world. As the primary structure for shaping and preserving reality, narrative is essential in the

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<sup>24</sup> Peck, 266.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Wuthnow, *Caring for Others and Helping Ourselves* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 155.

<sup>26</sup> Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community*, 105. Rasmussen is here summarizing Wuthnow’s findings.

life of any community committed to sustaining and acting on a vision which differs in fundamental ways from that of other communities.<sup>27</sup>

Secondly, it must be a *discerning* community in the sense proposed in Chapter Two, a community that consciously reflects on the values at work in its own life and the lives of surrounding communities, a community that with great intentionality seeks to bring its vision for life into conversation with the issues of everyday life. To penetrate to the heart of these issues, such discernment needs to be undertaken in awareness described in the Introduction, that human beings and the systems of meaning by which we operate are religious in nature.

Thirdly, it must be a community that is *politically engaged*. I use political in its broadest sense here, the *polis* as that public location where the interests and needs of the human collectivity are addressed. Any vision for human life must emerge out of deep struggle with the issues day to day reality of the many. Without suggesting that the best way to engage in that struggle is necessarily through participation in current political structures, I nevertheless believe that it is essential to be working in the arena of human need in which political structures operate.

Fourthly, it must be a community with *universal loyalty*. While grounding itself in a clear sense of the richness and particularity of its stories, a community capable of contributing to peace must hold itself loyal to all human communities. It must adopt the stance that all people, all communities bear the same precious value in the universe. None can be sacrificed in the interests of others.<sup>28</sup> None can be excluded from the scope of concern and caring which motivate such a community. To fail on this point is adopt the same exclusivist mode which forms the foundation of the many alienating stories of our world.

Fifthly, it must be a *transformed* community. A vision for peace is pure idealism with little capacity to touch real life unless it is rooted in a concrete, here-and-now reality. Thus peacebuilders need to be rooted in a community where people are actively living according to the vision they point to. By committing themselves to living out the vision of shalom in the ordinary tests of day-to-day living, people are transformed and ultimately a transformed community emerges. One consequence is that by modeling the kind of life it holds to be real and life-giving, a community adds credibility to its claim that the reality which points to indeed has great relevance

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Stanley Hauerwas, "A Story-Formed Community: Reflections on *Watership Down*" in *A Community of Character*, 9-35.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Bloesch, 170-173.

for human life. Another consequence is that the effort to live by its own standards is the most important strategy for preparing peacebuilders.<sup>29</sup>

No commitment is more important in enabling transformation of such a community and the individuals in it than a commitment to critical thought, particularly applied to self. Because spiritual growth is difficult the major part of the challenge lies in overcoming our own inner resistances to it. Whether we attribute that resistance to laziness, as does Peck<sup>30</sup>, to original sin, as do many Christians, or to ignorance and unawareness, as do many Buddhists and Hindus, any community capable of facilitating its own spiritual maturation and that of its members must have language and structures which make self-critical reflection a routine part of group and individual life. Such reflection can be painful, for none wish to admit that we have failed. But it is precisely the commitment to accept such pain, to indeed invite it by supporting the structures of self-critique which periodically administer it, that is essential for spiritual growth.

Like other dimensions of community life, the capacity to be self-critical and acknowledge errors or mistakes is important not only as part of the preparation of peacebuilders but also as an essential dimension of the peacebuilding task itself. The Nobel poet Octavio Paz believes that community as a social unit, braced by critical thought, along with “the examination of conscience and the remorse that accompanies it” is “the most powerful remedy against the ills of our civilization”.<sup>31</sup> Making a similar point to a Christian audience, Nairobi-based mediator Hezkias Assefa writes:

Particularly in societies with on-going conflicts, the Church can cultivate or prepare the ground for social reconciliation...Instead of always pointing to what others have done to us, the spirit of repentance and self-examination should enable us to identify behavior in ourselves which incites others to behave the way they do towards us. The Church could spread the message of self-reflection and self-criticism at the behavior, group, community, and national levels through its pastoral and prophetic activities. ...However, in order to be a credible actor the Church needs to begin with itself and lead by example. It must recognize and confess the role it has played in contributing to injustice and conflict. It needs to find mechanisms to foster the spirit of confession within its congregations and call them into a community of repentance and forgiveness.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Stanley Hauerwas has written extensively as a Christian ethicist and theologian on community as the essential location for forming character and virtue which he views as the foundation of moral life. See especially his *A Community of Character*, *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*, 16.

<sup>31</sup> Octavio Paz, “Poetry and the Free Market,” *The New York Times Book Review*, 8 December 1991, sec. 7, 36.

<sup>32</sup> Assefa, “The Challenge of Mediation in Internal Wars”, 20-21.

Later we will see the way in which Moral Re-Armament employed self-critical reflection in the spiritual formation of its own members, and used confession as a way of inviting others to engage in a similar discipline.

Sixthly, it must be a community formed around *foundational issues*. Peck states flatly that spiritual growth comes only through suffering, through entering into the inevitable problems and dilemmas that accompany existence and human diversity and learning to work through them..<sup>33</sup> It seems apparent that the “community” of neighbors cooperating in a neighborhood association in an urban suburb, for example, is unlikely to enable spiritual growth understood in this way.

A community capable of facilitating the spiritual maturation process required of peacebuilders must have structures capable of bringing human struggles into sharp focus. This contradicts one of the key dimensions of modern urban, industrial societies where individuals are presented with manifold options regarding where to work, live, and devote their life energies. Rather than stay and work through the struggles inherent in relationships and essential to spiritual maturation, many people simply “move on” and evade the struggle of true community. The task of spiritual preparation of peacebuilders requires that they root themselves in a community which has a clear identity, which is formed in terms of common commitment to *foundational issues* such as the meaning and purpose of life and which seeks to integrate those issues into daily living rather than in terms of *segmental*<sup>34</sup> or peripheral issues such as professional advancement, neighborhood concerns, recreation, etc. In such a context the challenges of community are harder to evade and the odds of genuine spiritual growth are correspondingly higher.

### **Community as Asset in Working with Communities**

My argument here begins from the intercommunal nature of the conflicts assumed in this thesis. Communities are in confrontation; it is the diverse realities created and sustained in communities that peacebuilders must interact with.

The chapter on “Engagement” cites MacIntyre’s argument that insightful philosophical work can be done only when consciously rooted in a “tradition of enquiry”. A parallel point follows: that to

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<sup>33</sup> Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*, 15-18, 83.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Robert Selznick who distinguishes between “core” communities and “segmental” communities. Selznick, *Moral Commonwealth: Social Theory and the Promise of Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 184-193.

- work insightfully with communities requires that peacebuilders themselves be rooted in communities.

Although he makes his argument in terms of the more academically-oriented concept of “traditions of enquiry”, MacIntyre repeatedly points out the historical groundings of such traditions in particular histories, circumstances, linguistic sets, the interplay of personalities, etc. Thus to speak of a “tradition of enquiry” assumes the presence of at least a certain kind of community. I will later call for a kind of community that is more cohesive than that necessarily implied by a “tradition of enquiry”, but it is at least worth noting the direction in which MacIntyre’s argument points us. To the extent that peacebuilding engages in the task of discernment which I called for in the chapter in “Transformation”, this point becomes increasingly significant, for to that extent the contribution of peacebuilders moves directly onto MacIntyre’s territory of moral enquiry.

But the present argument can be made on other grounds. People in social conflicts virtually always view themselves as connected to communities. The grammar of negotiations is plural, “we”. The concerns of the representatives at the table are usually for a large group of people with a long history. Just as it is difficult to understand culture-shock until one has experienced it, so it is difficult to understand the nature of communities in conflict unless one has a deep personal experience of community. To *understand* another community requires *being* in a community.

The latter does not guarantee the former, of course, but it is an enormous asset if not a pre-requisite for it. MacIntyre speaks of the “fundamental incoherence” which often afflicts people, particularly those shaped by the liberal individualist worldview, who are confronted with conflicting moral claims from competing traditions. Such individuals lack the kind of self-knowledge which would provide them first with an *awareness of* the “specific character of their own incoherence”, and then with “a metaphysical, moral, and political schema of classification and explanation” *by which to account for* the particular character of their incoherence.<sup>35</sup> In order to apprehend a phenomenon, then, we need a perceptual framework enabling us to engage it. The greater the gap between our own experience and that which we seek to understand, the harder it is to even become aware of the full realities of that which we seek to study, let alone to understand it. This means that the capacity of individuals whose primary social experience has been that of

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<sup>35</sup> MacIntyre, 398.

modern liberal societies to grasp the issues driving many of the conflicts in our world is likely to be limited.

Finally, to be able to participate meaningfully in conversation with others about that which is “life-giving” as I called for in the chapter on Transformation is greatly enhanced by connections to a community whose worldview is shaped by deep encounter with suffering. I recall in this regard a three-day workshop by an American professor, Dudley Weeks, in 1993 to a group of South African young people in Cape Town. Weeks began the workshop by relating at some length his experience of living in South America, working with the poor in a *barrio*, of being detained and physically abused during several days of interrogation. It was this experience which opened his eyes to the reality of injustice, the need for a struggle for social change, and eventually the importance of negotiation skills to capitalize on gains from the struggle. In a country flooded and bored with visiting Americans, Weeks gained the rapt attention of his audience in a matter of minutes, held it for the remainder of the workshop, and laid the foundation for a long-term relationship which to my knowledge continues to the present.

It seemed apparent that Weeks sensed that he needed to establish his identity with his audience in terms of a community of people, and that that community needed to be something other than an American university community, which was his professional base. His story “located” him for the group in terms of his values and gave him credibility as someone with experiences similar to theirs. The only thing that would have made it more credible would have been had he been able to tell the story in the present tense. Nevertheless the passion with which he told this story made it clear that people in the story still shaped his understandings of life.

It was also apparent that it was through his deep affiliation with a marginalized community that Weeks came to clarity about his own understanding of “life-giving”. The word “marginalized” is essential here, for I do not believe it was chance that his ability to talk with others about values which are life-giving resulted from his experience with people who are poor. Dominant, mainstream communities almost by definition have little reason to maintain deep concern about justice, tolerance, or the importance of looking after the interests of all. Because they are dominant they are able to structure social and political life in ways that support their interests. I do not mean to say that such communities or the people based in them *cannot* be tolerant and deeply committed to the interests of all, but rather that *the life experience* of people in such communities mitigates against the formation of values and awarenesses that support life for all.

The values which are “life-giving” in situations of conflict are not likely to emerge from the experience of people whose primary understanding of the world is rooted in realities of dominant social groups. Rather they are likely to emerge from deep affiliation with a community which understands the pain of being dominated by others and has an intuitive understanding of the underdog.

It is important to add, however, that experiences of pain, injustice, and oppression alone are incapable of providing a core of life-giving values from which to interact constructively with other communities. I recall a conversation with a senior leader in one of the paramilitary groups of North Ireland who was interested in hearing about events in South Africa. It became clear within a matter of minutes that he had decided who was “right” and who was “wrong” in South Africa based on his projections of the Irish situation and that he had no capacity to recognize life-giving dimensions emerging at that time from both sides of the South African scene.

For this man to arrive at a point where he could assist in discernment as a peacebuilder would require him to have a profound experience of a response to struggle and conflict quite different from the one of violence, retribution, and hatred he had thus far experienced. A year of retreat in a comfortable suburb or London or Los Angeles would not be adequate for it would be too removed from the reality of his past to enable significant growth and change. Individual study or therapy might be useful, but no lone individual has the resources to alone find healing from the trauma of his own experiences with conflict and simultaneously formulate an adequate alternative to old responses. The human institution most likely to facilitate the growth required in him to engage in discernment is a community of people who share a vision for responding to conflict transformationally, who are profoundly connected to the suffering in which so many in our world live and seek to shape their lives in response to it, and who recognize that to do so requires them to interact with each in ways not characteristic of modern urban societies, namely by encountering and supporting each other with the disciplines of love.

### **Community as Strategy in Peacebuilding**

So far I have dealt with community as essential in preparing and sustaining peacemakers. In the final section I reflect on community as a theme guiding the strategizing of peacebuilders.

#### ***Build a Community of Peacebuilding Communities***

To attempt to respond to conflicts of the nature we are wrestling with by structures which are at root individualistic would reflect a grave miscalculation of the dimensions of the task of

peacebuilding. Not even a community can alone meet the requirements of peacebuilding as here understood. Only a community of peacebuilding communities could hope to make a significant contribution to the transformation of societies in conflict.

This calls for a different understanding of the most critical dimension of peacemaking. Rather than facilitating agreements between warring parties as commonly understood, the most important task in peacemaking should be seen as building a network of communities who with time become a community of peacebuilders. This community of communities would be united by a common vision for peacebuilding, and the activities of each would be guided by the larger vision. The practical strategies and areas of focus taken up by each community would be different, enabling each peacebuilding community to draw on its own unique resources. But each community would be accountable for its responses to the larger community of peacebuilders, thus enabling the differing responses to be complementary.

#### ***Root Peacebuilding in Local Communities***

Chapter Five called for peacebuilding to be conducted “under auspices as close to local ownership as possible”. A different way of making the same point would be to say that peacebuilders should seek to base peace initiatives in local communities rather than on external bases. The consequence is transformation in the fullest sense, the empowerment of such communities to undertake responsibility to address their own conflicts rather than to rely on outsiders.

The Mennonite Central Committee, for example, chose not to fund the International Conciliation Service it established in 1990 with a program budget, on the grounds that this was likely to lead to peace initiatives undertaken autonomously without support from its own personnel at regional and grassroots levels, other NGOs, and additional actors from the local scene. The reasoning was that peace initiatives that are well-supported at “community” level, that is, by people close to the conflict itself, were unlikely to experience great difficulty in securing funding for many funders recognize how rare such initiatives are and are eager to support them. To date, this reasoning has proven correct, and peace initiatives in which the MCC has played an important role, notably in Ethiopia, have succeeded in attracting funding from a variety of sources. MCC’s role in such initiatives has been to encourage and support the gathering of a variety of actors, as many as possible with a local base and credibility, with MCC serving as consultant and assistant to such initiatives.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with John Paul Lederach, International Conciliation Service director, 9/6/95, Harrisonburg VA.

With such an approach peacebuilding becomes an exercise in community-building. Individuals and groups with diverse perspectives on the local scene are compelled to set aside partisanship and work together to accomplish the larger goal of facilitating a peace initiative.

***Ensure that Peacebuilders are Accountability to Community***

Regardless of the auspices of peacebuilding efforts, the individuals who undertake the mission itself need to be accountable to a community of person and operate in ways that make this accountability visible to the parties themselves, rather than function as isolated individuals. Partly this is a matter of competence and survival. The sheer logistical demands of meeting with numerous often emotional parties are enormous, not to mention the impossibility of one person single-handedly being able to decipher the complex web of personalities, social and political forces, perceptions and historical data which surround any violent conflict. We will see in the later case study how heavily all three of the actors in study of Rhodesia/Zimbabwe depended on a community of peacebuilders.

But even more important, undertaking peacebuilding in visible accountability to a community of peacebuilders makes an important symbolic statement. A common factor in most conflicts is that one or both parties have lost awareness of the fundamental basis of shalom, the rule of community, the reality that human beings are deeply interconnected and cannot separate their own fate from that of others. The likelihood of peace often hangs on whether or not the parties are able to regain some awareness of this reality.

Thus peacebuilding at its best is substantially more than a practical task of working out deals to maximize gains or reflect a balance of power, it is rather a battle for the minds and hearts of the combatants. Peacebuilders need to structure themselves in ways that reflect and communicate their understanding of reality, and that support the possibility of a new vision for human relationships. What better way to assert the possibility that diverse human beings can set aside personal needs and wishes in order to accomplish important tasks than a peacebuilding mission made up of diverse individuals, each of whom is clearly accountable to the group, none acting in ways that betray a need for personal recognition or control?

**Summary**

This chapter argues that transformation requires more than a particular approach to conflict, it also requires a particular kind of peacebuilders, people who are rooted in community. The very possibility of sustaining a moral vision for shalom assumes the capacity to view reality differently

than most in our world, and to have this capacity requires community. The spiritual maturity required of peacebuilders is attainable only through the nurturing disciplines provided by community. Identification with a community makes it easier to understand and work effectively with people in many conflicts, who are themselves embedded in communities. Creating a community of communities, that is, forging cooperation among communities committed to peacebuilding is the only way to ensure that peacebuilding is sustained on the long-term.

## Section Two

### Peacebuilding in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe\*

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\* A preliminary version of Section Two was published, with full knowledge and approval of my thesis advisor, Professor John de Gruchy, as a chapter entitled "Transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: The Role of Religious Actors", in *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), edited by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, 208-257. Oxford University Press has granted permission to the University of Cape Town to publish this case study in whole or in part, so long as acknowledgment to the original publication in the above cited book is made.

## Introduction to the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe Case Study

Rhodesia<sup>1</sup> in 1979 was a nightmare. By the estimates of some, twenty thousand people<sup>2</sup>, many of them civilians, had already died in a costly war for liberation now frozen in a deadly stalemate. The issue, at first glance at any rate, was simple. Black Africans, numbering nearly 90 per cent of the population, wanted majority rule from a government clinging at all cost to white control and privilege.

The future, without a doubt, belonged to Africa. Old-style colonialism teetered on the brink of its own grave; England, formally Rhodesia's ruler<sup>3</sup>, chafed to complete the painful process begun more than 20 years earlier of shedding its ill-acquired African colonies. Neighboring Zambia had been independent since 1964, Botswana since 1966. Angola and Mozambique had just gained their independence from Portugal in 1975. Rhodesia was the obvious next candidate to bear the torch of African nationalism. Oddly enough, even South Africa, long a backer of Salisbury's war efforts, had in 1976 begun withdrawing financial support and pressuring for reform. White leaders in Pretoria remained committed, to be sure, to an apartheid system even more comprehensively racist than Rhodesia's.

But South African Prime Minister John Vorster was playing shrewdly to win a long-term game of *realpolitik*. Already in 1962 he had counseled Rhodesian Prime Minister Winston Field against a Unilateral Declaration of Independence from England, on the grounds that, unlike South Africa, Rhodesia's African majority was so vast as to rule out the possibility of a white-ruled state. Black rule in Rhodesia, Vorster maintained, was inevitable, and it would be better for Rhodesian whites

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<sup>1</sup> The Patriotic Front called the country Zimbabwe, and the Muzorewa government called it Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. For simplicity, in this study we will refer to the country as Rhodesia until the time of formal independence and takeover by a *bona fide* government on April 18, 1980, and thereafter as Zimbabwe. The conflict itself will be referred to as the "Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict".

<sup>2</sup> M. Kuchera, Zimbabwe Council of Churches, interviewed by the author, Harare, August 19, 1992

<sup>3</sup> Unlike other African colonies, Rhodesia had been granted status as a "self-governing colony" in 1923, but in an effort to "restrain the racist excesses of the settlers" England still retained a right of veto over aspects of governance, particularly those having to do with black rights. Cf.: Anthony J. Chennells, "White Rhodesian Nationalism - The Mistaken Years", in Canaan S. Banana, Editor, *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1990* (Harare: College Press, 1989), 123-137.

to move cautiously and cultivate a moderate black leadership.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, strategists in Pretoria contemplating the lessons of a post-1975 Mozambique gone fanatically Marxist had concluded that prolonged guerrilla warfare created radical nationalism. Thus white racism to the north increasingly looked de-stabilizing for the region to Pretoria. Much better to succor instead the emergence of a pliable client state like Malawi. That required, not arms for fellow white racists, but rather black faces in government offices in Salisbury.

Within Rhodesia, the forces of liberation held the upper hand as well. After 14 years of warfare, guerrilla troops now roamed large areas of the country and maintained a steady barrage of attacks on white farms, government offices, and outlying security establishments. The economy lay in ruins from heavy military expenditures and 13 years of economic sanctions by the outside world. Emotionally, whites were exhausted by the war. Not only had they lost sons in the fighting, they had lost faith in their future. Thousands had already fled to South Africa and elsewhere; many more contemplated leaving as well. The question in 1979 was not if black Africans would gain their rightful place in the nation, but rather when.

The discouraging part for the majority of Rhodesians was that the experience of the last decade suggested the moment of true African rule might still be a long and costly way off. Salisbury *was* on the defensive, militarily, economically and politically, but it still possessed a deadly modern military machine and the will, evidently, to use it for a long time to come. Not only had Prime Minister Ian Smith earned a reputation for being bull-headed, he had proven cunning at political maneuvering in the ancient method of "salami-style" negotiation. When stonewall and steel failed to contain the forces seeking to snatch the prize he held, Smith more than once yielded. It was a stingy slice of political power he offered to Bishop Abel Muzorewa and two other blacks in the 1978 Internal Settlement but it gave what he doubtless sought: deep division in the camp of African nationalists and a black leader willing to go to Washington and London in defense of a government still controlled by whites.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, as usual in war, it was the civilians who suffered the most. One in six Africans had been displaced by the war; one in ten lived in forced government resettlement camps where they

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<sup>4</sup> Letter from journalist Colin Legum, who interviewed Field on this question, to the author, November 20, 1992.

<sup>5</sup> Muzorewa was brought into politics dragging his feet with reluctance in 1971 because his non-political background made him acceptable as leader to the several factions of nationalists seeking to oppose an agreement worked out between the British and Ian Smith. But by 1975 he was thoroughly despised by ZANU and ZAPU, the external liberation fronts, for entering into negotiations with Ian Smith against the wishes of fellow nationalists.

were vulnerable not only to diseases but also to harassment by hostile government forces.<sup>6</sup> Many thousands more lived in refugee camps in the bordering states of Mozambique, Botswana and Zambia.<sup>7</sup> Agriculture proved difficult and in many places impossible, leading to widespread hunger and impoverishment. Even worse for many was the calamity of getting caught in the crossfire of a vicious war. Since control of territory changes constantly in guerrilla warfare, "neutrality" on the part of civilians offers the only means of survival. But as thousands of unfortunate victims discovered, neutrality is a difficult act to maintain. Killings, torture, rape, and pillage became commonplace for villagers.

If Rhodesia was a nightmare for its citizens, it was also a graveyard of failed peace initiatives. Between 1966 and the end of 1978 some twenty efforts had been launched, most involving governments outside Rhodesia in a brokering role. Some of the world's best known politicians and mediators were involved. British Prime Minister Wilson and his advisor, Lord Goodman; British Foreign Secretary David Owen, United States Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance, US Ambassador Andrew Young, Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda - all invested substantial efforts to secure peace in Rhodesia, and all failed.

But in September, 1979, following a pivotal Commonwealth Conference in Lusaka two months previously, the impossible happened. Meeting in London at Lancaster House with the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Peter Carrington as mediator, the warring parties negotiated for thirteen weeks without a pause. Returning home just before Christmas, they carried to Salisbury the welcome news of a cease-fire, agreements on a transitional government, and settlement on a new constitution. For many Rhodesians, the possibility of genuine peace seemed incredible. Many thought whichever side lost in the elections slated for the early new year would take to the battlefields again. General Peter Walls, commander of the Rhodesian Security Forces, was said to have a coup prepared in the event that the election turned against the white minority. The guerrilla forces of the Patriotic Front led by nationalists Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo<sup>8</sup> were rumored

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<sup>6</sup> Ian Linden, *The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Zimbabwe* (London: Longman, 1980), 272.

<sup>7</sup> In Zambia one camp alone contained 6000 boys who had been separated from their parents. Source: Trevor Jepson, interview with the author, July 7, 1991, Wales.

<sup>8</sup> The Patriotic Front actually consisted of two liberation movements: the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), headed by Robert Mugabe and based in Maputo, and the Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU), headed by Joshua Nkomo and based in Lusaka. In 1976, at the urging of leaders from surrounding African states, the movements joined forces in an uneasy alliance and formed the Patriotic Front. The two movements had differing political orientations, different sponsors, differing instincts about when and on what issues to compromise with the Rhodesian government, and both sought pre-eminence in the eventual new Zimbabwe. The resulting tension constantly threatened their ability to collaborate during the war, at Lancaster House, and after Independence, and culminated in the Matebeleland catastrophe in the early 1980s.

to have kept men and weapons in reserve as well, outside the gathering points where the liberation armies were supposed to convene and lay down arms to a Commonwealth Monitoring Force of fifteen hundred men. The South African army moved three divisions to the border.<sup>9</sup>

In February, 1980 an independently monitored election was held and ZANU leader Robert Mugabe won a clear majority. This was the outcome whites dreaded the most. Misled by the propaganda of Smith and Muzorewa, most had thought a Mugabe win highly unlikely. But just in case, many had packed their cars in readiness to leave the country if Mugabe won<sup>10</sup>. Their fears were understandable - their government had long demonized Mugabe as a bloodthirsty, atheistic communist. ZANU's actions hadn't helped either. Just over a year previously, a "death list" had circulated from ZANU headquarters in Maputo, naming individuals with Government connections for execution.<sup>11</sup> Though surely a minority, some young militants confided in later years that as the brutal war drew to a close, they were waiting with "pangas in hand to kill every white in sight" if the word were given.<sup>12</sup>

What the citizens of Rhodesia, soon to become Zimbabwe, experienced during the first week of March shocked people in all camps. Lord Christopher Soames, the British representative charged with governing the country during the transition period, announced on Tuesday morning, March 4, that Mugabe had won. That evening Mugabe, Grim Reaper of the guerrilla war, addressed the nation in a new persona. Zimbabweans, he said, must now "beat their swords into plow shares." "I urge you," he said, "whether you are black or white to join me in a new phase to forget our grave past. Forgive others and forget. Join hands in a new amity and work together, Zimbabweans...."<sup>13</sup> On Friday, March 7, Ian Smith made a public announcement indicating that he accepted the election results. What is more, Smith announced, he had met with Mugabe on Monday, the day before election results were announced and found him to be "forthright and reasonable, as he was in his address to the nation on Tuesday night"<sup>14</sup>. Rather than make a hasty

<sup>9</sup> Stedman, *Peacemaking in Civil War: International Mediation in Zimbabwe, 1974-1980* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991), 201.

<sup>10</sup> Ian Robertson, interview with the author, May 25, 1991, Harare. Robertson is a Scottish-born biologist who moved to Rhodesia in 1977 to assist MRA activities and has been deeply involved in MRA work there ever since.

<sup>11</sup> ZANU Death List, issued by Dr. Edison Zvobgo, Deputy Secretary for Information and Publicity in Maputo 13 November 1978.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with MRA worker Ian Robertson, May 25, 1991, Harare.

<sup>13</sup> *Rhodesia Herald*, March 5, 1980.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the account by Alec Smith that Ian Smith's public statement took place on Tuesday, the same day as Mugabe's speech, in Smith, *ibid*. No records exist of any public statements by the elder Smith until the 7th, when he held a press conference in which he spoke positively of Mugabe. Alec has the timing of Ian's statement confused, and the speech he attributes to Mugabe was actually one given several months later at the time of formal independence.

departure, Smith urged whites to "wait and see" and he encouraged all to "work together with our fellow countrymen to try to make a success of this new venture." In the following days, Mugabe announced the appointment of two whites to his Cabinet and of General Walls to continue as head of the armed forces.

Arriving back in London with duties completed several months later, Lord Soames groped for words to explain what was taking place in Zimbabwe. "Every time we thought the thing would explode in our faces, some miracle came about," he reflected. "When we went out there I was not one who believed in miracles. I think I am reversing my position now."<sup>15</sup>

Without a doubt, something remarkable took place in 1979 - 1980. Although there were tragic exceptions in later years<sup>16</sup>, a generally peaceful outcome was attained in a situation that looked dismal. What is more, religious influence was pervasive, not only in the historical development of the country -- Jesuits played a key role in the early colonizing efforts of the British in the late 1800s, and the Catholic Church provided moral blessing for the *status quo* until well into the 1950s -- but also in the personal lives of many key leaders in the conflict.<sup>17</sup> At the grassroots level, liberation fighters turned in large numbers to spirit mediums for guidance and protection during the war,<sup>18</sup> while thousands of Christians participated in special "Days of Prayer" over the time of Lancaster House and the subsequent elections.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Speaking on his arrival at Heathrow Airport on 19 April 1980. From Hugh Elliott, *Dawn in Zimbabwe: Concept for a Nation* (London: Grosvenor Books 1980), 9.

<sup>16</sup> Since 1980, Zimbabwe has experienced crises that belie Mugabe's noble words. The conflict in Matabeleland in the early 1980s was particularly tragic, an African ethnic conflict writ large in a struggle for political power that cost thousands of lives. But given the recent background of a high-stakes and divisive war of liberation, the sense of reconciliation that still characterizes the country is remarkable; equally remarkable are the consistent efforts to restore unity with former opponents after each crisis. Joshua Nkomo, former ZAPU leader and Mugabe's rival during the war for the mantle of chief nationalist, was the instigator of the Matabeleland conflict, but was later brought back into government as a result of a lengthy series of negotiations mediated by Methodist minister and former President Canaan Banana from 1983 to 1987. Nkomo currently serves as Vice President under President Mugabe. So consistent has been the theme of reconciliation that one author, Victor de Waal, called his study of the first decade of Zimbabwe's history, *The Politics of Reconciliation* (London: Hurst and Co., 1990; also Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> To list just a few examples: Canaan Banana, the first president of the country (1980-1987), is an ordained Methodist minister. Current Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, like many other liberation leaders was educated in Catholic mission schools, and maintained active communication with Catholic leaders throughout the war. Nationalists Abel Muzorewa and Ndabaningi Sithole, who in the end discredited themselves in a fatal alliance with Smith were both ordained ministers.

<sup>18</sup> See David Lan's fascinating account, *Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe* (Berkeley and LA: University of California Press 1985).

<sup>19</sup> Gary Strong, *Keys to Effective Prayer* (Basingstoke: Marshalls, 1985) 11-24.

Not only were religious influences explicitly present at all levels in the Zimbabwe struggle, to an unusual degree religiously-based peacemakers - virtually all Christian in orientation - were at work as well. Most prominent of these was the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace which, beginning in 1972, played an active role both within Rhodesia and internationally. Initially it functioned almost exclusively in the role of advocate, attacking the Salisbury regime for its abuses. But in 1978, as the war escalated and the suffering of civilians became intolerable, the Commission along with other Catholic agencies mounted a global campaign to get the parties to the negotiating table.

Moral Re-Armament, a world-wide network of individuals committed to the concept of social and political change through personal transformation, was also involved in peace efforts in the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict from 1975 through 1980. MRA workers, in fact, arranged a final-hour face-to-face meeting between Robert Mugabe and Ian Smith one day before Mugabe's remarkable speech on 4 March, 1980. The spirit of reconciliation that astonished the world on that day is evidence, MRA workers believe, of the power of a spiritually-based approach to bring change.

Operating quietly from a London base, the Quakers too were deeply involved in negotiation efforts, plying skills grounded in a 300 year-old tradition of Christian pacifism and radical equality, and well-honed by several decades of non-governmental peacemaking efforts. Like MRA, the Quakers had a team of workers present both at unsuccessful peace talks held in Geneva in 1976 and the 1979 Lancaster House negotiations. In between, Quaker teams made several trips to Africa, visiting government leaders in Salisbury, liberation leaders in Maputo and Lusaka, and leaders of the Frontline States<sup>20</sup>, seeking to get negotiations started.

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<sup>20</sup> The Frontline States consisted of Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Botswana, and Angola, a "closely-knit caucus within the Organization of African States" formed in 1974 to achieve majority rule in southern Africa. Their influence on the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe struggle was critical, particularly because of the Zambians and Mozambicans, both of whom were hosting a Zimbabwean liberation army. See Colin Legum's encyclopedic work, *The Battlefronts of Southern Africa* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1988), 26ff. for more.

## Chapter Eight

### The Role of the Catholic Church

Largest, longest, and most complex of any religious response to the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict was that of the Catholic Church. There is good reason for this: Jesuit missionaries were among the first white settlers in the 1890s and in the first half of the twentieth century Catholics erected most of the country's infrastructure of schools and hospitals. By the time the liberation struggle had begun, the Catholic Church claimed the allegiance of nearly ten per cent of the populace, in a nation in which twenty five per cent of the people are reckoned as Christian.

Until the 1950s the Catholic Church assumed an uncritical role as sanctifier of the white-dominated status quo. Archbishop Aston Chichester, who headed the Church from 1931 till the mid-1950s, captured the spirit of the era in his consecration speech, expressing appreciation for "the fine relationship that existed between the Church and the civil authorities, for both were striving for the welfare of the same people." At public functions, the Archbishop was accorded a special seat next to the Governor-General.

During the fifties the African nationalist movement was making rapid grounds and for the first time Catholic leaders were confronted with an articulate challenge from their own laity. "Only very seldom do we hear the Church raising her voice against the prevailing economic, social, and political injustices," complained Lawrence Vambe, editor-in-chief of the Salisbury African Newspapers. "The silence is, rightly or wrongly, interpreted by the sophisticated African as acquiescence on the part of the Church in things which militate against their own interest."<sup>1</sup> A month later, in February 1959, came the first major reaction by the Rhodesian state against the nationalist movement. The government declared a State of Emergency, banned the fledgling African National Congress, and detained five hundred of its members

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<sup>1</sup> Kapungu, *Rhodesia: The Struggle for Freedom* (Orbis, 1974), 50, quoting from the *Rhodesia Herald*, January 28, 1959.

But it was white right-wingers who in the end shook the Catholic Church out of its lethargic role as cosmic umbrella for the white government. Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front came to power in 1962 and in 1965 announced a Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain. One motivation for the UDI was perhaps garden-variety aspiration to self-rule. But Smith was open about another goal: he would save whites from the horrors of Kenya and the Congo by halting any advance towards majority rule by Africans. As Smith implemented one piece of racist legislation after another, the Catholic Bishops reacted, issuing a series of pastoral letters that publicly confronted RF policies. For example, following the UDI in November, 1965, they appealed for attention to the needs of Africans: "Look at the inequitable distribution of land in this country; the scandal of those working conditions in which normal family life is made impossible; the often inadequate wages paid to servants, the humiliation of discriminatory legislation, the inequalities of opportunity in education."<sup>2</sup>

In 1969 the Church was provoked into open disobedience by the Land Tenure Act, which gave the State power to impose absolute separation of races not only in public institutions, but in Catholic missions, schools and hospitals. The Church along with some Protestant counterparts refused to comply, threatened to close its vast network of schools and hospitals, and denounced the Act and the new Constitution which accompanied it as "in many respects completely contrary to Christian teaching".<sup>3</sup>

In the end, an accommodation was negotiated, "a white man's agreement" in the parlance of African nationalists. The government agreed not to enforce all provisions of the Act; the churches in exchange withdrew their opposition. But the event marked a new era for the Church and thus the entry point for this study, for the viability of the Church's own institutions had come under threat by the State. The days of neutrality and easy co-existence with the *status quo* were past. From a half century as sanctifier of the status quo, the Church had in the fifties and early sixties shifted to uneasy critic. Now came a foretaste of a new role which was to pre-dominate in the seventies. The Church was under attack by the State, and in later years many in the Church were to fall victim to those attacks. From this point onward the Catholic Church became a persistent and aggressive critic of the Salisbury government.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

## Truth-Telling to the Nation and the World

### *Establishing the Commission on Justice and Peace*

Catholic involvement in the Rhodesia conflict initially revolved around confrontation between the Bishops and the Rhodesia Front. But as it became apparent that the State was committed to its policies, a disquieted Conference of Bishops institutionalized their concern, establishing a Commission on Justice and Peace. This was a turning point for the Rhodesian Catholic Church, "the first formal structural commitment to social justice made by the hierarchy."<sup>4</sup> Initially dominated by whites and perceived as an extension of Church hierarchy, the Justice and Peace Commission (hereafter JPC) soon established a reputation in its own right that ultimately out-shadowed all other institutions in the large network of Catholic hierarchies, orders, and missions.<sup>5</sup>

The primary role of the JPC was that of "truth-telling", conveying the reality of what was happening in Rhodesia to the nation and the world. The context was a battle the Salisbury government was fighting not only in the field but also in the media. "The government propaganda machine was advertising, publicizing the atrocities of the guerrillas wholesale and never admitting any of their own atrocities or [that they were] doing anything wrong at all," recalls one Catholic worker.<sup>6</sup> Central in the Catholic response was a long-distance liaison between the JPC based in Salisbury, and the Catholic Institute for International Relations based in London.

It is the truth-telling role of the JPC for which Zimbabwe's pre-eminent historian, former President Canaan Banana, remembers Catholic involvements during the liberation struggle. The JPC, wrote Banana in 1989, "played an invaluable role of publicizing and condemning the excesses of the Rhodesian army in its conduct of the war. In this way atrocities of the Rhodesian security forces were effectively disclosed and the psychological warfare counteracted."<sup>7</sup>

But truth-telling implies a prior activity. *Listening* to the victims of the war was a major activity of the JPC through-out these years. As news of the Commission filtered out through the townships in the early 1970's to the Tribal Trust Lands, writes Linden,

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<sup>4</sup> Linden, 163.

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of an Executive Committee Meeting of the Social Communications Commission of the Catholic Church, November 23, 1977, RCBC, December 5, 1977. Annotation from Linden, 262.

<sup>6</sup> Sr. Janice McLaughlin, interviewed by the author, 6 May 1991, Harare.

<sup>7</sup> Canaan Banana, *Turmoil and Tenacity* (Harare: College Press, 1989), 205.

Africans grew to see in it a major means at their disposal to speak of their oppression. Although they could have had little understanding to what they were addressing themselves, villagers, sometimes directed by the German Jesuits and Catholic teachers in Sinoira, or hearing from relatives in town, trekked to Salisbury to tell the Commission of their plight. Often there was no thought of redress, simply the quest for someone who would listen, see the wounds, and understand what was happening in the guerrilla war. It was strangely not so much a quest for justice and peace as a quest for truth. And it was ultimately truth, rather than justice and peace that the Commission achieved and will be remembered for.<sup>8</sup>

Of course, the JPC was by no means the only Catholic institution listening to the African community. Many rural Catholic missionaries throughout the war were intimately connected to the agony of the communities they served as much and more so than members of the JPC staff and board who were mostly Harare-based. Priests and sisters were increasingly radicalized by the stories brought to them daily by parishioners; several openly sided with the liberation movements. The JPC relied heavily on this well-grounded and far-reaching "listening Church" (as it came to be known in contrast to the "teaching Church" based in traditional hierarchy) for access to the experiences of Africans in the townships and rural areas. The point is not that the JPC single-handedly became the "listening ear" of the Church, but rather that it came to symbolize a new reality in Zimbabwe. For the first time, Rhodesia's largest religious body was perceived as exercising active interest in the pain of the country's African majority. The "listeners" themselves operated from diverse Catholic organizations; but because it made hearing the voice of the people an official part of its task, the JPC came to symbolize a listening presence.

### ***Confronting the State***

Emboldened by the stories it was hearing, the JPC was not content merely to listen. In a series of hard-hitting publications and well-orchestrated lobbying efforts domestically and abroad, the Commission actively conveyed the stories of injustice it was documenting to anyone who would listen. In March 1973, the Commission sent a delegation to Ian Smith to "express concern over certain methods allegedly used by the Security Forces and the possible deterioration of race relations."<sup>9</sup> For a year the Commission delayed further action, waiting for Smith and the Minister of Justice to act on the complaints of Security Force atrocities. After a second meeting with Smith

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<sup>8</sup> Linden, 196.

<sup>9</sup> RCBD April 25, 1973, quoted in Linden, 190.

in which he promised to investigate the charges but then did nothing, the Commission began pursuing other means.

After a briefing by the Commission, a Member of Parliament called in March 1974 for an independent commission of inquiry. Two days later, 29 March 1974, the Commission ran a large advertisement in the *Rhodesia Herald* supporting the call for an independent inquiry.<sup>10</sup> In August an interdenominational "Appeal to Conscience" sent the Commission's dossier of allegations of Security Forces atrocities to five hundred prominent Rhodesians and the Catholic hierarchy issued a statement objecting to "the use of inhumane methods to elicit information from the civilian populace and of brutal assaults, by certain members of the Rhodesian security forces..." on innocents.<sup>11</sup>

The Catholic newspaper *Moto* played a significant role from 1960 till its banning in 1974 as well. Initially limited in circulation and cautious in outlook, by 1973 the paper was a weekly with a readership of 17,000 operating "within a paragraph or two of banning".<sup>12</sup> In 1971 the paper played a significant role in articulating the objections of Africans to the Smith-Home Agreement which would have entrenched Smith's racist government in power by offering formal British recognition of Rhodesia as an independent state. In 1974 *Moto* repeatedly drew attention to FRELIMO successes in Mozambique. But in September 1974 the government banned *Moto* for "dissemination of inflammatory and subversive statements."<sup>13</sup>

Efforts by the Salisbury government to counter the truth-telling efforts of the JPC and CIIR only increased the pressure. For example, for several years the JPC had pursued the Minister of Law and Order in court for conduct of the war. With procedural delays exhausted, the state in September 1975 enacted an "Indemnity and Compensation Act", sheltering government employees from liability for actions committed in the war.<sup>14</sup> This amounted to a virtual *carte blanche* from the RF to its military personnel regarding conduct in the field. Given the widespread and well-documented abuses already taking place, this response only underscored the moral vacuity of the Salisbury government. The measure was met with increased pressure from domestic and overseas critics.

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<sup>10</sup> Linden, 190, 193

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>13</sup> Quote from Minister of Law and Order Lardner-Burke in Parliament, Sept. 27, 1974, quoted by Linden, 199.

<sup>14</sup> Linden, 210.

### ***The London-Salisbury Connection***

The most important ally of the JPC was the Catholic Institute for International Relations in London. The fate of Rhodesia, after all, was subject to decisions in England, the legal ruler of the colony.<sup>15</sup> Thus, informing the British public and decision-makers about the realities of Rhodesia became a critical aspect of the Catholic struggle against a racist regime. CIIR involvement on behalf of Rhodesia had begun in 1972 when it led an ecumenical "Justice for Rhodesia Campaign". Over the next several years the connection forged between Rhodesian Catholics and British policy-makers via the JPC and CIIR was to become a critical aspect of the struggle for Zimbabwe, bringing events in Rhodesia "home to Whitehall, and the world, with a rapidity and accuracy that was acutely damaging to the image of the Rhodesian Front."<sup>16</sup>

### ***Joint International Lobbying Efforts***

Part of the strategy was arranging meetings between prominent Rhodesian Catholics with British politicians. As early as April 1972 the CIIR arranged a meeting between Bishop Lamont, and British politicians. These included Prime Minister Wilson and Foreign Minister James Callaghan, and several Members of Parliament<sup>17</sup>. Between 1975 and 1979 there was a steady stream of Catholic delegations to London and other capitols. In June, 1975 Lamont made a second trip to London where he met with the Minister of State of the British Foreign Office and other political leaders. In October he traveled to France and Germany where he met statesmen and lectured to large audiences. While Lamont was in Europe, the JPC hosted a visit by the Secretary-General of the International Commission of Jurists.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Whites had viewed themselves as subjects of the Crown from the time Cecil Rhodes' Pioneer Column arrived from British-ruled South Africa in 1890. Running up the Union Jack on Harare Hill in Salisbury, the settlers had, in the name of Queen Victoria, claimed possession of Mashonaland plus "all other unpossessed land in South-Central Africa that should be found desirable to add to the Empire." Britain had indicated already in the 1950s her intent to offer independence to Rhodesia but had made clear in 1956 that she would not allow political groups which were racist to come to power. Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965 was thus a brazen tweak of the nose against the British. As Smith rightly calculated, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson chose not to respond militarily. What Smith had not anticipated was that his "independent" Rhodesia would remain economically and politically at the mercy of the British. Wilson imposed selective economic sanctions, and in 1966 the United Nations followed suit. By 1970 it was apparent that without the blessing of the British - and increasingly that meant the whole Commonwealth as well - Rhodesia was destined to become an isolated and economically handicapped pariah, all but surrounded by hostile African states.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 208

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 166, in footnote.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

In 1978 and again in 1979 Catholic delegations traveled to London and Washington to caution against acceptance of the Internal Settlement and lifting of sanctions.<sup>19</sup> The JPC also mobilized a major international lobbying effort in 1979 (see below) to pressure all parties to engage in negotiations.

### **Publications**

The response that proved most potent was the capacity of the Salisbury-London alliance to gather detailed information on the ground and disseminate it in London and elsewhere. The first major Catholic publication was *The Man in the Middle* which described the plight of Rhodesian villagers forced into "protected villages"<sup>20</sup> by the Security Forces to simplify their struggle with the guerrillas. It also documented torture and indiscriminate killing of villagers by the Rhodesian Security Forces. Along with other churches, Catholic agencies had organized relief - blankets, clothing, milk, medical treatment - to make the life of villagers in the "protected villages" bearable.<sup>21</sup> But unlike their Protestant counterparts, the Catholics decided to document the suffering in writing and publish it far and wide.

Published in London in 1975 *The Man in the Middle* gained wide attention in British daily newspapers and stirred great controversy in Salisbury.<sup>22</sup> In November 1976, again through the CIIR, the JPC published *Civil War in Rhodesia*, a further dossier of brutalities by the Defense Forces. Even more than the earlier book, this work received extensive press coverage in Europe and Canada.<sup>23</sup>

With an eye to influencing an Anglo-American peace initiative underway at the time, in 1977 the JPC published *Rhodesia: The Propaganda War*. This detailed further the devastating impact of the "protected villages" as well as the widespread use of torture by Rhodesian Security Forces and the misuse of security legislation by the Salisbury government. "We prepared the papers because we felt that when Andrew Young and David Owen met with the government they would only hear

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 and Auret interview, *ibid.* In the US visit, the JPC was assisted by the Commission for Justice and Peace of the US Catholic Conference of Bishops in opposing the Byrd Amendment, which would have allowed the US to import strategic minerals from Rhodesia in contravention of United Nations sanctions.

<sup>20</sup> In July, 1974, Smith made a strong showing at the whites-only polls, and interpreted this as a mandate to escalate the war against the liberation armies. Part of the escalation was an aggressive counter-insurgency campaign which moved villagers out of their home areas and sequestered them in centralized "protected villages." By the end of 1974, 36 such camps existed, holding 70,000 people. This campaign of forced removal imposed enormous suffering on villagers for whom normal life was impossible. Occupants in many of the camps lived without water or sewerage facilities and were unable to cultivate food.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

one side," recalls Sr. Janice McLaughlin, a Catholic nun deeply involved in writing the document. "We knew we weren't being balanced. We were only giving one side very deliberately because the other side was quite well presented and distorted by the government."<sup>24</sup>

Following the Internal Settlement in 1978, an ill-fated alliance between a desperate Ian Smith and a compromising Abel Muzorewa<sup>25</sup>, press censorship in Rhodesia tightened even further. The country was isolated from more than superficial scrutiny by the outside world. "Reliable information about life in the war zones and protected villages now came almost exclusively through Church channels, often deported missionaries and Church workers."<sup>26</sup>

Once again the link to London via the CIIR proved decisive. "We had something the press didn't have," recalls the director of the CIIR in London at the time. Through the JPC and the Catholic network in Rhodesia, CIIR had "access to the situation on the ground that was denied the media."<sup>27</sup> Several London newspapers reprinted information provided by the CIIR from Rhodesian sources. The JPC and CIIR also jointly published several documents critically assessing the Internal Settlement.<sup>28</sup> These reports circulated widely and succeeded in influencing many British Members of Parliament and strengthening the hand of British Foreign Secretary David Owen and American United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young in their opposition to the Internal Settlement.

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<sup>24</sup> McLaughlin, *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> In March, 1978, Abel Muzorewa and Ian Smith entered into the Internal Settlement, an arrangement which replaced Smith with a four-member Executive Council until elections. The Council consisted of Smith and Muzorewa, plus two other Rhodesia-based black leaders, Ndabaningi Sithole and Chief JAS. Chirau. The Internal Settlement provided for a Parliament to be established at elections to be held within a year, in which twenty-eight seats were guaranteed for whites in a body of 100 members. The externally-based Patriotic Front, who had not been consulted in this arrangement, immediately rejected this proposal for diluted majority rule, as did the United Nations and surrounding African states. Many others, including the Catholic Bishops, were initially ambivalent. The new leaders were installed, but it soon became apparent to outsiders that the three black "Prime Ministers" were mere puppets in a quartet controlled by Smith. By June, 1978, the Catholic Bishops and numerous other groups had rejected the arrangement. Meanwhile, the war continued to escalate, often with Muzorewa at the forefront in castigating the Patriotic Front. On one occasion he appeared on TV brandishing a machine gun, and on another he was quoted as saying that news of Rhodesian Forces bombing Nkomo's forces in Lusaka was a great start to his day. Cf. Linden, 277.

<sup>26</sup> Linden, 264-265.

<sup>27</sup> Mildred Neville, Director of the CIIR throughout the war years, interview with the author, July 8, 1991, London.

<sup>28</sup> The CIIR published "Comment #34" and the JPC published "An Analysis of the Salisbury Agreement". The Rhodesian Bishops wavered on whether to support or reject the Internal Settlement and asked the JPC to withhold publication of the latter booklet in April 1978. But after two massacres had taken place and it became apparent that the Internal Settlement would not end the war, the Bishops supported the release of the booklet in July 1978. Source: Michael Auret, secretary and primary staffperson of the JPC from 1974 to present, interviews with the author, Harare, June, 1991 and July, 1992. Cf.: Linden, 274.

### **Voice of Moral Conscience**

While Catholic efforts centered around truth-telling by documenting the realities of suffering on the ground to the nation and the world, the Church also sought to be a moral conscience. Assisted by the JPC, the Catholic Bishops released 10 pastoral statements between 1961 and 1980 calling for racial justice and, as the war escalated, for principled behavior on the part of the combatants. Additionally, the Bishops released 2 study documents in 1976.<sup>29</sup>

The thrust of the Bishops' statements, like the truth-telling campaign of the JPC, was largely directly against the Rhodesian State. But Catholic structures addressed the liberation forces as well. In December 1976, the Bishops publicly deplored guerrilla atrocities and in the same month, during the Geneva Talks, the JPC sent a private memorandum, "To all the African Nationalist Leaders in Geneva." The latter expressed "grave concern about the apparently growing incidence of guerrilla atrocities", noting as an example that burial had been denied certain victims. The letter was received "with cold hostility" by members of the two liberation armies in Geneva.<sup>30</sup>

Later, during mediation efforts in 1978, the Catholic delegation again raised the issue of atrocities committed by liberation forces with Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, and urged that special measures be undertaken to avoid harm to civilians.<sup>31</sup> On this occasion Mugabe admitted the occurrence of atrocities due to the difficulties of maintaining discipline over remote groups of guerrillas, stated his regret, and requested the Church bring any future cases that arose to his attention.<sup>32</sup>

### **Advocate of Negotiations**

Awareness of the massive scale of human suffering prompted a shift in emphasis in 1977 within the Commission for Justice and Peace, a shift that placed the JPC and the Catholic hierarchy in a new role in the Rhodesian struggle, that of actively advocating for negotiations. "We decided that because the suffering was so great in the country, the suffering of all people, black and white, whether they deserved it or not..., our direction must now be towards actively searching for peace," recalls Michael Auret, a key staffperson at the JPC.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> R.H. Randolph, *Dawn in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1985), 197-214.

<sup>30</sup> Linden, 250.

<sup>31</sup> This was done in a prepared speech delivered to both ZANU in Maputo and ZAPU in Lusaka by Archbishop Chakaipa. Report on meetings with the Patriotic Front August 13-21, 1978; quoted in Linden, 278.

<sup>32</sup> Interviews with Auret. The JPC acted on Mugabe's request shortly after this meeting when guerrillas massacred 16 overseas Pentecostal missionaries. According to Auret, the JPC felt satisfied with the ZANU response.

<sup>33</sup> Interviews with Auret.

In the first week of July, 1978, the Catholic Bishops' Conference convened and issued a statement of alarm. "Members of the Transitional Government, both Blacks and Whites, appear to be more concerned with restoring White morale and confidence than with guiding all the people of this country towards a new social order." The statement went on to say that, "instead of leading to a cease-fire, the signing of the Salisbury Agreement has caused an escalation of the war with the added risk of further internationalizing of the conflict."<sup>34</sup>

Still in conference, the Bishops issued another statement on 6 July offering "our services to do whatever we can to assist in the process of reconciliation." "We the Catholic Bishops of Rhodesia are appalled at the continuance of bloodshed in this country which has led to the death of thousands of innocent people. We believe that our horror is shared by the mass of the people and by the political leaders. We therefore call on all the leaders to come together now to discuss the means of bringing about an end to bloodshed and achieving enduring peace and justice in this country." This statement was followed by a public statement by the Christian Council of Rhodesia urging the Government to accept the Anglo-American proposals for an all-party conference.<sup>35</sup>

The possibility of a meeting between Catholics and the representatives of the liberation organizations was suggested by the JPC and the idea accepted in principle by the Bishops in December, 1977. The Archbishop of Maputo and the Apostolic Delegate in Lusaka were contacted soon thereafter to explore such a meeting, but the initiative became frozen in Church protocol. In June, 1978, the Commission was given permission to request the CIIR in London to initiate contacts with the two liberation movements. Meanwhile the JPC had met with representatives of the three internal nationalist factions, and had been addressed by Josiah Chinamano of ZAPU in Salisbury."<sup>36</sup>

On 13 August 1978 a 6 person delegation made up of Archbishop Patrick Chakaipa, Monsignor Helmut Reckter SJ. (president of the JPC), Mike Auret (secretary of the JPC), Brother Fidelis Mukonori, Ishmael Muvingi and Father Bernard Ndlovu traveled to Lusaka. There they met with the executive committee of the ZAPU liberation army, visited with Pres. Kaunda, and accompanied by Joshua Nkomo, visited Zimbabwe House, a resource center for exiles from Rhodesia, and refugee camps.

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<sup>34</sup> Linden, 273-74.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 275-276.

Their purpose, as they explained it to the ZAPU executive was two-fold: 1) "To share views with you on the situation in Zimbabwe as it affects the people, and the position of the Church in that situation." 2) To "consult with you about the role of the Church in the new Zimbabwe."<sup>37</sup> "The Church delegation presented a straightforward account of the anarchy within Rhodesia. Monsignor Reckter suggested that ZAPU forces should concentrate on the Security Forces and their installations in order to avoid harming the civilian population."<sup>38</sup> Nkomo explained why the war was necessary, and proposed that the delegation could help in several ways. They could 1) "persuade the Internal Leaders to attend a Conference"; 2) Try to "overcome white fears so as to show whites that they are welcome as Zimbabweans if they will accept people as people." 3) Keep mission stations etc., open as far as possible."<sup>39</sup> Nkomo went on to clarify that "under no circumstances" had orders been given by the Patriotic Front Leadership for attacks on missionaries, "in fact, quite the reverse."<sup>40</sup>

The delegation then waited for four days to discover the whereabouts of Robert Mugabe of ZANU. When he finally arrived on Friday, it turned out that a few days previously he had gone to Nigeria at the urgent request of the then-leader of Nigeria, Brigadier Garba. Garba had informed him that Nkomo was that week meeting secretly with Smith, and that another such meeting with Smith including Mugabe had been scheduled for Friday of the same week, August 20. Mugabe was furious about this turn of events which threatened to sever the already-shaky alliance between ZANU and ZAPU, and he declined to meet with Smith. Instead he returned to Lusaka enroute to Maputo, and still visibly angry, met with the Catholic delegation in Lusaka.<sup>41</sup>

In the meeting Mugabe explained the conflict in Rhodesia, "as a just war undertaken only when all else had failed. He felt it unfortunate that the Church had gone along with 'the system' in the past but pointed to the work of the Justice and Peace Commission which he described as 'well-known and appreciated'."<sup>42</sup> After meeting Mugabe, the JPC met again with Nkomo.

The secretary of the JPC, Mike Auret, recalled the input of the delegation with both leaders as focusing on "the extent of the suffering in the country." The primary message was "we must move

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>38</sup> From a prepared speech delivered to both ZANU and ZAPU by Archbishop Chakaipa, report on a meeting with the Patriotic Front 13-21 August, 1978 MS. Quoted in *ibid.*, 278.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>41</sup> Reconstructed from *ibid.*, 279 and interview with Auret.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 279.

towards peace" and they made it clear that they would be meeting with the internal leaders as well. Auret came away deeply impressed with Mugabe - his ability to listen well and respond point by point to the Catholic presentation; his candor in admitting that despite ZANU policy atrocities had occurred; his openness in requesting that Catholics contact him immediately if further atrocities came to light, a promise which Mugabe fulfilled shortly thereafter when the Eden massacres took place.<sup>43</sup>

The result of these meetings was "to reinforce the commitment of the commission to act as a force for reconciliation."<sup>44</sup> A series of meetings followed. The delegation met in Salisbury with Sithole, Muzorewa, Chirau, and Deputy Prime Minister Davidson to explore the possibility of an all-party conference. Smith refused to meet.<sup>45</sup> They met as well with Commanders Wall and McLean of the Army, stressing the desperateness of the situation and urging that they use their influence with the government to end the war. "We wanted to make sure what we had done out of the country we were doing inside," recalls Auret.<sup>46</sup> Representations were also made to Dr. David Owen of the British Foreign Office "to underline the gravity of the situation."<sup>47</sup>

In addition, the Church devoted greater attention, as requested by the Patriotic Front leadership, "to the growing problem of refugees outside the country in camps in Mozambique, Botswana, and Zambia."<sup>48</sup> Michael Traber, a member of the Bethlehem Fathers with many close friendships in top ZANU circles, went to Maputo and helped set up the Zimbabwe Project, which responded to needs of Rhodesians fleeing the violence in their homeland. Traber also met with Mugabe and secured permission to place a Catholic worker in the camps of the ZANU forces.

But in the weeks after the meetings with the political leaders, the possibility of negotiations appeared more remote than ever. The Executive Committee of ZANU, whose army accounted for eighty-five per cent of the guerrillas operating inside Rhodesia, refused to meet with Smith unless the British Foreign Secretary, legally the representative for Rhodesia, was also present.<sup>49</sup>

What is more, long-simmering tensions between ZANU and ZAPU flared into the open at a meeting of the Frontline States in September. Nkomo's private meeting with Smith had aroused

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<sup>43</sup> Interviews with Auret.

<sup>44</sup> Linden, 280.

<sup>45</sup> Interviews with Auret.

<sup>46</sup> Interviews with Auret.

<sup>47</sup> Linden, 280.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

anger and new suspicion in the ZANU camp, and dissension over this issue dominated the meeting of supposed allies. To make matters even worse, while the Frontline States were still in session, Nkomo's forces shot down a commercial Air Rhodesia Viscount aircraft and then slaughtered 10 of the 18 survivors on the ground. Government troops had in the past visited massacres on a far larger scale on Africans, of course but the white reaction in Rhodesia and abroad was visceral horror.

The war continued to escalate. In October Rhodesian forces raided Nkomo's camps in Zambia, killing 1500 people.<sup>50</sup> In addition to the government forces, there now roamed, virtually at will, private armies established by Muzorewa, Chirau, and Sithole. In some of the Tribal Trust Lands, five different sets of African militias fought for control.<sup>51</sup> The first famine deaths were beginning to occur.

### ***Meeting with the Pope***

Despairing of results from efforts to work directly with the political leaders involved, the JPC shifted course and moved once again to the world stage in a truth-telling role. The goal: "to alert world opinion to the tragedy of an anarchic collapse into famine and increased bloodshed."<sup>52</sup>

Circumventing protocols normally requiring six weeks advance contact, staff at the Vatican arranged an urgent meeting with Pope John Paul II on a few days' notice in early April 1979.<sup>53</sup> A delegation made up of Bishop Chiginya, Monsignor Recktor, and Mike Auret of the JPC met for an hour with the Pope in Rome in early April, 1979, urging the prelate to use Vatican influence to pressure all parties to enter negotiations. The Pope responded vigorously to their plea. Before the three left Rome, he had contacted diplomats in Italy, United States, Britain, France, and Germany<sup>54</sup> to urge British intervention in Rhodesia. Individuals from the trio followed up with personal visits to diplomats in Germany, Britain, and the US, and found in each case that the contact from the Pope had left a mark. The message to Western diplomats was the same as to the parties themselves: the suffering must end. The goal of the lobbying was "pressure, more pressure on Smith, more pressure on the guerrilla forces to negotiate."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 284.

<sup>53</sup> Interviews with Auret.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

In April, 1979, the election took place and Bishop Muzorewa won an absolute majority of fifty-two seats under the terms negotiated in the Internal Settlement. The JPC and CIIR lobbied in Washington and London against the sending of official delegates to the election. Lord Chitness, a Catholic layman, came from London as an election observer under Church auspices. In contrast to other observers, by working through Catholic networks Chitness accumulated a substantial dossier of government intimidation and coerced voting.

In August the breakthrough came. At the Commonwealth Conference in Lusaka, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher encountered virtually unanimous opposition from the Commonwealth nations to her oft-reiterated position of support for the Muzorewa government.<sup>56</sup> Bowing to a consensus forged by the joint efforts of Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere and Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser of Australia, Thatcher agreed to reject the Internal Settlement government and to convene a constitutional convention under British auspices as soon as possible.

### **Lancaster House and the Transition Period**

Catholics were in the background at Lancaster House and sought no direct role in the negotiations. But staff from the CIIR picked up their previous role as truth-teller and published five public briefing documents on key issues. For their part the Bishops' Conference issued a public appeal to all leaders to put the good of the whole nation before personal or party interests, for the sake of the people's suffering."<sup>57</sup>

The meetings that did take place had overtones of self-interested lobbying on behalf of Catholic interests in the new dispensation. Bishop Lamont, now living in Ireland, met with ZANU and ZAPU leaders, urging them not to outlaw Christianity and not to conduct a Nuremburg-type trial.<sup>58</sup> The Bethlehem Fathers met with the liberation fronts as well to discuss the closing by guerrillas of several schools they ran and to express concern about incidents of guerrilla misconduct.<sup>59</sup> Several individuals from JPC met with ZANU and ZAPU.<sup>60</sup>

In the transition period between the Lancaster House settlement and elections, the JPC and observers sent from CIIR in London used their intimate knowledge of the country and access to key leaders to support the tenuous peace. Lord Soames, sent from England to serve as Governor

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<sup>56</sup> Only Malawi, Uncle Tom of the continent, favored recognition of Muzorewa.

<sup>57</sup> Randolph, *Dawn in Zimbabwe*, 36.

<sup>58</sup> Interviews with McLaughlin..

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

of the country until the election, held the unenviable task of maintaining order in a political tinderbox with a small Commonwealth Monitoring Force. Several bombings, multiple assassination attempts on the life of Mugabe, roving bands of armed men, and ceaseless rumors threatened to plunge the country at any moment into renewed warfare. Soames relied in part on the corps of international observers present to inform his decisions. Lord Chitness and Eileen Sudworth, British observers sent by the CIIR, drew extensively on Church knowledge and resources in assisting other observers, providing transportation, arranging for observers to meet key people, and writing reports for the press.<sup>61</sup>

For example, there were persistent reports of misconduct by armed men in the northern and eastern regions of Rhodesia. Soames had been told that ZANLA, the military wing of Mugabe's ZANU party, was responsible and threatened several times to outlaw the presence of ZANLA in certain areas. From their extensive networks, Catholic observers knew that in fact the perpetrators were not ZANLA forces, but rather the auxiliary forces of Muzorewa. Archbishop Chakaipa took this information to Soames who accepted it as credible and ended his criticism of ZANLA.<sup>62</sup>

### **Partisan and Victim Roles**

At no time was it church policy to support the war effort of either side, but in reality large amounts of Catholic resources contributed to the support of both sides. Individuals and in some instances groups of Catholic workers actively supported the guerrilla cause. Some of the rural Catholic missions provided medicine, food, clothing, money, and rest to the guerrillas.<sup>63</sup> Notable here were the Burgos Fathers, a Spanish-based order still radicalized by their experience with the Fascists in Spain, and with an emphasis on living simply in close connection to the people they served. Many in this order "actively supported the guerrillas and were positively hostile to the Security Forces."<sup>64</sup> One Catholic worker interviewed six amputees at random at a Red Cross unit in Maputo, and discovered that all six ZANLA soldiers owed their lives to Catholic missionaries, each in a different incident.<sup>65</sup>

A minority of Catholic workers, on the other hand, openly supported the government. A substantial number of the Marianhill missionaries and some of the German Jesuits "saw the war as

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Linden, 270

<sup>65</sup> Interview with Sr. Janice McLaughlin in October 1978, reported in Linden, 270

a struggle between the State and terrorism" and maintained friendly contacts with the Security Forces.<sup>66</sup> What is more, decades of coziness between church and state had established conventions of cooperation that the Church never challenged. The Catholic Church provided chaplains for the Security Forces through-out the war, and never reciprocated with the guerrilla forces.<sup>67</sup> Though some Catholic leaders denounced the legitimacy of the State, none ever called for a boycott of payment of taxes. Catholic laypeople thus were a large and compliant source of funding of the war efforts of the Salisbury Government through-out.<sup>68</sup>

The Rhodesian Security Forces, of course, had been hostile from the early stages of Catholic opposition. Putting a gun behind one African priest's ear, a member of the Security Forces gave a command that seemed to capture a common attitude: "You black bastard, speak up, one dead missionary is better than one hundred dead terrorists."<sup>69</sup> But combatants on both sides of the conflict perceived the Church as partisan. The national network of Catholic schools, missions, and hospitals put Catholic workers at great risk and numbers suffered severely. Between December, 1976, and February, 1980, a total of twenty-five Catholic expatriate missionaries were killed; and as noted earlier, eighteen were deported.<sup>70</sup> Nineteen Catholic-run secondary schools were closed as a result of harassment by guerrilla forces; and an even larger number of primary schools.<sup>71</sup>

### Summary and Assessment

In its efforts to interact with people in a position to influence the conflict, the common theme in Catholic responses was an effort to be a voice of morality. Church representatives either stressed the immense scale of human suffering or they appealed for more humane conduct of the war by the fighting forces. Even the major effort in mid-1978 to get talks started was pitched at the level of moral concern. A delegation was sent, which in itself implies an intent to register a message with the parties rather than to attempt the more facultative tasks of practical negotiation where one or two are quite enough to accomplish the purpose of the meeting. No effort was made to convey messages between parties or to draw the parties into the practical issues of "getting to the table".

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<sup>66</sup> Linden, 270

<sup>67</sup> However, the Jesuits sent a worker in a chaplaincy-oriented role to work in a ZANU refugee camp in Zambia in early 1979. Source, Auret

<sup>68</sup> However, a small number of Catholics refused to pay the 5 per cent defense surtax which Salisbury imposed towards the end of the war to finance the war effort. Source: Michael Auret.

<sup>69</sup> *Daily News* of Tanzania, 12 May 1977. Quoted in Linden, 252

<sup>70</sup> Randolph, *Dawn in Zimbabwe*, 220.. Randolph gives no indication as to how many native Zimbabwean Catholic workers died in the war.

<sup>71</sup> Linden, 271.

The message from the Catholic delegation was not "we want to mediate"; rather it was "this war is devastating the people; please end it quickly." Similarly, in the 1979 effort, the JPC staff members made no effort to work through the parties. They went directly to outside pressure groups. In short, Catholics were lobbyists on behalf of moral concerns, not mediators.

Because the target audience of Catholic involvements was so vast - the entire public sphere in Rhodesia and abroad - it would be impossible to measure the full impact of the Catholic efforts. But leaders in present-day Zimbabwe credit the Catholic Church for a major contribution. In 1980 President Robert Mugabe commented: "I think the Catholic Church played a very significant role in the liberation struggle. Not that they fought with arms as we did, but they opposed racialism, and refused to be made an agent of the Government implementing racial policies. We valued the support which the Church gave us as it helped to internationalize our grievances and helped to mobilize international support for us. Within the country it gave us a broader base than the one which we ourselves, acting entirely on our own, could have created."<sup>72</sup>

Former President Canaan Banana and pre-eminent historian of the Zimbabwe struggle, concluded in a 1989 essay that the JPC "played an invaluable role of publicizing and condemning the excesses of the Rhodesian army in its conduct of the war. In this way atrocities of the Rhodesian security forces were effectively disclosed and the psychological warfare counteracted."<sup>73</sup>

For the scholar of conflict resolution, the Catholic involvements are a remarkable essay in the potential and limitations of a religious organization to contribute to the resolution of a national conflict. The Church's roles as truth-teller, moral conscience, and advocate of negotiations depended on each of several key factors:

*Transcendent value system:* A value system in which survival and power were not the ultimate goal, but rather faithfulness to transcendent goals which included justice, truthfulness, and service to others. This led Catholic workers to enter into...

*Engagement with victims of the war.* Catholics saw and acted upon the issues destroying the people of Rhodesia. Not only did Catholics see the issues, their far-flung church system provided an unparalleled....

*Information-gathering network* making it possible to compile information essential for mobilizing domestic and world opinion. When it came to influencing decision-makers, the Catholic efforts depended upon an...

<sup>72</sup> Interview on UK ITV Religious Program, broadcast 30 November 1980, quoted in Randolph. *Dawn in Zimbabwe*, 57-58.

<sup>73</sup> Canaan Banana, "The Role of the Church in the Struggle for Liberation in Zimbabwe", *Turmoil and Tenacity*, (Harare: College Press, 1989), 205.

*International structure* for collecting, analyzing and disseminating information and...

*Ready entre to political figures and media channels*, domestically and abroad.

With the possible exception of the first, none of these characteristics is "religious" *per se*, but in Rhodesia, the Catholic Church was the only institution that embodied all of them. In this regard the case study illustrates the Church at her best potential for peacemaking.

A fundamental part of the problem in the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe struggle was the apathy of the white ruling elite to the injustice of their own government. Like ruling elites almost everywhere, they believed the propaganda of their government. Rhodesia thus demonstrated a generic problem: the opiate of patriotism makes it harder for citizens to see the moral issues at stake in national conflicts with the clarity available to those at a distance. The Catholic Church, like other white-led churches and institutions in Rhodesia, was for many years lethargic in the face of massive injustice. But two fundamental differences set Catholics apart from other churches. One was that Catholic ecclesiology supports a global rather than a national orientation by placing final fiscal, theological, and organizational authority in an extra-national agency, the Vatican. The other was that the worldwide Catholic church was in the midst of a major renewal at every level in the aftermath of Vatican Two, and one result of the renewal was unprecedented commitment to supporting efforts for structural justice.

Consequently, the individuals within Rhodesian Catholic structures who challenged the injustice of their political system had access to a massive global structure that "leveraged" their efforts, even though they were a minority in their country and, initially at least, within their own Church. At the individual level, Bishop Lamont and priests more radical than he, were buoyed by the trends of the global Catholic Church in confronting the many in Catholic structures who supported Salisbury. At the institutional level, the Commission for Justice and Peace found a ready and powerful ally in the London-based CIIR long before many Rhodesian Catholics supported a position that, to blind patriots, looked subversive. To the extent, then, that injustice imposed by ruling elites is part of a conflict--and surely it is in many national conflicts--the Catholic Church in Rhodesia demonstrates the potential of religious organizations to cut through the lethargy of blind patriotism to a genuinely moral base of analysis and action.

On the other hand, the Catholic Church also demonstrates the limits of a massive, institution-bound religious structure as a base of response to conflict. In Rhodesia the Church had for decades cultivated a cozy alliance with the State. In providing a "cosmic umbrella" for an unjust

social and political structure the Church stood culpable as a contributing cause of the war. As individuals and agencies within the Church finally began awakening to reality, they faced debilitating resistance from within the Church itself to confronting the actions of the State. Though the Church found her way in the end to outspoken resistance to white privilege, one must ask why it took so long. African nationalism was already rocking the Catholic boat in the early 1950s, but it wasn't until 1969 that the Catholic Bishops disengaged themselves from the embrace of the State, and not until 1972 that they established a structure mandated to respond to the racial injustices that undergirded the society. Even then these actions came only after much anguished debate, arousing enormous ambivalence among the Bishops and great resistance within the Church.

Thus if the global orientation and networking capacity of international Catholic structures proved an enormous asset in mobilizing a response to the Rhodesian conflict, the institutional inertia and patriotic bent of domestic Catholics nearly paralyzed initial responses. It took many years for the Church to come to a point of sufficient clarity about its own moral position that it could begin mobilizing its far-flung resources effectively.

As will be seen in the case of the Quakers, the roles undertaken by the Catholic Church could perhaps have been undertaken by anyone. But no organization without a spiritual identity could have had an impact comparable to that of the Catholic Church. The point here is that roles and responses *per se* are not the key to understanding what religiously-based actors do. The key may lie instead in the *identity* of the religious actors and their resulting credibility in the eyes of the parties, as well as, in this case, in the power that the Catholic Church wielded to influence public opinion at home and abroad.

## Chapter Nine

### Moral Re-Armament

Harare in February 1980 crackled with tension. Lancaster House had yielded a peace plan two months previously, but the real test of the settlement was now at hand. Elections had just taken place and after several days of vote counting, the results were about to be announced. Rumors swirled about what each group planned to do if it lost. Whites were counting on Muzorewa to win the election and finally gain the recognition denied him in 1978 under the abortive Internal Settlement. But it was widely known that General Peter Walls of the Security Forces had a coup prepared to intervene in the event that the election turned out differently than expected.

On the other hand, many had also heard, and believed, reports that Mugabe's guerrilla fighters were no longer in the agreed holding zones. The word was that they were quietly moving out in preparation for battle and were being replaced by *mujibas*, young, less-experienced guerrillas.<sup>1</sup> Cuban troops were said to be just over the border in Beira with tanks and weapons, and the Nigerians allegedly had 19,000 troops waiting at airstrips in the event of a white takeover or South African intervention. South Africa had placed, at the request of the Rhodesians, a small army unit on the Rhodesian side of Beitbridge. "Everybody had their contingency plans," recalls one Moral Re-Armament worker. "It appeared to us was that whoever won the election, we were back into confrontation."<sup>2</sup>

A sober group of MRA workers, the "Cabinet of Conscience" as they had come to call themselves, gathered on Saturday morning at the end of election week to assess the situation. The moment of truth was nearing, for on Tuesday the election results would be announced. The fate of the country, not to mention the lives and future of their families, seemed to hang in the balance. After lengthy discussion yielded no way forward, Joram Kucherera, a member of the group with personal and family connections to ZANU, stood and said he knew what must happen. "Two people have to meet - Smith and Mugabe. There's no other way."<sup>3</sup> Some in the room doubted the possibility of such an event, but agreed it wouldn't hurt to try.

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Robertson, interview with the author, May 25, 1991, Harare.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Kucherera contacted a cousin who was a senior aide to Mugabe. To his surprise, the response was positive. Kucherera then rang Alec Smith, son of the Prime Minister and a key member of the MRA group. Over the last several years Alec had arranged numerous meetings between his father and individual nationalists, so the invitation to meet with Robert Mugabe could hardly have come as a complete shock to the elder Smith.

Both sides were interested in a meeting, but wary<sup>4</sup>. The elder Smith insisted on meeting personally with Kucherera and sought clarification from the Mugabe side about the agenda of the meeting before agreeing. Mugabe's aides, for their part, arranged a meeting at Mugabe's residence with a representative of Mozambican president Samora Machel to gain the support of their long-standing patron for such a meeting.<sup>5</sup>

Though frightened by the thought that his bold venture to get the two leaders together could easily end in the loss of his own life, Kucherera felt he was undertaking a divine mission and made no secret of what he saw as the source of his inspiration. Told in an early meeting that the idea of a meeting was a "thought from God", a skeptical Emmerson Mnangagwa, Mugabe's head of Security, shot back, "You think God fixes things like this? A meeting with Ian Smith?" But Mugabe himself saw no need to challenge Kucherera's assertion that "this country needs a miracle".<sup>6</sup> What Kucherera offered was something the Mugabe camp keenly sought - low-visibility access to Ian Smith via Kucherera's trusted friend, Alec. After several days of almost round-the-clock meetings - Kucherera recalls coming home from one meeting at three o'clock in the morning - both sides gave their approval.

Two and one half days after the MRA group had met, the man who had squandered the lives of thousands and the economy of his nation to destroy Robert Mugabe and his fellow African nationalists was driven by Kucherera in an aging Morris Minor automobile to the headquarters of Mugabe's party. Accompanied only by Kucherera, he walked past fifty tense and heavily armed guards into the house. "Let's get rid of him now," shouted one young guerrilla, raising his rifle.

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<sup>4</sup> The events of the actual meeting were reconstructed from interviews by the author with Former Prime Minister Ian Smith, April 28, 1992, in Harare; former ZANU Head of Intelligence and Special Advisor to Mugabe, Emerson Mnangagwa, August 17, 1992, in Harare, and Joram Kucherera, MRA worker, August 18, 1992, in Kwe Kwe. All three of these individuals were present in the meeting. Additional information came from Alec Smith and Ian Robertson, who assisted in setting up the meeting. Cf. Alec Smith's account in his book *Now I Call Him Brother* (London: Marshalls 1984) 117-120.

<sup>5</sup> The representative was Machel's young special assistant on Frontline affairs, Fernando Honwana. Interview with Kucherera.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

The senior Commander of the ZANU forces turned, and with the butt of his own weapon, sent the youth sprawling. Inside the house, Mugabe invited Smith to sit next to him on a couch, and for the next several hours, the two men talked about the future of the nation.

Both had been tipped off regarding the expected outcome of the election, so they entered the meeting aware that in less than twenty four hours Mugabe would be announced as the winner. In the meeting, Mugabe indicated that, as a civilian leader he would approach things differently than he had as leader of a liberation army, and he outlined policies he intended to pursue. He stressed his eagerness to retain the confidence of whites and inquired from Smith what measures would be necessary to do so. Mugabe also put an offer on the table: Smith would be welcome to nominate two white Cabinet Ministers to serve in Mugabe's Cabinet.

The following morning, Tuesday, March 4, came the public announcement of the election results. That evening Mugabe delivered his famous "reconciliation speech."<sup>7</sup> In his first public response, on Friday Smith made his astonishingly positive response, encouraging fellow whites to stay. A few weeks later, with the political transition process nearing its completion, Prime Minister Mugabe reiterated the theme: "If yesterday I fought you as an enemy, today I have become a friend and ally. If yesterday you hated me, today you cannot avoid the love that binds you to me and me to you."

### **MRA Roots**

Moral Re-Armament began in the 1920s among students at Oxford University. Their leader was Frank Buchman, an American Lutheran pastor who in England met a personal conversion experience under the preaching of one American evangelist and from a second, F.B. Meyer, learned "the secret of guidance", the practice of listening to God. Charismatic by nature and a crusader at heart, Buchman quickly gathered others around him. His blend of a pietist salvation experience and a practical technique for receiving divine guidance appealed to many, particularly

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<sup>7</sup> There has been private speculation among some MRA people aware of the Mugabe/Smith meeting that the speech was a direct result of the encounter. It is possible that the meeting had an impact on the tone and nuances of the speech - Kucherera was present on Tuesday at Mugabe headquarters and witnessed the content being modified in a last minute rehearsal between Mugabe and top aides in ways that he believes to have been a consequence of the meeting. But the evidence is overwhelming that Mugabe and other ZANU leadership had been working on unity as a theme of political leadership for months previously. To cite just a few examples: Before Lancaster House the Quakers had noted the topic being discussed by ZANU leaders in Maputo. At Lancaster House, Josiah Tongogara, by no means a moderate among ZANU leaders, spoke at length in an interview on October 29, 1979, about the need to include old enemies in a new government. Throughout his election campaign Mugabe made clear his intent to create a society with room for everyone. Cf.: de Waal, *The Politics of Reconciliation*, 40-47.

to young intellectuals at a time when grand-scale turn-of-the century idealism lay shattered with the ruins of the first World War.

At Oxford an active group of student followers known as the "Oxford Group" emerged and began conducting campaigns worldwide. The movement took the name Moral Re-Armament in 1938 and at its peak over the next decade drew large numbers to conferences and meetings. One MRA function in 1939 filled the Hollywood Bowl.

### **MRA Beliefs**

MRA has no creed or dogmas. God is assumed to exist and to be actively involved in implementing a just and loving masterplan for the world.<sup>8</sup> Beyond these fundamental assumptions, MRA workers and literature reflect little interest in prescribing "correct belief". The closest the organization comes to doctrine is a belief in "four absolute standards": honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. To the extent that individuals apply these standards to their life, it is believed, they will find themselves and their relationships transformed. To the extent that leaders apply these standards to their personal and public lives, society will be transformed.

But what, specifically, does "absolute love" demand? Where ethicists write books in answer, MRA leaves the problem to the individual. Such a response could appear to be sheer abandonment, but MRA points to some assistance: divine guidance. Recurrent in MRA literature is the call to "listen to God." God is in charge of the world, and any individual who listens will find that God speaks, giving guidance about what needs to be done. Active MRA workers and supporters typically spend at least twenty minutes each day alone or in an MRA group in "quiet time", "listening" for "thoughts" about what to do. Often these thoughts are about individual actions to set aright one's own life and relationships, which MRA stresses as the place where genuine change of any kind must begin. But as one's own life comes aright, God will also prompt the individual with thoughts about actions needed to effect God's purposes in the world. An oft-repeated MRA story, for example, recounts how Desmond Reader, a senior academic at the University of Rhodesia, was prompted in a quiet time to apologize to an African colleague for under-estimating his abilities and under-employing him. Gordon Chavunduka, the man in question, responded warmly; his work and the relationship were transformed as a result. This experience brought the two men into deeper conversation and they began working together on a

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<sup>8</sup> Although most MRA supporters are theistic, they do not insist on belief in God. Most believe that anyone, including atheists, can receive guidance if they merely undertake the discipline of listening to their "inner voice."

series of lunches and dinner parties to bring together people who were, in Reader's words, "extreme opposites."<sup>9</sup> Chavunduka was Secretary-General of the African National Congress and thus had access to a variety of internal African leaders. These meetings continued for several years.

The assumption critical to understanding virtually all MRA activities has to do with the phenomenon of change: social change begins with individual change. "In order to build a new society, you must have people who are willing to begin with themselves," was the way Alec Smith summarized the purpose of the MRA "Cabinet of Conscience", a key MRA strategy group in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Henry Macnicol, a Scotsman who spent several years in the country during the height of the war and served as a central figure in MRA efforts put it this way: "You can change the system all you like but unless you change the hearts of men, you're changing nothing."<sup>10</sup>

More than the Catholics or the Quakers, MRA workers carried in their own minds a clear and relatively uncomplicated agenda: to call individuals to do what God wanted them to do. Only as this happens can constructive change take place in society. Whether meeting in private prayer sessions with Abel Muzorewa, publishing a full-page newspaper statement, or arranging a one-on-one meeting between Robert Mugabe and Ian Smith, MRA workers maintained a simple, if often unspoken, agenda. Their task was to support individuals in listening to God. This would lead to a change of heart and to clarity about the "right" thing to do. And if leaders get themselves oriented in the right direction, society must follow.

### **Activation of MRA in Rhodesia**

MRA was active in southern Africa from 1928 onwards<sup>11</sup>, holding conferences and workshops in South Africa and Rhodesia. MRA workers in the 1970s were surprised to discover that numerous liberation front leaders, including Nkomo and Mugabe, already knew about the organization. Nkomo, like many black Africans, held positive views from his encounters with MRA in the 1950s, for MRA had already then challenged individual whites to change their racist attitudes. Mugabe had seen MRA films as a student at Ft. Hare and told an MRA worker in 1976 that he respected the organization's concept of beginning with mending one's own ways as the key to

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<sup>9</sup> Elliot, 20.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Frank Buchman, *Remaking the World* (Washington DC: Mackinac Press, 1950), xxiv.

healing relationships. But he held serious reservations. The idea "works in the family, and also in society," he said, but "it doesn't work in politics." "They are the oppressors and we are the oppressed. If we change our attitude, nothing happens. We've tried it."<sup>12</sup>

After influencing the lives of thousands of young people in southern Africa in the 1940s and 1950s, MRA faded. By 1970, activities in Rhodesia had dwindled to personal visits by a handful of retirees. "My first contact with MRA was at a quaint old house in Harare, and nobody in the room was under 75 years old," recalls Alec Smith, a key figure in the revival of MRA in Rhodesia. But as Smith soon discovered, the MRA people possessed a major asset: they had "built up a network of friendships across society that laid the basis for everything [that followed]."<sup>13</sup>

Smith's involvement with the small and aging group of pensioners began in 1974 and led in a remarkably short time to the re-activation of MRA in Rhodesia. He was on the rebound himself from a decade of vintage 1960s-style rebellion: alcohol and drugs, partying, and dismissal from Rhodes University in South Africa all figured in a past of which the young Smith had now wearied. A few months prior to encountering MRA, he had experienced a profound personal religious conversion. Awakened for the first time to the painful realities of war-torn Rhodesia, he was convinced that God was able to bring great change in the lives of human beings and filled with a burning desire to carry this message to his own countryfolk. An MRA film about Dr. William Nkomo from Pretoria, the first president of the African National Congress Youth League in South Africa, deeply impressed Smith. Nkomo was a committed MRA supporter who had overcome bitterness through his own experience of God, and who traveled widely in Europe and Africa challenging audiences with fundamental MRA concepts: to begin living by absolute moral standards, to hand over control of their lives to God and to listen to Him for guidance.<sup>14</sup>

Impressed by the Nkomo account and the MRA vision for re-building broken societies through individual renewal, Alec Smith took up an active role in MRA. Others were becoming active at the same time, including Sir Cyril Hatty, a former Cabinet member and Dr. Elliott Gabellah, Vice-President of Rhodesia's African National Congress. Meeting regularly and groping for a way to reach their countrymen with a message they felt offered the only possibility of a peaceful future, the group decided to convene an international MRA conference in Salisbury.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview with Robertson, Harare, May 25, 1991.

<sup>13</sup> Alec Smith, interview with Cynthia Sampson, Washington, DC., Sept. 23, 1990.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Hannon, *South Africa: What Kind of Change?* (Johannesburg, Grosvenor Books, 1977) 13-18.

The event, held in June 1975, drew more than a thousand participants and laid the groundwork for MRA work in Rhodesia for the next five years. Among those present were four Cabinet Members from the Smith government, as well as a delegation from the opposition United African National Congress, whose leader, Bishop Muzorewa, was out of the country at the time but sent a message of support.<sup>15</sup> Several individuals who over the next several years numbered among MRA's most active workers encountered the organization for the first time at this conference.

One key relationship that resulted was a close friendship between Alec Smith, and Arthur Kanodereka, an African nationalist. At the conference Smith spoke with deep feeling about fellow Rhodesians driven in desperation to fight in the bush for liberation. "It's people like me who have sent them there," confessed the son of the Prime Minister before the whole assembly. "For my part, I am deeply sorry for the thoughtlessness of my past life and I have now committed myself to finding a solution for our country to building bridges of reconciliation and to showing the rest of Africa that black and white can live together. That, under God, there is an answer."<sup>16</sup>

Alec's speech stirred a response in Kanodereka, a Methodist minister deeply embittered by his experiences with whites and now a recruiter of young men into the guerrilla forces. Kanodereka was touched by Smith's words, and invited him to come to his church to speak. A friendship resulted, and the two began addressing audiences together on a regular basis. Kanodereka also began holding weekly meetings in his congregation to enable blacks and whites to dialogue together. On occasion, as many as eight hundred people attended at a time.

Smith and Kanodereka traveled widely in Rhodesia and to South Africa as well, offering, in classic MRA style, first-person accounts of their own experiences of the power of God to bring change and reconciliation, and challenging listeners to set aright their lives in accordance with the four absolute standards as a first step towards finding God's plan for themselves and the nation. Until Kanodereka's assassination<sup>17</sup> in December 1978, the pair were by far the most visible in MRA activities in Rhodesia.

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<sup>15</sup> Letter from Henry Macnicol, October 30, 1992. Muzorewa, of course, later fell into disrepute within the liberation movement for opting to participate in compromise measures with the Rhodesia Front. But at this time he stood in high esteem as the formal representative of the liberation movement within Rhodesia.

<sup>16</sup> Elliott, 63.

<sup>17</sup> Kanodereka is an enigmatic figure around whom controversy lingers. He was assassinated by unknown gunmen outside his home after initiating a promising peace effort in 1978 (See following Quaker section for more information). Almost a decade later, Ken Flower, the man who for years directed Ian Smith's Central Intelligence Organization, asserted in his memoirs, *Serving Secretly* (Johannesburg: Galago Books, 1987), that Kanodereka was a paid agent of the CIO. Flower, now dead, claimed that Kanodereka cooperated in a scheme that recruited many

But a larger nucleus stood just behind them. At the heart of MRA activities between 1975 and 1980 was the group that came to be known as the "Cabinet of Conscience". Meeting eight to ten times per year for much of this time, the "Cabinet" served partly as a central strategy-planning group, partly as a place of encounter and dialogue for people of diverse backgrounds, and partly as a forum for confronting individuals with the call to change their own lives according the four absolute standards."

The core group was small, less than a dozen.<sup>18</sup> They were also poorly-balanced: They were more white than black, more reliably connected to Government than to black nationalist circles, and better connected to Muzorewa and other Internal Settlement leaders willing to strike a compromise with the Smith regime than to the leaders of ZANU and ZAPU.<sup>19</sup> But they were ambitious and deeply committed. They carried a message of reconciliation both challenging and hopeful at a time when the nation was weary of war. Perhaps most important, on a continent where personal

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hundreds of young men into the guerrilla forces and then sent them into the bush in poison-doused trousers to die a slow death. MRA workers dismiss this claim. "I saw Kanodereka risk his life too many times for the cause of peace," says Henry Macnicol, a key MRA worker who worked closely with Kanodereka, "to believe such a claim from a man who made his living as a professional deceiver. (Interview with Macnicol, June, 1991) Macnicol believes Flower sought with one cynical last effort to discredit a man of integrity.

Emmerson Mngangwa, who served as ZANU's Head of Security throughout the war years and then as Minister of State for Security in the new Zimbabwe state and thus as Flower's boss until the latter's retirement in 1981, supports Flower's claim. In an interview with the author in August, 1992, he said that Kanodereka was for many years on ZANU's list of "suspicious persons" and that Flower told him soon after the transition in 1980 that Kanodereka was a CIO agent, a claim which Mngangwa accepts. However Mngangwa proved to be an unreliable source of information on the Mugabe/Smith meeting, and another source, who requested to remain anonymous, says that Mngangwa once commented that Kanodereka was working for ZANU. Alec Smith says that ZANU(PF) leadership went out of their way to provide financial support to the family of Kanodereka in the early 1980s, and that over this time Simon Muzenda, Tongogara, and Mngangwa all expressed in strong terms to him or other MRA workers their respect for Kanodereka. To the author the true identity of Kanodereka remains a mystery.

<sup>18</sup> At the core of the group were a handful of individuals deeply committed to the work of MRA: Alec Smith, Arthur Kanodereka, Ian Robertson, a British biologist who took up work in Rhodesia in 1977 in order to support MRA activities there; Henry Macnicol, a lifetime MRA worker from Edinburgh who lived in Rhodesia from 1974 to 1984; Steven Sibare, a young Rhodesian who joined MRA as a full-time staff person in 1979; Don Barnett, an accountant, Stan O'Donnell who had served for 9 years as Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Champion Chigwida, a trade unionist; Kevin Hongwe, a student, Dixon Maremba, a school headmaster. Other sporadic attenders included Sir Cyril Hatty, a former Cabinet Minister; Dr. Elliott Gabellah, a member of the Executive Committee of Muzorewa's ANC; Desmond Reader and Gordon Chavunduka, both academics at the University; Hugh Elliott, a British MRA worker, Andre Holland, a Cabinet member.

<sup>19</sup> Individuals in MRA developed friendships with members of ZANU and even more so with ZAPU, and secondary players from both organizations attended MRA conferences on occasion. But no leaders in the external liberation forces publicly identified themselves with MRA in the way that several leaders involved in the Internal Settlement did. Muzorewa, for example, was a close friend of the key MRA strategist Henry Macnicol and attended several MRA gatherings. Chief Chirau, Muzorewa's colleague in the Internal Settlement along with Ndabaningi Sithole and Ian Smith, was the only politician among a small number of individuals signing a call for unity published by MRA just prior to the elections in 1980.

relationships often transcend politics and ideology, they were tireless in cultivating relationships across the political spectrum.

Their relationship-building not only gave them access to a variety of key leaders, it also brought several well-connected additions to the group. One such person was Stan O'Donnell, who had been Secretary of Foreign Affairs for nine years. Andre Holland, a sporadic attendee, was a government Cabinet member; another was a key staffer in the Prime Minister's office. Joram Kucherera, who set up the Mugabe/Smith meeting, had close personal and family ties to top ZANU leadership.

As a result, then, of all these factors, Moral Re-Armament was on the scene of most of the critical political events affecting Rhodesia between 1976 and 1980, and MRA workers interacted with many of the key players on the political stage over this time, in several cases at substantial depth. During this period, four to eight people, more than half of them volunteers from England and Scotland, worked full-time for MRA in a variety of activities.<sup>20</sup>

## **MRA Activities**

### ***Promoting Reconciliation Between Key Individuals***

MRA teaches that individual change is the key to social change. Thus bringing individuals of diverse backgrounds together for face-to-face encounters formed the heart of MRA activities.

MRA strategies to accomplish this were diverse and creative:

The *MRA conference*, an event refined through long MRA experience elsewhere to a unique blend of inspiration, admonition, and confession, all conveyed in the genre of the personal narrative, provided the foundation for many of MRA's activities in Rhodesia. It was to such an event, the gathering described above, that Alec Smith and others turned in 1974 to put MRA "on the map". MRA workers in Rhodesia took advantage of the large international MRA conferences, held every year in Caux, of Switzerland, for bridge-building purposes of their own as well. Over the critical period 1975-1979, MRA took delegations of ten to twenty Rhodesians every year to Caux. In 1979, one such group spent a week in Caux before continuing on to London for the Lancaster House talks.

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<sup>20</sup> Presentation by Dick Ruffin, head of MRA activities in the US, in a meeting of the Steering Group of the Religion and Conflict Project on September 25, 1989 in Washington DC.

In addition to the large Caux gathering, a shorter regional conference took place every year in southern Africa that Rhodesians attended. MRA workers held small workshops every few months in Rhodesia as well, seeking to apply MRA principles to family life, education, industrial relations, etc.

Another innovative strategy for interpersonal encounter was *dinner parties*, described above in the account of the Reader/Chavunduka partnership. One MRA leader estimates a dozen were held, each involving perhaps twenty people.<sup>21</sup> Among the guests were several members of Smith's Cabinet and prominent African National Congress leaders.<sup>22</sup>

MRA set up several *one-on-one encounters* among key leaders with the intent of destroying stereotypes and fostering new attitudes. The high-stakes, eleventh hour meeting between Mugabe and Smith, which opens this account, provides the most dramatic example of MRA use of interpersonal encounter. But there were others:

- \* Every six to eight months over a several year period MRA workers took people connected to political rivals of Prime Minister Ian Smith to visit Smith.<sup>23</sup> Usually these were arranged by Alec Smith. On two occasions Alec took his friend and MRA co-worker, Arthur Kanodereka, to have tea with his parents. These meetings, Alec felt, were a precedent for the elder Smith, who had previously never invited blacks on a social basis into his home. On the first occasion, after Kanodereka and his wife had departed the Prime Minister thanked his son and commented: "If all blacks nationalists were like him, I'd have no trouble turning over the country tomorrow."<sup>24</sup>
- \* Kanodereka had a similar impact on the Minister of Law and Order, Hilary Squires. MRA arranged a meeting between the two in early 1976 in which Kanodereka, then Treasurer of the UANC and thus a key leader in the internal nationalist camp, recounted his personal struggle with bitterness against whites. Squires was visibly impressed. "I've never seen such a change in a man's attitude in my life", recalls Tom Glen, the MRA worker who arranged the meeting. Later that year during the Geneva Conference, Squires and

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Henry Macnicol, London, July, 1991.

<sup>22</sup> Information from Elliott, 20; Hannon, 36-37; and interview with Henry Macnicol, July 1991 in London.

<sup>23</sup> Dick Ruffin, presentation to Study Group at Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC, 1989

<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Now I Call Him Brother*, 85.

Kanodereka held several additional meetings. From that point on, Kanodereka was able to secure permission for public meetings of the UANC with a mere phone call to Squires.<sup>25</sup>

- \* A few weeks prior to the Mugabe/Smith meeting, an MRA team went to visit officials at Mugabe's headquarters. One member of the group, a former Secretary of Foreign Affairs under Smith, broke the ice after a tense beginning by sharing his struggle with the near-loss of a son injured in the war. A top ZANU official, the man who was instrumental in setting up the meeting a few weeks later between Mugabe and Smith, was deeply touched and responded by sharing his own experience of picking the body of his brother out of the trenches after a battle between Rhodesian Security Forces and ZANU.
- \* At the Geneva Conference in 1976 MRA was present and set up several meetings--albeit of no apparent consequence--between members of Smith's delegation and leaders of the UANC.<sup>26</sup>
- \* Aware that Ian Smith harbored bitterness towards the British for what he regarded as dishonesty and broken promises regarding Rhodesian independence, MRA workers arranged a meeting between Smith and several senior British diplomats who in their personal capacity apologized for British actions.<sup>27</sup>

### ***Conversations with Public Figures***

The second major category of MRA activities was effort to inject moral principles into the decision-making process of key political leaders and, to a lesser extent, of the public as well. In congruence with the earlier described conviction that social change begins with individual change, MRA workers devoted enormous amounts of time and energy to cultivating relationships with individual leaders. They did so in the belief that, as one MRA worker put it: "If you change the attitude of one person, he begins to change society if he's a prominent person."<sup>28</sup>

*Dedicated pursuit of personal friendships* formed the heart of MRA efforts to engage public figures. Alec Smith, of course, related to his father extensively throughout and had many

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Tom Glen, April 1992, Harare.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Macnicol.

<sup>27</sup> Dates of this encounter unknown. Ruffin transcript, *ibid.*; confirmed by Alec Smith, interview with Alec Smith, April 1992, Harare.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Robertson, May 15, 1991.

conversations with him about the issues he faced as Prime Minister.<sup>29</sup> Another significant relationship was with Bishop Muzorewa, with whom several MRA workers met from the early 1970s onward.

- \* Henry Macnicol, a senior MRA worker recalls accompanying Arther Kanodereka in 1978 to visit Muzorewa after an embittering incident with the British. Muzorewa had been left out of a meeting with the liberation front leaders because, he was told by the British, he had no army. Concerned about the temptation this offered for Muzorewa to establish his own army<sup>30</sup>, Macnicol and an accompanying MRA worker visited at some length with Muzorewa. At the end of the visit the three knelt and prayed and Muzorewa "thanked God for these men who have come to call me to my Christian faith."<sup>31</sup>

At Lancaster House in 1979, Macnicol and Hugh Elliott, a London-based MRA worker who knew Muzorewa from visits to Rhodesia again met with Muzorewa. Elliott shared a "word from God" he felt that he had received specially for the Bishop in "quiet time" that day. "Bishop," he told Muzorewa, "You just fight this election (the upcoming campaign in February 1980) as the man the people trust to be a man of God, and on the basis of love but not hate."<sup>32</sup>

- \* MRA teams were present at both the failed Geneva conference as well as Lancaster House and actively sought opportunities to interact with the negotiators in these critical meetings. At Geneva, Macnicol and Kanodereka (at that time still on the executive committee of the UANC) had breakfast several times with UANC leaders to discuss the negotiations. The King and Queen of Rumania joined one of these breakfasts to share insights from their personal struggle with bitterness in the aftermath of exile from fascist and communist governments.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The elder Smith claims not to have been aware of any particular moral concerns from his son, nor even of the fact that Arther Kanodereka and other MRA visitors which Alec took to meet him were affiliated with MRA. Interview with Ian Smith, Harare, April 28, 1992.

<sup>30</sup> Muzorewa did in fact yield later to this temptation. By the end of the war he had an "auxiliary force" of about 26,000 loyal to his party, the UANC. From "The 1980 Rhodesian Election: A Report", issued by the CIIR, London, March 1, 1980, 10.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Macnicol.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* History again shows that Muzorewa failed to heed the advice of his MRA friends. He conducted an acrimonious, highly personalized election campaign that played heavily on stereotypical fears of Mugabe, *et al.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

- \* At Lancaster House, members of the eight-person MRA delegation had numerous late-night conversations with members of the negotiating teams.<sup>34</sup> A common theme was the concern of the MRA workers that a settlement be reached. These meetings often took place without an explicit MRA identification. For example, the head of the African Farmers' Union stayed at the Moral Re-Armament House and, due to extensive prior relationships, MRA workers viewed him as part of the MRA "team". He arranged a meeting with Mugabe in his role as head of the Farmers' Union, not as a representative of MRA. Mugabe responded with great surprise and concern to the accounts of personal suffering among villagers offered to him.<sup>35</sup>

But it would be misleading to suggest that MRA workers established friendships with an agenda restricted to moral concern. MRA team members sought, particularly at the time of the Geneva and Lancaster House conferences to personally support individual members of the negotiating teams.

- \* Ian Smith was invited to the MRA guest house in London during Lancaster House and the MRA workers sought to create an atmosphere where "he could relax like he was amongst friends."<sup>36</sup> Later, Smith commented that "it was such a change to come to that house." Concerned about Smith's status as a pariah in London - other politicians on the scene were so reluctant about being in the same photograph with him that they refused to go near when press were around - the MRA staff rang an old friend of Smith, a well-known retired European leader, and asked him to come to London to provide personal support for Smith.<sup>37</sup>
- \* MRA workers took members of Mugabe's team away to the country to relax on several weekends during Lancaster House.<sup>38</sup>
- \* Henry Macnicol sought to provide moral support to his old friend, Bishop Muzorewa, whose willingness to support new elections was essential and hung in the balance for much of the Conference.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Cynthia Sampson interview with Alec Smith.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Macnicol.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Robertson, April 1992.

A strategy for which MRA workers used frequently with remarkable effect in their conversations with public figures was *sharing a personal struggle or confessing wrong as a means of breaking down barriers of mistrust*. Examples here would include Alec Smith's confession at the 1974 MRA conference in Salisbury, the meeting between MRA staff and Mugabe aides a few weeks before the election when the ice was broken after an MRA member shared an intimate story of his struggle with the near-death of a son in battle, and the fruitful liaison between Reader and Chavunduka in sponsoring dinner parties, begun as a result of Reader's confession to Chavunduka.

"It's a key MRA concept," reflects Alec Smith, "to be honest about yourself." Others may then "drop their guard" and respond with similar scrutiny of themselves. Politicians in particular are accustomed and resistant to being told what they ought to do, believes Smith. Often the only way to engage in dialogue at the level MRA sought was for MRA workers to take the first step towards personal vulnerability.<sup>40</sup>

Another frequently-used approach was *itinerating carefully chosen outside visitors* in Rhodesia. A group of about twenty MRA workers as far scattered as London, Washington, Caux, and Salisbury communicated regularly through letters and phone calls to identify candidates for these visits.<sup>41</sup> Several individuals with extensive previous experience in the British Foreign Affairs Office were part of the British team and helped to make sure the group did not commit political blunders.<sup>42</sup> "We would constantly be trying to figure out who has the experience anywhere on the globe that is relevant to what is going on with these people at the center of these negotiations," recalls one MRA strategist.<sup>43</sup> Each year from 1976 to 1979, MRA workers arranged 2 to 3 group tours and up to a dozen individual visits with visitors including the exiled King and Queen of Rumania, a Minister of Education from Australia, a West Indian cricket star, religious figures, business people, educators, politicians. Some of these foreign visitors had fifty or more meetings, most of them private with individuals or small groups, but some involving groups of one hundred people or more.<sup>44</sup>

The goal in these meetings was to encourage Rhodesian leaders to engage in moral reflection. The visitors didn't preach, rather they shared personal experiences of transformation, reconciliation,

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with Alec Smith, May 1991.

<sup>41</sup> Ruffin, *ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, also interview with Robertson, May 1, 1992.

and healing as a way of opening dialogue. The ongoing nature of the interaction between MRA workers and some public figures suggests that at least some of these conversations were effective. But not all appreciated the visits. Former Rhodesian Prime Minister Garfield Todd, an outspoken critic of the Smith/Muzorewa government, found the meetings annoying and contrived, commenting in a later interview:

"I could tell how popular I was from the amount of attention I was getting from MRA. When I was popular, they were interested. When I was not, I didn't hear from them....They would do anything, absolutely anything, as a pretext to come and talk with me."<sup>45</sup>

### ***Moral Appeals to the Public***

In addition to its central mission of interacting with key individuals MRA sought to exert moral influence on the larger society through *outreach to the public via publications, newspaper ads, and open meetings*. Over the war years MRA ran several full-page newspaper ads putting forward MRA concepts at key moments. For example, ten days before the elections in early 1980, MRA took out a large ad in the leading newspapers of Salisbury, Gweru and Bulawayo. The ad was a Manifesto calling for "God-led unity", urging Rhodesians to "rise above our conflicts and sufferings and launch the new Zimbabwe in unity and peace." "What is right, not who is right" is the key to the future, the Manifesto proclaimed. Rhodesians should do three things: forgive others and ask forgiveness; live "with standards of absolute honesty, unselfishness, clear morals and care for one another"; and "help our leaders to do the same". Signatories included Chief Chirau, one of the participants in the Internal Settlement, and Cabinet of Conscience members Joram Kucherera, Alec Smith, and Stan O'Donnell, a former Cabinet Member under Smith, along with 11 other Rhodesians from various walks of life.

MRA also held regular showings of MRA films<sup>46</sup> and circulated tens of thousands of copies of a pamphlet calling readers to set their own lives in order as a part of re-building the nation. Perhaps the greatest impact on the public arena was had by the many dozens of meetings held throughout the country by Alec Smith and Arther Kanodereka who shared their experience of personal reconciliation and the principles on which they had found it.

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, Garfield Todd, Harare, April 30, 1992.

<sup>46</sup> One MRA worker estimated there were 3-4 showings per week at the MRA house in Harare over this time, for groups ranging from 2 to 20 in size. Interview with Robertson, May 1, 1992.

### Assessment of MRA Involvement

MRA is simultaneously the easiest and the hardest to assess of the three major groups we are studying. The Mugabe/Smith meeting probably altered the history of the nation. It is probable that white Rhodesians would have fled the country in far greater numbers had it not been for the conciliatory mood between Mugabe and Smith resulting from their MRA-arranged meeting. Even though Mugabe had been planning a policy of reconciliation before this meeting, it is doubtful that jittery whites would have believed him or cooperated so readily in the critical early months of transition had Smith not led the way. Then too, it is possible if not probable that the coup-in-waiting by General Walls would have been implemented. Mugabe's top advisor at the time, Emmerson Mnangagwa, confirmed the pivotal role of the meeting in a later conversation with MRA workers. "If it had not been for what this young man did," he told Macnicol and Kucherera, "the streets of Salisbury would have been running with blood. We had absolutely no touch with the white leaders when we came in from the bush. He provided it."<sup>47</sup>

Beyond this verifiable success, the results of MRA activities resist simplistic conclusions. MRA's goals and *modus operandi* were the most narrowly and self-consciously "spiritual" of the three groups. What mortal can judge whether the targets of MRA activities "listened to God", which is at root all that MRA sought to accomplish? Similarly, it is almost impossible to determine whether targeted public figures acted with greater moral conscience as a result of the promptings of MRA friends or associates or, if so, what the impact of their behavior might have been.

At its best, the MRA experience in Rhodesia offers inspiring insights about attitudinal and value change unparalleled in either the Quaker or Catholic involvements. Under-lying MRA encounters with the political actors was a radical sense of *individual responsibility* and *openness to transcending purpose*. "How you respond could transform the entire situation," was implied in virtually all MRA encounters. Further implied was this: "Be prepared for the possibility that you will be guided in the interests of reconciliation in a direction which may be difficult and unpopular." It is difficult to imagine Joram Kucherera risking his life by setting up a meeting between two bitter enemies unless motivated such values. Alec Smith, Arther Kanodereka, Desmond Reader, Gordon Chavunduka, to mention only the more obvious examples - all experienced profound personal transformations through encounter with MRA, and undertook risky reconciliation efforts as a consequence.

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<sup>47</sup> Letter from Macnicol, October 30, 1992.

MRA's genius lay in part in the way it communicated these values to others. Sharing a story with an inescapable moral or theological implication was at the heart of most MRA activities. This parable-telling approach enabled MRA workers to communicate values of individual responsibility and commitment to larger purpose without prescribing or preaching. Almost always the stories contained a central note of confession or error or vulnerability, further reducing defensiveness and inviting similar vulnerability from others.

MRA's emphasis on individual change demarcates it most clearly from the other actors in this study, particularly from the Catholics. Where the Church produced public dossiers criticizing the actions of Salisbury in great detail, and to a lesser extent the excesses of the liberation fronts as well, MRA resorted to brochures and newspaper ads which called individual readers to do what is right and to live by broad standards of unselfishness, honesty, purity, and love. MRA had been on record for decades in opposing racism - a creditworthy tradition to be sure - but it dealt with a structural evil by individual remedies.

In my assessment MRA's emphasis on individual change was its greatest limiting factor. There is something disquieting about brochures and newspaper ads which, in the context of massive racial injustice and economic inequality, merely call the reader to do what is "right" and to live by vague standards of unselfishness, honesty, purity, and love. The attack on evil perhaps ought to start at home, within the individual, as MRA teaches. But if there is anything to learn from the moral tragedies of the twentieth century, it is that evil exists in the collectivity as well. Because of the structures created in its service, collective or structural evil has a life of its own that is more tenacious than individual evil, and it is more powerful than the sum of perversity within the individuals who comprise it. The greatest weapon of structural evil is its hiddenness; its ability to prevent, for example, consumers in New York from recognizing that cheap bananas have anything to do with poverty in South America. Thus the first step in fighting structural evil is to *name it*. To shrink from doing so not only suggests naiveté or worse, apathy, it also hinders the struggle to respond with measures commensurate to the injustice.

In contrast to the Rhodesia experience, MRA has in some other arenas been prepared to name structural evil, notably in its crusade in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s against the evils of communism. But its record in naming structural evil is inconsistent, reflecting little insight, for example, into the injustices of the capitalist system. This imbalance makes MRA all the more

vulnerable to the criticism that individual reform tends by nature to affirm the status quo, reinforcing the existing social order through its silence regarding blatant structural inequities.

MRA's emphasis on individual change also made MRA workers both more sympathetic towards and attractive to the reformers of Rhodesia than to the revolutionaries. It seems more than chance that MRA's closest and most reliable affiliations were with Muzorewa and other compromised supporters of the Internal Settlement who in the end proved to be out of touch with the Rhodesian grassroots. An emphasis on individual change as the avenue to social change, after all, is virtually by definition a gradualist and reformist approach. In a situation that cried out for a sharp break from the structures of the past - the election of Mugabe established that this was surely the verdict of the majority of Zimbabweans - MRA attracted and publicly allied itself with reformers.

But Zimbabwe's revolutionaries must provide the final verdict on the work of MRA in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. According to MRA workers, after the war both President Mugabe and one of his top lieutenants, then Security Minister Emmerson Mnongagwa initiated meetings in 1980 with MRA members to acknowledge their work.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, a few months after the elections, Zimbabwean Vice President Simon Muzenda summoned Alec Smith and Joram Kucherera to his office and thanked them for their role in the struggle for a new nation.<sup>49</sup> In 1982, Speaker of the House Didymus Mutasa addressed an MRA conference in Salisbury and spoke with enthusiasm of the importance of MRA's work and principles.<sup>50</sup> If in principle, then, MRA is vulnerable to criticism as individualist and reformist in approach, there is no denying the perceptions of those at the forefront of the struggle for structural change: the organization contributed in significant ways to the creation of a new Zimbabwe.

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<sup>48</sup> Interview with Alec Smith, May 1, 1992, and interview with Robertson, May 1, 1992.

<sup>49</sup> Telephone interview with Alec Smith, September 6, 1992.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter Ten

### **The Quakers**

Though both the Catholics and Moral Re-Armament played key roles in the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict from their bases in Salisbury, in the end it was a London-based group of Quakers who became the most strategically involved in negotiation efforts to end the war. Between 1972 and 1980, Quakers conducted four missions to Africa in the interest of peaceful change in Rhodesia, and sent delegations to both the Geneva and Lancaster House conferences. The trips to Africa formed the heart of the Quaker contribution, but London was the scene of other activities as well, including meetings with leaders from the liberation movements.

#### **Establishing Human Solidarity with All Parties**

More than either the Catholics or Moral Re-Armament, the Quakers engaged the combatants in substantive discussion about the war and how to end it. This is paradoxical for, of the three groups, the Quakers consistently brought the simplest agenda to their meetings with the parties: establishing human solidarity with everyone involved. They engaged the parties at other levels, to be sure, as we shall see later. But whether meeting Mugabe in Maputo, Nkomo in Lusaka, Muzorewa in Salisbury, or heads of Frontline States, the Quakers' subordinated even the most ambitious tasks to their primary agenda, that of engaging the parties as human beings suffering from a ghastly war and struggling to find their way out. In a situation where everyone else was lobbying for something, the Quakers were a unique phenomenon: a traveling reservoir of unconditional and uncomplicated good will.

Several points deserve particular attention: For one, the amount of time and effort a small group like the Quakers were prepared to devote to such an innocuous activity is staggering. For another, the breadth of their connections was remarkable. They were best connected to black Rhodesians, notably to the external liberation front leaders Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, and to Abel Muzorewa. Though they never succeeded in meeting with Ian Smith, they met regularly with several top white government officials, including an Under Secretary and a Permanent Secretary in Foreign Affairs, and they regularly visited with business and church leaders in Salisbury.

But their connections extended well beyond the combatants. Keenly aware of the larger forces at work in the Rhodesian conflict, the Quakers maintained active personal ties to a network of leaders outside Rhodesia. In their missions they met with President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, President Kaunda of Zambia, and President Seretse Khama of Botswana. They also met with top officials in the capitols of each of these countries on several occasions, as well as with officials from Mozambique, South Africa and Nigeria.

In addition, they met regularly with British and Commonwealth policy-makers. These included a meeting with David Owen, the Secretary of State for British Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, and many other meetings with officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. On numerous occasions they met with individual Members of Parliament. They also maintained close ties with officials at the Commonwealth Secretariat, including Emeka Anyaoku, then-Deputy Secretary-General.

In addition to these connections to the top level leadership of each side, the Quakers also sought to connect to civilians on the ground suffering from the impact of the war. Quakers Tony and Eirene Gilpin spent January to March, 1978, in Botswana, exploring possibilities for Quaker assistance to refugees who by then were arriving in increasing numbers.<sup>1</sup> On several other occasions Quaker peacemakers toured refugee camps in Lusaka and Maputo in order to arrange relief.<sup>2</sup>

#### Timeline of Quaker Activities

**1972** - George Loft visits Lusaka and Salisbury to promote contact between the ANC and white authorities

**November-December 1976** - Quakers send five-person team to the Geneva Conference

**January 1977** - Trevor Jepson spends 8 days in Rhodesia and follows up with visits to British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and with Commonwealth Secretariat, urging perseverance

**November 1977** - Jepson visit to Salisbury

**January - March 1978** - Tony Gilpin and wife explore Quaker assistance to Rhodesian refugees in Botswana (continued next page)

<sup>1</sup> Confidential Quaker Document. The aid would have been from Friends Service Council, renamed Quaker Peace and Service in 1978. A note is in order regarding the source "Confidential Quaker Document" which will be cited extensively in following footnotes. Staff members at Quaker Peace and Service, Quaker House, London were concerned not to violate their commitment to confidentiality in peace work. They agreed to give me access to records of the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe peace efforts under condition that no specific documents be identified. Rather all would be cited under the generic name, "Confidential Quaker Document".

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

**Second half of 1978** - Extensive meetings in London about possibility of a Quaker mission to the region, including with Muzorewa and representatives of all liberation fronts

**August 1978** - Walter Martin and Jepson make first major visit to the region. They spend several weeks in Rhodesia and several Frontline States, meet Muzorewa and other Internal Settlement leaders in Lusaka and Nkomo in Lusaka

**September-October, 1978** - Second major visit (Trevor Jepson and Tony Gilpin) includes meetings with Internal Settlement leaders in Salisbury, ZAPU leaders in Lusaka, and ZANU leaders in Maputo

**October-November 1978** - Quakers fund an African peace initiative (Byron Hove, Arther Kanodereka, Max Chigwida)

**October 1978** - Meeting and correspondence with British Foreign Secretary David Owen, and exploration of a possible meeting between Owen and Mugabe

**March 1979** - Third major mission to Africa (Adam Curle and Walter Martin). Meetings in Salisbury, Bulawayo, Maputo, Dar es Salaam, and Lusaka. Exploration of possibility of convening an informal gathering of second-level leaders.

**May-June 1979** - Fourth mission (Adam Curle and Walter Martin). Meetings in Nairobi, Salisbury, Maputo, Lusaka, Dar es Salaam, and Gaborone. Quakers convey messages from Nyerere to Muzorewa and back; and from Muzorewa to ZANU and ZAPU and back.

**July 1979** - Jepson meets with Internal Settlement leaders in Salisbury, and with Muzorewa in London

**August 1979** - Lusaka Accord achieved at meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Government (no Quaker presence)

**August 1979** - Fifth mission (Trevor Jepson and Walter Martin). Meetings in Maputo, Lusaka, Pretoria (South African Foreign Affairs), Dar es Salaam.

**September 10 to December 21, 1979** - Lancaster House

**Transitional period** - Mr. and Mrs. Curle go to Salisbury November 24, before end of Lancaster House until January 24, 1980. Mr. and Mrs. Gilpin go February 1 till end of March, 1980.

**February 27-29, 1980** - Elections

This broad range of active relationships proved fundamental to the Quaker contribution. With the possible exception of British and American diplomats, who were inescapably perceived as bearing heavy agendas for their own governments, no other individuals or organizations maintained active communication with so broad a network of actors in the web of political influence at work in the conflict.

Seeking solidarity with others as an end in itself is an act of altruism, and altruism, even at its best, elicits skepticism in today's world. But the Quakers practiced their art with such transparent fidelity that expressions of compassion alone provided not only a constant theme guiding their actions throughout the conflict, it served as their primary means of access as well.

Their primary agenda, for example, in their first several trips to Rhodesia and the Frontline States in 1977 and 1978 was to express their concern about the suffering of the people of Rhodesia. This humble agenda proved quite adequate to open doors. "Without exception we were warmly and sympathetically received and almost universally encouraged to remain in touch with the parties," recalled one team member later.<sup>3</sup> The same theme shaped Quaker involvements throughout. At a later stage, for example, when their role was well established and they were exploring the possibility of informal, off-the-record talks under Quaker auspices, concern for the ever-mounting suffering caused by the war continued to serve as their rationale for such an encounter.

It would be misleading, however, to highlight the effectiveness of a modest agenda as a means of entry without noting the context. The Quakers benefited enormously from their own history in solving the "entry problem." In addition to a reputation within the broader circles of diplomacy for a quiet, principled approach to peacemaking, the team operating in Rhodesia profited from a recent history of involvements in Rhodesia and elsewhere in Africa.

An American Quaker couple living in Salisbury had openly supported the African nationalist cause in the 1950s and 1960s, before the outbreak of violence, and the wife, Margaret Moore, had served as Secretary of two political parties started by Joshua Nkomo. A British couple had worked extensively with families of political detainees held by the Smith government in the mid-1960s, developed a friendship with Sally Mugabe, the activist wife of Robert Mugabe, and also made acquaintances with nationalists Robert Mugabe, Joshua Nkomo and Josiah Chinamano. Another Quaker couple had worked extensively with political prisoners in the 1960s and 1970s, and backed by funds from British Quakers, they founded a well-known rural training center at Hlekweni. The husband, Roy Henson, was the only white member of the African National Council, a broadly-based coalition of African nationalists, at its founding in 1971, the heyday of its credibility in the nationalist community.<sup>4</sup>

Old connections also assisted the Quakers in gaining entre to the extraordinary range of governments influencing the evolution of the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict. The British High Commissioner in Botswana was himself a Quaker and arranged meetings with President Seretse Khama of Botswana. In Mozambique, the Quaker team met a warm welcome from President Joachim Chissano because of assistance American Quakers had given to gaining United Nations

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Trevor Jepson, Wales, July 7, 1991.

recognition for Frelimo.<sup>5</sup> In Zambia, President Kenneth Kaunda had known Quakers for many years.<sup>6</sup>

Thus when the Quaker team initiated a role in the Rhodesia conflict by sending a delegation to the Geneva Conference in 1976, they were pleased to discover that many of the delegates, particularly the nationalists, were already personally acquainted with one or more members of the delegation. This provided ready access to many delegates, particularly for private meetings in hotel rooms.<sup>7</sup> One key member of the team felt in retrospect that later mediation efforts would have been far more difficult had it not been for this "pioneering work."<sup>8</sup>

Access to white Rhodesian government officials was deficient throughout the Quaker effort, but the two best Quaker contacts here also resulted from Quaker history. The Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs had years earlier participated in a Quaker conference for diplomats as well as in the Quaker-sponsored London Diplomats Group and had been deeply impressed with Quaker commitments. As a result he met with Quaker delegates regularly in their visits to Salisbury and commented later that Walter Martin, with his low-key but persistent emphasis on compassion, reconciliation, and justice, had changed his life.<sup>9</sup> The Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs was a personal friend of a Quaker family in Salisbury. This introduction led to a request by the Permanent Secretary to seek the release of a dozen white Rhodesians who had been abducted into Mozambique by guerrilla forces.<sup>10</sup>

But the team of peacemakers benefited from more than Quaker history, they also demonstrated the genuineness of their compassion by calling a network of Quaker relief organizations into play in the conflict. The war created many refugees; the most hard-pressed fled the country to Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana. In response to needs brought to their attention by the team of peacemakers, Quaker service agencies or foundations sympathetic to their work forwarded cash and materials to the Red Cross in Salisbury for refugees within Rhodesia, to United Nations

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Quaker Experience of Political Mediation: A Document Result from a Quaker Consultation*, August 21-24, 1989, Buckinghamshire, England.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Adam Curle, London, July, 1991.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Tim Hawkins.

<sup>10</sup> The Quakers took up the issue with Mugabe's aides in a later meeting to no immediate avail. But some months later four abductees were released and the Quakers' contacts in the Salisbury Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote and thanked them for their contribution to the release, "brought about by the water-dripping-on-a-stone technique of pressing the matter at every opportunity." The Confidential Quaker Document cites an undated letter from Tim Hawkins.

organizations, to the Christian Council of Mozambique for refugee needs under the care of ZANU in Mozambique, and also directly to ZANU and ZAPU for refugees. The amounts sent were modest, totaling some 10,500 pounds in value at the time, but they reinforced the genuineness of the Quaker concern.

Whatever the advantages offered by Quaker history and charitable activities, the original point still holds: A simple, straightforward agenda of concern for the human beings involved in the conflict was the dominant theme of Quaker involvement and provided their primary tool for entry. The Quaker team benefited from their past, but they moved far beyond it by their tireless rounds of personal contact with key parties.

If expressing concern for human suffering opened doors for the Quakers, practicing *disciplined listening* opened hearts. In memos drawn up in preparation for major missions, the desire to hear and support the parties invariably topped the list. The number one goal chosen by the team who attended the Geneva Conference was typical: "To build up relationships with participants so as to develop a sympathetic understanding of their fears, hopes and intentions and to support and strengthen their efforts at achieving a just settlement in a conciliatory manner."<sup>11</sup>

Listening well opened the doors for further conversation, for increasingly the parties became eager to know what the Quakers were hearing from *other* parties.<sup>12</sup> The Quakers were diligent not to betray confidences, but found their own growing knowledge of the situation soon became a resource welcomed by the parties. "Very rarely was access a problems," recalls Trevor Jepson, a key member of the team. Thus the Quaker role emerged from the dynamics of relationships. "We felt we had been put into the role and must continue."<sup>13</sup>

It would be simplistic, of course, to suggest that the Quakers held no goals in their meetings other than listening. Clearly they sought to influence the parties to function more humanely and to encourage non-violent means of resolving the conflict. But listening was for the Quakers no mere prelude to serious talk. Listening was itself a genuine contribution to change, a means to support the dignity, credibility, and rationality of the individuals with whom they were interacting. And because the Quakers consulted widely each time they expanded their role, listening was also a manifestation of their political values. Rather than give advice, the Quakers *sought* advice about

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<sup>11</sup> Confidential Quaker Document.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Jepson.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Jepson.

they should do and at all times presented themselves as quiet servants of the needs of the parties. Theirs was the politics of transformative listening.

### **Opening Channels of Communication**

As trust grew the depth of discussions expanded, and with it, the scope of possible Quaker involvements. The Quakers were open at all times about their contacts with other parties and, as a result, people with whom they were meeting asked them to convey messages to other parties on several occasions:

In May, 1979, President Nyerere requested a "personal, nongovernmental link" with Muzorewa, then, in name at least, Prime Minister of Rhodesia.<sup>14</sup> Nyerere was deeply concerned about the potential for the Rhodesia conflict to expand into an East/West confrontation and hoped that Muzorewa might assist in moderating the war. In addition to establishing a communication link, he sought from Muzorewa a less bellicose stance towards the Frontline States and towards the Patriotic Front itself. The Quakers carried the request to Muzorewa, who responded positively to the idea of a link. This led to a second round of "shuttle diplomacy" for the Quakers, to explore further the nature and purpose of such a nongovernmental link. In their second meeting with Muzorewa, he handed to Walter Martin, the Quaker representative, a packet of letters to deliver: to Nyerere, Kaunda, Mugabe, and Nkomo.

But on the day that Muzorewa handed over conciliatory letters to Martin for delivery, the Rhodesian air force bombed Lusaka in a "preemptive strike" against Nkomo's troops headquartered there, a move later publicly endorsed by Muzorewa. That Muzorewa had a hand in planning this military adventurism was perhaps unlikely. But even the kindest interpretation suggested that Muzorewa was impotent to control his own government, and Nyerere concluded there was now no point in further communication with the Prime Minister. "Perhaps, after all, the British will help more to solve the Rhodesia problem than the Bishop," he mused to Martin.

A month later, Nyerere played a key role in the move to convene the Lancaster House conference. At the gathering of the Commonwealth States in August in Lusaka, the elder statesman of Africa called for British intervention in Rhodesia and all-party talks among the combatants. In the days that followed, Thatcher, Nyerere and others in a six member caucus forged an unprecedented

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<sup>14</sup> Muzorewa began his role in politics as a respected leader of the internal Nationalist party, the African Nationalist Congress. But by June, 1979, when Nyerere made this overture, Muzorewa was a part of the Internal Settlement and stood in the ironic role of supporting a war against his old comrades, a task he undertook with all the bombast and rhetoric of his predecessor Smith.

consensus: the recently "elected" Muzorewa/Smith government would remain unrecognized and instead constitutional negotiations would begin as soon as possible under British auspices.

There were other instances of Quaker efforts to open channels of communication as well. In late 1978, several members of the Quaker team met with David Owen, a key formulator of British policy as head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In response to a comment by the Quakers about the depth of suspicions that existed within the Patriotic Front regarding the motives of the British, Owen expressed a desire for more interaction with Robert Mugabe.

A few weeks later, in November 1978, the Quakers mentioned this to Mugabe's associates and received their support to work on such a meeting, so long as it could be set up in a way that threatened no damage to the unity of the Patriotic Front. One possibility would be for the Quakers to arrange for Mugabe to address a small group of people at the Quaker House in London, a meeting to which Smith and other FCO officials would also be invited. In such a meeting personal interaction could follow without the implications of a formal, planned encounter. Preliminary signals from both parties were positive to such an approach, so the Quakers arranged funding for Mugabe to come to London and began making arrangements for meetings. But in the end, other events intervened and the trip never took place.<sup>15</sup>

The Quakers provided financial support in late 1978 for a peace initiative by three black African nationalist Rhodesians. At their request, the Quakers secured funds for travel enabling further discussion of a proposal to found a "Committee for Permanent Indaba" in Rhodesia<sup>16</sup>. This initiative looked promising for several months, but fell to pieces when Rev. Arther Kanodereka, the central figure, was assassinated. Though the Quakers had no role other than providing moral support and finance for the initiative, the incident demonstrates the depth of the Quaker commitment to support any *bona fide* effort to establish negotiation among the parties.

In early 1979, after British Prime Minister James Callaghan had explored but then decided against convening all-party talks, the Quakers actively pursued the possibility of bringing together a small,

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<sup>15</sup> British Prime Minister James Callaghan sent Cledwyn Hughes on a high-profile mission in November-December 1978 to explore the possibility of all-party talks, an eventuality that would have rendered moot a meeting with Mugabe. After the initiative had dominated the scene for nearly three months, Callaghan announced that the time was not yet ripe for a conference.

<sup>16</sup> "Indaba" is a term used widely in southern Africa meaning "palaver". Kanodereka and Byron Hove had recently left Muzorewa's ANC; the third person was Max Chigwida. Kanodereka, of course, was a central figure in MRA from 1975 until his death, and Chigwida, to a lesser extent, was also involved in MRA.

private, informal gathering of second-level people from all parties.<sup>17</sup> In a series of meetings over a period of several months, the team consulted extensively with officials, many of them at high levels, from the United Nations, Zambia, Tanzania, Nigeria, and England, in addition to top-level representatives from the liberation armies and Smith's government. Responses to the possibility of such a gathering were generally positive. But again, other events overtook the initiative.<sup>18</sup>

At Lancaster House, the Quakers met informally with numerous delegates, many of whom had by now become old friends. From these conversations arose six different requests to bring individuals or groups who were officially incommunicado together in special meetings. The chairman of one of the compromised Rhodesian internal parties, for example, requested assistance in meeting delegates from ZANU and ZAPU, and the Quakers arranged a meeting.<sup>19</sup> In another instance, the Quakers conveyed to Nkomo and Mugabe a query from the Salisbury Government delegation about the possibility of an informal meeting of Muzorewa, Nkomo, and Mugabe.

### **Supporting Formal Negotiations**

The Quakers never saw their work as more than a footnote to a larger story. There were moments, to be sure, when the footnote nearly leaped into the text. But even in their most ambitious efforts to convene face-to-face meetings between representatives of the parties, the Quakers saw themselves as serving a larger process: formal negotiations that would have to involve the British in a convening role.<sup>20</sup> Most of the activities already described above had the effect of supporting formal negotiations. But there were other activities that deserve mention as well:

In October 1978, after their second major mission to Africa in which they had met representatives of all the key parties, the Quakers arranged a meeting with David Owen, the British Secretary of State. They sent a follow-up letter a few days later, listing ten concerns and suggestions regarding ways to move the negotiation process forward. They stressed "the need for preparation, yet speed, in convening an All-Party Conference."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Confidential Quaker Document.

<sup>18</sup> The events included the April 1979 election in Rhodesia, the Quaker-facilitated round of communication between Muzorewa, Nyerere, ZANU and ZAPU described above and, ultimately, the Lusaka Accord, which turned the attention of the parties towards Lancaster House.

<sup>19</sup> Of the six requests for meetings, this is the only one that the Quakers knew for certain had taken place.

<sup>20</sup> The external liberation fronts were adamant that the British be at the table since, in their view, Rhodesia had yet to become genuinely independent from British rule.

<sup>21</sup> Confidential Quaker Document.

- \* The Quakers usually informed the British Foreign Office before leaving on their trips, and on several occasions visited with officials from the FCO upon returning.
- \* The Quakers held a series of interviews in Lusaka, Maputo, and Salisbury with representatives of virtually all the key parties just after the Lusaka Commonwealth Conference in 1979. The external liberation fronts in particular were deeply skeptical of British motivations. The Quaker team listened to these objections but still supported the viability of the Lancaster House negotiations as a step to end the war.
- \* Present at both the failed Geneva Conference as well as Lancaster House, the Quakers interacted with many key delegates and sought to offer low-key suggestions about courses of action and attitudes to adopt that they felt would enhance the likelihood of resolution. At Lancaster House the Quakers wrote personal letters of welcome to all the delegates whom they knew personally and met with many of them privately - in all, over one hundred meetings<sup>22</sup>. In these conversations, they tried to interpret the perspectives of each delegation to other delegations.<sup>23</sup> "Our role had become that of a lubricant," reflected Trevor Jepson later, "by identifying sticking points and where appropriate making representation with a view to problems being overcome rather than used as a reason to break off negotiations."<sup>24</sup>
- \* As it became apparent at Lancaster House that the British would supervise a transitional period, the Quakers directed substantial effort towards influencing British policy-makers towards strategies that, from their interactions with all the parties, the Quakers believed were essential to the implementation of the cease-fire and establishment of monitoring forces. They had numerous meetings with officials in the British Foreign and

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<sup>22</sup> *Quaker Experience of Political Mediation.*

<sup>23</sup> Although they sought to do this without bias, much of their attention was directed towards helping the Salisbury delegation and the British government understand the position of the Patriotic Front. By all accounts, Carrington played a highly assertive role in mediating the talks. He frequently undertook a strategy of first testing proposals on the Salisbury delegation, and after getting their approval, putting them to the Patriotic Front. On several occasions, when the PF balked, he threatened to go ahead with the proposals anyway and simply work out a bilateral settlement between the British and the Rhodesian government. A reluctant partner to the talks in the first place, the PF reacted to the dynamics of the negotiation process by adopting a consistently reactionary posture. Concerned about the possibility of the whole exercise breaking down, the Quakers sought to reduce the possibility of a walkout by trying to create better understanding, particularly among the British, of PF concerns.

<sup>24</sup> *Quaker Experience of Political Mediation.*

Commonwealth Office, wrote letters to Lord Carrington, and in one instance, to Prime Minister Thatcher.<sup>25</sup>

- \* On one occasion the Patriotic Front threatened to walk out of the Lancaster House talks, as did the Salisbury delegation on another. In both instances, the Quakers urged the delegates in private conversations to stay in the interests of the people of Rhodesia as a whole.
- \* It was a secret to no one that the Patriotic Front struggled to maintain unity between the liberation fronts of Mugabe and Nkomo. Predictably, the Lancaster House talks brought new strains to this relationship which the Quakers sought to overcome by stressing to both wings of the PF the importance of a unified stand.
- \* Towards the end of the Lancaster House Conference it became apparent that there was poor coordination between the Patriotic Front and the Frontline States and that the British were using this to increase pressure upon the PF. Concerned that this could lead to misunderstanding and abrogation of agreements later, the Quakers encouraged African diplomats to better coordinate their policies.<sup>26</sup>
- \* In the months just after Lancaster House, an advisor to Nkomo asked the Quakers to relay a message to a British Member of Parliament requesting that Carrington be sent to Rhodesia urgently to render an "agreed interpretation of the Lancaster House Agreement." The request was delivered but Carrington remained in England.<sup>27</sup>

### **Advocating Policies and Actions in Support of Reconciliation**

Role conflict is inescapable for the intermediary. Any effective mediator constantly analyzes the dynamics of the dispute and forms opinions about how the policies and activities of each side affect the likelihood of resolution. But when should the mediator express these opinions to the parties? Doing so can give the impression of partisanship and destroy the possibility of mediating.

Thus the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict presented the Quaker intermediaries with a difficult role conflict. On one hand, they were mediators, potentially at least, and keen to maintain their impartiality. But on the other hand, they were deeply sensitive to questions of justice: Quaker

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<sup>25</sup> Confidential Quaker Document.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

institutions, for example, actively supported sanctions against the Rhodesian government.<sup>28</sup> They were also British citizens, concerned that their own government handle its role responsibly, and they had access to a variety of key British policy-makers, the majority of whom knew far less about the dynamics of the Rhodesia situation than the Quakers themselves knew.

At several points, therefore, the Quakers shifted from the role of mediator to policy advocate in relationship to their own government. They chose to go to Geneva, for example, in part because the British government was reticent to assist a peaceful transition by being involved in any way in a transitional period. The Quakers felt that it might be necessary to play a role in "informing the UK public and building a sympathetic understanding" for support of agreements reached.<sup>29</sup> The Quakers harmonized their roles in this complex situation by framing their advocacy in the language of reconciliation. For example:

- \* They conveyed to several British Members of Parliament their conviction that if sanctions against Rhodesia were lifted too soon, the fighting would escalate and the war would be prolonged.
- \* In the months prior to the Lusaka decision to call all-party talks, they communicated to British officials the universal rejection among African leaders of the Muzorewa/Smith Internal Settlement government and the concern raised by President Nyerere that if Great Britain and the United States recognized the Salisbury government, a major East/West conflict was likely to result.
- \* At Lancaster House, as described above, they devoted substantial effort towards helping the British and the Rhodesian government understand the concerns of the PF, in order to reduce the likelihood of a walkout by the PF or abrogation later of an agreement perceived to be unfair.
- \* Also at Lancaster House, Quakers participated in writing briefing papers on several occasions designed to inform and influence all parties. Team member Tony Gilpin, for example, assisted the Catholic Institute for International Relations in preparing briefing paper about cease-fire arrangement.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Trevor Jepson, "Zimbabwe", Case Study in Appendix C of *Quaker Experience of Political Mediation*, 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

- \* In the interim period between the Lancaster House agreement and the election two months later, a report by Quaker Adam Curle raised concerns in urgent tones about handling by the British of sensitive governance issues in Rhodesia.
- \* In the same period, Quakers cooperated with Tim Sheehy of the Catholic Institute for International Relations in writing a letter to Lord Soames suggesting measures to reduce tensions before and after the elections.<sup>31</sup>

In other instances they sought to influence the liberation fronts towards actions they thought would be constructive:

- \* Following the downing of a civilian aircraft by Nkomo's troops in September 1978, Quakers Jepson and Gilpin in the course of a meeting with ZAPU officials pointed out the serious damage that had been done to ZAPU's credibility by the incident and Nkomo's comments thereon.
- \* Throughout their involvement, the Quakers were deeply concerned about the great fear expressed by whites about the liberation fronts, particularly Mugabe's ZANU forces. In a meeting with ZANU officials in October 1978, Jepson and Gilpin were struck by the amount of thought being given in ZANU to the nature of the new society sought for Zimbabwe. Changes were to be made gradually, "avoiding the mistakes made through precipitate action in other African countries."<sup>32</sup> Impressed, the two stressed to ZANU leadership the importance of conveying this thinking to Rhodesia and the outside world.

In each of these instances the Quakers were advocating a viewpoint or strategy. Grounded in deep principles of justice and fairness, they were open at all times about their own values. They were cautious, however, in advocating specific strategies. When they did, as in the above instances, they couched their appeals in the language of a higher non-partisan purpose: reconciliation, fairness, long-term peace. "Our motivating power is reconciliation, not advocacy"<sup>33</sup> was the way Walter Martin, senior Quaker team member put it.

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

### Assessment of Quaker Involvement

The Quaker involvements in Rhodesia are, at one level, a study in failure as a fundamental aspect of peacemaking. The Quakers invested substantially in four major efforts to set up meetings among top leaders, all of which failed to materialize: a Nyerere/Muzorewa link in 1979, an Owen/Mugabe meeting in 1978, an effort to convene a meeting of second-level leaders in 1979, and the peace initiative by Kanodereka, Hove, and Chigwida in 1978 which the Quakers funded. What then did the Quakers contribute?

Fundamental to a response to this question is an understanding of the nature of the Quaker focus. MRA focused on individual and attitudinal change; Catholics on structural change. The Quakers focused on perceptions and processes that would enable a negotiated settlement. In the end the parties reached that outcome at Lancaster House, rendering the work of the Quakers almost invisible against the backdrop of larger success. Their work was so interwoven in the complex fabric of influence moving the parties towards a negotiated peace that it is impossible to isolate the Quaker contribution from that of other actors.

But one measure might be the amount of access which the parties accorded the Quakers. Mugabe, Nkomo, and Muzorewa as well as many of their top aides met repeatedly with the Quakers throughout their involvement. The ongoing access which these leaders offered to the Quakers means they must have found the meetings useful. The British apparently recognized the significance of the Quaker role as well: When at the start of the Lancaster House talks Lord Carrington invited the incoming delegates to a dinner party, the sole person invited who was unaffiliated with any of the parties was Quaker Walter Martin.

Another measure can be found in subsequent comments by parties present. A few weeks after Mugabe's election in early 1990, two prominent members of ZANU strongly encouraged the Quakers to maintain a role in Zimbabwe, with a focus on race relations.<sup>34</sup> A leading figure in the Commonwealth Secretariat echoed this sentiment, stressing the need for informal gatherings between whites and blacks.<sup>35</sup> Josiah Chinamano, a leading figure in ZAPU, also encouraged a Quaker role in the post-Independence period, adding that "not only we but you have a

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<sup>34</sup> Nathan Shamuyarira, Minister of Information and Tourism, and Didymus Mutasa, member of the ZANU Executive Committee and later elected Speaker of the House of Assembly, made these comments in private meetings with Tony Gilpin. Confidential Quaker Document.

<sup>35</sup> Emeka Anyaoku, then Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, speaking with Tony Gilpin in March 1980. Anyaoku, of course, was not a party to the conflict but had been at both Lusaka and Lancaster House, and was intimately acquainted with the perceptions of all parties.

responsibility in all this."<sup>36</sup> Joseph Msika, another top ZAPU leader endorsed this, adding that a quality he had always appreciated about the Quakers was their optimism. "During our darkest times in Lusaka, we were greatly heartened by visits from Quakers whose faith in the possibility of progress towards peace helped to revive our hopes."<sup>37</sup>

In 1981 Nathan Shamuyarira, the then Minister of Information who had held a position of senior leadership in Robert Mugabe's ZANU during the war when ZANU was based in Maputo, told Trevor Jepson that the fact that the Quakers had taken a serious interest in ZANU and represented their views to the British Foreign Office had contributed to their credibility in the eyes of the British. Another Cabinet minister, Josiah Chinamano, over the same time recalled in conversation with Jepson that towards the end of the war senior leadership of ZANU and ZAPU had become concerned about growing anti-white feelings among younger guerrillas, and decided to adopt a firm policy of reconciliation after the war. They decided at this time there would be no trials or victimization of whites who had opposed them militarily or politically. He went on to say, recalled Jepson, "that the Quaker emphasis on reconciliation, as a necessary sequel to a just peace, had been in their minds in reaching this decision."<sup>38</sup>

President Nyerere of Tanzania wrote a letter thanking Quakers for their work in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.<sup>39</sup> A United Nations diplomat commented some years later that it was widely recognized that "the Quakers had played an important part in creating the conditions for a satisfactory settlement."<sup>40</sup> The Personal Assistant to Nyerere expressed a similar conviction to Walter Martin a few months after Lancaster House. In a letter of "congratulations to you and your colleagues who have been active for peace with justice in Zimbabwe," she wrote, "I believe that the quiet intervention of Quaker Peace and Service personnel may well have had a special importance at different moments in the lead-up to Lusaka, and during the Conference itself."<sup>41</sup>

Then, too, there are times when nothing clarifies like failure. President Nyerere was angry and let-down by the Rhodesian air strikes against Lusaka that coincided with the messages the Quakers were conveying between him and Muzorewa. But having failed in his effort to work cooperatively

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<sup>36</sup> Confidential Quaker Document.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Confidential Quaker Document.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Adam Curle.

<sup>40</sup> Adam Curle, *Tools for Transformation*, (Stroud: Hawthorn Press, 1980), 85. The comment was made by an American diplomat attached to the United Nations throughout the war to Curle, whom the speaker had no idea was himself a Quaker.

<sup>41</sup> Letter from Joan Wicken to Walter Martin, March, 27, 1990; Confidential Quaker Document.

with Muzorewa through the good offices of the Quakers, he was prepared a few weeks later to take leadership in the call for the British to convene the Lancaster House negotiations. It is likely that this Quaker-assisted failure contributed to the evolution of Nyerere's decisive stance.

Precisely the difficulty of "proving" success illustrates an important characteristic of many religious peacemakers. The Quakers intentionally operated in such a way that their own contribution to success would be barely, if at all, visible. They made no effort to hide their role, but they sought to be genuine servants to the interests of others, and they understood that their ability to contribute depended on keeping a Quaker stake in the outcome minimal. They knew that earning the trust of the parties, which is often the hardest part of mediating in cases such as this, depends upon a commitment to the interests of the parties that is unadulterated by the need for "credit." As one social commentator put it, "You can have social change, or you can have credit for social change, but you can't have both."<sup>42</sup>

Thus it should come as no surprise that the Quakers would be the least concerned about evidence of "success". Religious peacemakers at their best engage in their work, ultimately, not because they seek success, but rather because they are "called" by a reality larger than the empirical "facts". If this appears at one level to be naive or unrealistic, at another it reflects what is perhaps the fundamental asset of the religious intermediary. War, after all, is a consequence of the loss of hope that talking can yield results. Any peacemaker motivated by "success" as a yardstick would fade quickly in the atmosphere of pessimism that envelopes most serious conflicts. A sense of transcendent calling is more sustaining than pragmatic ambition, and the Quakers, faithful to their call, persevered in the face of long odds and major setbacks.

Msika's description of the Quakers was insightful but, if anything, he understated the truth. Quakers are more than optimistic, they are grounded in divine hope. God, who is loving and good, is seen to be present everywhere working to bring things aright. The hopefulness, then, that pervades their work is not the cocky but ultimately brittle confidence of a clever strategist or a skilled practitioner. Rather, it is the calm assurance of a spiritual visionary who knows that all appearances to the contrary, in the end a deeper reality will prevail. It is difficult to imagine anyone functioning with the quiet perseverance that characterizes Quaker mediation efforts without such a deeply-rooted optimism.

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<sup>42</sup> Quote is from the American sociologist Robert Theobald

Claims to "trust in God", of course, are common as the American penny<sup>43</sup>. But Quakers add to it trust in human beings. For centuries they have taught that within the heart of even the tyrant there exists a divine spark. The challenge is to address and kindle that spark, to "speak to that of God in every person". Thus Quakers are hopeful about the possibility of establishing constructive relationships even in discouraging circumstances with difficult people.

Other traits come closely aligned. If God resides in every person, there is no room for pretense, arrogance, or superficiality in relations with others. Nor is there room for injustice, selfishness, or "looking after our own" at the expense of other people. It was no chance that the Quakers won trust rapidly with most of the people with whom they met. Though they were "foreigners" to most of their contacts, they operated with such modesty, such transparent openness to and concern for each party whom they met that doors opened relatively quickly for them.

Getting through the door, after all, was the primary prerequisite for the Quaker involvement. To the extent that their contribution can be documented, it consisted mostly of conveying messages and interpreting to each party the concerns and actions of other parties. The harder to document aspects of their work -- encouraging the parties not to give up hope; listening well in order to reduce defensiveness and other psychological impediments to rational analysis and strategizing, encouraging constructive attitudes -- required little more than getting in the door as well plus the well-honed Quaker skills in these activities.

The whole Quaker contribution depended, then, on a quality of interpersonal bearing that would appear, at first glance, merely psychological or sociological in nature. In fact, the roots of this bearing are profoundly theological. Getting "through the door" is no spiritual exercise, of course, but the Quaker example suggests that the right kind of spiritual roots are an enormous asset. An interpersonal bearing that is grounded in a spiritual vision brings consistency, congruency, and simplicity of purpose to the task, and thus heightens the odds of getting through the many doors that await any potential peacemaker -- and of rapidly building trust once inside.

The Quaker reputation for integrity, non-partisanship, and work in the field of peace and justice proved to be a great asset in gaining entry as well. In the exquisitely sensitive world of mediation, interpersonal bearing in the end often speaks more loudly than reputation. But a good reputation helps a great deal, and the two qualities in combination gave the Quakers almost instant access.

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<sup>43</sup> I refer here to the fact that the American penny is inscribed with the motto "In God We Trust".

## Chapter Eleven

### Conclusion to Section Two

#### Christian Council of Rhodesia

Although incidental to the purposes of this thesis, an account of religious involvements in peacemaking in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe would be incomplete without at least some mention of the work of the Christian Council of Rhodesia. The Council was a convening point from 1964 onwards of ecumenical efforts within Rhodesia for efforts to oppose the Smith government and the war it was waging. Though sympathetic to the African nationalist perspective throughout, from 1971 to 1979 the Council was often paralyzed in the debate between the moderate nationalism associated with Bishop Muzorewa and the more militant nationalism of the external liberation movements.<sup>1</sup>

In July, 1979, the Council formed a Christian Council Reconciliation Committee (RC) to initiate involvement in the quest for political solutions. The RC undertook as its primary goal to seek unity among the African nationalist parties, now bitterly divided by Internal Settlement.<sup>2</sup> Though able to meet Muzorewa, himself a member of the Executive Committee of the Christian Council until 1978, the RC was prevented by logistical problems of travel arrangements and visas from meeting Mugabe and Nkomo.<sup>3</sup>

Four members of the RC traveled to Lancaster House, with a clear mission: "to impress upon the three main actors on the Zimbabwean scene the need to end the war in Zimbabwe through Political Reconciliation."<sup>4</sup> One of their main concerns was to support unity among the African leaders.<sup>5</sup> The RC made several efforts to get Muzorewa, Mugabe, and Nkomo to meet, but gave up when Nkomo<sup>6</sup> declined. Instead they met separately with the three leaders and their aides: three times

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hallencreutz, 51-101.

<sup>2</sup> M. Kuchera, a member of the Reconciliation Committee, in interview with the author, Harare, August 19, 1992

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Carl Hallencreutz, "A Council in Crossfire: ZCC 1964-1980", in Carl Hallencreutz and Ambrose Moyo, editors, *Church and State in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1988), 98. Presumably this is a quote from Council documents.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Kuchera.

<sup>6</sup> Right up until the 1980 elections Nkomo apparently entertained notions of single-handedly dominating the political future of the country. Cf. Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 264, 268.

with Mugabe, twice with Muzorewa, twice with Nkomo. They pled moderation with all three, stressing the suffering taking place at home. To the liberation movements they urged that so long as the settlement put full political control in the hands of the majority, including control of the police and security forces, the remaining issues were not urgent enough to block agreement.<sup>7</sup> Muzorewa, for his part, promised he would not "stand in the way of a good deal for Zimbabwe."<sup>8</sup>

In the latter part of the Lancaster House conference, the group sought to support "the credentials of the Patriotic Front to Christian groups in Great Britain and to the international press."<sup>9</sup>

### Summary of Section Two

The three religious groups in this study present a remarkably broad spectrum of responses to conflict. What is the problem which peacemakers are choosing to address? The question cleaves to the heart of the differences between these three groups. Consider the following spectrum:

Personal                  Relational                  Structural

Microanalysis <----->Macroanalysis

In this schema, Moral Re-Armament defined the problem as a *personal* one. Individuals were not living according to God's standards, not listening to God, and consequently conflict and injustice prevailed. Thus MRA devoted almost exclusive attention to reaching individuals and working for attitudinal and moral change. MRA left a mark, *willy nilly*, on processes by which the parties communicated with each other and on the structures that emerged as a result of its work with individuals. The Mugabe/Smith meeting, after all, facilitated Mugabe's offer to include whites in his cabinet in the new government and Smith's positive public response probably led to a significant change in the attitude of some whites to the incoming Mugabe government. But these results were affects, not the targets of MRA activities.

The Catholics, for the most part, defined the problem as a *structural* one. The political and economic structures were fundamentally unjust and needed to be over-hauled. This required

<sup>7</sup> The Patriotic Front leaders were ambivalent about the churches. On one hand their resentment towards Bishop Muzorewa, whom they regarded as a traitor, made them suspicious of churches in general and in particular of members of the delegation thought to favor him. On the other hand, recent grants from the World Council of Churches to the liberation movements had helped restore their faith in the churches, and additionally, they sought the support of the influential Council. Source: Kuchera, *ibid*.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Kuchera.

<sup>9</sup> Hallencreutz, "A Council in Crossfire", 99. Hallencreutz cites Bishop Shiri, a member of the Committee.

mobilizing opinion against the existing structures via publications and lobbying efforts. The Catholics, too, devoted some attention to problems of relationship. The Catholic appeal to commence negotiations, made directly to the parties a year before Lancaster House, and to the international world just prior to the Lusaka Conference, was probably one of the numerous important influences that eventually brought the parties to the table. But the Catholics influenced relationships by structural methods. They functioned mostly as moral lobbyists within the structures of power, not as clarifiers of communication or facilitators of negotiation.

The Quakers centered their activities around problems of *relationships*. The parties were not communicating clearly, and negotiation efforts were bedeviled by misinformation, misinterpretations, and lack of forums and mechanisms to communicate constructively. The Quakers sought to fill this gap, interpreting each side's concerns to others, conveying messages, trying to arrange face-to-face meetings, exploring options for resolution with the parties informally at Lancaster House and elsewhere. More than either the Catholics or MRA, the Quakers were involved in discussion of substantive issues with a broad range of leaders, and thus came the closest to a mediating role.

Though the Quakers devoted the bulk of their attention to relationships, they were also directly concerned with individuals and with structural problems. Like MRA, they spent a great deal of time with individual leaders in a listening and supportive role. Like the Catholics, they demonstrated profound awareness of structural imbalances. Though they were careful not to endanger their mediation role through open activism, they interacted quietly with London-based groups, such as CIIR and the British Council of Churches, which sought to highlight injustice in Rhodesia, and they sought to influence the British government to take what they felt were more enlightened approaches to the situation.

The groups focused upon different aspects of the larger problem because they defined the problem itself differently and thus employed differing strategies. But the effect of the three involvements proved to be a complementary one. The Catholics and the Quakers recognized this and cooperated throughout the war years, keeping each other well-informed of activities. But contacts between MRA and the other two groups were minimal. This seems a regrettable gap: closer cooperation, if only in the sharing of information and insights about the conflict, particularly between the Quakers and MRA, might have substantially enhanced the work of both organizations.

The three groups shared a striking similarity: all dealt with the "entry" problem by use of listening strategies. Individuals from both the Quakers and MRA teams repeatedly emphasized in later interviews the importance of low-key, nonjudgemental listening to the parties as a central part of their work, and both organizations spent enormous amounts of time doing it. The Catholics were less self-conscious about it, but they based their truth-telling on listening nevertheless. The far-flung network of Catholic personnel in Rhodesia and the reports from the thousands of individuals who brought complaints to the Commission for Justice and Peace formed the backbone of Catholic truth-telling efforts in the world arena. If anything sets the work of these three religious organizations apart from that of many other organizations, it is the scope and quality of listening in which they engaged.

Did the religious groups make a difference in the outcome of the conflict? This conflict was resolved by formal political negotiations, and the religious groups were only one of numerous actors on the scene. Clear evidence of their impact is hard to come by. Even so, the answer is unequivocally yes.

The evidence is episodic but incontrovertible in the case of MRA where Ian Smith, a key protagonist, confirms that the MRA-brokered meeting altered his response to Mugabe before a breathless nation.<sup>10</sup> The evidence is less dramatic in the case of the Catholics, who tirelessly goaded the world to take action in Rhodesia. But the magnitude and scope of the Catholic efforts, particularly at truth-telling, make it virtually certain that the conflict would have been prolonged and the human toll thus substantially higher had the Church not been so deeply involved.

With regard to the Quakers, the evidence is neither decisive nor voluminous, yet the levels of access to the disputing parties and to key external policy-makers, and their expressions of appreciation afterwards suggest that the Quakers played a role that the parties found constructive as they groped their way towards a settlement. It is hard to imagine the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict becoming "ripe"<sup>11</sup> for resolution and moving into a new dispensation with so little bitterness had it not been for the roles played by these three religious actors.

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with Ian Smith.

<sup>11</sup> The "ripeness" school of negotiations theory holds that settlement has relatively little to do with the skills and attitudes of the negotiators, and rather is a function of "the balance of inputs of internal and external actors involved in the conflict system at any time." When the key parties all decide in a given moment that now is the time most favorable to their own interests to settle, the conflict is "ripe" and settlement becomes likely. Mottie Tamarkin in a thought-provoking paper, "Negotiations or Conflict Resolution South Africa: Lessons from Zimbabwe", published in conference proceedings *Conflicts and Negotiations* (Germany: Herbert Quandt Foundation, 1992) draws on Richard

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Haas' elaboration of ripeness theory to analyze the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe negotiations. Though I find Tamarkin's analysis overly-machiavellian, from within his framework, I believe one could reasonably conclude that the religious actors were one of numerous important influences bringing the situation to a point of "ripeness". To take one instance, Tamarkin believes Margaret Thatcher's about-face, her rejection of the Internal Settlement, was the key to the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe conflict becoming "ripe". It is likely that both the Catholics and Quakers contributed to what some called "the education of Maggie Thatcher"; the Catholics through their protracted lobbying efforts and the Quakers through their quiet conversations with British politicians and FCO officials who were part of the complex web of influence at work on Thatcher. Legum, *ibid.*, 126ff, highlights the influence of the Australians and Mozambicans in Thatcher's change of heart; MRA workers believe that they were influential in tipping Malcolm Fraser, then Australian Prime Minister, towards challenging Thatcher. Interview with MRA worker and senior official in Fraser's administration, Allen Griffith, Washington DC, July 1991.

## **Section Three**

### **Conclusions**

## Chapter Twelve

### Testing the Paradigm

Section One outlined a paradigm for peacebuilding based on the values and experiences of peacebuilders in the Mennonite/Anabaptist tradition. Section Two documented the work of three religiously based peacebuilders that were active in the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. This chapter compares the paradigm of peacebuilding from Section One with the experience of the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe actors.

The Introduction and Vision chapter of Section One argued for the importance of peacebuilders identifying the vision or myth in which they locate their moral decisions and for them to articulate the connections between that vision and their strategic understanding of peacebuilding. By articulating this, I said, peacebuilders become more capable of moral reflection on the issues raised by involvement in conflict, more effective in facilitating such reflection in others, and more accountable to others for their own actions as peacebuilders. Section One reflects my effort to accomplish this in regards to my own vision and understandings of peacebuilding, or more accurately, my understanding of the vision for life and its implications for peacebuilding held by my own primary community, the Anabaptists.

Important though self-reflection and self-explication are, however, the challenge of operating with effectiveness and integrity in the arena of public affair requires yet another step. No human community, after all, has a “corner on truth”. If we hope to contribute constructively to the interaction of communities in our world - and such an intention is surely the minimum required of any peacebuilder at work in communal conflicts - we are compelled to do our self-explication publicly and to test our “truth” about how to engage in peacebuilding with that of others. From that dialogue can emerge the closest thing to Truth accessible to human beings.

One dimension of that Truth is the truth of *particularity that is committed to the universal*. By this I refer to the integrity of the internal understanding of truth held by a community that seeks at all times to be open, reflective and self-critical, and sensitive to needs of other communities as it formulates its own understandings of truth and their implications for action in the world. A second dimension is the truth of *universality discovered through the interaction of particularities*.

Here I refer to consensus about meaning, being, or action that is forged in dialogue between differing communities. Neither of these, in my estimation, are ever “ultimate Truth” and when viewed as such they threaten to become imperialistic. Rather they are working hypotheses, subject to new insight and challenge, whose ability to welcome and survive dialogue and contention is the most convincing mark of their truthfulness and vitality.

Section One represents an effort to reach for the former, *particularity committed to the universal*. The current Section seeks the latter, *universality through interaction of particularities*. To what extent can the themes highlighted in my paradigm be found to be at work in the response of other religiously-based peacebuilders? Finding commonalities is not essential of course to the value and integrity of my own paradigm. But to the extent that they are found to exist they contribute to the possibility of developing a descriptive theory of religiously-based peacebuilding. Then I will look for key differences between the approaches of these peacebuilders and my own and seek to analyze these from my own perspective.

Section One began with “Vision”, arguing that strategies for peacebuilding reflect a deeper underlying vision. Consistency would suggest beginning the current section with the same theme, comparing my vision with the vision of the actors in this study. However practicality requires otherwise, for this would entail an extensive review and comparison of the theological backgrounds of the actors in this study. Besides, the focus of the thesis is not to compare or critique the visions from which peacebuilding strategies are derived, but rather to develop the strategic implications of one particular vision for peacebuilding and to compare those strategic proposals to the actions of other peacebuilders.

Thus I will restrict comparisons to strategic actions, not to the theological underpinnings of those actions. This said, it nevertheless merits noting that all three groups in this study shared a common heritage in their origins in Christianity. All had a vision for human life which compelled them to act, ultimately, at levels of commitment substantially above that of the numerous other Christian groups close to this conflict. While their ways of expressing this vision theologically differed, it seems apparent that their underlying motivation came from a conviction that God created human beings as equals and intended them to live in a state of well-being and justice, and that this divine intent required a concerted response to the tragedy of injustice and war in Zimbabwe. In later sections it will become apparent that they held differing understandings about

how to respond to this conviction. My point for now is that a vision for human life different from that which prevailed around them lay at the heart of the response of these groups.

## **Transformation**

Chapter Two argued that peacebuilding guided by shalom is about more than imposing justice or creating the best possible package of solutions to a conflict, that it calls for transformation of the people and societies involved in conflict. With strategies of *empowerment* peacebuilders can support the ability of each party to recognize and act on the fullest possible range of options for response available to them. By providing opportunities for *recognition* peacebuilders encourage other-awareness within the parties. *Discernment* is an effort to engage people in conflict in reflection, discussion and planning regarding the personal, relational, structural, and cultural dimensions of conflict, in a quest to jointly find “life-giving” responses to their conflicts. To what extent does a similar understanding of the goal of peacebuilding seem to guide the activities of the three actors examined at work in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe?

### ***Moral Re-Armament and Transformation***

True to its name, Moral Re-Armament made moral transformation a high and explicit priority, and its activities provide a rich and fascinating study in strategies for reaching the hearts of individuals involved in conflict. From its first conference in Rhodesia in 1974 through to the dramatic meeting between Mugabe and Smith in 1980, Moral Re-Armament’s activities are characterized by a consistent goal: to get people involved in the conflict, particularly those in places of great influence, to awaken spiritually and to adopt a different attitude towards others.

MRA’s tactics in accomplishing this ranged from the sublime to the banal, and effected people accordingly. Alec Smith’s heartfelt public confession of his own culpability in the suffering of black Rhodesians melted the heart of the erstwhile guerrilla fighter Arther Kanodereka and laid the foundation for public partnership between the two that lasted for several years, until Kanodereka’s assassination in 1978. Small dinner parties brought together prominent white and black leaders on a regular basis for intimate conversation and opened up valuable channels for communication. On the other hand, a former Prime Minister was deeply alienated by the vaudeville character of uninvited drama presentations made in his office by visiting MRA workers.

MRA understood its activities in spiritual and theological terms such as “listening to God” or “living by absolute principles” but virtually everything MRA did can be understood in the categories of Folger and Bush. Implicit and often explicit in the message of MRA was an

assertion with powerful overtones of *empowerment*. “You matter. You have clear choices regarding how you respond to your opponents in this conflict. The place to begin is with your own heart. God has a plan and a message for you. How you respond may have an impact on many others.” The fact that this message (my paraphrasing of MRA’s message) was conveyed in theological terms only heightened its impact. To assert that someone is significant and equal with others in the eyes of God and a potential partner in a divine plan to heal the nation is as profound a statement of empowerment as could be imagined.

The message of MRA also reflected clear themes of *recognition*. Interestingly, one of the most common presentations of this theme took the form of a call for self-judgment: “Set your life aright in relationship to others; confess and make amends to them your failures in living by the ‘four absolute principles’ as the first step in hearing God”. This message came through repeatedly in MRA discussions with individuals, literature and films, and public presentations. While this call was likely one of the aspects of the MRA approach which some listeners found offensive, MRA was nevertheless able to assert it regularly with surprising success by presenting it in the disarming form of self-confession on the part of MRA workers.

Additionally, MRA’s first principle was “absolute love”, a standard which well exceeds the studied tepidness of “recognition” in the intensity of its call for acknowledgment of the needs, feelings, and perceptions of others. Thus a high-voltage challenge to recognition of others and to actively confess and make amends for failure to offer recognition awaited anyone who listened for long to the message of MRA presentations.

The call for *recognition* and opportunities to act on it came in other ways as well. MRA consistently spoke out for the equality of all and the ending of racial privilege. More important, MRA actively created ways for blacks and whites to meet and mingle as equals. MRA workers usually attended meetings in teams and often these were bi-racial in character. Conferences featured people of diverse racial backgrounds contributing as equals to the struggle for peaceful change. The heart of MRA public outreach for several years, the partnership between young Smith and Kanodereka, was of course biracial. Similarly, the dinner meetings organized over a several year period by MRA workers brought blacks and whites together for acquaintance and discussion, affording them opportunities for recognition which in some instances lasted well beyond the hours of the social gathering. Finally, the meeting which MRA arranged between key

individuals on a number of occasions, notably the Mugabe/Smith encounter, facilitated acts of recognition.

It deserves mention, however, that MRA's relatively narrow focus on spiritual categories and principles may have limited the imagination of its members regarding ways to support moral transformation of the actors in conflict. Despite the creative, wide-ranging, and often effective ways in which MRA sought to touch the hearts of others, the secular categories of *empowerment* and *recognition* suggest a range of other strategies which MRA in its relatively narrow emphasis on listening to God and scrutinizing self in light of absolute principles apparently never considered. The experiences of Martin Luther King and Gandhi in applying principles of non-violent direct action, for example, clearly fall in the category of moral transformation because of the prominence of concern apparent in them for both empowerment and recognition. There is no evidence that MRA members ever sought to explore such riskier and more activist strategies in addressing the Rhodesia/Zimbabwe situation.

The strategies proposed by Folger and Bush summarized in Chapter Two likewise suggest a variety of relatively mundane approaches which might have been effectively employed by MRA workers in their efforts to reach the minds and hearts of the combatants. But by the same token, the repertoire of response proposed by Folger and Bush for moral transformation could be substantially broadened by the experience of MRA. The most significant addition is, to put it in religious language, repentance and confession as avenues of recognition. No secular equivalent exists, but terms like "critical self-reflection", "apology", "voluntary admission of failure to meet widely accepted standards of conduct towards others" convey at least some important dimensions of these religious terms.

The MRA experience highlights a related dimension of moral transformation on which Folger and Bush are silent: the powerful impact that evidence of moral transformation within peacebuilders can have on others. Of specific interest here is the effect that the confessions of their own failures or vulnerability which MRA people themselves made had on individuals for whom they sought transformation like Arther Kanodereka.

A recurring emphasis in MRA's work was on what Stephen R. Covey in his widely-read book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* calls an ethic of character<sup>1</sup>. This ethic, says Covey,

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen R. Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989).

teaches “that there are basic principles of effective living, and that people can only experience true success and enduring happiness as they learn and integrate these principles into their basic character.”<sup>2</sup> It contrasts, according to Covey, to the “personality ethic” which emphasizes personality, image, skill, and technique as the key to success.<sup>3</sup> MRA’s first principle of moral transformation was “transform yourself”. To the extent that people opened themselves to this challenge, MRA taught, they would find that they were capable of being instruments in the transformation of others. This echoes the theme of critical self-scrutiny developed in Chapter Seven on “Community” as an essential foundation for peacebuilding in the transformational understanding.

The MRA example suggests an important strategy for peacebuilders seeking to support moral transformation: be humble and demonstrate your own struggle with the issues involved in moral transformation. More fundamentally, it highlights a significant dimension of preparation of peacebuilders, the need for them to enter fully as persons into the struggle for moral transformation in their own lives.

I suggested that at the heart of transformation lies a vision to restore moral response and dialogue as the basis for addressing conflicts. This understanding clearly was shared by MRA. The focus of MRA was to call people in conflict to recognize and begin acting upon a category of timeless values, regardless of the response of others. The “four absolute standards” defined what MRA believed to be the contents of such a moral realm, “listening to God” was a way of invoking guidance from it, confession and apology were the consequences of applying moral reflection to one’s own life.

However, MRA applied an individual model of change to a situation in which structural issues were paramount. Rather than encouraging reflection on the nature of the society they envisioned, MRA focused on calling individuals to reflect on their own personal conduct. The two of course, are ultimately closely linked, for a society is to a certain extent the sum of the individuals within it. But there is little evidence of effort on the part of MRA workers to engage the people they met with in what I call discernment, reflection on their deepest values, the implications of those values for others and how to build social and political structures supporting their values.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 18

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 19

### ***The Quakers and Transformation***

The Quakers were less explicit in articulating transformation as a goal and more circumspect in their efforts to interact deeply with those in conflict than MRA. Nevertheless they were clearly concerned with more than merely resolving the conflict, but rather also with laying the foundation for a new social order in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Although their most important work was in the area of relationships, they engaged in interaction with individuals which fit Bush and Folger's understanding of "moral transformation". Likewise they sought to contribute to establishing structures enabling the parties to more effectively work out their problems on an ongoing basis.

If the strength of MRA was its message, the strength of the Quaker effort was its meta-message. The Quakers conveyed no hints of divine plans or special missions for individuals. What they brought was a consistent stance of deep respect and caring towards the parties, coupled with a general sense of optimism that something could be worked out. Underlying their respect and caring of course was the Quaker theological conviction that God dwelt in each person they met. But they rarely if ever articulated their convictions in such terms, relying instead on action and attitude to convey the message.

I noted earlier that the desire to hear and understand the concerns of each party invariably headed the list of goals Quakers set for themselves in planning their missions. Of course it is tactically wise for peacebuilders to have the fullest possible understanding of the perceptions of all sides. But the persistence with which the goal appears in Quaker planning, and the self-evident way in which the goal was often articulated coheres with Quaker theology. Listening to the parties was more than tactical wisdom, it was an expression of Quaker faith, a statement about the intrinsic worthiness of each person with whom they interacted.

Bush and Folger say that: "In the most general terms, empowerment is achieved when disputing parties experience a strengthened awareness of their own self-worth and their own ability to deal with whatever difficulties they face, regardless of external constraints."<sup>4</sup> If there was anything that the Quaker presence seemed particularly to support, it was a heightened sense of self-worth. A review of their number one goal for themselves in attending the Geneva Conference offers insight as to why. The Quaker team hoped "to *develop a sympathetic understanding* of [the parties'] fears, hopes and intentions and to support and *strengthen their efforts* at achieving a just

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<sup>4</sup> Bush and Folger, 84.

settlement.”<sup>5</sup> The italics are mine, added to highlight language that could have been lifted straight from Bush and Folger’s expositions on the merits of empowerment. At Geneva and beyond, the Quakers sought first and foremost to support and strengthen the parties. Even when more ambitious agendas emerged capable of elevating them into prominent intermediary roles, such as the effort to set up meetings between Robert Mugabe and British Foreign Minister David Owen, the Quakers always subordinated these agendas to their commitment to strengthen the parties’ sense that they were heard, understood, and respected.

The desire to support the parties’ understanding of the claims of their opponents and to recognize the legitimate dimensions of those claims similarly played a prominent role in the Quakers’ self-understanding of their efforts and clearly received a great deal of their attention in practical ways. Describing Quaker activities at the Geneva Conference, for example, Trevor Jepson characterized them as firstly, supportive, and secondly, “interpretive, so that having established a basis of trust in our relationship with members of various groups, their differing aspirations and fears could be interpreted to one another so as to foster better communication.”<sup>6</sup> In an essay reflecting on a variety of Quaker experiences in international mediation, Sydney Bailey highlights elimination of misperceptions and misunderstandings as a “primary task” in Quaker efforts, and comments that “the Quaker team working on the Southern Rhodesian question regarded the removal of misperceptions as a crucial task.”<sup>7</sup>

“Eliminating misperceptions and misunderstandings” sounds like a different activity than recognition. But in practice the two were virtually identical. The point of clarifying misperceptions, after all, was not merely pristine communication, but rather to prepare the way for negotiation. Misperceptions and misunderstandings are almost always negative, that is, they contribute to the process of demonization of enemies, and mitigate against recognition. Thus to eliminate misperceptions substantially increases the chances of recognition taking place.

What is more, the Quakers augmented their efforts at clarifying communication with active steps to give opportunity for the parties to recognize the legitimate needs on the other side. For example, they conveyed to the British government the concern held by Nyerere of Tanzania that a decision on the part of the UK and the US to recognize the Muzorewa government might lead to

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<sup>5</sup> Martin, 7-8

<sup>6</sup> Trevor Jepson, “Rhodesia and Quaker Peacemaking”, *Quaker Monthly*, August, 1977, 157.

<sup>7</sup> Sydney D. Bailey, “Non-Official Mediation in Disputes: Reflections on Quaker Experiences”, *International Affairs*, February, 1985, 219.

major East/West conflict. At Lancaster House, they repeatedly sought to interpret the concerns of the Patriotic Front to the British government. When the Callahan commission of the British government recommended against the convening of all-party talks, the Quakers actively explored with all the parties the possibility of convening talks under their own auspices. Towards the end of the war, they encouraged Mugabe's lieutenants to publicize their commitment to moderate governance in a new dispensation so as to defuse white anxieties.

The Quakers were aware that at times they spent more effort advocating the legitimacy of the views of the liberation movements to the British and to representatives of Salisbury than *vice versa*. Walter Martin noted in his report on the Quaker efforts that at Lancaster House they actively sought to interpret the position of one side to another. "Whilst this was done, without conscious bias, in all directions, the bulk of this experience was concentrated on explaining the position of the Patriotic Front to the Salisbury delegation and the UK government."<sup>8</sup>

If then, in practical terms, their efforts concentrated more on one party than another, recognition appears to have been an ever-present implicit goal on the part of the Quakers, and often an explicit one as well. The lack of a formal mandate from the parties to mediate restricted the Quakers to low-key efforts, of course. But in the context, an on-going civil war where virtually no direct communication was taking place between the parties themselves, clarifying misperceptions and interpreting the concerns of the opposing parties to each other in a positive light clearly belong in the category of recognition. Not only did they imply a bold statement - that the Quakers thought the concerns of the mutual enemies deserved serious consideration - they also provided the parties in several instances with practical means to take steps towards recognizing the legitimacy of the other parties' needs.

In their patient efforts to advocate negotiations and prepare the opponents for it, the Quakers' efforts can also be understood in terms of my proposal to view the essence of transformation as evoking moral awareness and seeking to draw people in conflict into discussion of solutions based on deep moral reflection rather than on mere pragmatic give-and-take. The respect with which Quakers treated all parties and their emphasis on understanding them was a reflection of their theological conviction that something of God dwells in all persons, and as such a statement of their belief that all parties were capable of responding constructively.

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<sup>8</sup> Confidential Quaker Document, 120.

### ***The Catholics and Moral Transformation***

Whereas MRA's primary target of interaction was individuals and that of the Quakers individuals and small groups, Catholics concerned themselves mostly with political processes and structures. It is apparent that moral impact was a major theme in the Catholic response and that, in support of my understanding of transformation, Catholics sought to get the combatants and influential constituencies to respond to the conflict at an moral level. The Catholic response was grounded in regular proclamations from the Bishops in the form of Pastoral Letters setting out a comprehensive vision for a just society which differed clearly from the existing one. The Catholic Church was threatening to the government precisely because such publications made it clear that the goal of the Church was fundamental change of the political and social order, not merely restoration of peace and stability.

Further evidence of Catholic commitment to moral transformation is that much of their work consisted of appeals to conscience. By placing evidence of atrocities in front of first Ian Smith and then the world, CJP members clearly hoped to arouse others to take action to address injustices. Similarly, when they mounted a major campaign to get the parties into negotiation in the months preceding Lancaster House, the Catholics again did so on the grounds of conscience, appealing to the parties to end the suffering caused by the war.

The Catholic approach to transformation differed substantially from that of the Quakers and MRA. While MRA members commonly functioned as individuals interacting with other individuals, the Catholics typically addressed institutions as an institution. While the Quakers tiptoed to avoid damaging relationships, the Catholics pressured and polarized, even filing a court suit against the government. Where MRA members confessed personal culpability and Quakers presented themselves as humble servants of the needs of the parties, the Catholics assumed a stance of moral rectitude and exhorted the parties on their own failings. While Quakers listened quietly and asked questions intended to provoke awareness in the parties and MRA encouraged people to listen to God's voice, the Catholics issued statements asserting their own understanding of what needed to be done.

To grasp fully the reasons for this sharp divergence in style would require addressing themes beyond the scope of this thesis, including differing understandings of the role of the church in relationship to society, as well as differing understandings of the meaning of revelation and mission. But the simplest explanation has to do with a theme already touched on in Section One,

namely, the relationship between the peacebuilders and those in conflict. Whereas neither the Quakers nor MRA had extensive institutional bases in Rhodesia, the Catholics were pervasively engaged in the society through their networks of schools, hospitals, and service agencies. The very survival of the Catholic Church in Rhodesia was at stake in ways that had no parallel for the Quakers or MRA who institutionally were only marginally affected by the war.

More than self-interest was at stake, however, for through this deeply engaged network, Catholics were existentially enmeshed in the suffering of the war's victims. In a way that parallels my own call for taking a conscious bias as peacebuilders towards understanding the conflict from the standpoint of those who are most vulnerable, Catholics actively sought to press that suffering into the awareness of the combatants and the influential surrounding world. While on one hand this deep engagement doubtless increased the stridency of the Catholic responses, on the other hand, it enormously enhanced the credibility and impact of Catholic efforts.

Not only were Catholics deeply engaged in the conflict situation, they *located* themselves in moral terms in ways never contemplated by the Quakers or MRA. It is true, on one hand, that the Catholic Church could have probably been more effective in the ways it did this had it broadened its repertoire of interaction with key figures in the conflict to include the more facilitative and elicitive approaches to transformation modeled by the Quakers and MRA (e.g.: listening, eliciting, clarifying, asking thoughtful questions, acknowledging own failures, etc.) These skills appear to have enabled the latter two groups to engage key leaders in conflict in thoughtful give-and-take in a way that never happened with the Catholics. But at root, the Catholic inclination to articulate its own values in the context of discussion about the conflict coheres with my own understanding of the need for peacebuilders to operate from a standpoint of clear definition of their own values.

### ***Summary Regarding Transformation***

The work of all three actors can be understood as taking place within a transformational paradigm of peacebuilding. However each actor targeted a different arena of operation as critical to transformation and employed a different style of operation. In my view the possibility for transformation would have increased had these actors recognized the need for work in all three of the complementary areas they were engaged in and chosen to coordinate their efforts accordingly.

Alternatively, I do not believe that these differing approaches are necessarily mutually exclusive and that in some situations one organization with adequate resources could to some extent work in all three areas. In terms of my framework, such a response would begin and be at all times

sustained from a point of clear moral location and deep engagement with suffering similar to that of the Catholics. It would be accompanied by the modest, thoughtful inquiry and relational emphasis employed by the Quakers, and grounded in the insistence of MRA that no social change is meaningful or sustainable unless it is rooted in the lives of individuals.

## **Vulnerability**

### ***MRA and Vulnerability***

The work of MRA parallels in a number of ways my proposal that vulnerability serve as a “marker of reality” in guiding peacebuilders to the most important dimensions of a conflict. MRA’s emphasis on personal confession often led MRA personnel to share deeply from their own experiences and to acknowledge their own failings. This had positive results on numerous occasions. Alec Smith’s confession of culpability in the injustices leading to war led to the “conversion” of Arther Kanodereka; Desmond Reader’s apology to a colleague led to a fruitful partnership between two black and white academics in convening dinners bringing together whites and blacks. The account by a former Rhodesian Secretary of Foreign Affairs of losing a son in the war led to an empathetic account by one of Mugabe’s men of picking the body of his brother out of the trenches in Mozambique in the aftermath of a Rhodesian raid.

MRA also clearly maintained a careful eye for the personal vulnerabilities of key actors and sought to respond constructively. The special effort to provide emotional support to the socially ostracized Ian Smith during the Lancaster House talks, Henry Macnicol’s offer to pray with Bishop Muzorewa as he struggled with giving up his central role in government, and the weekend outing provided for exhausted members of Mugabe’s staff during the same time all illustrate this point. One of MRA’s greatest strengths proved to be its ability to see even highly-placed leaders as vulnerable human beings, to approach and minister to their needs, and in moments of grace to encourage them to make choices based on principles of cooperation rather than recrimination and fear.

On the other hand, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that MRA’s perceptions of the conflict were based, not on the experiences of those who were most vulnerable, the African masses living in the townships and rural areas of the country, but rather on the outlook of the national leaders with whom MRA interacted as its primary target of influence. I noted earlier that MRA was best connected to leaders from the Muzorewa/Smith “internal settlement” camp which took a reformist

stance regarding political change in the country. In the end this stance was strongly rejected by Zimbabwean voters.

Examples abound, to be sure, of MRA involvement with “the masses”. Alec Smith and Arther Kanodereka devoted countless hours, after all, in dozens of meetings in a tireless public campaign for unity. But these activities seem secondary to the more dramatic mission which formed the centerpiece of MRA work in Rhodesia as other places in the world: interaction with highly placed and therefore influential individuals. The latter focus was an important agenda in the formative 1974 MRA premier conference in Salisbury, frequently occupied the attention of the “Kitchen Cabinet”, set priorities in determining attendance at MRA conferences in Caux, Switzerland, and perhaps most tellingly, dominate the accounts of MRA workers reflecting in later years on their work in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

Emphasis on work at this level enabled MRA to contribute in significant ways already pointed out. But it also limited MRA’s impact to the cast of characters already calling the shots within the conflict. Rather than, for example, supporting the emergence of new constellations of influence at “middle” levels as proposed by Lederach, a focus on interacting with existing high-level individuals tended to reinforce the role of elites as the ones who decide what the issues are, who the negotiators will be, what options will be considered, etc. In this sense MRA’s strategy could be understood as tending to reinforce the status quo of the power formations on each side of the conflict and thus as a conservative response.

Here again we must acknowledge that MRA engaged in some work at “middle levels”. The dinner parties, for example, brought together a variety of people from academia, business, and religious backgrounds who were leaders in their setting but not prominent in the national political context. But these activities focused on individual encounter and individual change, not on the formation of new institutions or on-going initiatives capable of supporting peace initiatives. By attending primarily to individual influence, MRA’s impact was limited by the constraints of the existing institutions within which those individuals operated. In interacting primarily with individuals who were “at the top of the pile” of those institutions, MRA members developed their own key understandings of the conflict and possibilities for its resolution through the eyes of people with a stake in those institutions.

In conclusion then, although the MRA experience coheres with my proposal that attention to vulnerability serve as a guide to religiously-based peacebuilders in determining their agenda, my

proposal highlights a dimension largely missing in MRA work: the value of consciously seeking out extensive interaction with the experiences of those who are the most vulnerable in conflict.

### ***The Catholics and Vulnerability***

To a substantial extent it was the Catholic church's own experiences of vulnerability that brought it into the arena of peacebuilding. The efforts by the Smith government in 1969 to impose separation of the races on all church institutions goaded the Church into open disobedience of the government and marked an important turning point in its response to the overt racism of Smith's Rhodesia Front. From this point onward the Church took an activist role in promoting racial justice, formalized in 1972 with the establishing of the Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace.

Similarly, it was the suffering of her own people in dioceses and parishes throughout the country which motivated the Church to confront first Ian Smith with a delegation in 1973 regarding the atrocities of the war, the nation through Parliament and mass publications in 1974, and finally the world in 1975. As the war intensified, Catholic priests and sisters themselves became regular victims along with their lay charges and in the end at least 25 lost their lives.

But if it was the experience of her own membership and personnel which initially impelled the church to act, the structure created by Church hierarchy to formally address the conflict, the Commission on Justice and Peace made its primary mission that of documenting and publishing the experiences of vulnerable people everywhere. Utilizing the "listening church", the extensive network of on-the-ground Catholic clerics, the Commission received the testimony of thousands, and carried it to the world stage in the books and reports it published.

Even in 1977, when the Church shifted to a less partisan role, that of advocating negotiations, it did so on the basis of the suffering of vulnerable people. The appeals which the traveling delegations made to the heads of the liberation fronts and to the government stressed one theme: the importance of ending the war in order to end the suffering of ordinary people.

In summary, in making the reality of suffering visible nationally and internationally it seems apparent that the CCJP played an important role in bringing pressure to bear on all parties to end the war. Clearly the Catholic experience then supports my proposal to use vulnerability as a marker in determining the "realities" of conflict and choosing a focus for peacebuilding efforts. However it is worthy of note that the Catholics were weak where MRA was strong. While MRA was effective in connecting to the vulnerabilities of individuals and limited in its interaction with

the most vulnerable sectors of the populace, for the Catholics the converse held. Bishop Lamont, Sister Janice McLaughlin, and many other Catholic advocates of the poor were highly effective in articulating the needs of the African majority but in their interaction with individuals whose policies they opposed, they displayed no awareness of or interest in the arts of listening and empathy which characterized Quaker and MRA activities.

This in no way challenges the rightness of the advocacy role through which the Catholic Church was able to alter the larger power dynamics at work on the Rhodesian scene in favor of the African majority. But no evidence suggests that the Catholics succeeded in touching the hearts of individuals in ways comparable to the impact that the MRA-arranged meeting had on Mugabe and Smith or that some MRA encounters had on other individuals. Had Catholic workers brought more than the tools of polarization and polemics to their efforts to challenge the powerholders in Salisbury it is possible that their impact might have been substantially increased.

#### ***The Quakers and Vulnerability***

Concern for the suffering caused by the war was at the center of Quaker motivation for their role, and as noted earlier, formed the primary agenda of many of their meetings with the parties. The Quakers themselves seem to have been at times somewhat surprised by the receptiveness of the parties to meet with them on the basis of such a modest agenda. A focus on vulnerability thus not only was central to the Quaker initiatives, it provided a rationale for involvement that proved credible to the parties.

Like the Catholics the Quakers took conscious steps to connect to and support individuals suffering the most from the war. Quaker peace representatives visited refugee camps in Botswana, Maputo and Lusaka, and arranged for support by Quaker affiliated agencies and foundations.

#### ***Summary Regarding Vulnerability***

Although the kinds of vulnerability to which they responded and the ways in which they sought to connect to it varied, a profound sensitivity to and concern for suffering and vulnerability was a hallmark of the work of the religiously-based peacemakers in this study. None of the groups explicitly articulated a desire to give special weight to the experiences of vulnerability. But in fact, it is apparent that the Catholics and the Quakers did so. Both stressed the dimension of suffering repeatedly in their meetings with leaders on all sides. The Catholics in particular

confronted leaders sharply with this concern in their major push for negotiations in early 1979 just prior to the decision to go to Lancaster House.

Thus the study yields an important insight about a specific agenda which is probably broadly characteristic of religiously-based peacebuilders. It also stakes out a spectrum of ways in which to attend to vulnerability, ranging from the highly individualized attention of MRA members to the personal vulnerabilities of key leaders on one hand to the solidarity with the suffering of the masses portrayed by some Catholic efforts on the other.

## **Engagement**

I proposed that to enable transformation peacebuilders need to conduct their efforts in the context of a particular kind of relationship with people in conflict. That relationship is characterized by *connection* to the parties, accomplished by long-term relationships; *location*, accomplished by being open about the values peacebuilders hold to be important; and *vulnerability*, accomplished by an inability to impose solutions on those in conflict and in some instances by a willingness to endure risk in the mission of peacebuilding.

### ***Catholics and Engagement***

To a substantial extent the stance of the Catholic Church in the Rhodesian conflict corresponds to the three criteria I proposed. Without a doubt the Catholic Church was *connected via extensive relationships*: it is clear from the account of Catholic activities that Catholic workers were deeply involved at all levels of Rhodesian society. Indeed much of the Church's unique contribution was due to her deep rootedness in Rhodesian society. At a time when journalists were denied first-hand access to the victims of the war, the Salisbury government was unable to prevent the Church from continuing to document and publish abroad the stories of systematic abuse of human rights by the Rhodesian military. The Church was also *located* morally, publishing a stand in support of racial justice relatively early in the conflict. This put the Church on a collision course with the government, so that up until 1977 the Church functioned primarily in the role of advocate and activist and made no effort to engage the parties in negotiations.

In regards to vulnerability of Catholics as peacebuilders, the picture is mixed. On one hand the Church had little power in her own right to impose any kind of solutions on the parties. Moreover, as was pointed out earlier, Catholic personnel and laypeople often fell victim to the violence of the war. But on the other hand, the Church had access to the world stage and carried much moral clout there. It seems apparent that the ceaseless campaign of the CJP and London-based CIIR

played an important role in creating the world awareness which led in the end to the decision of UK officials to convene the Lancaster House talks.

### ***Moral Re-Armament and Engagement***

Although far smaller in numbers than the Catholics, MRA workers also founded their efforts on long-term relationships. MRA workers lived in the country throughout the war years and viewed cultivation of relationships as a central feature of their work. It is clear that the trust that developed between MRA workers and some key leaders, notably Abel Muzorewa, Ian Smith, as well as some “second tier” people in all camps, was key to MRA’s entire mission. It is impossible to imagine MRA doing what it did, bringing together people who had never met before, and quietly encouraging individual leaders to support peace efforts except in the context of extensive and in some cases intimate relationships.

Although never taking a position on the practical political issues in the Rhodesia situation, MRA nevertheless provided at least a general sense of its own moral location through open advocacy of the four “absolute principles”. Most importantly, MRA made it clear throughout that it supported racial justice.

In regards to vulnerability, MRA held almost no positional power over the parties. MRA members placed themselves in situations of personal danger on numerous occasions. Alec Smith and Arther Kanodereka were obviously vulnerable to partisans from either side opposed to the public displays of racial cooperation which they offered in their many joint presentations throughout the country. Arther Kanodereka frequently risked his life in meetings with guerrillas in the bush and of course tragically lost his life in the end at the hands of an assassin. Joram Kucherera pressed ahead with his effort to bring Ian Smith and Robert Mugabe together, despite his fears for his own life.

### ***Quakers and Engagement***

Like the other actors, the Quakers based their efforts on long-term relationships. The contributions of a handful of Quaker individuals to early nationalist endeavors in the late 1950s and early 1960s seems to have been important in establishing Quaker credibility among the liberation front leaders. Similarly, their long-standing relationships with Kuanda, Nyerere and other African leaders was central to their capacity to draw the influence of larger African political figures into their peacebuilding efforts.

In regards to locating themselves morally, the Quakers, like the other groups in this study were on the record in opposing racism. The larger Quaker reputation for commitment to justice and

equality was well-established. Quaker institutions actively supported sanctions against the Rhodesian government.<sup>9</sup> But Quaker values probably came through most clearly in the quiet candor of their efforts to remove distortions on each side about the intentions and character of the other side and foster a view of the conflict that took intent account the concerns of others.

Tim Hawkins, Deputy Secretary of Rhodesian Foreign Affairs and one of the few members of the white Salisbury regime with whom Quakers succeeded in establishing close ties, recalled later that he, like most other whites in the government, pictured Mugabe as a "bloody-handed communist who had to be kept out of the country at all cost." Without preaching or moralizing, Hawkins says, Quaker Walter Martin "disabused me of that notion" and "persuaded me to see the 'terrorists' in a better light. He did this very gently....made me see that the only hope for this part of Africa was in reconciliation and that majority rule was the only thing that could happen, that it was futile to resist it."<sup>10</sup> In unspoken ways, the deep Quaker commitment to respect for the humanity of all was apparent to others in such encounters, as well as the commitment to equal empowerment of all.

In regards to their own vulnerability, the picture is unclear. Operating largely from outside the country, the Quakers were the least vulnerable physically of the three groups. While MRA lost Kanodereka and the Catholics lost more than two dozen priests and nuns, the Quakers had no casualties. Given their regular meetings with heads of state in Africa and British Foreign Affairs in London, obviously the Quakers were well-connected to people with substantial positional power over parties in the conflict. But on the other hand, the Quakers were careful not to flaunt their contacts or to manipulate others with threats of coercion.<sup>11</sup> While they clearly held some influence, the Quakers never traded on it. Rather they forged their identity as peacebuilders in terms of unconditional human regard, honesty, scrupulosity in handling information, and obvious commitment to the interests of others rather than their own. In short, they operated solely on the grounds of the trust they had built up with the people they met.

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<sup>9</sup> Trevor Jepson, "Zimbabwe", Case Study in Appendix C of "Quaker Experience of Political Mediation: A document arising from the consultation at Old Jordans, Buckinghamshire, in August 1989" (London: Quaker Peace and Service 1989) 3.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Tim Hawkins, by Ron Kraybill, in Harare, August 17, 1992.

<sup>11</sup> Hawkins reports that he never knew who else the Quakers were going on to see. He says he thinks they would have told him had he asked, but that he assumed they didn't tell him in order to avoid embarrassing him. *Ibid.*

### **Summary Regarding Engagement**

The work of the peacebuilders in this study supports my proposal that engagement is an essential pre-requisite to the possibility of peacebuilders contributing to moral transformation of a conflict through long-term relationships, a clear moral location in terms of their own values, and relative powerlessness in terms of inability to impose solutions on the parties. While it is impossible to assess the precise extent to which the peacebuilders were able to contribute to moral transformation, it seems evident that to some extent at least they did, and that the engaged nature of their presence was essential to their contribution.

In the case of the Catholics, for example, it seems clear that the flow of information documenting the impact of the war in general and the atrocities of the Security Forces in particular had a significant impact on the international actors, and that this impact was due in substantial part to the deeply-rooted location of the Catholic effort. In the case of MRA and the Quakers, it is apparent that a substantial part of their efforts were directed towards changing the way the parties conceived of their enemies and how to resolve the conflict. The fact that the parties continued to interact with the religious actors at this level suggests that their efforts had at least some influence. It seems highly unlikely that the parties would have been willing to engage in these conversations had they not taken place in the context of deep-rooted "location".

Finally, the experience of the Catholics highlights the importance of location in influencing how peacebuilders themselves perceive the conflict and the issues at stake. Ian Linden observes that whether Catholic missionaries gave credence to Ian Smith's defense of the war or to the reports of rural African victims "depended much on whether they belonged to the rural/township or the white urban Church."<sup>12</sup> Thus we see that location is more than a matter of credibility and influence on the parties, it is also fundamental to enabling peacebuilders to gain a true understanding of the conflict.

### **Transformation of Structures**

I argued in Section One that transformation calls for special attention to the way in which peacebuilding efforts connect to social and political structures. I said that the transformation required by shalom is a greater possibility if peacebuilding efforts reflect the following three emphases:

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<sup>12</sup> *Op cit.*, Linden, 223.

- 1) If they penetrate beyond elite leadership of the parties in conflict. In most cases, as Lederach suggests, beginning at the “middle level” of social/political structures is a preferable place to establish peace initiatives.
- 2) If ownership of the peacebuilding enterprise itself lies in the hands of conflicting parties or people close to them.
- 3) If peacebuilding is understood to be a long-term process unfolding over a period of many years during which the awarenesses, skills and institutions required to sustain genuine peace can be developed.

### ***Catholics and Transformation of Structures***

Of the three groups in this study, the Catholics operated the most extensively at all levels of society. In their advocacy work they were deeply involved at the grassroots level in documenting the proportions of suffering of the African masses during the war and trying to alleviate it. As the largest religious body in the country, Catholic representatives also engaged in extensive conversations at middle and top policy levels, pressing their concerns about the conduct of the war and its devastating consequence for ordinary citizens.

But far-reaching advocacy is one thing, a comprehensive strategy for empowering a society at broad levels to build peace is quite another. While Catholic efforts demonstrate concern for the masses, during the war they offer little resonance with the call of this section for actively nurturing structures of peacebuilding which enable a society to transform itself long-term towards reconciliation. Even when the Catholics moved into a less partisan role prior to Lancaster House, and focused on encouraging the parties to negotiate, their primary strategy was to admonish the parties to settle quickly to end the war. No evidence exists of Catholic efforts to ask what kind of peacebuilding structures or bodies were best-suited to accomplish the task of ending the war. The assumption seemed to be that the existing structures, namely, the political groupings who eventually gathered at Lancaster House, were quite adequate to handle the task of peacebuilding. All that was necessary was for the parties to be more cooperative and enter into negotiations.

In this regard the Catholic understanding of the relationship of peacebuilding initiatives to social and political structures differs substantially from my own, placing more trust in the vision and capacity of political structures to take primary leadership in the quest for peace.

The question of Catholic understandings of the timeframe of peacebuilding efforts moves into the period of the 1980s, beyond the timeframe of this thesis. Nevertheless some tentative conclusions

are possible from existing literature. The Catholic bishops made repeated calls for reconciliation for several years in the new political dispensation<sup>13</sup>. The Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace continues its work up to the present in independent Zimbabwe. Over the time of the disastrous Matebeleland incident in 1982-84, when thousands were killed in the outbreak of regional fighting, the Commission returned to its previous role of documenting abuses and outraged the government by publishing a pastoral letter of concern; indeed, several staff members of the Commission on Justice and Peace were imprisoned for several weeks as a consequence. Victor de Waal reports that the Commission was in communication with both sides and assisted in setting up talks by “assuring each that the other was open to talks.”<sup>14</sup> The Catholic Church also ran a number of projects designed to facilitate recovery from the traumas of war. De Waal cites in this regard the Zimbabwe Project, which sought to assist war veterans in returning to civilian life<sup>15</sup> and also “crying workshops” which were conducted by a pair of Jesuits to assist emotional healing in people who had experienced particularly traumatic events during the war.<sup>16</sup>

Although these efforts lack the comprehensive framework for strategizing long range peacebuilding called for in my proposal, they nevertheless reflect a similar awareness that peacebuilding efforts must continue beyond the cessation of hostilities.

### ***Quakers and Transformation of Structures***

The emphasis I placed on conducting peacebuilding activities in ways that facilitate long-term transformation at structural levels resonates only in part with Quaker activities in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. In regards to the social location of their efforts, the Quaker focus was on what Lederach calls “upper” levels, that is, on senior leaders of all parties. Such a focus appears consistent with the pattern of most Quaker peacebuilding efforts elsewhere in the world.<sup>17</sup> To be sure, Quaker representatives consulted with a wide variety of people at all stages of their involvement, including middle and, to some extent, grassroots levels. But the purpose of interaction at the lower levels seems to have been information-gathering to equip the Quakers with

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<sup>13</sup> Patrick M. Mutume, “The Priorities of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference Since Independence”, in Carl Hallencreutz and Ambrose Moyo, editors, *Church and State in Zimbabwe* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1988) 461-476.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, de Waal, 95.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, de Waal, 97.

<sup>16</sup> Victor de Waal, *The Politics of Reconciliation* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1990) 82.

<sup>17</sup> See for example, Mike Yarrow, *Quaker Experience in International Conflict* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978) who studies Quaker mediation efforts in post-War Germany, the India-Pakistan war of 1965, and the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-70. See also “Quaker Experience of Political Mediation” a document arising from a consultation at Old Jordans, Buckinghamshire, in August 1989 (London: Quaker Peace and Service) which assesses Quaker mediation efforts in Zimbabwe, the Middle East, South Africa, and Northern Ireland.

a solid grasp of the issues rather than to explore the possibility of peace processes involving people at those levels.

In regards to empowering local peacebuilders, the Quakers provided strong moral and financial support to the effort by Kanodereka and Hove to establish a peace initiative by Rhodesians in 1978. But no other evidence exists to suggest that Quakers at that time deemed it important to base peacebuilding efforts close to those in conflict, or to develop conflict resolution capacity among people in or close to the groups in conflict. This is a surprising omission given the presence of Quaker communities at several locations in Africa including in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe itself, and all the more surprising in light of the prominence of the theme of empowerment in many Quaker programs.

In regards to Quaker understandings of the timeframe of peacebuilding, it is apparent that they viewed the task of peacebuilding as a long-term one. Between the time of the Lancaster House agreement in December 1979 and Independence in April, 1980, the Quakers actively explored the possibility of a long-term reconciliation role, sending four senior Quaker peacebuilders for exploratory visits and meeting with several senior leaders in the incoming government.<sup>18</sup> This led to a decision to establish the Quaker Friendship Center in Harare, which functioned for about a year after Independence, staffed by a Zimbabwean Quaker.<sup>19</sup> Later, in 1981, Quaker representatives from London also discussed with two Cabinet members the possibility of organizing a “diplomats’ conference” for southern and central African countries in which Zimbabweans would have been invited to take a leading role.<sup>20</sup> It appears then that conceptually Quakers shared my view of peacebuilding as a long-term effort. However the programmatic expressions of such an awareness are modest.

### ***MRA and Transformation of Structures***

In regards to the social location of their efforts, MRA workers interacted broadly with a wide variety of people on both sides of the conflict. Although they clearly placed great emphasis on and faith in the possibility of contributing to the larger picture by influencing top-level decisionmakers, they also interacted extensively with people and middle and lower levels. In the latter regard, the intensive efforts by Alec Smith and Arther Kanodereka to jointly address

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<sup>18</sup> Trevor Jepson, “Zimbabwe Case Study”, *Quaker Experience of Political Mediation*, *ibid.*, 7.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Trevor Jepson, “Report on Visit to Southern Africa 23rd September to 9th October 1991”, contained in confidential collection of Quaker documents. Although the response was positive, the conference never materialized.

audiences of ordinary folks throughout the country with a message of reconciliation is particularly noteworthy. However, it is equally clear that MRA assumed that the appropriate locus of discussion regarding strategies for peace was at top levels. Although they sought to encourage conciliatory attitudes among individuals at grassroots and middle levels, there is no evidence that they sought to explore the creation of peacebuilding mechanisms based at this level as advocated by Lederach.

In regards to empowering local peacebuilders, MRA's approach is closer to my proposal than that of the Quakers. The MRA effort was based in Zimbabwe, and although several key full-time staffpeople came from overseas, most of the key MRA people including the majority of the "Kitchen Cabinet", were native Zimbabweans. MRA also held workshops from 1974 onwards that targeted unionists, managers, civil servant, teachers, and many others, suggesting a commitment to disseminate broadly the vision for reconciliation. On the other hand, the fact that the gifted and well-connected Arther Kanodereka had to go to the Quakers to get financial support for his peace initiative suggests less than full commitment on MRA's part to supporting indigenously based peacebuilders. In regards to the MRA workshops, it must be acknowledged that the focus was individualistic, motivating persons in attendance to act with integrity and fairness in their arenas of influence. Such an emphasis, however important, is different from the strategic commitment to supporting the emergence of on-going processes and institutions for peacebuilding called for in my proposal.

As with the other religious actors in this study, MRA efforts continued beyond the end of the war. Alec Smith took a post as chaplain in the new Zimbabwean army and in that capacity showed the MRA film "Freedom", which seeks to introduce the concept of moral living in the context of post-Independence Africa, to 12,000 Army personnel.<sup>21</sup> Over the time of the Matebeleland crisis MRA sent a delegation of 16 to meet with President Mugabe to express concern over the escalating confrontation there.<sup>22</sup> MRA maintains a house and a full-time worker in Harare up to the present.

### ***Summary Regarding Structures and Transformation***

All of the awarenesses I identified as important in this section were present in the work of at least one of the three religious actors in this study. Clearly the concerns I seek to address in this section are neither novel or unique. But on the other hand, I am aware of no evidence that any of these

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<sup>21</sup> Alec Smith, interview with the author, May 27, 1991, Harare.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Smith was unsure whether the meeting took place in 1983 or 1984.

groups gave priority to the question I wrestle with in this section: how to go about peacebuilding in ways that contribute to an ongoing, self-sustaining process of transformation of social and political structures. The priority that I give to this challenge sets my framework apart from the work of the Zimbabwe peacebuilders.

## **Reconciliation**

In the chapter on Reconciliation I called for *formal, joint, proactive* attention to healing of relationships as a matter of highest ongoing priority in peacebuilding. I proposed a view of reconciliation as a complex process made up of several stages unfolding over a period of time and said that part of the task of peacebuilders is to help those in conflict to recognize the importance of reconciliation and to plan strategies to accomplish it. To what extent does this understanding of reconciliation correspond with the activities of the peacebuilders in this study? To answer the question adequately would require a study of activities after the war in the 1980s, which moves beyond the historical scope of my study. Nevertheless, on the basis of secondary literature some conclusions can be drawn regarding activities prior to Independence and, to a lesser extent, after Independence.

### ***Catholics and Reconciliation***

Some components of the approach to reconciliation which I outlined are apparent in Catholic responses to the war and in activities after Independence. One of the most significant was the hearings held by the Commission on Justice and Peace which provided opportunity for large numbers of African victims of the war to tell their experiences of suffering to members of the Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace. Aside from its importance as an information-gathering strategy for the Catholic Church, for reasons already laid out in Section One these hearings contributed, I believe, to the long term healing of the war victims. The work of the two Jesuits who organized “crying workshops” provides another illustration of a similar contribution.

The regular Pastoral Letters issued by the Catholic Bishops also hold a place in my understanding of reconciliation in their capacity to assist victims of conflict to engage in essential identity work. By naming racial discrimination as the primary villain in the war the Catholic Bishops contributed to the task of recovery of self-respect among blacks who for decades held the identity of second-class citizens.<sup>23</sup> The Pastoral Letters addressed the residents of the war-torn country as moral

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<sup>23</sup> See quotes from Pastoral Letters in R.H. Randolph, *Dawn in Zimbabwe: The Catholic Church in the New Order* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1985) 200-214.

beings of equal status and worth, appealing to them to work out their differences humanely. At a time when powerful forces of polarization threatened to divide the people of Zimbabwe into ontologically fixed categories of race and ideology, the pastoral letters called them to a larger identity as children of the same Father.<sup>24</sup>

In their big push for negotiations in the months prior to Lancaster House, Catholic representatives pushed leaders from all sides to pull back from the effort to defeat the other side and to work out their issues jointly. This corresponds to the theme of “re-connection” proposed in my chapter.

In the post-Independence era, the Catholic Church repeatedly issued statements in favor of reconciliation and peace<sup>25</sup> and cooperated extensively with the government in the administration of development projects essential for reconstruction in the post-War period.<sup>26</sup> But there is little evidence that the Church actively sought to enter the difficult arena of practical issues raised by the history of injustice leading up to the war. It appears rather that church responses primarily involved unilateral assistance to victims of the war rather than actively participating in or seeking to foster larger dialogue about the question of restoration in a country still marked by major injustices. Of course, the new government was actively seeking to address such questions and Church leaders may have wished to avoid being seen as invading political territory. But such questions deserve more than political responses, calling for the most comprehensive reflection human communities are capable of engaging in.

Even in regards to those matters of justice which clearly fell under her own jurisdiction, the Church proved disinclined to enter the debate. In 1988, Paul Gundani, a cautious and relatively uncritical commentator, pointed out that the Church had so far failed to address the fact that she herself was one of the largest landholders in a country where land settlement remained a divisive issue.<sup>27</sup> In 1989, former President Canaan Banana reiterated this concern and challenged the Church to take the lead in the land question.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Patrick Matume wrote in 1988 that “Every single pronouncement the Bishops have made since 1980 speaks of reconciliation and peace.” Patrick Matume, “The Priorities of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference Since Independence” in Hallencreutz and Moyo, *Ibid.*, 467.

<sup>26</sup> For a summary of these projects, see Paul H. Gundani, “The Catholic Church and National Development in Independent Zimbabwe”, in Hallencreutz and Moyo, *Ibid.*, 215-250.

<sup>27</sup> Gundani, *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>28</sup> Canaan Banana, *Turmoil and Tenacity* (Harare: The College Press, 1989) 209.

In summary, the work of the Catholic Church illustrates some dimensions of essential tasks of reconciliation, but the evidence suggests that no comprehensive understanding of reconciliation through active engagement with the issues in conflict guided her. The Church's biggest contribution during the war came in assisting people in "truth-telling" and after the war in actively working against the threat of revenge. But the dimension of enabling or participating in active engagement between former opponents regarding the traumas and injustices of the past which I view as essential to reconciliation is missing.

### ***MRA and Reconciliation***

Similar to the Catholics, the work of MRA in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe overlaps in some dimensions with my understanding of reconciliation. MRA constantly sought to identify personal vulnerabilities among key people - bitterness in Ian Smith towards the British for past treatment, homesickness on the part of Mugabe's staff, resentment in Muzorewa at not being taken seriously by international actors because he had no army - and actively sought to address these vulnerabilities. In this and in their extensive one-on-one interaction with individual leaders, MRA workers did a lot of listening, thus contributing to the personal tasks of truth-telling and wrestling with identity issues.

It is also apparent that in some conversations with Muzorewa MRA members encouraged the reluctant Bishop to risk the loss of the political power he held when entering the Lancaster House talks by agreeing to the proposals for a new Constitution and fresh elections.

More than either the Catholics or the Quakers, MRA created forums for people with opposing backgrounds and views to meet. Their national conference which convened people from a variety of backgrounds in 1974 offers an example here, as do the many dinner meetings organized in the mid and late 1970's. The most dramatic example of course is the Mugabe/Smith meeting.

The most interesting overlap between my framework of reconciliation and that of MRA is the latter's emphasis on confession and forgiveness as the critical step towards reconciliation. There is no question that on numerous occasions confessions on the part of people related to MRA succeeded in breaking down interpersonal barriers and opening up avenues of reflection and action for individuals which are rare in the polarized atmosphere of war. From my perspective such an emphasis is constructive because, more powerfully than perhaps any other single human action, confession asserts a commitment to the possibility of a moral response to human conflict and from

a standpoint of vulnerability, invites others to join in such a commitment. To confess or to forgive makes a profound statement of faith in the possibility of transformation.

However from the standpoint of my framework of reconciliation, the MRA emphasis on confession and forgiveness also seems simplistic. Precisely because they are important and powerful, I placed apology and forgiveness near the end of my cycle of reconciliation because they can be destructive if offered too early in interaction between alienated people. Part of the power of apology is its virtually implicit call to others to moral response to conflict. Hence a too-quick apology is likely to arouse mistrust and resentment because it arouses fears that the apologizer seeks to draw others into releasing him or her in a facile way from culpability for the past. Apology is capable of drawing others into moral response only when there are some grounds for trust, and in many circumstances those grounds have to be established first.

The concept of "taking responsibility" offers a way of understanding MRA's emphasis in ways that address my concerns. Peacebuilders should encourage people in conflict to look for ways to signal their intention to taking responsibility for their actions past and present. This implies a commitment to moral response without suggesting superficiality. When upon further discussion it becomes apparent that certain costs of conflict cannot ever be compensated, apology and forgiveness can at that time be offered.

### ***Quakers and Reconciliation***

Several Quaker activities correspond to themes developed in the "Reconciliation" chapter. Quaker commitment to improving or establishing relationships can be found in the efforts to bring Robert Mugabe and British Foreign Office Secretary David Owen together in 1978, and in the effort in 1979 to assist President Nyerere in establishing communication with Muzorewa.

The conversations which the Quakers held with nationalist leaders could also be understood as contributing to identity work on the part of the latter, particularly over the time they were anticipating the question of how to relate to whites in the aftermath of the war. The comment by Zimbabwean Cabinet Minister Chinamano in 1981 that the Quaker's emphasis on reconciliation as a necessary sequel to a just peace had been influential in the decision of the nationalists to adopt a firm policy of reconciliation after the war seems particularly significant here.

The comment by Joseph Msika, a top ZAPU official who commented after the war that he had always appreciated the optimism of the Quakers is also telling: "During our darkest times in Lusaka, we were greatly heartened by visits from Quakers whose faith in the possibility of

progress towards peace helped to revive our hopes."<sup>29</sup> This suggests that the Quakers might have contributed to the willingness of some nationalists to accept the risks of exploring reconciliation.

Of these three groups, the Quaker involvements after Independence had the shortest lifespan, just under a year. This practical reality to some extent mitigates against a conclusion otherwise suggested by the nature of Quaker efforts during the war that the Quakers placed substantial emphasis on reconciliation and relationships. It is true of course that the Quaker effort during the war was based outside the country. With all key actors located in country by the time of Independence, for the Quakers to pursue their previous efforts for reconciliation required developing a whole new internal infrastructure which for the other groups had already long been present. However the latter highlights the importance of the point made in Chapter Five, that to work for peace in ways that maximize the possibility of genuine transformation requires particular attention to the structure of peace initiatives. Had the Quaker peace initiatives during the war been structured in such a way as to empower peacebuilders closer in geographical and relational terms to the warring groups, it is likely that sustaining a long-term reconciliation mission in Zimbabwe would have been more easily accomplished.

#### ***Summary Regarding Reconciliation***

Addressing the emotional and relational needs of the people in conflict was clearly a common theme in the efforts of these three actors. Although the ways in which they sought to accomplish this varied substantially, one response shared by all three groups was an effort to persuade people in the conflict of the importance of relationships and of the necessity of moving beyond the hatred and pain of the past. Minimally the study supports my assertion that healing and reconciliation of relationships is an important theme in peacebuilding.

Significant as their contribution was, all three groups were handicapped in their ability to contribute to long-term transformation by lack of a conscious theory of reconciliation capable of enabling them to integrate the sometimes contradictory tasks of reconciliation or to assist the parties in wrestling with these tasks. MRA would probably have benefited the most here had it been able to articulate its calls for confession and forgiveness in the context of a framework recognizing the equal legitimacy, indeed importance, of anger and rage as an essential dimension of the reconciliation process. Suppose, in addition to calling people to confess their

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

failures, MRA had explicitly invited them in appropriate forums to voice their hurt, pain, and anger?

A similar point could be made in regards to the Catholics and Quakers. Suppose that the pastoral letters by the Bishops during and after the war had, as part of the call for forgiveness and reconciliation, urged Zimbabweans to openly bring their grief and rage into Catholic masses in rituals of lamentation, and named the expression of these feelings as a constructive step towards national reconciliation? Suppose that the Quakers, in addition to their apparent contribution of helping some nationalist leaders recognize the importance of adopting a policy of reconciliation after the war, had been able to point the ZANU leadership towards an understanding of reconciliation richer than the call to “forgive, forget, and rebuild” which Mugabe eventually issued?

## **Community**

This section called for rooting peacebuilding efforts in the structures of a community of peacebuilders. To what extent was community a guiding theme among the peacebuilders at work in this study?

### ***Catholics and Community***

The structures of Catholic responses to the war support a number of themes developed in Chapter Seven. Although they were late in doing so, the majority of Catholic leadership in Rhodesia eventually recognized that their values required a society structured in ways fundamentally different from that envisioned by Ian Smith and the Rhodesia Front. This conclusion came only as a result of lengthy and often anguished debate. Although my own understanding of shalom differs from that of most Catholics, the Catholic experience nevertheless provides an example of response to conflict rooted in a vision for life that emerged from a community of awareness with deep traditions of its own.

Much of the effectiveness of the Catholic response to the war lay precisely in the size of the Catholic community. The “truth-telling campaign”, arguably the most significant Catholic contribution, was possible only due to the logistical reach of Catholic institutions. With a large network of personnel and institutions on the ground in Rhodesia and a well-placed mouthpiece in London, the Catholic Church was probably the most effective opponent of the Smith regime. The effort to advocate peace talks in early 1979 depended again on the international reach of the Catholic Church.

Although operating in teams seems much less a consistent pattern in the Catholic responses than in that of MRA and the Quakers, it is nevertheless clear that individuals saw themselves as accountable to the larger structures of the Catholic Church. The priests and nuns, after all, who formed the backbone of Catholic on-the-ground institutions, were nurtured by and accountable at every point of their lives to the Catholic Church.

### ***MRA and Community***

The concept of community is clearly present in the structures with which MRA sustained its activities throughout the period under study. The MRA conferences, perhaps the hallmark of MRA efforts worldwide, could be understood as short-lived but often highly effective efforts to create a community among participants, and to harness the power of that community in breaking down old barriers and opening up new possibilities for those present. The dinner parties organized by MRA in Salisbury could be viewed in a similar light.

The delegations which MRA regularly put together to pay visits to key leaders could be viewed as a traveling community. Like the Catholics, MRA depended heavily on its international network for counsel in determining directions to take and for logistical support in arranging visitations from outsiders as well as for sustaining a presence at Geneva and London.

To a degree that is highly unusual in organizations, MRA appears to have been guided in day-to-day decisionmaking and planning by an ethic of community. Very few hierarchical roles existed then or now within the organization and even where they did exist, the individuals filling them appear to have consistently made themselves accountable to others in the organization. A great deal of planning and strategizing in MRA begins in group “quiet time”; during this time individuals listen for “thoughts” from God, and these are then discussed and debated by the group.

### ***Quakers and Community***

Like the Catholics and MRA, the Quaker initiatives were deeply rooted in a tradition of belief and activity which sustained and was sustained by a substantial community of adherents. This tradition and community gave the British Friends who staffed the Quaker peace initiatives the perspective necessary to seek goals different from the politically-motivated intentions that guided British political decision makers. Equally important, it enabled them to gain an identity in the eyes of key actors in this conflict that set them apart from their nationality.

Like MRA the Quakers depended heavily on group discernment in planning how to respond and on teams to undertake visits with key leaders. But the Quakers appear to have provided substantially less in the shape of formative, sustaining community to the individuals who carried out the Quaker missions than either the Catholics or MRA. Supportive communities pervade Catholic structures in the form of orders, parishes, mission and service institutions. MRA members in Salisbury and London often worked as teams on a daily basis, shared regular quiet time, and attended MRA conferences together. The Quaker response, in contrast, was relatively small and fragmented. All four of the individuals who were most involved in the Quaker response had other full-time jobs, so their capacity to interact with each other was limited.

### ***Summary Regarding Community***

That these three religiously based peace initiatives were deeply rooted in communities of values and drew heavily on those communities in their activities is so obvious as to render the point almost trivial. Nevertheless it is an important one, for this characteristic sets the work of these peacebuilders apart from many others and supports the proposal that efforts to make peace on the basis of moral vision rather than mere political bargaining require a model of peacebuilding that is rooted in more than political frameworks and individual realities.

The connection between community-based peacebuilding and my earlier call for engagement deserves to be highlighted. Being rooted in a community of values is an enormous asset for peacebuilders committed to “locating” themselves morally in the eyes of conflicting parties.

However, although the experiences of these three actors strongly supports the proposal for rooting peacebuilding in a community of peacebuilders, two dimensions of my proposal are missing: the call for peacebuilders to seek to build a “community of peacebuilders” with other peacebuilding groups and the emphasis on giving priority to strengthening the communities of those who are in conflict by building peacebuilding initiatives on existing resources as close to the combatants as possible.

In regards to the former, Section Two points out that although the Catholics and Quakers cooperated at key points, there is no evidence of an effort to strategically link their efforts, much less to seek to create a “community of peacebuilders” among the various other groups, religious and otherwise, which participated in initiatives of their own. MRA of course operated in virtual isolation from the other two groups.

In regards to the latter, all of the groups seem to have been relatively content with a model for peacebuilding which made the community of peacebuilders itself the primary resource. The Kanodereka-Hove initiative funded by the Quakers is an exception here. But even this initiative appears to have come not from the Quakers but from Kanodereka and Hove themselves who approached the Quakers for funding.

## Chapter Thirteen

### Conclusion to the Thesis

In the interplay between the framework for peacebuilding outlined in Section One and the work of the religiously-based actors in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe documented in Section Two lie insights for current practice in the field of conflict resolution and also further unanswered questions. These become evident in a review of noteworthy features of this study.

#### **Moral Vision as Central to Conflict Transformation**

At several points the thesis advanced an understanding of peacebuilding as an effort to engage people in conflict in moral discourse, with the goal of finding ways of resolving conflict through moral reflection rather than coercion. To my knowledge such a proposal has never been developed elsewhere in the literature on conflict resolution and deserves further exploration.

On one hand, it is clear that the religious actors all responded to this conflict from a powerful moral vision. This vision caused them to respond in ways that they hoped would not merely end the conflict but improve the moral capacity of the people involved. Their identification with such a vision in the eyes of others was central to their capacity to relate to those in conflict. But there is not a great deal of evidence showing that they actively engaged the parties in *moral discourse* regarding the combatants' own values, the situation and the choices open to them, an activity which in Chapter Two I called *discernment*. The Catholics moralized, but the transaction was one-way. The Quakers encouraged actions which they felt were moral, but there is little evidence of active conversations. Moral Re-Armament raised moral issues, but the vocabulary and scope were individualistic in nature.

This highlights then an area which holds substantial promise. An understanding of peacebuilding that incorporates moral discourse offers an attractive alternative to common understandings of conflict resolution as simply negotiating "win/win agreements" or settlement reflecting the existing configurations of power. For purposes of *describing* what happens in negotiation, the concept of moral discernment is illuminating for it focuses attention on a critical but often ignored dimension of human conduct: that we are inherently meaning-centered beings and that profound structures of meaning underlie even apparently superficial conduct. By organizing the data of

human conduct in the arena of conflict and negotiations around this proposal, the concept of moral discourse may prove a better tool for describing the deepest realities driving people in conflict than many current theories.

For *prescriptive* purposes the concept of moral discourse also offers useful insights in guiding the efforts of peacebuilders. Such an understanding makes it harder for peacebuilders to ignore the often unacknowledged values at play in their own lives and communities and thus requires a more honest relationship to people in conflict. An emphasis on moral discourse leaves peacebuilders no option but to enter their role through extensive, sympathetic interaction with the worldviews of those in conflict, thus greatly increasing the chances that the issues essential to truly resolving conflicts will indeed be dealt with and not merely shoved under the table in pursuit of cease-fires.

Morally, the case seems obvious that dealing with conflicts on the basis of a quest for what is right is preferable to mere expediency. Of course, it is differences of understanding regarding what is right which cause many conflicts in the first place and makes them intractable. Determining “what is right” will never be easy. But an emphasis on moral discourse at least enables peacebuilders to move to the heart of many conflicts and draw people into reflection and encounter regarding the factors which influence their perceptions of what is “right.”

The question of how *in practical terms* to do this remains a challenging one. This study contributes to an understanding of the nature of the relationship required for such discourse to take place, but in the context of the “connected” relationship for which I called, what is further required to enable it to happen? What skills, techniques, and awarenesses are required to facilitate it? How can it be done in ways that people in conflict experience such encounter not as threatening or moralizing in nature, but rather as opportunity to reflect on things that they care about deeply and are motivated to discuss? Does it have to be done separately, in caucus with each party or could it be done jointly? Answers to these questions could yield valuable insights for peacebuilders committed to the transformation of conflict.

### **Engagement as Basis for Peacebuilding**

More consistently than with any other proposal in Section One, the work of the religiously-based peacebuilders supports the understanding that transformation requires peacebuilders to be deeply engaged with people in conflict through long-term relationships, openness about their own values

as peacebuilders, and vulnerability in the sense of lack of capacity to impose solutions on combatants and willingness to take personal risks.

This challenges widespread practices taken for granted in the larger field of international conflict resolution. An enormous amount of work in the field in recent years has been undertaken on the basis of “one-off” training events or other short-term involvements in which peacebuilders with no previous relationships or long-term commitments seek to assist people in situations of conflict. More active involvement of religious actors could provide an important antidote to this trend.

To what extent is a bias towards engagement specific to the nature of religiously-based peacebuilding? To what extent does it apply more broadly, regardless of the base from which peacebuilders operate? Are there particular kinds of conflict resolution tasks which are amenable to short-term, “non-engaged” involvements and others which demand the deep engagement I called for?

The current situation in Bosnia presents an interesting case in that the need to end the war immediately seems obvious, even at the cost of arm-twisting by outside enforcers determined to cut a deal in order to end the killing. Yet on the other hand the long-term limitations and dangers of such an approach are all too obvious. The situation cries out for the application of a vision similar to that proposed in Section One, that looks at the conflict on the long-term and lays out non-coercive transforming processes that engage the antagonists heart and soul. To what extent could these two approaches, contradictory but all too often seemingly required by the extremes of violence most fruitfully interact?

It seems likely that all would agree that wherever possible the transformational vision is the preferable one. Were this the case, how could short-term settlement-oriented approaches be conducted in ways that would provide maximum room for transformational ones to get underway and succeed?

### **Peacebuilding and Transformation of Structures**

Section Three concluded that all three of the actors in this study responded transformatively to the conflict by seeking to contribute to changes in attitudes and perceptions on the part of those in conflict. However none of the actors appear to have recognized what I see as an essential implication of the vision for transformation: the need to structure peacebuilding efforts themselves in ways that genuinely empower people at broad levels in the conflict.

In my view the peacebuilders held too much faith in the political structures at work in the conflict, for all three invested heavily - indeed almost exclusively - in moving this conflict into the arena of political bargaining for resolution. Of course there was no escaping the need to deal with the political issues at stake and doubtless this was the place to start. My criticism is not a rejection of working through political structures, but rather of the degree to which these peacebuilders relied on them as a solution to the conflict and neglected to work actively to put in place structures capable of carrying out peacebuilding efforts on the long-term.

In retrospect we know of course that the early years of the new Zimbabwe were tragic ones which saw the outbreak of fighting in Matebeleland and the deaths of up to twenty thousand people. It appears that criticism of government practices and excesses and the sending of delegations to meet with Mugabe by the Catholics and MRA members played a role in the decision by the government to change its disastrous course in Matebeleland. The eventual rapprochement which took place between President Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, who figured central in the Matebeleland affair was mediated by the former President Canaan Banana, the role of whose credentials as a Methodist minister is difficult to assess.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously at least two of the religious actors in this study then responded to the new conflict in the early 1980s, but with the agenda of the nation firmly in political hands they were unable to forestall major violence. This underscores the importance of the call for peacebuilding to be conducted in ways that have an impact on structures, through the creation of on-going structures mandated to carry the complex challenges of peacebuilding forward over an extended period, and through careful attention to working with all levels of alienated populations and not just with military and political elites.

Difficult questions arise again in contemplation of actual practice. How could this be accomplished? The truth is that most peace efforts have been short-term and episodic in nature and that we have very few experiences demonstrating what the approach called for in Chapter Five might look like in practice.<sup>2</sup> Is the fault here with peacebuilders and an inability on their part to

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Willard A. Chiwewe, "Unity Negotiations", in Canaan S. Banana, editor, *Turmoil and Tenacity: Zimbabwe 1890-1990* (Harare: College Press, 1989), 212-287.

<sup>2</sup> The examples closest to what I have in mind would probably come from work of Mennonite practitioners and to some extent, Quakers. In the Middle East Mennonite peaceworkers have labored quietly for several decades; in Ireland, for nearly 20 years; in Somali, John Paul Lederach has worked with a group of "middle level" leaders for several years. But all of these efforts have been relatively small; none approach in scope the requirements of situations like Bosnia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, etc. A study of these efforts currently in progress by the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Transformation at Eastern Mennonite University will be published in late 1996.

articulate frameworks for action appropriate to the problem? Or is it with people in political roles who seek a monopoly of influence and over-estimate the capacity of political structures to facilitate healing? Probably it is both. But at a time when several conflicts of catastrophic proportions appear to be moving into a post-combat phase and pivotal strategic decisions are being made, how do we put structures in place capable of facilitating peacebuilding long-term? What could be learned from the experience of South Africa which, at least during the phase of intensive political negotiations leading up the 1994 transition, erected the most significant national-level structure for dealing with conflict that the world has yet seen?

### **The Need for Incorporating Theories of Reconciliation into Peacebuilding**

Earlier I observed that although all three of the groups clearly believed healing of relationships was important and actively sought to facilitate it, none had a conscious theory of reconciliation. This gap is indicative of a gap not only in the larger field of peacebuilding but also in the political world as well. Substantially more is known about how to help people explicitly address the *issues* that divide them than about how to explicitly address the nature of their *relationship* or the *social residues* of bitterness and mistrust that inevitably linger in the aftermath of conflict. The work of these religiously-based peacebuilders suggests that they are well ahead of at least the politicians in their awareness of the importance of reconciliation. But the absence of effort to articulate how it happens even among those most pre-disposed to take seriously the need for reconciliation reveals how much work remains yet to be done.

Perhaps the major question in regards to reconciliation is how to satisfy the often conflicting demands of long-term and short-term requirements. The framework for reconciliation outlined in Chapter Six calls for activities requiring a great deal of time, ideally years. Ideally, major political and structural decisions would be delayed until substantial progress has been made in the psychosocial process outlined in this section. But in reality this is unlikely and for some good reasons, undesirable. South Africa, for example, will require decades to work through the trauma wreaked by apartheid on its diverse populations. It would seem ludicrous to suggest postponing the requirement to work out new political and social structures.

How can we proceed with the obvious requirement for reconciliation in the midst of making urgent and difficult decisions about political and structural decisions? What can be learned from the experiences of those countries which have endured traumatic violence on a major scale?

## **Community as Basis for Peacebuilding**

It is apparent that these religiously-based peacebuilders benefited from being based in communities of faith rather than being solo professional practitioners. By explicitly naming what is surely one of the most valuable assets of religiously-based peacebuilders, this finding supports the growing recognition of the unique potential they hold for working in some conflict situations. It also suggests a responsibility for religious peacebuilders to be better prepared than they have in the past to use this precious asset more effectively for critical peacebuilding tasks.

This finding also casts in sharp relief the reality characterizing many current actors in the field of conflict resolution. Many people circumnavigating the globe today to assist in resolution of conflicts and provide training are rooted in no discernible community, and would be hard-pressed to describe the values, traditions and people to which they are most deeply accountable.

Obviously not all can or should seek to base themselves in formal structures. But the knowledge that being grounded in a concrete, on-going community was critical to the work of the actors in this conflict invites further reflection about ways in which all practitioners might become more effective and responsible by grounding their work in community.

They might choose, for example, to seek to identify the traditions and values shaping their work and make them more explicit to others. They might elect to establish structures of accountability for organizational decisionmaking that explicitly serve a set of values and spread decisionmaking power among a network of people committed to those values. They might focus less on selling pre-packaged skills or training approaches and take the slower, more costly route of getting acquainted with the internal resources and unique needs of the communities they seek to serve. They might pay greater attention to forging communities of peacebuilders as the most important part of their work, shifting their away “magic workers” towards capacity-builders of communities. They might take more seriously the lessons to be learned from the struggle of daily life with family and colleagues.

## **The Value of an Explicit, Coherent Framework for Peacebuilding**

Throughout the thesis I have stressed the importance of approaching peacebuilding with an explicit, coherent, reflective framework of response. I made the case for this on ethical grounds in the Introduction, arguing that an explicit framework is required by integrity, honesty and accountability. But the grounds for such an approach have broadened in the course of the study, as follows:

***Articulating a Framework Yields Rich Insights for Peacebuilders Regarding the Implications of Their Own Values***

This assertion arises from my personal experience in this thesis of seeking to develop a coherent framework for peacebuilding based on my own values and those of my own primary community. Although I have been working full-time in peacebuilding for sixteen years, it has only been in the process of reflection occasioned by this thesis that I was able to consciously articulate certain values which I now recognize were often implicitly at work in my past activities. For example, although my colleagues and I have typically gone to great lengths to connect to vulnerable people in situations of conflict and not to rely heavily on interaction with political and military leadership, it is only in writing this thesis that I realized that a profound epistemological assertion underlies this bias, namely that what we hold to be God's "reality" is not reliably apprehended through experiences of privilege and power. By bringing this statement to conscious awareness I shall be able to act with greater consistency, to interpret my actions more clearly, and to function more effectively in enabling others wishing to study and learn peacebuilding to wrestle with this issue. Parallel examples could be given in regards to virtually every theme developed in Section One.

The impact of such an exercise extends well beyond the individual or individuals conducting it. In seeking to develop clear explanations for my own understandings of peacebuilding I repeatedly sought the assistance of Mennonite colleagues. These conversations will continue long after the thesis is submitted.

***Articulating a Framework Lays the Groundwork for Dialogue with Others***

In interacting with the approaches to peacebuilding taken by the actors in this study, in Chapter Twelve I identified numerous points at which those actors fell short in terms of my own proposals. Although it is possible of course that this study fails to accurately capture the full scope of the efforts of these actors, these observations make it possible to engage them at a depth not possible before. By articulating my own understanding of peacebuilding and engaging in constructive critique of others from that perspective, I hope to be able to contribute to the peacebuilding capacity of all. Likewise, I anticipate that as others pursue a similar exercise their own perspectives will enhance the peacebuilding capacities of myself and others.

***An Explicitly Value-Based Approach Is Integral to the Approach and Contribution of Religiously-Based Peacebuilders***

It is apparent that being rooted in a tradition with known values, seeking to apply those values to the conflict, and at certain moments actively advocating those values was a common denominator for all three of the peacebuilding groups in this study. Descriptively, this supports what might

readily be surmised through common sense: that an explicitly value-based approach to conflict may be one of the distinguishing characteristics of religiously peacebuilding efforts.

Prescriptively, this study also supports my assertion that an identity rooted in a set of explicit values is an asset in peacebuilding rather than a liability as often believed. Rather than hampering their access to conflict, the value-based identity of these religious actors appears to have facilitated it. It would be too broad, of course, to say that *any* set of values would do. In this case the common strands seem to be values regarding the sanctity of human life, reduction of suffering, justice, fair play, and tolerance of cultural and racial diversity. The actors in this study made no secret of being committed to these values, and it seems reasonable to conclude it was precisely their integrity in holding to them that made them trustworthy to those in conflict.

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