

I. CONTEXT

1.1 NEW APPROACHES TO RESOLVING CONFLICT



~Introduction~

The search to find new and more effective ways of resolving internal conflicts is a major preoccupation in today's world. The massive toll that modern wars have taken on civilian populations has given great urgency to this search. This is just one aspect of the effect of war and is, perhaps, the most visible and the most tragic. The true cost of war is even greater when we consider damage to the infrastructure of a country, to its economy and development. The violence done to the population through terror, the destruction of personal property, physical injury and the loss of loved ones all point to the urgent need to build peace in our world.

New and innovative approaches to humanitarian intervention and conflict resolution must be developed with the realisation that diplomatic interventions on their own are inadequate when dealing with complex internal conflicts. Diplomatic efforts to resolve conflict need to be complemented by a wide range of appropriate responses which includes the building of a peace constituency at all levels within the affected community. Local capacities for peace need to be recognised and developed. The trend in present day conflicts is likely to continue, as the international community seems to have no adequate answer to the current situation of international instability.

~The cost of conflict~

The nature of conflict has changed radically over the last fifty years particularly since the end of World War II. A drastic consequence of this change is the enormous effect that war has on civilian populations. In World War I (1914-18) the number of civilian casualties was estimated at about five percent of total casualties. During World War II (1939-45) the number rose to almost fifty percent of all casualties. The world was shocked by the Holocaust, a deliberate and systematic elimination of the Jewish population in Europe. The setting up of the United Nations immediately after World War II was, at least in part, an attempt to ensure that such large scale genocide could never again happen. It did happen again and there is still no guarantee that it will not happen again in the future.

The civilian casualties during the United States war in Vietnam reached an estimated eighty percent and in current conflicts around the world the number of civilians killed can vary from eighty-five to ninety-five percent of all casualties.

In addition to those killed there are an estimated 18 million refugees, mainly in developing countries. This represents a six-fold increase in the number of refugees since 1970.¹ There are 24 million people displaced internally within their own countries – a figure that has doubled since 1985.

The statistics on children are equally alarming. Between 1986 and 1996 an estimated 2 million children have died in war, a further 4-5 million have been wounded or disabled, 12 million have been made homeless and 1 million orphaned or separated from their parents.

Every war takes an enormous toll on a country and the cost of war can never be adequately reflected in any real terms. We may be able to approximate how much is spent on a war effort in terms of personnel, equipment and arms. We can assess the damage done to the physical infrastructure and losses to a country from disruption of normal economic and development activities. We can count the number of people killed and maimed in a war as well as the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

~Hidden costs ~

The hidden costs of war are rarely taken into account. The massive outflow of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants includes the very people upon whom the economy of a country depends and represents an enormous loss of human resources that could contribute greatly to the economic development of the country

The effect of war on people's lives because of the death of loved ones, the destruction of property and economic base, displacement, fear and physical insecurity, the growth of a culture of violence and the loss of human rights can never be adequately measured. Human beings are killed, the social and economic infrastructure is destroyed, women are widowed and children orphaned and large numbers of people deprived of a decent human existence. The fighting goes on. The people are the victims.

The statistics of the human costs of war never adequately reflect the tragedy and scale of human suffering caused by war. Neither can these statistics be reduced merely to economic values. Nonetheless, for the thousands of families affected by war there are economic costs directly related to the human costs. These costs include the economic life years lost through death and injury, the income earning activities disrupted through displacement, the skills lost through emigration, the costs of maintaining displaced families and subsequently rehabilitating them. Such costs are hidden and rarely calculated.

Internal wars can deeply damage and erode the traditional value system and moral foundations of the affected society. Access to lethal weapons, whether by legal or illegal means, becomes easier not just for military but also for civilians. Violence becomes part of the political and social institutions of the country and undermines fragile democratic processes. The urgent needs of the military as well as the trade in arms lead to the relaxation of controls on accountability and opens the way to large scale political and economic corruption and the disregard of human and civic rights.²

When we add to this fact the enormous cost to the international community of trying to resolve conflict, the cost of maintaining peacekeeping forces, the cost of humanitarian assistance and the prohibitive cost of post-war reconstruction in affected countries, we conclude more effort should be put into actively promoting the prevention of
conflict.

~The need for new approaches to resolving conflict ~

As we look back on the history of peacemaking and peace processes we see that they have traditionally centred on diplomacy, mediation, the cessation of hostilities and the achievement of peace agreements. These are things we are all familiar with. Once a peace agreement is signed the diplomats and the mediators go home and the parties to the conflict get on with life under the terms of the peace agreement. This is not sufficient any more.

The effect of conflict on civilian populations and on a country reflects the fact that, in recent years, the very nature of warfare has changed. Over the years, wars have been fought between nation states and between people who did not necessarily live in close proximity to one another. Today, the vast majority of armed conflicts around the world are internal wars or, as they are called, intranational wars, where conflicting groups live very close to one another. The real or perceived enemy is no longer on the other side of the world but is perhaps in one's own locality, town, village or neighbourhood.

We find that almost two-thirds of all current conflicts are "identity conflicts". The unit of identity can be based in religion, geographic region, cultural and language differences or ethnic affiliation and such conflicts are likely to have a historical dimension that will add to the complexity of the conflict. Identity groups in conflict situations "live as neighbours and yet are locked into long standing cycles of negatively defined interaction. The conflicts are characterised by deep-rooted, intense animosity, fear and severe stereotyping".³ Many of these conflicts start as internal conflicts but, because of their nature, they can spill over national borders and quickly take on a regional dimension.

These conflicts pose enormous challenges to peacemakers and the solutions are not readily forthcoming. We can see, at least, that traditional diplomatic approaches to resolving conflict are very inadequate when dealing with identity conflicts that have impinged on and shaped people's lives for generations. If sustainable peace is to be achieved in places where mistrust, fear and hatred have festered for a long time then new approaches to resolving conflict have to be found.

~ Can we prevent deadly conflict? ~

Doctors say that prevention is better than cure. Those who work for peace could adopt the same principle. Prevention of conflict would, by any standards, be far less expensive than trying to resolve conflict and it makes much more practical sense. Conflict prevention, or even intervention at a very early stage in a conflict, presents the best possibilities for peace. If conflict prevention is going to be taken seriously then early warning systems which will indicate when and where conflicts are likely to take place have to be developed, put in place and taken seriously. The problem here is the kind of indicators to be used to predict the possibility of conflict taking place. Are the indicators to be solely political or are economic and social indicators also necessary?

Another question is: Who is to be responsible for the application of the early warning systems? The UN should be the best umbrella organisation and perhaps the one with the greatest influence. NGOs (non-governmental organisations), on the other hand, are more involved locally and in the best position to monitor events on the ground. Co-operation between the UN and NGOs would be the most effective method but differing mandates and conflicting interests make standardisation difficult.

Early warning should lead to preventive action and this depends totally on the willingness of donor governments and the international community generally to respond. Given compelling evidence on the potentially deadly conflict in Rwanda, the international community did not respond to prevent the genocide.

The problem is that powerful governments and international organisations are traditionally used to military solutions in conflict and potential conflict areas. Conflict prevention must go beyond the military efforts and include political, economic and social and humanitarian measures which would decrease the potential for conflict. This demands much greater co-ordination among all agencies involved and the development of a much more integrated approach to conflict and its resolution.

~ Peacebuilding from below ~

The optimism for peace that followed the end of the cold war quickly evaporated as the number of complex emergencies increased. The UN, as the leading international agency mandated to achieve and maintain peace, experienced some tragic failures. The UN's inability to enforce peace in Somalia, its failure to respond to the crisis in Rwanda, the problems encountered in Bosnia and more recently in Kosovo, have all served to underline the need for new and more appropriate responses to intranational conflict.

A number of lessons have been learned, not just from the recent experiences of the UN, but also from the experiences of those working in the field of humanitarian assistance and from practitioner-scholars seeking more effective and sustainable peacemaking processes.

1. There is the recognition that complex conflicts require equally complex interventions. Complex emergencies do not lend themselves to simple one-dimensional interventions such as traditional mediation aimed at a peace agreement, or peacekeeping operations or cease-fire supervision or ensuring democratic elections. Any meaningful intervention has to be multi-dimensional and has to take place at several different levels at the same time. No one actor can provide a total response so that in any new approach to conflict resolution the need for co-operation and co-ordination between all the actors involved in trying to resolve the conflict becomes vitally important.
2. There is the realisation that post-conflict peacebuilding needs to be built in to the framework of any peace agreement. There is a need for long term development strategies that will erode cultures of violence and sustain peace processes on the ground.
3. The international agencies need to recognise and strengthen indigenous organisations with a capacity to resolve conflicts. Local organisations are in the best position to seek out and exploit opportunities for peace. Too often ignored by the international peace actors and donors alike, local organisations need to be encouraged, through training and capacity building programmes, to play a much greater role in the search for sustainable peace.

~ Support for local peacemakers ~

The role of outside mediators and the use of mediation techniques have, for long, been accepted as a more likely way to produce the shift in attitudes and understanding necessary for a stable peace and a resolution of conflict than conventional diplomacy alone. However, it is becoming clear that peace settlements reached through negotiation do not necessarily bring about the required change of heart, which is the crux of peace particularly in complex internal conflicts.

Adam Curle is an eminent peace researcher and practitioner who for the past few years has been involved with the Osijek Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights, based in the Eastern Slavonia province of Croatia. Curle has been a strong promoter of the principle of negotiation but, because of his Osijek experience, realises that negotiation by outsider neutral parties alone may not be sufficient to bring about the necessary change of heart. He says: “Since conflict resolution by outside bodies and individuals has so far proved ineffective (in the chaotic conditions of contemporary ethnic conflict – particularly, but not exclusively, in Somalia, Eastern Europe and the former USSR), it is essential to consider the peacemaking potential within the conflicting communities themselves”.⁴

Support for local peacemakers is essential to the successful resolution of the many complex internal wars around the world today. This support can be given in a number of ways: by being available in an advisory capacity, by facilitating local initiatives, by workshops and training in a number of fields which local groups might identify as necessary. The task is to empower people of goodwill in conflict affected communities to rebuild democratic institutions and to help in “the development of the local peacemakers’ inner resources of wisdom, courage and

compassionate non-violence”⁵ This approach may lead to better opportunities for more formal mechanisms of conflict resolution.

***~ People from all levels of society need
to be involved in building peace ~***

John Paul Lederach is another scholar-practitioner with experience in Central America who has stressed the importance of this approach, which he calls *indigenous empowerment*. “The principle of indigenous empowerment suggests that conflict transformation must actively envision, include, respect, and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting. This involves a new set of lenses through which we do not primarily ‘see’ the setting and the people in it as the ‘problem’ and the outsider as the answer. Rather, we understand the long-term goal of transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting.”⁶

The approach also suggests that it is important to identify the “cultural modalities and resources” within the setting of the conflict in order to evolve a comprehensive framework which embodies both short term issues (such as an end to hostilities) and long term perspectives (such as constitutional reform) for conflict transformation.

To achieve Lederach’s comprehensive approach it is necessary to build an infrastructure for peace which includes many different levels of the affected population. This includes the affected population having input into the peace process as well as into the implementation of any peace agreement.

Lederach describes the affected population as a triangle, with the key military and political leaders at the apex, at level one.

In the middle, at level two, are the national leaders who have significance as leaders in sectors such as health, education and within the military hierarchies, ethnic and religious leaders and academics.

Finally, at the grassroots level, level three, are the vast majority of the affected population: the common people, displaced and refugee populations, local leaders, elders, church groups, community development workers and locally based NGOs. At this level, the armed combatants are also represented as guerrillas and soldiers in militias.

Most peacemaking at the level of international diplomacy operates at level one of this triangle but for conflict resolution to be successful and sustainable then the co-ordination of peacemaking strategies across all three levels must be undertaken.

Each level needs to be involved in the process of building peace. At level one there are normally very few people involved and the focus is on high level negotiations. The mediators lead the negotiations and are normally quite high profile. The emphasis will be on bringing an end to hostilities through negotiations and the signing of a peace accord.

Level two consists of problem solving workshops, training in conflict resolution with leaders of civil society, the establishment of peace commissions and the development of negotiation teams who are familiar with the conflict and with the parties (insider-partial as distinct from outsider-neutral).

Level three involves putting in place local peace commissions to promote and monitor peace, training grassroots community groups, programmes designed to reduce levels of stereotyping and prejudice and culturally appropriate psychosocial and trauma healing programmes.

In this new thinking, peacebuilding from below is of decisive importance for it is the means by which, according to Lederach, a peace constituency can be built within the setting of the conflict itself. Once again this is a departure from conventional practice where peacemaking resources from outside the conflict are valued more highly than the peacemaking assets which may exist within the community.⁷

~Conclusion - moving towards reconciliation ~

In a real sense the ultimate goal in the work of conflict resolution is the achievement of reconciliation. To move from a situation where we have reached a peaceful settlement to a new place where broken relationships between groups and between individuals can be rebuilt, and where healing can take place – this is the challenge of reconciliation. Is reconciliation possible? How can reconciliation be achieved?

If we are to be agents of reconciliation in conflict areas then we ourselves must believe that reconciliation is possible. Forgiveness is at the heart of reconciliation and at the heart of our Christian faith. God’s love makes forgiveness possible. Working for reconciliation we become agents of God’s love in helping people to acknowledge the wrongs of the past, to accept shared responsibility and to work out a mutual understanding of a common future. In internal conflict, the futures of the conflicting parties are inevitably linked together. To achieve reconciliation we must create or provide the space where encounter can take place and where relationships can be healed.

To do this we must help people come to terms with a tragic and painful past. Psychological and social healing are important aspects of reconciliation. Victims must have the opportunity to acknowledge their pain and have their pain acknowledged. The opportunity to ask for forgiveness and the opportunity to forgive must be created.

Speaking of reconciliation, Lederach maintains: “Its primary goal and key contribution is to seek innovative ways to create a time and place, within various levels of the affected population, to address, integrate, and embrace a painful past and the necessary shared future as a means of dealing with the present”.⁸

1 Summerfield, Derek, *The Impact of War and Atrocity on Civilian Populations: Basic Principles for NGO Interventions and a Critique of Psychosocial Trauma Projects*, Relief and Rehabilitation Network, Paper 14, Overseas Development Institute, London, 1996

2 A study on the true cost of war can be a useful exercise for Caritas agencies in the field. Such a study can help influence decision makers and also provide important information for the citizens of a war-torn country. It can also help promote peace initiatives and build a peace constituency within the country. This kind of study is particularly effective in advocacy work.

3 Lederach, John Paul, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, The United Nations University, 1995

4 Curle, A. 1994: “New challenges for citizen peacemaking”, *Medicine and War*, vol. 10, pp.96-105

5 Ibid, p.104

6 Lederach, John Paul, “Conflict transformation in protracted internal conflicts: the case for a comprehensive framework”, in Rupesinghe, K., 1995, *Conflict Transformation*, pp.201-22

7 Acknowledgement is due to Dr. Tom Woodhouse, Director of the Conflict Resolution Centre, University of Bradford (UK), for permission to use some personal notes in this section on Peacebuilding from Below.

8 Lederach, John Paul, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, op.cit., p.35

1.2 CATEGORIES OF CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MAPPING



~Introduction ~

If we are to engage in the work of reconciliation in situations of violent conflict the importance of good conflict analysis cannot be over-emphasised. Part of conflict analysis is the attempt to identify the type of conflict situation we are trying to address. In the post-cold war period it has become increasingly difficult to categorise the many different conflicts taking place around the world. How do you select conflicts for consideration? Do you categorise conflicts according to discernable patterns? By root causes? By the statistics of casualties? By parties to the conflict? By conflict issues? Do you include inter-state wars with civil wars? Such attempts at categorisation have led to well over 100 different categories of conflict.

We can, at least, try to identify progressive phases in the categorisation of conflict in the last fifty years. Though these phases are tentative, they give us an idea of the development from a definition of conflict that included inter-state wars and wars of independence from colonial regimes (*phase 1*) to a broader definition that included internal or intranational war and protracted social conflict (*phase 2*) and further expanded to include complex emergencies that have come to be identified with humanitarian crisis, political and economic disintegration (*phase 3*).

Within the numerous categories of conflict most analysts agree on three types of major armed conflict.

Inter-state conflict is conflict between two independent states.

Revolutionary conflict involves insurgency groups within the boundaries of the state and aims to change the government. This type of conflict may also include repressive violence by the state, be it state terror or genocide.

Identity conflict involves culturally defined groups whose identity is based on shared racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or kinship characteristics. This conflict may be about control of territory or inter-group violence.

To the list of civil conflicts or intranational conflicts we can add *factional conflict* which covers coups d'état, power struggles by elite groups, warlordism and criminality where the aim is to seize power and retain it to further particular interests.

We must also bear in mind that conflicts can change in nature over a period of time. What starts out as a revolution or an identity conflict could, in time, become a factional conflict.

~Domestic conflict ~

The vast majority of conflicts around the world today are domestic conflicts and they are the kinds of conflict in which we are most likely to be working towards reconciliation. In order to be adequately prepared to work in reconciliation it is necessary to have some idea of the various phases that domestic conflicts can move through. If we are involved in conflict prevention programmes, whether it is to prevent hostilities breaking out, preventing the escalation of hostilities or preventing the re-emergence of violent conflict in ceasefire situations or unstable peace, we need to be able to anticipate where, when and what is likely to happen.

As with the categorisation of conflict, the stages of conflict are equally difficult to establish. What is presented here as a typology is an attempt to fit domestic conflict into recognisable stages of conflict escalation.¹

Stage one is seen as a **peaceful stable situation**. In this, the state works much to the satisfaction of all concerned. Domestic politics are conducted in a peaceful way and outbreaks of violence as a way of political protest are extremely rare. There is generally a high regard for human rights issues and those who feel their human rights are being abused have open access to judicial protection. Change is advocated through open political dialogue and minorities are not excluded from the political process. There are effective mechanisms for peacefully reconciling conflicting interest groups. Labour disputes are resolved through dialogue or labour courts.

Stage two is when a **situation of political tension** exists. There can be latent conflict to a greater or lesser degree in most societies. It can be expressed through discrimination, prejudice, racial, class or religious tensions, political or economic injustice, mistrust, displacement of tension through family violence and crime.

When the manifestations of latent conflict begin to emerge to the extent that there are human rights violations, an increase in social conflict, the relationship between government and opposition groups becomes increasingly tense, protestors suffer from intimidation by police and armed forces, we enter a situation of political tension. There are evident signs of social unrest.

This stage is often characterised by a denial of the problem by the authorities and by fear on the part of the suppressed. There may be sporadic outbreaks of political violence with a small number of fatalities. Between stages two and three there is a **political crisis**.

Stage three is referred to as **serious political conflict**. This phase is characterised by further political polarisation and acceptance of factional politics. The gap between government and opposition groups widens and violent protest becomes more widespread. There is an increase in hostilities and in fatalities related to political violence and a general erosion of the government's political legitimacy. Riots become more common, services are frequently disrupted and the country's infrastructure begins to break down.

Further repression on the part of the government includes restrictions on freedom of speech, assembly and free press. Opposition groups complain of political intimidation, torture and disappearances.

Stage four is **low intensity conflict** and marks the beginning of open hostilities between rival political groupings. Armed conflict is generally restricted to specific areas of the country but fatalities increase. There is a large increase in the destruction of property and conflict causes displacement of peoples from affected areas. Human rights abuses become more frequent and indiscriminate. Rebel activity escalates as armed confrontation with security forces increases. Civilian populations and cultural institutions can also be targeted by factional violence.

Governments impose restrictions such as curfews and press censorship. Opposition parties and trade union activity may be banned. Security forces assume greater power and take increased license in terms of violence, arrests, detentions and the execution of “suspects”. Members of civil society such as lecturers, lawyers and doctors take refuge outside the country as exiles. Public services become weaker and the country’s infrastructure disintegrates as foreign investment as well as other sources of government income begin to dry up.

Stage five is **high intensity conflict** which is open warfare or full-scale civil war. The conflict spreads to large areas of the country, atrocities committed against the civilian population escalate dramatically and can even reach genocide proportions. There is massive displacement of peoples into neighbouring countries as refugees or to safer areas inside the country as internally displaced people (IDPs). The country’s infrastructure collapses totally with the national resources being used to support a war effort. Cultural institutions continue to be targets of violence as well as hospitals, clinics, schools and government institutions.

Assassinations and assassination attempts, coup attempts, summary mass executions of opponents, purges, massacres, martial law, corrupt election practices and occupation of sections of the country by factions are some of the symptoms of high intensity conflict.

This stage is characterised by crisis at two main levels. The country experiences the erosion of political authority and plunges into a state of **political crisis**. The government can only hope to stay in power with the active support of the military forces while faction leaders attempt political change by violent means.

The second level of crisis is **humanitarian crisis**. The lives of hundreds of thousands of civilians are so adversely affected by the conflict that outside intervention is needed to resolve it and to provide humanitarian assistance to the civilian population.

~ Conflict mapping ~

An understanding of the stages of conflict may help us to prepare for an intervention at a particular stage of the conflict and is particularly useful if we are involved in preventive strategies such as early warning and advocacy.

Conflict mapping may be of benefit to us in our conflict analysis and an aid to our understanding of the conflict. It is a slightly misleading term in that only a part of the exercise concerns a physical geographical map. Conflict mapping is more about providing a complete and objective picture of all parties and influences in the conflict situation and clarifying the relationship between them.

~ *Conflict mapping exercise2* ~

BACKGROUND

To develop the background to the conflict it is useful to decide how detailed this should be. Some conflicts, such as the Middle East or Northern Ireland, may have a very long and quite complicated history which can be time consuming to research in detail.

In developing the background to the conflict we need to examine the following:

Context

We should look at the *geographical location* of the conflict and particularly its regional setting.

A *demography* of the conflict area should outline the social and cultural distinctions that exist and the conditions of life that influence the conflict.

Governance is another important factor. This may include the political realities at national, provincial and local level.

An analysis of the *economic and developmental trends* in the conflict area is also necessary in establishing the context of the conflict.

History

No two conflicts have the same history so it is difficult to give guidelines. We may be able to develop identifiable stages in the history of a particular conflict.

Taking Northern Ireland as an example, these identifiable stages are:

- n Ireland under British rule;
- n Independence for the Irish Republic – partition and the creation of Northern Ireland;
- n Northern Ireland conflict 1968–98;
- n Post-Good Friday Peace Agreement 1998 -

A wall map of the conflict area will help to identify the physical areas affected and also the areas likely to be affected in the progress of the conflict.

We need to develop a time chart for the conflict, outlining its duration, significant dates, periods of conflict escalation and/or de-escalation, mediation attempts, alliances and any other events of consequence.

CONFLICT MAP

The core of our conflict mapping exercise is a close examination of all factors directly influencing its course. Conflicts are not static and all or any of the factors can change during the course of the conflict. Mapping will help us to monitor the various shifts that bring new dimensions to the conflict. We can develop the conflict map under a number of headings.

Parties

Identify all the parties involved in the conflict. This may be straightforward if it is government forces versus rebel forces or it may be more complicated, as in the Liberian war where there were as many as eight different factions involved in the fighting.

Issues

As stated, it is difficult to classify internal conflicts strictly according to the issues involved. The conflict may be to change a government, to gain independence or it may be one ethnic or cultural group against another, or it may be religious. There may be many issues involved. Northern Ireland has been seen by many as a religious conflict – Catholic and Protestant. It does have a religious dimension to it but there is a whole range of historical, political, social and economic issues which are more fundamental in terms of defining the conflict.

Issues can change during the course of the conflict and the conflict map enables us to keep track of such changes. The Liberian conflict began with the stated aim of removing the government. It quickly developed an ethnic dimension and then moved into warlordism and became an economic resource war. The original aim was eventually achieved but several other issues came into play during the course of the conflict.

Strengths

The relative strengths of the parties have an important bearing on the conflict. The numerical strength may be significant but the power base and relative population support of the parties can be even more important. Working from our two examples of Liberia and Northern Ireland we can say that the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) was numerically the strongest party to the Liberian conflict. Controlling large areas of the country and exploiting national resources, the NPFL had the economic strength to actively pursue the war.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA) may have been numerically small, but with a strong “sympathy” base, both inside and outside of the conflict area, it could engage in a particularly effective form of guerrilla warfare.

Detailed knowledge of the conflict areas can add to the strength of a particular party. Rebel groups exploit to great effect their knowledge of terrain, in contrast to, for example, government or peacekeeping troops.

Attitudes

Attitudes play a major part in any conflict situation and tend to harden rather than soften as the conflict develops. Attitudes harden as the notion of self-group identity strengthens, the understanding of the other group(s) decreases and frustration, anger and misperceptions of the other group increase. Communication between the groups deteriorates and enemy images and stereotypes are formed. Polarisation of the groups can become total with destructive feelings developing into fearful aggressive behaviour.

A vital aspect of conflict resolution is attempting to effect a change in attitude of the parties to the conflict and thereby modify aggressive behaviour.

Behaviours

The external behaviour of the conflicting parties is easier to map since it will consist of coercive actions, damaging actions and violent actions. All noted incidents of aggressive behaviour can be entered in the conflict map, as they are valuable indicators in defining the conflict area and determining the intensity of the conflict.

Conciliatory actions or gestures by parties to the conflict should also be recognised since they may indicate a change in attitude and can provide an opportunity for third party intervention and resolution of the conflict.

Phases

The phases of conflict are outlined in detail above and the indicators used to determine the escalation of conflict can also be used in the conflict mapping exercise. Being aware of the particular phase that a conflict may be in or moving towards is important in determining the suitability of a particular type of conflict resolution intervention.

External influences

The external influences on any conflict can be many and varied. These influences can be broadly divided into those that feed into the conflict and those that work to alleviate it. The list of possible outside influences is infinite and a sample few are mentioned here. In developing a conflict map we need to know as much as possible about the external influences that impact negatively or positively on our own conflict.

We should take particular note of the influences that feed into the conflict. These can include regional or wider international influences that have vested interests in the conflict and support one or other party to the conflict. Vested interests may be economic, political or ideological in nature. The outside influences can provide resources to the conflict party they support. These resources can include the sale of arms, training of military personnel, trading facilities, provision of safe havens and the promotion of political legitimacy.

External agents can also try to resolve the conflict and can include official diplomatic efforts to end the conflict. There may also be non-official conflict management agents such as mediation groups, non-governmental organisations or eminent persons. There may be military intervention forces in a peacekeeping or peace enforcement role. The United Nations is perhaps the most prominent external actor in the search for peace. The UN can, through its various agencies, play many roles in conflict areas, and may appoint a special representative or special ambassador to the conflict area.

Prospects for conflict resolution

As we engage in reconciliation work, our conflict map will help us identify both the internal and external agents that have both the interest and the resources to work for peace. It will also help us to identify opportunities for intervention in the conflict as well as the type of intervention most suitable. Our intervention may be in the area of conflict prevention, conflict alleviation/mitigation, conflict settlement or post-war peacebuilding. Our conflict mapping should provide a good tool for conflict analysis, reflect the changing situation of conflict and point us towards new possibilities for realistic and positive intervention.

1 Based on the model developed by PIOOM, the Interdisciplinary Research on Root Causes of Human Rights Violations, Leiden University, Netherlands, 1996.

2 Different models of conflict mapping are used by various agencies in conflict resolution. The exercise presented here is taken from a model used by the Centre of Conflict Resolution at the Department of Peace Studies, Bradford University, UK.

1.3 THE ROLE OF NGOS WORKING IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS



~ Introduction ~

“Non-governmental organisations are deeply involved in the world’s conflicts, and are frequently participants in most efforts to manage and resolve deadly conflicts.”¹

The international community is becoming increasingly aware of the vital role that NGOs (non-governmental organisations) play in conflict situations around the world. NGOs are frequently the first to focus the world’s attention on emerging catastrophes related to violent conflict and because of their flexibility, expertise and commitment they are normally the first to respond to human suffering in conflict areas. Through their efforts in humanitarian intervention and human rights advocacy, NGOs help to keep the world’s attention focused on the horrors of deadly conflict. Because of their long-term commitment they play a significant part in helping communities rebuild their lives after the conflict has ended.

Caritas, while being a socio-pastoral expression of the Church, belongs to the NGO community. Its members are often involved in all four spheres of NGO activity such as traditional economic and social development programmes, emergency assistance, human rights advocacy and monitoring and conflict resolution programmes. Its particular strength lies in its capillarity - that it is often found at village level but exists also at diocesan, national, regional and international level. Being part of the local Church, even in times of conflict, it is always present.

~ Advantages of NGOs in working for peace ~

NGOs bring some decided advantages to work in conflict situations. They have a long history of engagement in countries experiencing violent conflict and because of their long-term commitment and extensive in-country networks, they have considerable knowledge of local conditions and greater acceptability with indigenous populations than many national and international institutions.

Their strengths, particularly in conflict situations, lie in the fact that they are relatively independent, they are non-bureaucratic, they are well informed and well connected. NGOs are involved with grassroots organisations encouraging participation in political, economic and social life. They have an inbuilt flexibility that allows them to be innovative with responses and, perhaps most important, they have a long-term perspective to their programmes.²

In conflict resolution work, NGOs can function in areas where diplomats and politicians cannot operate because of political constraints and in areas where official actors often cannot gain access. They can have contact with different parties to the conflict without losing their own credibility. Because of their contact with grassroots

communities, they can build peace constituencies at a local level and mobilise public opinion to increase political will to actively work for peace.

NGOs have been able to accomplish an enormous amount of good work because of the advantages they bring to conflict situations. Through humanitarian assistance in food, health and shelter, countless lives have been saved. Human rights advocacy has prevented repression, torture, detentions and deaths in many countries. Communities in post-conflict situations have been assisted towards rehabilitation and economic viability through reconstruction programmes. Many local agencies have acquired conflict resolution skills because of training interventions.

*~ Development and relief aid can have
a negative impact ~*

The fact that NGOs are operating in a conflict situation could mean that they are already, albeit unwittingly, politically involved in the conflict. Many NGOs have found that development or relief programmes can feed directly into a conflict and help to exacerbate and even prolong the conflict. NGOs that have had a long-term engagement in a country prior to conflict may find themselves, their programme areas and programme beneficiaries targeted in conflict.

In times of peace NGOs are involved in development work and their programmes are designed to benefit a target population. They may be involved in education, health, agriculture, or any other development activity that creates a resource base, which can become a target in times of conflict. Armed factions in search of medical supplies and trained medical personnel, whom they may abduct, can target health clinics and hospitals. Agricultural programmes can be targeted for food or, where cash crops are cultivated, as an economic resource.

Educational institutions can be a ready source for the abduction or recruitment of young people into factions involved in the conflict. Feeder roads and bridges can ease the movement of armed groups. In addition, resources such as vehicles and fuel supplies are attractive to armed factions. The fact that an NGO is working in a particular area or with a particular community could, in itself, be a factor

During times of conflict many NGOs find that they can no longer continue with their normal development programmes mainly due to lack of security in the areas where they work. A decision then has to be made as to whether an NGO should maintain its presence or evacuate. Obviously, if the security situation deteriorates to the point that the lives of personnel and beneficiaries are threatened, it is necessary to close down programmes as people move to safer locations. Closing down a development programme does not mean that an NGO's commitment to its target groups has ended. Many NGOs continue their commitment by ensuring the safety of the people they work with and then becoming involved in humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian assistance is necessary during times of conflict as thousands of people are forced to leave their homes and relocate in areas not affected by the conflict, either as refugees in neighbouring countries or as internally displaced people inside their own countries. Food, shelter, health, water and sanitation become the primary needs of displaced people. NGOs becoming involved in humanitarian assistance to the victims of internal conflict do so for the best of motives which is to sustain dignified life and to relieve human suffering caused by conflict. In doing this, NGOs attempt to be impartial and provide assistance without discrimination, addressing the needs of all who are suffering and without bias toward or against one or more parties to the conflict. In theory, NGOs do not allow themselves to become allied with a party to the conflict.

However, many NGOs have found that humanitarian assistance frequently has a negative impact on conflict, exacerbating it in some cases and prolonging it in others. In Liberia, for example, NGOs estimated that armed factions looted up to \$40 million worth of relief supplies and other resources from relief agencies. This was a major source of income for the factions and undoubtedly prolonged the conflict.

The provision of humanitarian assistance to large sections of a population can, in some conflict situations, take responsibility from governments to find solutions to the conflict. As resource bases are exploited by armed factions, local populations move to safer areas where they become recipients of relief aid. In providing this relief aid NGOs can, in a rather perverse way, be accused of supporting structures that perpetuate violence rather than adopting an approach aimed at the reduction of violence.

While NGOs claim to be impartial in targeting beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance, maintaining impartiality is not always easy. The delivery of relief aid to people who were victims of conflict could be seen by those who caused them to be victims as being partial. During the early years of the conflict in Sierra Leone, relief aid was seldom, if ever, delivered to the RUF (Revolutionary United Front) held territory causing the RUF to see humanitarian aid as partial and pro-government. The hiring of armed guards to protect relief supplies and to assist with the safe delivery of those supplies into conflict areas can be seen as condoning conflict even if the beneficiaries are in great need of help.

NGOs need to be aware of the many ways in which relief aid can feed into a war time economy. During war many of the normal economic activities cease and alternative economies emerge. Relief supplies can be manipulated by governments, commandeered by military factions, exploited by unscrupulous merchants and even by corrupt

relief workers. The whole operation of humanitarian assistance can be a complicated process from the time relief supplies arrive in country. Dealing with customs officials, transport companies, security, warehousing, registration of camp dwellers, food distribution, and constant monitoring and verification of beneficiaries puts considerable strain on an NGO's resources. Local NGOs need to examine their capacity to operate a large relief programme before they take on the responsibility. It may be more feasible and effective to work in collaboration with larger relief agencies that have a proven track record in relief work.

~ Different approaches to delivering relief aid ~

“NGOs working in conflict situations have different approaches to the possibility that their humanitarian work may have negative effects.”³

Some NGOs set about their work in humanitarian assistance with one aim in mind – to pursue their own mandate. Working in emergency situations their primary concern is to deliver aid to victims as quickly and as efficiently as possible so that lives can be saved. This can be a laudable approach but not in all conflict situations. Such NGOs rarely act in consultation with other parties be they other NGOs, the authorities and, most crucially, the beneficiaries they intend to help. This approach to humanitarian aid can detract from local policies regarding aid distribution, can place beneficiaries in greater danger from attacks by warring factions and creates dependency rather than empowering local capacities for survival. These NGOs rarely take responsibility for the negative spin offs of their programmes. Their primary mandate is to save lives or deliver assistance to conflict victims. They usually have a very narrow perspective to their intervention and are mainly concerned with short-term solutions to a long-term problem.

Other agencies can involve themselves in humanitarian work, delivering relief to victims and accepting responsibility for the possible negative side effects that their programmes may engender. Such NGOs are very aware of the negative impact that assistance can have in conflict situations but reserve to themselves the right to decide the circumstances in which to provide or withhold assistance, again, without consulting any other affected parties. These NGOs insist on giving assistance on their own terms and in ways that conform to their own aims and objectives.

~ The “Hippocratic Oath” Approach ~

The Hippocratic Oath is taken by medical doctors before they begin practice. The oath commits them to do all in their power to assist their patients. This includes increasing their knowledge by keeping up to date with new medical developments and learning from their own experience to improve their own expertise. The Hippocratic Oath also includes a pledge *to do no harm*. This pledge acknowledges that medicine itself is good but if wrongly applied can do more harm than good.

NGOs are adopting this kind of approach in relief, development and in conflict resolution interventions. They may work with the very best of intentions but they cannot always predict that the outcome of their intervention will be what was intended. NGOs must be prepared to take on board the consequences of their own actions, learn from their own experience and that of other agencies – be that experience positive or negative. They need to have the

flexibility to adapt to the changing nature of complex conflict situations and to take on board the longer-term impact that their intervention may generate.

Another important aspect of the *do no harm* approach is the need for greater collaboration within the NGO community, between NGOs, governments and other international organisations and between NGOs and the people on whose behalf they work. Such collaboration ensures a more integrated response to conflict emergencies, maximises resources and increases the capacity to resolve conflict.

~ NGOs and conflict resolution ~

NGOs working primarily in humanitarian relief are becoming more and more aware of the need to incorporate a conflict resolution component into their regular programmes. In terms of a more comprehensive response by the international community to complex emergencies, this development is essential. While relief assistance is necessary to alleviate suffering caused by conflict there is little evidence that it is ever used to address the causes of armed conflict or to support the conditions for a return to peace.⁴

Because of their work in relief aid, NGOs have direct access to the victims of violence. In intranational conflicts not only are civilians used by factions as legitimate targets of violence but they also target the social and cultural institutions which connect those people to their history, identity and lived values.⁵

NGOs are in the strongest position to address the social impacts of war so necessary to conflict resolution at community level. Once their economic coping strategies have been removed, the most important coping mechanism for the victims of war is the social fabric of their society. The destruction of their traditional political and social institutions increases the sense of confusion, chaos, vulnerability and trauma among victims.

NGOs in humanitarian relief are beginning to realise the importance of recognising the political, economic and social dimensions of conflict and to develop programmes which address the root causes of conflict as part of their long-term strategies.

~ Developing local capacities ~

The emphasis on developing local capacities to manage emergencies and to encourage sustainable development must be complemented by developing the capacity for sustainable peace.

NGOs working in relief need to find ways of structuring assistance and organising their programmes in a way that empowers victims rather than creating dependency. Empowering people to work for peace necessitates ensuring that they have a voice and that they have a safe space in which to make that voice heard. Enabling victims to have a voice means that they decide on the issues to be pursued and on how and where to pursue them and includes deciding the risks that the people themselves are willing to take in working for peace.

While NGOs may not be in a position to influence a movement for peace at the level of politically negotiated settlements, they do have great potential for developing peace constituencies among the people with whom they have direct contact. Empowering civil society provides the foundation for the involvement of people in the process of peace. The provision of conflict resolution training facilities for community based organisations, religious

organisations, community leaders, youth and women's groups presents an essential opportunity for such empowerment.

NGOs can help to repair and strengthen the traditional structures which have been affected by violence and promote traditional and other culturally appropriate conflict resolution practices and institutions.

Caritas, as a socio-pastoral expression of the Church, is in a unique position not only to be an agent of reconciliation itself but to strengthen other aspects of civil society to become peace builders. This requires viewing our traditional work of emergency, rehabilitation and development through the lens of reconciliation and altering our practices accordingly.

1 Carnegie Commission of New York on Preventing Deadly Conflict, *Preventing Deadly Conflict*, December 1997. p.112

2 Mackinlay, John, (ed), *A Guide to Peace Support Operations*, Thomas A. Watson Jr., Institute for International Studies, Providence RI, 1996

3 Anderson, Mary B., in Crocker et al. (eds), *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, 1996

4 Bradbury, Mark, *Rebels Without a Cause? An Exploratory Report on the Conflict in Sierra Leone*, CARE UK, (internal document), 1995

5 Summerfield, Derek, *The Impact of War and Atrocity on Civilian Populations: Basic Principles for NGO Interventions and a Critique of Psychosocial Trauma Projects*, Relief and Rehabilitation Network, Overseas Development Institute, London, 1996, p.1

1.4 JUSTICE AND THE RULE OF LAW IN POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION



~ Introduction ~

This section on justice and the rule of law should be useful for Caritas agencies in three particular areas. It provides an important backdrop of macro level reconstruction and reconciliation issues against which much of our own work in reconciliation at the micro level has to be carried out.

It focuses on issues some of which we may feel are outside our direct sphere of influence but which should feature prominently in our advocacy and discernment work.

Various Caritas agencies are already engaged in post-war reconciliation work where the issues at stake are justice issues. In helping people to obtain access to justice, in human rights work, in working for social justice, in seeking to redress the wrongs of the past that brought about conflict, we are constantly made aware that an equitable rule of law is at the very heart of reconciliation and sustainable peace. The changed nature of warfare from international to internal wars poses new questions for conflict resolution and also for building and maintaining peace. When two countries sign a peace agreement, it rarely demands changes to the internal structures of either society. As we reach the end of the twentieth century, civil or intranational strife accounts for the vast majority of conflicts within which we find ourselves working and to which we attempt to find peaceful solutions. With intranational conflicts, a peace agreement can have wide-ranging implications for state institutions and processes, particularly those concerned with the administration of justice.

Pope John Paul II has said on numerous occasions that there can be no true peace without justice. Certainly, any credible peace must accept the task of addressing the injustices that existed in society and which precipitated the conflict. Conflict resolution must examine the root causes of conflict and, where issues of justice are concerned, set about redressing past inequities.

A peace agreement that brings an internal conflict to an end has to be concerned with authentic stability and the building of a society where the rights of all citizens are respected. Rules and procedures have to be established to protect these rights and to ensure that in future there are peaceful means by which conflict can be resolved. The rebuilding of society along these lines can only be achieved if that society has its foundation in the rule of law.

Much conflict resolution has to be done in the post-war period as efforts are made to reconstruct a society shattered by war. This reconstruction has to take place at all levels from the political efforts to build a democratic government to the rehabilitation of rural communities. In intranational wars, the signing of a peace agreement does not necessarily mean that peace has been achieved. The agreement can be a foundation upon which peace has to be built. Addressing issues of justice is an important aspect of building sustainable peace and working towards reconciliation.

A great deal of the work done by Caritas agencies is at the community level, in other words, at a micro level. Success at this micro level can be influenced by how the process of national reconstruction is approached at the higher level of the state, at the macro level. This is particularly true with regard to the administration of justice.

In the post-war period a country must try to heal the scars of conflict which has ignored the conventional rules of warfare and where the civilian population are deliberate targets of state repression or of factional violence. How the new government deals with the perpetrators of criminal violence during the course of the conflict also influences our work in reconciliation. It is often precisely in this area that the tension between reconciliation and the pursuit of justice is exposed.

The concepts of justice and reconciliation are not always compatible in post-war reconstruction. It may not always be possible to pursue justice and work for reconciliation. Compromises are made to achieve peace and in many cases it is the issues of justice that are compromised. The reasons for this can be varied. Amnesty may have been offered in order to bring the warring factions to the negotiating table or may be written into the peace agreement itself. War criminals can have considerable political support and the incoming government may feel insecure and unwilling to pursue them for fear of jeopardizing a fragile peace. The institutions of justice may be so weak that the state is not capable of providing legal support for victims.

Whatever the reason, as Caritas workers we need to be aware of the issues that influence our own work in reconciliation. We need to be aware of the political, economic and social problems faced by a post-conflict government and to know the limits that may be imposed on our own search for justice for victims. We need to know the direction for our advocacy and human rights work and, in particular, where government is failing to deliver on the terms of peace.

~ Society in transition ~

Every society emerging from war yearns for a time when violence gives way to justice and peace. However, when a country has experienced civil strife then the process of post-war reconstruction and the transition to a stable

and democratic society can be a slow and painful one. The process can sometimes be more trying than the preceding conflict if we insist on demanding ready-made solutions as soon as a peace agreement is signed.

The main focus in this section is on the rule of law and the administration of justice in post-conflict societies. Both of these are essential elements in the establishment of sustainable peace.

Many problems have to be overcome as a country begins the task of nation building, and the rule of law has to be seen in the context of some other vital elements of reconstruction which face post-war countries and which need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

~ The economy ~

During war the whole economic system of a country suffers enormous damage. Business investment is badly affected, the banking system breaks down and inflation becomes rampant. Government expenditure on the military increases and little money is spent on maintaining essential services in the country. The country's mineral and other resources are often illegally exploited either for personal gain or to finance military operations.

We cannot instantly demand economic stability, employment, education, redistribution of wealth, housing. Everybody wants to return to normality but we also have to face the reality that (in most conflict countries) the national coffers are empty and so all the citizens need to co-operate in rebuilding the nation into a state where justice prevails and rights are guaranteed.

~ State institutions ~

In the immediate post-war period, state institutions are usually too weak to cater to the most basic needs of its people, even those worst hit by the conflict, and who, even before the conflict, lacked the basic necessities of life.

There is the added problem of establishing government institutions according to the principles of democratic rule. This is particularly true for countries emerging from the long tunnel of authoritarian rule where bureaucracies are inept and incapable of democratic administration. The institutions of government need careful and (often) prolonged guidance to move from being moribund bureaucracies into democratic institutions promoting the welfare and rights of citizens.

~ Elections ~

Part of any peace agreement is holding free and fair elections to a government representative of all the people. This can often lead to a political scramble as exiled politicians return and faction leaders try to consolidate areas under their control in an attempt to gain legitimate political power. The election of a democratic government does not always allow for effective government. For many politicians it may be their first experience of democratic government. Many newly elected governments are limited from the beginning as politicians begin the work of consolidating their power base, and many appointments to government and civil institutions are made on the basis of political favour rather than ability.

~ Security ~

One of the most important tasks facing a new government is the problem of security. In many cases there may be an unknown number of government troops, opposition troops and other factions inside the country, as well as an unknown quantity of arms. There is an urgent need to begin a programme of demobilization, disarmament, retraining and restructuring of the armed forces. This programme has to be completed quickly and efficiently. In the post-war period many countries experience the political violence of wartime becoming criminal violence in peacetime. There are implications here for the development of the police force and how well equipped it may be to tackle violent crime, much of it perpetrated by former combatants.

~ Constitution making ~

Newly emerging democracies face the task of drafting a new constitution, which is the foundational legal document for all other rules and is the cornerstone of the rule of law. Constitution making should be by national consensus or allow for as wide a range of opinion as possible to be incorporated by consensus. The process of developing a new constitution is an important part of national reconciliation and is an essential contribution to national peace and stability.

~ Justice ~

While there are many other aspects of national reconstruction that have to be considered, the elements mentioned above have major consequences for the rule of law and the development of a workable and equitable system of justice in a society emerging from a period of prolonged conflict.

The establishment of the rule of law is one of the most important elements in building a stable peace in the post-conflict phase. If a just and equitable society is to be developed in the post-war period then the rule of law has to play a central role. "There is an obvious connection between the rule of law and the achievement of true peace and security in any new and stable political order."¹ To consolidate peace and promote reconciliation in the post-conflict period, serious attempts have to be made to overhaul justice systems that have proved inequitable and unjust in the past.

In cases where there is a transition from an autocratic to a democratic system the judiciary plays a key role, but also a very difficult one, since the laws of the country have been distorted and geared to the needs of the former regime. There is an immediate dilemma: Should all the laws be replaced? Many of those involved in the dispensation of justice, such as lawyers and judges, may well have been instrumental in the perversion of justice in the former regime. Should they all be dismissed? To replace them could be a long and difficult process.

There is a difference between rule of law and rule by law. There are many examples of regimes that have distorted the law to achieve their own ends and used the law to justify the repression of its citizens. In many instances, successive governments have manipulated the constitution of the country and the judiciary to their own political advantage. Here we have cases where the legislature and the judiciary, whose independence is often enshrined in the constitution, become tools of the government leaving little or no redress against injustice.

What we mean by rule of law is the process by which the rights of all the citizens of the country are protected and where recognised standards of justice exist.

What constitutes justice may vary from one society to another yet despite this lack of consent as to what justice might mean, it is the dream of every human being and every society to live in a world where justice prevails. In pursuit of justice, we know that in different parts of the world similar problems have found different solutions and this is particularly true in countries that have experienced conflict situations.

When we speak of justice we frequently mean the imparting of justice. This, however, ignores the magnitude of the justice issues at stake. When we analyse the causes of social crises we see that the lack of justice features prominently. Perhaps then it is better for us to describe justice as that which is indispensable for the peaceful co-existence of peoples.

Speaking in El Salvador, Pope John Paul II draws our attention to the need for making the vision of a more just world a reality:

“Making this world more just means, among other things, making it a world where children are not left without adequate nourishment, without education, without instruction; where young people can enjoy adequate training; where rural-dwellers are not landless, but rather live and develop in dignity; where workers are not ill-treated or deprived of their rights, where there are no systems justifying the exploitation of man by man or by the state; where there is no corruption; where there is no yawning gap between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’, the latter, for no fault of their own; where the family is not deformed, broken, crippled, or insufficiently cared for; where no one is defenceless against the law and where the law defends all equally; where force does not prevail over truth and right, rather truth and right reign; a world, finally, where economics and politics never gain the upper hand over all that which is human.”²

Conflict situations undermine the just relations within a society. In many states the judiciary and legal system become an arm of government and cater to the needs of those in power. In such cases there are no laws that favour a transition to democracy. One of the first steps must be the establishment of an independent legal system and that is a prerequisite for the construction of peace.

~ War crimes ~

How a country deals with its violent past will have an important bearing on the whole process of national reconciliation. One of the first areas that will test a country's legal system will be investigation into the conduct of the war. There are a number of issues to be examined here but perhaps the most important is deciding how those who were responsible for perpetrating the violence, and those who committed war crimes, are to be treated.

~ Amnesty? ~

Millions of people have suffered under repressive regimes and as a result of violent conflict. The use of violence and terror in deeply divided societies becomes a way of life. With a transition to democracy the victims of the former regime cry out for vengeance and demand to know the truth of what happened under that regime. The choices made by the new government can make a lot of difference in the process of constructing a new democracy. Decisions have to be made founded on the laws of the country which implies due respect for the rules of a judicial process and respect for the inviolable rights of the persons involved.

There are two broad positions that can be taken:

- n subject those responsible for grave violations of human rights to judgement; or
- n grant them a pardon.

Those who argue for the first option say that it is necessary to bring the culprits to judgement because the judicial process will mark an important dividing line between the past and present regimes and initiate a new pattern of administering justice. The process will identify those responsible, establish the real truth, repair the damage done, and open the door to pardon (rather than impunity). Only in this way can the process of reconciliation take place by keeping alive the memory of the past so that it can never be repeated.

Those who argue in favour of pardon without recourse to judgement say that we should forget the past and generate a new dynamic within society. This means granting amnesty without insisting on a process to establish the truth of what happened.

Countries have adopted different policies: Spain granted amnesty to everyone after Franco but the United States insisted on the Nuremberg Trials in Germany after the Second World War, while Chile, Uruguay, Argentina and El Salvador opted for Truth Commissions to discover those responsible for the atrocities committed during their wars. South Africa instituted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to recover the truth of its violent past.

In pursuing the perpetrators of violence through the judicial process, the basic norms of justice must be observed particularly equality of all before the law. The inalienable rights of the accused must be respected.

It should be kept in mind that crimes such as the violation of human rights might not have been incorporated in a country's laws during autocratic regimes, in which case the due legal process may be delayed.

~International humanitarian law ~

The basic principles of international humanitarian law are formulated in various international conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Civil and Political Rights Pact, which bind all signatory (member) states.

We should be aware of the various documents within which international humanitarian law is enshrined, particularly in countries where laws are not adequate to guarantee the rights and security of its citizens. The following is a list of some of those laws that may be applicable.

1 Protection against Discrimination

Universal Declaration of the United Nations on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or One's Convictions

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

2 Protection of Human Rights in the Administration of Justice

Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Minimum Standards for the Treatment of Prisoners

Code of Conduct for Law-Enforcing Functionaries

Basic Principles of the Independence of the Judiciary

Basic Principles on the Function of Advocates

Minimum Standards of the United Nations for the Administration of Justice to Minors

Basic Principles of Justice for the Victims of Crimes and the Abuse of Power

3 Norms Relating to Genocide, War Crimes and Humanity

Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

Manual on the Prevention and Effective Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary or Summary Executions

4 Rights of Children

Declaration on the Rights of the Child

Convention on the Rights of the Child

~ Who should be put on trial? ~

When the decision has been made to proceed with trials the question inevitably arises as to who should be prosecuted: the one who designed the violation of human rights, the one who gave the order, the one who executed the order, or all those directly involved?

The list can go on to include bureaucrats, public functionaries, army officials, police, collaborators and politicians of the party responsible. We must, however, keep in mind that civil servants are the only ones who know the running of the administrative apparatus and so pragmatism has to play a part to ensure the basic functions of government are carried out.

Wholesale prosecutions can sometimes be pursued simply out of a desire for vengeance and could adversely affect reconciliation.

~ Compensation ~

The question of compensation for those who suffered gross violations of human rights will inevitably arise. The weak economies of post-war countries and the priorities that have to be set in nation building leaves scant resources to compensate the victims of the previous regime. However, in principle, the issue of compensation should not be ignored but should be incorporated into post-war reconstruction plans. It is important to compensate victims for their material loss. It is also important that the government officially acknowledge the injustices suffered by victims in the past. The payment of compensation can also be a deterrent to such abuses happening in the future. The acknowledgement that compensation is due can ease the pain suffered by victims.

~ Truth Commissions ~

Support for Truth Commissions and supplementing their work should also be an area where Caritas can play a vital role. Truth Commissions have gained prominence in recent years as a way of addressing some of the issues of post-war reconciliation. They have come some way towards healing the historical memory of violence and its consequences. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is perhaps the best model available and one from which valuable lessons can be learned.

The proposed life of the South African TRC may be far too brief to address even a small percentage of the submissions it has received. A way forward would be for Churches and other humanitarian organisations to take up the work of the TRC to ensure that all the victims of violence have the opportunity to tell their story. Bearing that in mind, it is worth while looking at some of the strengths and weaknesses of the TRC for future reference.

The Commission is made up of three different committees that deal with human rights violations, reparations and rehabilitation and amnesty. The TRC was set up in 1995 to probe human rights violations that took place in more than thirty years of apartheid.

Advantages of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission

n The Commission does provide space for people to tell their story and that story is listened to. Victims have a forum at which they can, for the first time, name the violence that has been done to them and what the effect of the violence was. On an individual and collective level, the importance of the event and the enormity of its impact can be acknowledged, allowing the survivor to reclaim their past.³

- n The fact that people have a right to the truth is acknowledged and those who suffered have the possibility of finding out the truth about the imprisonment, torture, and disappearance of family and friends. They have the opportunity of putting those who died in the struggle to rest.
- n This process of truth recovery has been an important instrument in breaking what can be termed the culture of silence which is a direct result of physical violence. Silence is often the hallmark of repression where victims are reluctant to expose the truth for fear of reprisals. The Commission has set a useful precedent in creating a safe space where people can tell their stories.
- n The Commission documents the history of wrongdoing and human rights violations that were so much part of the struggle in South Africa. A new narrative is being written which incorporates the violence and its effects. Through the use of the media this narrative impacts on the national consciousness so that the narrative is no longer a private but a public one.
- n The Commission travels around the country. In this way it is much more accessible to people than a commission that works out of a capital city. People giving testimony before the Commission have the benefit of community support and feel less threatened.
- n There is the possibility of meeting the oppressor face to face with the opportunity of forgiveness being asked for and given. The interaction between the two parties that is necessary for forgiveness can happen and there is the possibility of reconciliation taking place.⁴ There is a forum for public acknowledgement of guilt and statement of contrition, which is the first necessary step towards reconciliation. For the victim there is the opportunity to forgive and somehow let go of the injustice.
- n The TRC is composed of South Africans and this gives it an extra strength to fulfill its tasks. It has the backing of government and has the necessary infrastructure at its disposal. It is run by indigenous people who have the moral authority to oversee the process so that the Commission has respect and international recognition. South Africa also has a justice system that works well.

n The Commission can make recommendations on restitution though it does not disburse funds itself. It is unlikely that any amounts paid out will compensate adequately for losses incurred but there is, at least on paper, an official acknowledgement that wrongs have been committed that should be compensated.

Disadvantages

- n The Commission does have its limitations and among these is the fact that it is not a justice tribunal. This leaves many South Africans aggrieved because they feel that murderers are getting off free in spite of the fact that the Amnesty Committee has been strict on the legal requirements necessary for granting amnesty.
- n Those who apply for amnesty do not necessarily have to ask for forgiveness but they do have to reveal fully the circumstances surrounding their crimes. This is certainly a step ahead of the blanket amnesty granted in Chile and El Salvador. Amnesty will continue to be a delicate issue in peace negotiations.
- n The Commission does not deal with the long term memory and can do little to change the structures of apartheid that still remain in place. The Commission's mandate refers to crimes committed since 1960 under apartheid but there are other truths and other reconciliations that also need to be addressed. The problem of historical memory is not fully addressed.
- n The success of the TRC in fostering reconciliation and uncovering the truth of South Africa's history has yet to be assessed. The limitations of the Commission indicate that the work of reconciliation is far from complete in South Africa. Nonetheless, the lessons are there to be learned by the Churches and other organisations that will be involved in this work in the future.

1 Kritz, Neil J. "The rule of law in the post-conflict phase: building a stable peace", in Crocker, et al. (eds), *Managing Global Chaos*, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, 1996

2 "Mensajes Sociales de SS Juan Pablo II en América Latina", Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano - Celam, Depas 80, Colección Documentos Celam no. 80, Bogotá, October 1986, p. 175

3 Hamber, Brandon, "Dealing with the past and the psychology of reconciliation", public address presented at the 4th International Symposium on "The contributions of psychology to peace", Cape Town, 27 June 1995

4 Forset, Jim, "A Dialogue on Reconciliation in Belgrade", in Baum, G. and Wells, H. (eds), *The Reconciliation of Peoples: Challenge to the Churches*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y., 1997

II. RECONCILIATION AS UNDERSTOOD BY CHRISTIANS

2.1 WHAT IS RECONCILIATION AS UNDERSTOOD BY CHRISTIANS?



Reconciliation can mean many different things. For some, it means the re-establishment of harmony after a time of conflict. For others, it means the end of enmity between two parties. For still others, reconciliation refers to a process that begins with forgiveness for past acts and ends with peace.

Reconciliation can mean all these things, both for Christians and for others. Christians struggling to end hostility and to promote peace participate in all of these activities. Yet it must be recognised that, for Christians, reconciliation has some very specific meanings alongside these widely understood usages of the term.

For Christians, reconciliation describes first and foremost the activity whereby God and the world are brought together through the saving activity of Jesus Christ. It is the action of the Holy Trinity in the world: God sending the Son into the world to achieve reconciliation between God and the world, a relation that is sustained by the Holy Spirit until the fulness of that reconciliation is realised at the end of time.

~ Biblical meaning ~

The term reconciliation is not used specifically in the Old Testament, although there are stories that would be considered stories of reconciliation, such as that of Jacob and Esau (Genesis 33) or Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 45). More central for the Old Testament is the concept of atonement, whereby a ritual performed once a year takes away the sins of the people and makes right their relationship with God (Leviticus 16).

In the New Testament, one finds similar stories of reconciliation, such as the parable of the lost sheep and the prodigal son (Luke 15). The word reconciliation occurs in the New Testament only in the writings of St. Paul. Originally, it was a secular term, meaning “to make peace in time of war”, and was used in the divorce courts to refer to the reuniting of an estranged couple.

In Paul’s writings, it refers to Christ’s special activity in the world, reconciling the world to God (Romans 5:11), reconciling Jew and Gentile (Ephesians 2:12-16), or reconciling the entire universe to God (Colossians 1:19-20). Christ’s reconciling work is now entrusted to the Church (2 Corinthians 5:11-21).

~ The Christian understanding of reconciliation ~

The basics of the specifically Christian understanding of reconciliation can be summarised in five points:

- 1 Reconciliation is first and foremost the work of God, who initiates and completes reconciliation within us.**

Those events and memories that cry out for reconciliation in our lives are of such an enormity that we, of ourselves, are incapable of effecting reconciliation. The possibility of reconciliation comes from God, who alone grasps the sheer enormity of the wrongdoing and makes possible the means whereby reconciliation can take place.

What that means is that reconciliation is not something new that, ultimately, we do or achieve. We work as God's agents, participating in a reconciliation that comes from God. All our plans and strategies for reconciliation must be seen in that light.

2 In the Christian understanding of reconciliation, the process begins with the victim, not with the evildoer.

Many strategies of reconciliation are built around ways to get the wrongdoer to repent or to acknowledge wrongdoing, so that the relationship between the wrongdoer and the victim can be repaired. Christian understandings of reconciliation focus first on the victim. Because reconciliation is the work of God, Christians believe that God turns first to the victim, whose humanity has been damaged by the acts of the wrongdoer. This is consistent with a Christian understanding of God, who hears especially the cry of the poor and oppressed, who reaches out first to the marginalised and powerless of the world.

What God does in the act of reconciliation is to restore the life of the victim, to give back the humanity and the dignity that the acts of the wrongdoer have tried to take away. Christians call this experience of receiving back humanity and dignity the experience of grace, that is, an experience of the graciousness of a life-giving God, the God of life who overcomes all the death-dealing acts that affect our world. This restoration of the victim to dignity and selfhood is the basis for the further process of reconciliation

By engaging in acts of injustice, wrongdoers not only damage the dignity and humanity of their victims, they also diminish their own dignity and humanity. Their acts, however, usually blind them to what they have done to themselves. They cannot grasp the enormity of what they have done, and they often fear reflecting on what their deeds have done to themselves.

Thus one cannot expect that the reconciliation process can begin with the evildoers. It must begin with the restoration of the victims who can then lead society to a new possibility.

3 The experience of reconciliation makes both the victim and the wrongdoer “a new creation” (2 *Corinthians 5:17*).

Strategies of reconciliation often aim at getting a society back to the state it was in prior to the conflict. But the sheer enormity of what has happened – such as dislocation of large groups of people, the deaths of thousands, destruction of homes and environment – make such a return to a prior condition virtually impossible.

Christians believe that the reconciliation that God works is not a restoration to a former state, but a situation in which both victims and evildoers are taken to a new place. The victims, having experienced reconciliation, no longer demand vengeance upon the wrongdoers, but are able to imagine a totally new state of affairs.

Here one enters the difficult areas of justice and forgiveness. We know that justice – in the sense of restitution – is sometimes impossible to achieve (as in the case of justice for the dead). Punishment of wrongdoers may not achieve anything like an equivalent for the evil that has been done. Similarly, forgiveness can never be simply the restoration of the old way of doing things.

A mark of the Christian understanding of reconciliation is precisely this “new creation”, namely, that God leads both victims and wrongdoers to new life in the future that gets beyond the undeniable hurt of the past.

4 What creates this new humanity for victims and wrongdoers can be found in the story of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Christians believe that the reconciliation that God has worked for the evil that afflicts our world has been brought about through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are two distinct ideas that are important here.

First of all, Christians believe that Jesus’ unjust and violent suffering and death are the ways that the structures of power and evil in the world are overcome. In that suffering and death, Jesus has taken on the power of evil and has overcome it. The resurrection can be seen as a paradigm of reconciliation: the risen Jesus is the reconciled new creation, the source of reconciliation for every victim of power and evil in our world. God overcomes evil not by ignoring or dismissing it, but by entering into it so as to conquer it from the inside.

Second, the story of Jesus’ unjust suffering and death becomes a “dangerous memory” for Christians and indeed for the whole world. That memory means that no evil will ever be allowed to prevail, no matter how heinous. The reconciling power of the God of life is always stronger, and can always bring victims through that experience to a new creation.

As a result, Christians discover ways of placing their own story of suffering inside the bigger story of the suffering and death of Christ in order to overcome its effects. In the words of Paul, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death” (Philippians 3:10).

5 The Christian understanding of reconciliation reveals a deeper truth about the world itself.

Christians believe that this understanding of reconciliation as the work of God in Christ for the sake of the world reveals a number of things about the world.

First of all, it takes seriously just how complex and how deep evil and wrongdoing pervade the world. It took the suffering and death of the very Son of God to overcome it. As a result, even though Christians believe that reconciliation is first and foremost the work of God, this never leads them to a passive stance toward the work of reconciliation. Their active struggle to bring about reconciliation reflects God’s own commitment to the world and to the victims of evil.

Second, the Christian understanding of reconciliation teaches us something about the nature of power as the world understands it. Power, no matter how complicit with the forces of evil, is of itself not capable of undoing the effects of evil. It takes the work of God to bring that about.

Third, the cross of Christ stands as a paradoxical symbol of how God overcomes the evil of the world. At the time of Christ it was a symbol of utter humiliation and (for the powerful) the betrayal of state power. It was “a stumbling block for Jews and foolishness to the Greeks” (1 Corinthians 1:25). But it reveals a deeper meaning of just where power does lie: with the Creator and with those whom the Creator loves, even though they may be considered weak, powerless and foolish to the world.

~ Some basic theological concepts in reconciliation ~

Because there are some distinctive features to the Christian understanding of reconciliation, it can be useful to see how this affects some basic concepts associated with the reconciliation process. Some of these concepts also have theological meaning beyond their common sense meaning in societies.

1 The ministry of reconciliation by the Church

St Paul tells us that Christ’s ministry of reconciliation has been given to the Church (2 Corinthians 5:18). In John’s Gospel, Jesus entrusts the ministry of the forgiveness of sins to the disciples (John 20:23). The Church, therefore, has seen itself carrying forward the ministry of reconciliation from the very beginning.

This has been accomplished principally for Catholics in the sacrament of reconciliation, but also in the sacraments of baptism and eucharist. In the administration of these sacraments, the ordinary minister is the priest or bishop (the deacon in the sacrament of baptism).

Reconciliation as it is understood in this Handbook is addressed to social situations of conflict and injustice. How does this work of reconciliation relate to the Church's ministry of reconciliation? What does it mean to be a minister of reconciliation in these instances?

What has become clear in some cases is that the ordinary ministers of these sacraments may not be suitable ministers of reconciliation in situations of conflict. The Church itself, on occasions, has been implicated in the violence against victims which now calls for reconciliation. This happens when the Church sides with the wrongdoer as when it sanctions a violent, authoritarian government, or when it is complicit with the violence by not condemning it or resisting it.

In situations of conflict, the ordinary ministers of the Church must earn the right to be ministers of reconciliation after situations of violence by proving their solidarity with victims of the violence and the oppression. In other words, the Church must earn the trust of the victims in order to act as a mediator of reconciliation.

Caritas agencies are expressions of the socio-pastoral concern of the Church. In this regard Caritas workers can be seen as ministers of reconciliation. To use the words of St. Paul they can be "ambassadors for Christ's sake," (2 Corinthians 5:20). What does such a ministry of reconciliation involve?

As we have seen in the first part of this section, we are not so much authors of reconciliation as God's agents and co-workers. What that means is that a ministry of reconciliation involves *creating the conditions under which reconciliation can take place*. Such a ministry includes:

- n Creating conditions under which victims might regain their humanity and their dignity. This involves creating zones of safety and hospitality where victims can tell their stories. Once humanity and dignity have been regained, a ministry of reconciliation also entails helping victims *assert* their dignity in the larger sphere beyond zones of safety and hospitality.
- n Supporting the ministry of reconciled victims to help them reach out to the wrongdoers to bring about their repentance.
- n Supporting processes of reconciliation initiated by other agencies and groups, be they governmental or non-governmental organisations, as well as other religious communities.

Caritas has its own projects for reconciliation and peacebuilding as well. When those projects and other co-operative efforts take into account the specifically Christian aspects of reconciliation, Caritas workers share in a special way in the Church's ministry of reconciliation.

2 Justice

In processes of reconciliation, one of the earliest calls is always for justice. The need for justice is usually blatantly obvious when one sees the wrongs that have been perpetrated and how those wrongdoings stand in the

way of any reconstruction of a shattered or deeply damaged society. Solidarity with victims in itself cries out for justice.

Yet experience has shown how complex justice itself is in situations of reconciliation. Seen theologically, justice is the right relations in society intended by God the Creator. These involve right relations between God and creatures and also right relations among human beings, as well as right relations between human beings and the environment.

Justice comes in many forms and addresses many wrongs. All too often the first calls for justice after situations of oppression are really calls for punishment or even vengeance against the wrongdoers. These are a form of justice, but usually address more the feelings of victims having been wronged than any redress of the situation. After all, can such calls for punishment bring back the dead? Such feelings are indeed legitimate, but giving them immediate satisfaction may not further the reconciliation process. They may, in fact, deepen the division in society. Moreover, there are many situations where the wrongdoers are still so powerful that they cannot so easily be brought to task or punished.

A second level of calls for justice addresses reparation or remuneration for victims. These occur, for example, when compensation is paid to families whose loved ones have been killed so that the elderly can be cared for or the children educated now that the breadwinners for those families are dead. This is a very concrete way of bringing about redress after a time of injustice.

A third level of justice addresses the structural inequities which were the cause of injustice and conflict in society in the first place. These might address land reform, equal rights for minority groups and the like. Such injustices often take longer to address, and may not be able to yield the experience of redress that will help rebuild a shattered or damaged society.

Yet another level of justice involves the legal systems and the laws of society (see section 1.4 Justice and the Rule of Law in Post-war Reconstruction).

All of this is to say how complex the justice question is in the reconciliation process. Workers for reconciliation in such settings must help participants distinguish what kind of justice they are calling for, and how long it will take to achieve. This is especially important when the call for justice is really a veiled call for vengeance. Calls for justice that are too intransigent in their conditions may actually stall the achievement of justice or any reconstruction of a society. In some instances, truth may be the prior condition for any call for justice. In such instances, sorting out what is really being called for is important to any long-term programme of justice and peace.

3 Truth

Truth is essential to justice and to the reconstruction of a society. The pattern of injustice and oppression that now calls out for a process of reconciliation often must begin by re-establishing what is the truth. Oppressive societies are built upon lies – lies about the victims and how they deserved or required the oppression they

experienced. Lies about society and who and what was threatening society and had to be combatted. Lies about those who were in power and how they were really the saviours of a society rather than its destroyers. Truth is often very hard to establish because of the way that all segments of a society may be implicated in the fabric of the lies. Most insidiously, victims of torture or rape are made to believe that they deserved the terrible things that were done to them, and these lies have been inscribed on their bodies.

It is for this reason that many post-conflict efforts that begin as justice and reconciliation programmes become truth and reconciliation programmes. The quest for truth is twofold. The first is to *establish the truth of what actually happened*. For example, who among the “disappeared” died, and where are their bodies? Who ordered their deaths, and who carried out the orders to kill? Documenting the dead is about establishing the truth of their condition so that the question of justice can be undertaken thereafter. For survivors, truth about the dead sometimes is more important than justice, since no justice can bring back the dead.

The second reason for a quest for truth is *to establish a pattern of truthfulness upon which a new society can be built*. This is an important step in supplanting a society based on lies. It also provides public practices of truthfulness that supplant the subversive and often secret character of oppressive societies.

“You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free”, we hear in the Gospel of John. Part of reconstructing a society is learning how to *do the truth*.

4 Peace

Like justice, peace is also elusive. Peace is more than the cessation of conflict; however, without the cessation of conflict, peace is not possible either.

Peace understood theologically is a gift from God. Like reconciliation, it is more than we can achieve for ourselves. It comes through Christ, who “made peace through the blood of his cross” (Colossians 1:20). What this means, from a theological point of view, is that peace shares in the paradoxical condition of reconciliation. It is not about power over conflict and hostility as the world understands power, but as something that comes from God, sides with and lifts up the victims, and is as much about self-emptying as self-aggrandisement. That is why peace is tied to non-violence for so many Christians.

From the point of view of those working for reconciliation, peace might best be seen as something to be attained in progressive stages. There can be no peace without truth, nor can there be peace without some establishment of justice. Peacemaking involves concrete engagement as well as an awareness that peace is ultimately a gift from God in which we participate and cooperate.

5 Forgiveness and repentance

Forgiveness on the part of the victim and repentance on the part of the wrongdoer are usually seen as fundamental building blocks of a programme of reconciliation. Unless the victim is able to forgive, based on the repentance of the wrongdoer, no new society can come about. Such is the thinking behind the South African theologians’ *Kairos Document* in 1985.

What happens in practice is usually more complicated. Most frequently, the wrongdoer is unwilling to repent. This happens either because wrongdoers are afraid of the repercussions that will come upon them if they admit wrongdoing. Hence they seek amnesty or other guarantees of impunity. They may also feel that what they did was necessary for the salvation of the nation and that they are therefore not culpable. Sometimes wrongdoers may make a *pro forma* repentance in order to escape graver punishment that is not adequate in the eyes of the victims.

Victims, for their part, may have suffered such trauma from the wrongs perpetrated that they do not know how even to begin to forgive. The evil has burrowed so deeply into their souls that they do not know how to extricate it without losing the few shreds of humanity they still possess. In other instances, there are cultures where to forgive is to admit weakness and to lose face vis-à-vis the wrongdoers. In these instances, to forgive is to victimise the oppressed even further.

Complicating these patterns even further is the admonition followed by many Christians to “forgive and forget”. They remind victims that Christ urged forgiveness upon his followers, enjoining them to forgive their brothers and sisters “seventy times seven”. Not to forgive, then, makes of victims an even more diminished status as faithful disciples of Christ.

How is forgiveness to be understood theologically? Are Christians called upon to forgive and forget?

One must begin by recalling that the New Testament says that it is only God who can forgive sins. Jesus scandalised some of those around him by pronouncing a forgiveness of sins that was proper only to God. After all, all sin was against God, and only God is in a position to comprehend the immensity of such wrongdoing.

The forgiveness of sins carried out by the Church is something that Jesus entrusted to the Church, not as something intrinsic to the nature of the Church itself, but as something given by God. Jesus, acting on the authority given him by God, gives this power to the Church. What this should remind us is how difficult forgiveness is and it is something that ultimately only God is really capable of doing.

Advocates of forgiveness also point to Jesus forgiving his executioners in Luke’s Gospel (22:34), which is echoed by Stephen vis-à-vis his executioners in the Acts of the Apostles (9:60). These passages are cited to enjoin prompt forgiveness even in the case of heinous wrongdoing.

A closer reading of Luke 22:34 suggests another interpretation, however. Jesus does not forgive his executioners in this passage; rather he calls upon his Father to forgive them. There is an important difference here. Jesus, in his being tortured and executed, cannot encompass the enormity of the wrong being done to him. But his Father rescues Jesus' humanity that allows the victim Jesus to call upon God to forgive. Here the victim Jesus experiences the full dignity of his humanity – his ability to call upon his Father even as his humanity is being demeaned and ripped away from him by his executioners. Jesus calling upon his Father in this passage becomes a paradigm not of instant forgiveness, but of maintaining humanity even under the most degrading circumstances.

This may be a more accurate reading of Luke 22:34 (which is, in fact, not found in all of the most ancient manuscripts of Luke's Gospel). Just as Jesus is the calm, superior figure who overcomes the powers of darkness in Luke's passion narrative, so too he shows us how to behave under the most degrading circumstances of torture and execution.

The injunction "forgive and forget" is found nowhere in the Bible. It appears to have come from medieval Western Christianity. The issue is that we can never forget profound evil that has been perpetrated upon us. To forget either trivialises the evil or trivialises our dignity as human beings. It would be better to say that in forgiving we never forget, but we do learn to remember in a different way. That is to say, the way we remember what has happened to us no longer detracts from our humanity, but has become part of a reconciliation process that has restored our humanity. It also gives us a new perspective on the wrongdoer who has perpetrated the evil against us: as someone also bereft of humanity as a result of that deed. A stark example of this is found in John's Gospel. When Jesus appeared to his disciples after the resurrection, his transfigured body – that could walk through locked doors – still bore the scars of his torture. But those wounds are no longer lingering recriminations of those who had tortured him. They had become sources for healing the lack of faith of the disciples and the doubts of Thomas.

What has happened to us can never be erased. But it can be seen in a different way which empowers the victim rather than being a continuing source of degradation.

Finally, the fact that forgiveness is something that comes from God makes us aware of how profound and difficult it is. To forgive is to share in the graciousness and the fullness of God's life – truly a gift that restores our humanity. That is why forgiveness is also larger than any cultural injunction which identifies it with weakness. We do not forgive because we have to, or should, or have no other choice. We forgive because we have been able to come to see the world, even in its brokenness, from the perspective of God.

All of this is not to say that the victim has no role in the process of forgiveness. Following upon an awareness that it is God who forgives, is the ability of the victim – in a sense of recovered dignity and humanity – to cooperate and participate in God's forgiving activity. Such cooperation and participation are signs of a reassertion of that dignity. A concrete sign of participation in that forgiving activity is the ability to pray for one's enemies. Through such prayer, the victim is joined to God's forgiving activity in a special way.

From this it should be clear that the reconciliation of the victim is not in itself dependent upon the repentance of the evildoer. Too often there is no repentance whatsoever. The reconciliation of the victim cannot be held hostage to the will of the evildoer; that is why, from the Christian perspective, the two are not completely linked.

Similarly, reconciliation and forgiveness are not completely the same thing. At an early stage of reconciliation, the victim may be able to call on God to forgive, but may not yet be able to take the step toward forgiveness. Processes of reconciliation all take time. But eventually, victims themselves come to an assertion of forgiveness. By then it is obvious that the experience of reconciliation has helped make this assertion of forgiveness possible; forgiveness is not a condition for reconciliation.

In summary, then, the processes of reconciliation are often understood to take place in the following sequence: **repentance** (followed by) **forgiveness** (followed by) **reconciliation**. But in the Christian perspective, where God leads the reconciliation process and begins with the victim, the sequence is rather: **reconciliation** (followed by) **forgiveness** (followed by) **repentance**.

6. *Mercy*

In common parlance, mercy is something wholly undeserved proffered to a wrongdoer. It reflects the magnanimity of the one in power rather than any merit on the part of the wrongdoer.

The Christian understanding of mercy in the reconciliation process is somewhat different. It begins with an appreciation of the unbounded and utterly gratuitous nature of God's love for creation. It is a love that knows no limits and has no conditions placed upon it.

One of the experiences of the reconciled victim is that of the mercy of God. This mercy is experienced first in the victim's own life, a marvelling at the wonder of restoration of dignity and humanity that has taken place. But that wonder overflows into a compassion for the wrongdoer, because the victim is gradually able to see the wrongdoer from God's merciful perspective: as needy, as broken, as diminished by the acts the wrongdoer has perpetrated.

Mercy is therefore not some kindness doled out as a display of power over the wrongdoer. It is an inner experience flowing out of God's love.

This experience of mercy is a powerful link to the Muslim community in processes of reconciliation. The two names of God most frequently invoked in Islam are God as compassionate and God as merciful. Here Christians and Muslims can join together in a ministry of reconciliation.

7 *Power*

Reconciliation is in many ways about redressing the abuse of power. The wrongdoer has engaged in acts that have wrested away power from the victim and then has misused that power against the victim. Reconciliation in its common understanding involves finding ways to bring the use of power back into balance.

This understanding recognises two kinds of power. On the one hand, there is internal power, or power from *within* that is part of the experience of autonomy and freedom of every individual and every society. It is part of what makes us in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). On the other hand, there is dominative power, or power *over*. This is power that has been wrested from individuals or from a society and is then used against them to diminish further the power within.

The Christian understanding of power recognises both kinds. But, as we have already seen, there are some specific contributions Christians can bring to an understanding of power. Power is all too often identified with dominative power and the capacity to coerce others. Re-establishing equilibrium in a situation is seen as a counteracting of power against power.

Christians see true power as flowing from the mystery of the cross. Here the appearance of utter powerlessness becomes the true source of power. The mystery of the cross is bound up with where God has chosen to dwell on this earth. It is not in the safe sanctuaries that human beings have prepared for God, but “outside the gates”, in the garbage heap (see Hebrews 13:14), where the poor and dispossessed are made to dwell by the powerful of this world. The cross is at once the ultimate symbol of human shame, and the throne of God’s glory in the world.

The experience of reconciliation is the discovery of this paradox about power. Having one’s dignity and humanity restored takes the victim to this new place where the cross stands. The power that flows from the cross is a power that no wrongdoer can ultimately take away from the victim. It is what makes resistance possible in the face of an overweening human power. It is what makes survival possible for so many of the poor in the midst of inhuman conditions. Power is experienced as free self-giving rather than the will to dominate. It is an act of service and concern for the other rather than coercion and the diminishment of others.

This experience of power confounds the powerful of this world. It is the power spoken of in Mary’s Magnificat.

The Christian understanding of reconciliation, then, contributes in a number of important ways to a more general understanding of reconciliation. By focusing on the victim it provides help for those who need it most. Often the wrongdoer cannot be brought to justice, let alone repentance. The Christian concentration on the victim can start to chart a way out of the situation.

Because of this emphasis on the work of God in bringing about reconciliation, the Christian approach provides a way of acknowledging the enormity of the damage of the wrongdoing (it is such that it takes the word of God to undo it), yet not lose hope that anything can be done (God indeed will bring about reconciliation). This is especially important where the damage is widespread.

Finally, by its emphasis on a new creation, the Christian understanding looks to the future without forgetting the past. Its concentration on the victim rules out ignoring the past. But by insisting that reconciliation bring victims to a new place, it frees up the imagination from an obsession with repairing the wrongdoing so that things might return to the way they used to be. This is important for the reconstruction of societies after a time of conflict and violence.

~ Conclusion ~

As can be seen from this brief review, Christian theological understandings of some basic concepts associated with the reconciliation process can add dimensions which aid reconciliation. Keeping these extra dimensions in mind while building reconciliation processes can help make these processes move more smoothly and be more effective.

2.2 CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AND RECONCILIATION

A teacher on spirituality of many years' standing noted that she still had difficulty explaining what she taught.¹ Spirituality has been variously described as “the glue that holds us together”; “walking in the truth of who I am”; “being really real” and simply “God”. For the Christian, at the heart of spirituality is, however, the Spirit of God as the source of our new life in Christ.

Whatever the definition, a commitment to reconciliation work requires us to recognise that people are spiritual beings who need to have space to love, to be loved, to long for communion with the holy beyond common pettiness and greed and to realise their potential as human beings cast in the image of God.

The assurance of spiritual space is necessary not only for those who have suffered in a conflict situation but also for the Caritas workers who can often be left with burn-out.

~ Down to earth spirituality ~

Kiltegan missionary, Fr Donal Dorr,² has coined the phrase “down to earth spirituality”. By that, he means a spirituality which is not privatised, or, as Gilbert Markus puts it, a “comfortable world of vague and heart-warming platitudes”,³ but one which is holistic and integrated, which takes the “art and discipline of living daily in relationship with God and others in today’s world”⁴ as its agenda and which is grounded in the earth and its people.

He bases his analysis on the well-known text from the prophet Micah: “This is what Yahweh asks of you, only this: that you act justly, that you love tenderly, that you walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). In the diagram, he shows how “acting justly” – transforming unjust structures or, put more simply, getting involved in social justice issues to make the world a fairer place especially for the poor – overlaps with the interpersonal (“loving tenderly”) and personal integrity and responsibility (“walking humbly”).

The interpersonal covers the way we relate to others - whether we use our abilities to empower others or to dominate others, whether we build community or little empires, whether we make decisions on our own or together. Personal integrity and responsibility cover the way we are as people, whether what we say about justice corresponds to what we do, whether we continue to grow throughout our lives as loving human beings or whether we become stultified and ultimately whether we then take on the responsibilities that come from viewing the world through a justice lens.

At the heart of the three circles of act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly is *shalom*, the biblical word for an all-embracing peace in every facet of life, the peace of being in harmony with nature, a peace based on justice, peace in our relationships, personal peace with being at home with oneself and the “opening up of oneself to

experience peace as an utterly undeserved gift of God, a peace that passes all understanding in all or any of these areas of life”.⁵ This is integrated spirituality.

Prayer nourishes the deepest part of us and enables us to act with greater *personal responsibility and integrity*. Hence, we are helped to relate more authentically to other people, to reverence the personhood of the other and to find God in the seemingly unlovable. Relating to others requires us to be more open, to share with people at a deep level. This is what Fr Dorr calls *transparency*, a quality of openness in our relationships that enables one’s personal integrity to shine through to others. It means we have to deal with our own angers, fears and violence.

The *interpersonal respect* means concentrating on the power of facilitating or enabling others and not coercing or dominating them. This leads to joint decision-making and cooperative planning, building up *community participation*, no matter the circumstances. It also involves really listening to the other person, thus showing respect. Where the *structural justice* and *personal integrity and responsibility* circles overlap, is *ecological sensitivity*, remembering that life and the planet are God’s gifts to us and that we must grow into our humanity and care for Mother Earth as stewards for future generations. The whole comes together in *shalom*, an integrated spirituality which stands for peace with justice manifested within ourselves as well as in our actions towards others and the world.

How do we achieve that? The following is an attempt to identify “tools” which will help underline the spiritual in reconciliation practice.

~ *Spirituality for the victim* ~

- n It is helpful to provide a chapel or a place for prayer, meditation or just being alone with God. For people suffering from trauma, a church or chapel may be more important than shelter or clothes.
- n Celebrate regular liturgies which stress that God is always with us in every situation of pain and darkness. In the Eucharist, the “broken, damaged and abused bodies of individual victims and the broken body of the church are taken up into the body of Christ. Christ’s body has known torture; it has known shame. In his complete solidarity with victims, he has gone to the limits of violent death. And so his body becomes a holy medicine to heal those broken bodies of today.”⁶
- n Ritual is important. Sometimes special rituals, such as the purification of the National Stadium in Santiago, Chile, where 900 people were executed and many more “disappeared” under Pinochet, can take on greater significance. The dead deserve a proper burial and a funeral.
- n The sacrament of reconciliation (confession) could be made available on a regular basis.
- n Give people the chance to faith-share, using texts such as the Return of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11 – 23) or the conversation on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24: 13 –35) or the passages dealing with the crucifixion itself. These will be openings for people to tell their own stories and will help heal memories.

~ *The Caritas worker and psychological wellbeing* ~

Caritas workers active in a situation of conflict or post-conflict will need special care. They will go through several stages. The first is shock at the situation which confronts them. The second is disillusionment at their inability to meet every need. Anger or dismay at the helplessness of people who have been traumatised and seem unable to function may follow. The normal coping mechanisms which most people have developed over their lives are often inappropriate in emergency situations and workers can lose initiative and avoid responsibility, become depressed or apathetic and then become a burden to themselves, their colleagues and to the people they are meant to serve. Within such situations, it is difficult to provide proper counselling and other support services so that the workers have to resource themselves. The ideas given above for people who have suffered from conflict also apply to Caritas workers.

There are some additional ideas which could be taken on board:

- n Encourage the workers to function as a team, to share how they feel with one another and particularly to share those success stories where their work has borne fruit by people coming together to talk, to do things for one another, to be more human with one another. They should also feel able to come together to share their own stories. That means becoming more open with themselves and one another. A recommended exercise is Johari’s Window (see Donal Dorr, *Integral Spirituality*).
- n Various forms of meditation could be taught (even as breathing exercises etc. – see Bibliography).

- n Allow time for prayer, to talk, to share emotions and experiences or for silence. Activists often neglect this area to their own detriment, so that stress, tension and ceaseless activity can lead to burn-out. Managers should ensure that there is time for these quieter but essential aspects of life if our workers are to help give life to others.
- n Make time for regular moments of celebration – parties, simple get-togethers, opportunities for laughter. People involved in reconciliation work are literally dealing with life and death issues but remember St Teresa of Avila, the 16th century Spanish mystic who brought the Carmelite Order back to its original austerity. One of the sisters in her convent once found her eating partridge. “Mother”, the sister said in outraged tones, “you are eating partridge!” “Yes”, replied St Teresa. “Sister, when it is time to pray, pray and when it is time to partridge, partridge!” People involved in reconciliation work should aim for this kind of balance in life.

Spirituality in reconciliation work is not a substitute for tools and strategies which are always necessary. It is to be seen rather as the fertile soil out of which the complex work of reconciliation grows and which ultimately gives it meaning.

1 Una Agnew SSL, “Soul hunger! Soul food!”, *Spirituality*, vol. 3 May/June 1997

2 Donal Dorr, *Integral Spirituality: Resources for Community, Justice, Peace and the Earth*, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin 1990

3 Gilbert Markus OP, “Almsgiving: the heart of the spiritual life”, *Spirituality*, vol. 4 May/June 1998

4 Una Agnew SSL, op.cit.

5 Donal Dorr, op.cit., p.6

6 Robert J. Schreiter, CPPS, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*, Orbis Books, New York, 1995, pp.75-6

2.3 PROMOTING RECONCILIATION IN AN INTERFAITH CONTEXT



Much of the tension and conflict within countries today is based on identity. Social division is based on differences in, for instance, gender, nationality, ethnicity or religion. As Caritas, working in conflict settings throughout the world, we will find ourselves working in situations where religious differences may be the source of the conflict. It is important to be actively Christian in our approach to reconciliation work but at the same time to understand, respect and collaborate with other religious groupings. When we say “actively Christian” we do not mean in a proselytising sense, since this approach could do little but exacerbate tensions, but rather in a way that we do not hide our religion either. Sometimes when tension or conflict are related to differing religious identities, a short-cut response can be to try to water down religion to the point of secularisation. That is, agencies operate as if their faith is “in their back pocket”, perhaps as a primary motivation force but with no outward manifestation of religiosity.

While this may be a workable approach in most relief and development situations in which Caritas manifests the love of God through our actions and by living the social gospel – it can be far too limiting in conflict settings. A secular approach can limit the spiritual tools available for what is an inherently spiritual process. It can also put people into an uncomfortable position of feeling they have to abandon their religion in order to live harmoniously with other faiths. This dissonant social-psychological state can result in the abandonment of religion or to the radicalisation of religion – both undesirable outcomes.

~ Pluralism rather than secularism ~

Secularism is not a recipe for pluralism. Religious pluralism assumes diversity. It requires at least tolerance of those other faiths or, beyond that, a celebration of differences. It embraces religiosity while abhorring fundamentalist militancy. It allows people to be profoundly religious and to believe deeply in their faith while accepting those of other faiths. It invites religious dialogue rather than forcing religious conversion. It seeks to identify commonness while not ignoring differences.

Many development workers find that they should encourage non-Christians to embrace their faith more fully. A priest working to prevent communal conflict between Muslims and Hindus in the slums of Ahmedabad, India says when he tries to talk people out of a religious riot, he tells them: “I am not asking you to be no longer a Muslim or a Hindu, I am asking you to be a good Muslim or a good Hindu.”

~ Working in interfaith settings ~

Caritas agencies are challenged with a need to show sensitivity to those of other faiths while still embracing the spiritual component of development. This is particularly important in situations in which religious identity is a factor in inter-group tension and conflict.

Being sensitive to other religions does not mean that as Caritas workers we have to secularise ourselves. It is not necessary to abandon your own religion in order to work effectively with those of other religions.

There are three principles to keep in mind when working in interfaith settings:

- 1. Provide equal opportunity;**
- 2. Try to work within the various religious traditions;**
- 3. Witness through action.**

A simple example from Pakistan illustrates these principles. Caritas was working in several technical workshops for poor people from various religious affiliations. Both Christians and Muslims attended one workshop for trainee electricians. Before the workshop began, the catechist from the local parish stood up to lead the group in prayer and read from the Bible. The Muslim students were offended and left the workshop saying they would not

return. Their criticism gave the impression locally that Caritas served only Christians. This created a problem for Caritas and worked against its objective to build interfaith bridges.

Caritas animators learned of the incident and met the instructor, the catechist and the students. They decided that in future Muslims would have an opportunity to pray (*equal opportunity*). The group also suggested that prayer time for Christians should coincide with the Muslim call to prayer (*working within various religious traditions*). Finally, the group acknowledged that the best way to share their faith was by their example rather than their words, at least in that setting (*witness through action*).

The Caritas programme still had a spiritual component involving prayer but it was designed in a way that fostered inclusivity rather than exclusivity. Caritas therefore embraced the spiritual dimension of development respectfully, implementing a programme that builds interfaith bridges in an environment prone to discrimination against Christians.

~ Promoting forgiveness in an interfaith setting ~

Caritas workers should feel comfortable using liturgies and sacraments as part of their reconciliation work. Refugees and internally displaced people, living in camps, particularly the Christians but often those of other religions also, appreciate regular liturgical celebrations. Staff members of faith-based agencies would be remiss to ignore these wishes.

At the same time we should be sensitive to invite those of other religious faiths to hold their own religious observances. An entry point of interfaith prayer, particularly at meetings, might be to allow people to take a moment of silence. Or, it might be possible to allow the leader of each faith group to say a traditional prayer aloud. The organisation of interfaith events may be possible on special days of the year such as World Peace Day.

While it is important to respect the religious expression of those of other faiths, Caritas workers need not gloss over genuine differences. Such differences can arise around the notion of reconciliation. The Christian faith has a developed, definite and detailed concept of reconciliation which places forgiveness at the heart of the process. Other faiths may not share the same concept of reconciliation. We should, nonetheless, be prepared to explore concepts analogous to reconciliation in other religious traditions in the areas where we live and work. In our reconciliation efforts we must be open to recognising and supporting the religious and cultural traditions of the affected populations. Links to other religions are very important in the work of reconciliation.

In our work we can emphasise and support reconciliation by encouraging mercy and forgiveness which we all long for as human beings as we seek to rid ourselves of a painful past and search for healing.

Forgiveness is an integral part of the reconciliation process and can be fostered in victims even before the perpetrator has confessed and requested forgiveness. As Fr Robert Schreiter has written, if it is necessary to wait for perpetrators to confess for a reconciliation process to begin, it would never happen because perpetrators are, by definition, living a lie. What is miraculous about the healing power of God is that victims can be liberated from their hatred and can forgive even before the perpetrator has confessed. This ability, through God's love, of the victim to forgive can help the perpetrator overcome a denial of the truth, acknowledge guilt and thereby complete the process of reconciliation.

In conflict settings, Caritas workers can perform a tremendous service when they encourage forgiveness. We recognise that reconciliation is a spiritual process and ultimately it is God who reconciles. Our aim is to help create conditions in which the healing power of God is more likely to be brought to become effective.

~ *Religious leaders and institutions* ~

Even in parts of the world where religion may not be among the causes of conflict, religious leaders and institutions can play an enormous role in promoting peace. The Carnegie Commission Report *Prevention and Management of Deadly Conflicts*¹ outlines five main factors that can give religious institutions a key role in resolving conflict from the highest level of international diplomacy to the level of local community.

Religious leaders and institutions have:

- 1 A clear message which resonates with their followers;
- 2 A long-standing and pervasive presence on the ground;
- 3 A well developed infrastructure which often includes a sophisticated communications network connecting local, national and international offices;
- 4 A legitimacy for speaking out on crisis issues;
- 5 A traditional orientation to peace and goodwill.

We should promote the setting up of interfaith or inter-religious councils and committees in conflict areas as a means of initiating and supporting peace initiatives. In former Yugoslavia the leaders of the four religious communities, Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish, set up such a council. Such a religiously inclusive group can be a powerful agent for advocacy and conflict resolution.

The Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland, composed of Catholics and Protestants, is testimony that people from both sides of the religious divide can share together a common witness and ministry of reconciliation. One of their aims “is to provide opportunities for meeting, dialogue and learning in communities to dispel ignorance, prejudice and fear and to promote mutual respect, trust and co-operation.”² The Corrymeela Community also provides support to the victims of violence and injustice and provides space where personal and social healing can take place.

Churches working together have proved to be an important catalyst for change in South Africa, the Philippines, the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. The Carnegie Commission concludes:

“There is a need for increased interfaith dialogue, so that religious leaders can discover their common ground. The Commission believes that religious leaders and institutions should be called upon to undertake a worldwide effort to foster respect for diversity and to promote ways to avoid violence. They should discuss as a priority matter, during any interfaith gathering, on ways to play constructive and mutually supporting roles to help prevent the emergence of violence. They should also take more assertive measures to censure co-religionists who promote violence or give religious justification for violence.”³

~ *Conclusion* ~

When working in an interfaith context, Caritas workers should do all in their power to promote a climate of tolerance and understanding between the different religious groups. We should also seek out opportunities for active co-operation between groups at grassroots level, particularly those involved in the pursuit of peace. The leaders of all religious groups must be encouraged to come together, engage in dialogue and provide, from within their various traditions, a moral guidance and leadership that fosters a culture of sisterhood and brotherhood and a culture of peace rather than division.

1 Carnegie Commission, *Prevention and Management of Deadly Conflicts: An International Directory*, European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, PO Box 14069, 3508 SC, Utrecht, Netherlands, 1998, p.114

2 *A Guide to Peace, Reconciliation and Community Relations in Northern Ireland*, compiled by Joe Hinds, Community Relations Council, April 1994

3 Carnegie, op.cit. pp.117-18

III. RECONCILIATION IN ACTION

3.1 PLANNING A RECONCILIATION PROGRAMME



Working in reconciliation brings a new dimension to the work of many Caritas organisations already involved in development work or in humanitarian assistance. Whether we take reconciliation separate from our regular activities or we integrate a reconciliation component into our normal development or humanitarian work, careful consideration must be given to our involvement in reconciliation work and, in particular, to our programme development.

Because of its socio-pastoral mandate, Caritas can make a very meaningful contribution to reconciliation in conflict-affected countries. Being a local Church-based organisation should give Caritas the credibility needed for engagement in conflict resolution issues as well as the long-term commitment needed in areas where conflict is protracted.

This section deals with the need to plan carefully our reconciliation work. Most Caritas agencies are already involved in various development programmes and in humanitarian assistance. We are very familiar with the steps needed in planning our regular programmes and therefore have a lot of experience to bring to planning a reconciliation programme. It is important that we learn from our previously successful programmes and it is also important to learn from programmes that were less than successful.

Working in reconciliation is extremely sensitive and we can afford less margin for error than may be possible in other programmes. *“Part of the difficulty is the sheer enormity of the task, so great that it seems well-nigh unachievable. For it is not only a matter of healing memories and receiving forgiveness, it is also about changing the structures in society that provoked, promoted and sustained violence.”*¹ The first question we must ask ourselves is whether it is possible to put a reconciliation programme in place.

Working in reconciliation is about creating the space where healing and forgiveness can take place and for this reason it is essential that Caritas agencies working in the field of reconciliation apply principles of good practice in planning programmes. These principles of good practice we can examine under three headings: *conflict analysis, information gathering* and *programme design*.

~ I. Conflict Analysis ~

Conflict analysis is important because it is an essential guide in developing an appropriate reconciliation programme. It helps examine the context in which reconciliation is to take place and helps to determine the type of intervention that will be most effective in the particular conflict situation. Good conflict analysis requires us

to critically examine our capacity for intervention. The following issues should be addressed in conflict analysis.

Context

The type of conflict must first be established. This may be straightforward in some cases. It may be an ethnic, a religious or class problem. The conflict may, however, be compounded. It may be an ethnic *and* political problem or a religious *and* historical problem or class *and* economic problem. The various dimensions of the conflict need to be carefully identified.

It is necessary to establish the context of the conflict.

u

Identify the type of conflict.

The extent of the problem has also to be established. Is it a conflict that exists only in our community or is the context of the conflict much wider? If it is a local conflict there may be factors outside the community, which impinge positively or negatively on the community and which may affect the reconciliation process.

u

Establish the extent of the conflict.

u

Is it local, district, provincial, national?

u

Which factors influence the conflict?

Examining the context of the conflict helps determine the people or groups who should be involved in the reconciliation programme as well as those who should not be involved. We need to identify the various actors in the conflict and to specify those towards whom the programme is to be directed. In situations of violent conflict the victims and victimizers need to be identified and we need to understand how the victims have been affected by the conflict.

u

Name all parties affected by the conflict.

u

How are they affected?

u

Towards whom should the programme be directed? Why?

There is a need to identify positive values for use in exploring reconciliation. There may be a shared vision, a shared hope or forces within the community that can move the reconciliation process forward. Are there people or groups that have credibility with the victims and what can they contribute?

u

Name any positive values that might favour reconciliation.

u

Can they be exploited? How?

Above all we need to know if there is a felt need for reconciliation.²

Root causes of conflict

An examination of the root causes of a conflict is essential to an understanding of the conflict. Such an examination involves a study of the social, political, economic, cultural and historical background of the conflict.

The social and cultural realities that exist locally must also be addressed. In this context it is necessary to know what values and attitudes exist that may have deepened the conflict. There may be negative attitudes such as prejudice, discrimination, complacency, dependency or fear that impact on the conflict.

The conflict may have a history of exploitation. Injustices and human rights violations exacerbate a conflict and are often supported by political or other structures.

Underlying causes of tension can exist in conflict situations such as economic competition, land pressure, ignorance, cultural and ideological differences. These need to be explored in conflict analysis and recognised as root causes.³

A thorough examination of root causes of the conflict is necessary.

u

Identify the events that triggered the conflict.

u

Develop a history of the conflict.

u

Look at the historical, political, social, economic, cultural and any other relevant dimensions of the conflict.

u

Examine the local realities that have had a bearing on the conflict.

u

Identify any underlying tensions that may have provoked the conflict.

Type of intervention

During the course of conflict analysis it may become clear which type or types of intervention are necessary. Individual Caritas agencies must decide what particular benefit they bring to a conflict situation. We must accept that we cannot be “all things to all people” and so our role has limitations and we must decide what is possible. It is important at the beginning of the programme to review work being done by other agencies and decide what role we are going to play, why and how we are going to play that role. The role should be discussed and agreed upon by all the actors.⁴

A critical step in programming is deciding on the type of intervention.

u

Based on analysis of the conflict what kind of intervention(s) is/are necessary?

u

As an organisation what particular benefits can you offer to promote reconciliation?

u

What role(s) can you play? Why?

u

How best can you play that role?

Conflict analysis will help determine the aims and objectives of the programme. On-going analysis allows for change in the programme when and where necessary and allows for the development of alternative strategies. While a particular role may seem best at the outset, it must be kept in mind that conflict itself is a shifting process and there is need for inbuilt flexibility with every reconciliation programme.

Good analysis can also show the projected outcome of the proposed intervention. It helps in setting the targets for the programme and establishing standards to measure the success, or lack of it, of the programme.

u

Can you ensure on-going analysis of the conflict?

u

Can your intervention be flexible enough to allow for change of role, strategy, even a change in type of intervention?

Interventions will vary from conflict to conflict and no two interventions will be the same or have the same result. It is useful to study examples of good practice in reconciliation work in that it can help us to identify our own strengths and weaknesses.

Organisation and human resources

As part of the conflict analysis, we should look at the capacity needed to implement a reconciliation programme, what resources we have available and where strengthening is needed. Capacity includes the human and physical resources to support the proposed programme.

Capacity must be adequate to the demands of the programme.

In reviewing our human resources we need to look at the skills and expertise available and what skills and expertise are lacking in terms of management, co-ordinators, facilitators and field workers. A reconciliation programme must have adequate and competent staff. There is a danger of taking on reconciliation work because of current trends or because of donor conditionality, and assigning already overburdened staff or an inadequate number of staff to the programme. It must be decided where human resource development is needed and how best this is done. It might be necessary to recruit new staff or to provide training for existing staff. If training is needed, there must be careful consideration of facilities available and appropriate courses.

u

Do you have the human resources necessary *at all levels* for the successful implementation of the programme?

u

Does your current staff have the skills necessary for a reconciliation programme?

u

Do you need to identify staff for special training?

u

Can you organise in-service training for staff?

u

Do you need to recruit additional staff? Which skills do they need to have?

u

Are there facilities available locally or regionally for staff training?

u

We may have to look outside our own organisation and examine what expertise is available within the conflict situation itself or within other organisations or networks with whom collaboration is possible.

u

Are your physical resources adequate to the programme?

u

Is the necessary expertise available locally within another organisation, NGO, university?

We need to review our physical resources to ensure they adequately meet the demands of the programme. The physical resources include office space, training facilities, transport and all physical inputs required by the programme.

~ II. Information Gathering ~

The quality of information available will determine analysis of the conflict and appropriate interventions. To this end information gathering is an essential part of good conflict analysis. There are several important considerations when collecting data and information which will have a direct impact on our programme development.

It is essential to know the *types of information* required within the context of the programme being developed. Such information generally includes the root causes of the conflict, economic, social, political or cultural. The main stakeholders or actors – who loses and who gains – should be identified. The extent of the conflict needs to be established as well as the main issues to be addressed in a programme of reconciliation. Depending on the nature of the conflict it will be necessary to know what outside influences are at work in the situation.

Information gathering is an essential aspect of good programming.

u

List all types of information concerning the conflict
that you consider necessary to the development of your programme.

As a rule it is better to have too much information than too little since information can be filtered prior to or during analysis. It may be difficult to get all the information required before the programme is set up but it is important to keep in mind that, as the programme develops, more and more information becomes available.

u

Do you have sufficient information to begin planning the programme?

Information gathering needs to be on-going for the maximum benefit of the programme. Conflict is a dynamic process and every conflict situation changes constantly. These shifts require equally constant adjustment in the programme as it keeps pace with and analyses new developments.

u

Allow for the continuous gathering of information on all aspects of the conflict.

It is important to keep a broad base for gathering information. Limiting the programme to one source of information (e.g. field staff) may have disastrous effects for the programme. A cross section of informants with different perspectives will give a broader picture of the conflict situation and its complexities. Consultation with other groups working in the area may prove valuable. Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community based organisations (CBOs), common interest groups such as women's organisations, youth groups, local co-operative and development agencies can be resourced.

u

Check sources of information to ensure the broadest possible picture of the conflict.

Above all, remember that reconciliation is a people-centred process and those people must be consulted. The programme must be directed to the needs of the people rather than based on what our assumptions of those needs might be.

u

Have you consulted with programme participants?

Consider the methods employed for information collection. There is no single methodology which will guarantee success but whatever method is used must be culturally sensitive and, as far as possible, non-threatening for the participants. It is best to use a variety of methods since consultation is of the essence. Study days, group discussions, community meetings, brainstorming sessions, personal interviews are all useful tools for gathering information. The level of formality to be used in the process must also be decided.

u

Which methods of gathering information are most appropriate in your situation?

It is useful to have access to any information relevant to the conflict which may already be available although it is necessary to be aware of outside influences in terms of information already disseminated about the conflict. Sometimes general perceptions (particularly in the media) can be misleading or superficial. Good interpretation of information is essential.

u

Do you have access to useful information on the conflict that has already been published? In local press, in international press, TV and radio programmes.

Time is of the essence in developing an appropriate intervention in a conflict situation. This applies also to the information-gathering component of the programme. There is a tendency among local organisations that are already familiar with an area to overestimate their own knowledge of a conflict situation. More information leads to greater knowledge which, in turn, allows for better analysis and more understanding of the complexity of the situation.⁶

Information collection is an important aspect of good practice in reconciliation and a data bank can be built up throughout all phases of the programme. Putting unrealistic time constraints on this aspect of a programme will generally lead to inappropriate and ill-conceived programmes simply because of inadequate analysis of the situation.

u

Ensure you have sufficient time for the collection and filtering of information.

u

Can you develop a data bank on conflict information?

Similarly, it is not ideal for any Caritas agency to attempt developing a reconciliation programme in a conflict area over a short period of time. Conflicts are often protracted and this demands a greater organisational commitment and a deeper analysis of events. There is no “quick fix” in reconciliation work.

u

Can you ensure a long-term commitment to the programme?

We must consider the risks involved in information collection. In a particular conflict situation where some information may be sensitive, there are risks both for those collecting information and those giving the information. Where sensitive information is being collected there must be particular attention to the methods of information gathering and the implications for both collectors and informants.

u

Have you given adequate consideration to the risks involved for those collecting the information and those giving the information?

u

Can you safeguard against risks of danger to personnel?

Sharing information is very important for programme co-ordination. There are various levels at which information sharing should take place. Within the organisation share information among all those directly involved in the programme from administration to extension workers in the field. Inform staff fully at all levels of the organisation. It is common to find very divergent views on a particular conflict situation within the same organisation from head office to country office to field office.

To achieve greater co-ordination, it is important for Caritas to share information with other NGOs or agencies working in the same field/area. This applies to agencies with whom we are co-operating and with whom we have a common purpose. This sharing of information reduces duplication and provides the opportunity for discussion which can only improve the quality of conflict analysis and the quality of the programme in general. This type of co-ordination also reduces the spread of misinformation.

u

Have you ensured that all relevant personnel within your organisation are adequately informed about all aspects of the programme?

u

If you are collaborating with other agencies do you have a forum for sharing information with them?

As with other aspects of the programme we must examine our capacity to collect and analyse information. Information gathering can be treated superficially by some organisations. It is often seen as mere data collection without sufficient examination of the attitudes, behaviour and structures which underline the conflict. When not treated seriously the work of gathering information is given to extension workers who may be ill-equipped for the task.

u

Do you have competent staff responsible for gathering information?

It is also necessary at the outset for us to reflect on our own subjectivity within a particular conflict. This examination requires us to look at our current agenda and our motivation for becoming involved in reconciliation work. If we are already involved in development, relief, or other work in the location of the conflict we may also be (wittingly or unwittingly) involved in the conflict itself. Before we can begin to be objective in a conflict situation we need to take time to understand our own position in the context of the conflict. It is vital for us to be, and to be seen to be, neutral or impartial. If we are biased then it is likely that the information collected will also be biased and credibility may be lost.

u

Have you adequately analysed your own position in the conflict?

u

Have you ensured that the information you have can be objectively analysed?

~ III. Programme Design ~

The planning of a reconciliation programme will depend very much on the information that has been gathered and on the analysis of the conflict. Our capacity to implement the proposed programme will also impact on planning. There are three stages of planning that must be considered.

Strategic Planning

Since reconciliation is a new field of work for many organisations already working in development and emergency relief, it will be necessary to revisit our strategic plan which articulates the aims and objectives of our organisation and which has a strategy for achieving these aims and objectives. The strategic plan needs to be modified in order to include a new activity. Necessary adjustments must be incorporated into the strategic plan in order to optimise our capacity for successful interventions.

Strategic planning should take the following points into consideration.

- n Incorporate new priorities essential to the proposed reconciliation programme into the strategic plan.
- n Be aware that reconciliation work will give a whole new dimension to the work already being done by the organisation and this will need to be reflected in the overall mission statement. The mission statement reflects our fundamental policy choices.
- n Evaluate our strengths and weaknesses and consider the demands that the new programme will make on our physical and human resources. Put in place plans to strengthen the organisation to meet these new demands.
- n Study carefully the context for implementing a reconciliation programme so as to maximise resources.
- n Build in monitoring and evaluation procedures. These may not be suitable for a programme in reconciliation and there may be a need to introduce more suitable monitoring indicators and evaluation criteria.
- n Consider staff roles: what their input into the programme will be, what roles they should play and how to brief them.
- n Include consultation with all stakeholders about the new programme—donors, staff, partners and beneficiaries.

Programme Strategy

The programme strategy includes the work plan, personnel, timeframes, allocation of resources, monitoring and evaluation. The strategy for the programme is based on the conflict analysis that has already taken place and addresses all aspects of the implementation of the programme.

The following points must be considered in developing the programme strategy.

- n The programme strategy decides the main activities of the programme and the appropriateness of these activities to address the conflict situation. It examines how the proposed activities are related to our existing programmes and whether there is a need to set up new organisational structures or strengthen already existing structures.
- n How will you identify and what are the selection criteria for target groups who are to be involved in the programme?
- n How will you organise the day to day management of the programme?

- n You will need to identify staff required by the programme and draw up job descriptions.
- n You should also consult potential partner organisations about the programme
- n Allocate physical resources to the programme and set out conditions for their use.

Project Planning

Project planning is really about tightening the nuts and bolts of the programme strategy. Who does what, when and how?

You will need to decide on the day to day running of the programme.

- n Project planning will set out both the short-term and long-term objectives within the general aims of the programme. Priorities are set and justified.⁷
- n The work plan or the specific activities to be carried out in addressing the conflict situation are decided. Expected results and/or possible results should accompany the detailed activities. Depending on the type of conflict situation there should be a time frame within which activities are to be carried out.
- n Brief staff members properly regarding their own roles and those of other staff working within the programme. Draw up detailed job descriptions, establish lines of communication and put in place reporting procedures.
- n Make known the resources available to the programme and how to access them.
- n It is essential that a reconciliation programme has an inbuilt flexibility. This can be done by using the *Incremental Programme Design* whereby, at the end of each phase of the programme there is a period of reflection before moving on to the next stage. This allows for an action-reflection-action approach to reconciliation programming, which gives the programme the flexibility necessary to develop new responses to meet the demands of a fluctuating conflict situation.

u

Essential to programme flexibility is an inbuilt system of monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring

Monitoring allows us to check that things are going according to plan and enables us to make adjustments. Monitoring is designed to help improve the programme by checking on progress and identifying aspects of the programme that are going well. It also identifies weaknesses or problems that need to be addressed.

Programme planning must specify indicators for use in monitoring, identify who monitors, how and when the monitoring is to be done.

The end results of a reconciliation programme are less quantifiable than other regular programmes. It may be easy enough to quantify, for example, the number of people trained to handle conflict, the number of people reached by the programme, the amount of literature produced. It is more difficult to measure the impact of the programme in terms of actual reconciliation or of conflict reduction. *Qualitative* indicators, however simple, must be determined. These could include levels of active participation, degrees of co-operation, raising of awareness, openness to the programme, reduction of tension.

Monitoring indicators should reflect the views of all concerned and, where possible, be incorporated into the daily activities of the programme.

u

Are monitoring indicators adequate to the programme?

Evaluation

Regular evaluation is equally important to the success of the reconciliation programme. Evaluation is not an optional extra after the programme activities have been completed but rather is essential to ensure we constantly pursue the aims and objectives of the programme. It helps us to assess our own effectiveness and to ascertain the impact and sustainability of the programme.⁸

Evaluation is sometimes seen as an exercise in self-criticism and a threat to staff members. Evaluation should give us an opportunity to acknowledge our own success and to learn from our mistakes. This is particularly true for reconciliation work, which is a relatively new activity for most organisations who wish to build their capacity in conflict resolution. Evaluation should be seen as an integral part of the programme.⁸

In establishing criteria for evaluation it is important to bear in mind that the interests of the various stakeholders in the programme are not always compatible. Donors, for example, will probably have their own set of evaluation criteria which are sometimes imposed on implementing partners. There are two dangers here – the criteria may not be suitable for an evaluation of the work being done in the field of reconciliation and the implementing agency may take these criteria as the only ones with which to evaluate. It is vital to establish the priorities of all the stakeholders at the outset and determine the focus and criteria for evaluation.

It is important to remember that evaluation not only reflects what actually happened but also considers what improvements can be made for the future. Impact, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and sustainability are yardsticks commonly used for evaluation. To this end a base-line study may be established at the beginning of the reconciliation programme against which to monitor progress.⁹

u

Are the evaluation procedures adequate to the programme?

u

Are they acceptable to all parties concerned with the programme?

~ Conclusion ~

Many Caritas agencies will already have considerable experience in designing programmes in development or emergency relief and this experience will be extremely valuable to them in reconciliation work. Many of the principles of good practice used to design regular programmes can be transferred to designing a reconciliation programme.

However, any Caritas organisation wishing to expand its work to include a reconciliation component must realise it will be touching people's lives in a way that is unlike any other programme.

The most important work done by Caritas in conflict situations is at grassroots level, working with affected communities and helping them to rebuild and reshape their lives. Caritas can no more than facilitate the process of reconciliation. It is the affected people themselves who reconcile. By careful planning and maximising effectiveness, Caritas attempts to present the best opportunity and also maximise the possibilities for reconciliation. In this way Caritas members can integrate reconciliation into their relief and development work, thus becoming agents of reconciliation and peace in our world.

1 Robert J Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1992, p.1

2 Christine Burke, *A Spirituality for Workers in Situations of Conflict*, paper presented to Caritas Internationalis Working Group on Reconciliation, Rome, May 1997

3 Caritas Sierra Leone, *Community Based Reconciliation and Trauma Healing*, Training Manual for Trainers, Caritas Sierra Leone, 1996

4 See also section 3.2: "Fundamental Activities for Caritas in Conflict Situations" for possible conflict resolution interventions.

5 See the list of reconciliation organisations in section 4.1 for conflict resolution centres in your region.

6 *The Oxfam Handbook of Development and Relief*, vol. 1, Oxfam, 1995

7 Bryson, J., *Strategic Planning for Public and Non-Profit Organisations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organisational Achievement*, Jossey Bas, 1989

8 AGKE and MISEREOR, *Evaluations in the Church's Development Cooperation: A Workbook for Implementing Partner Organisations and Support Agencies*, Aachen, 1991

9 *Oxfam Handbook*, op.cit.

3.2 FUNDAMENTAL ACTIVITIES FOR CARITAS IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS



~ Introduction ~

The 154 members of the Caritas Confederation throughout the world are socio-pastoral expressions of the local Church. Given their work at grassroots level and their presence at diocesan, national, regional and international level, they are in a unique position to contribute to building peace in the conflict areas where they are present.

The complexity of internal conflicts has led those who are interested in conflict resolution to a number of conclusions. Among them is highlighted the vital part which local, credible organisations and actors can play in the search for sustainable peace. Conflict resolution demands a greater understanding of the complex nature of internal conflicts and their underlying causes. Because of the composite nature of internal wars any effective response will require a greater number of interventions and an approach that allows for a wide range of peacemaking efforts.

~Multi-track diplomacy~

This approach to peacemaking at many different levels is called multi-track diplomacy. It recognises that a wide variety of actors (or tracks) are needed in the effort to bring peace. These actors include governments, professional organisations, the business community, Churches, media, private citizens, training and educational institutes, activists and funding organisations.¹

More recently the role of the United Nations (UN), regional organisations (such as ECOWAS in West Africa), eminent persons (such as former US president Jimmy Carter), and second track diplomacy (such as the Oslo peace talks) have been added to the list. In addition citizens' action has been recognised through the activities of women's groups, youth groups, teachers and lawyers.

The multi-track approach recognises that “the prevention of deadly conflict is, over the long term, too hard, intellectually, technically and politically to be the responsibility of any single institution or government, no matter how powerful. Strengths must be pooled, burdens shared, and labour divided among actors”.²

Within this multi-track approach to conflict resolution Churches, and international NGOs like Caritas and local NGOs have a vital role to play. Because of their knowledge of the local situation and their work with grassroots organisations they have an advantage that few other actors possess.

~What kind of activities can Caritas undertake?~

Caritas agencies throughout the world are already involved in socio-pastoral work. As a Church organisation, Caritas works in various aspects of development such as education, health, AIDS prevention, water, sanitation and agriculture. Many Caritas agencies are involved in advocacy on human rights, debt reduction, agrarian and economic reform, the environment, gender issues, democratisation and many other issues in an attempt to improve the quality of life of those on whose behalf they work.

In situations of conflict many of our regular projects are severely disrupted. Security deteriorates and people are forced to move to safe areas. We may have to abandon programmes and move with our people to camps or parts of the country not affected by the conflict. A modern commitment to the “preferential option for the poor” requires Caritas to adapt its programmes to include conflict resolution and working for peace.

Internal conflicts can go through different phases and each phase may demand a different response in terms of what is appropriate and what can be achieved. Let us now examine some of the activities which a local Caritas organisation can undertake in conflict situations.

~Early warning and prevention~

NGOs are in the best position to sound alarm bells with regard to impending conflict. They can alert the wider community to any early warning signals to potential conflict within a country because they work on the ground with local groups on a day to day basis. In this way NGOs could pave the way for action to prevent conflict and avert a humanitarian disaster. Unfortunately, the international community has not always paid the necessary attention to

early warnings and only responded when conflicts escalate into complex emergencies as, for example, in Rwanda. There is a need for more emphasis on conflict prevention and developing pre-emptive strategies.

These pre-emptive strategies can include:

- n leadership training in conflict transformation;
- n forming and being involved in community peace committees;
- n promoting solidarity groups within a non-adversarial framework;
- n counteracting false information;
- n reducing stereotypes which dehumanise an opposing group and fuel conflict;
- n pre-empting flash points of violence;
- n the promotion of cultural festivals and various art forms to develop harmony;
- n use of local media, radio, television, newspapers, in conflict prevention;
- n promoting cross-group co-operation between, for example, people of the same profession;
- n where possible using liturgical services to promote cross-group harmony.

~ Human rights ~

In recent years there has been a tremendous growth in the number of NGOs actively involved in the promotion of human rights such as Amnesty International, a large international human rights NGO with local offices in many countries. On a regional level there are also such organisations as Africa Watch and the Asia Human Rights Commission.

After early warning signals have been delivered local NGOs can play a very important role in monitoring human rights both in their own areas and throughout the country. This can be done by gathering supplementary information that supports the early warning signals in areas of tension.

Traditional human rights work, especially in the Cold War era, was influenced by a concentration on reporting human rights violations, particularly in Eastern Europe, and on state persecution of well known individuals, detention without trial, torture and freedom of expression.

There is need for a greater emphasis on promoting the universal nature of human rights while at the same time ensuring that the practice of human rights is culturally, socially and politically specific.³ While it is important to alert the international community to possible conflict, human rights advocacy also requires working with a wider variety of actors in the local situation in an attempt to create a local peace constituency. Human rights advocacy offers criticism as it concentrates on abuses but it should also be concerned with providing practical support while remaining objective in the process.⁴

We must be aware that human rights movements can easily be hijacked by opposition politicians and manipulated to support their political ambitions.

~Peace advocacy~

Many NGOs now place a strong emphasis on advocacy activities in order to influence governments or international bodies to take account of the poor and vulnerable in their policies. Such advocacy can on occasion be adversarial and one-sided. Advocacy for peace is different. These programmes have to be designed in such a way that they bring the parties closer together.

When we consider peacebuilding activities for NGOs, the thinking on advocacy has to be different. Advocacy for peace has to be designed in a way that brings the parties closer together and partisanship can only be in reference to the desire for a resolution to the conflict.

Peace advocacy requires moderation, restraint and conviction. We already know what is right and what is wrong in a particular situation and so it can be difficult to maintain a non-judgemental position in situations of conflict where we see gross injustices perpetrated by one or other side. The temptation is to condemn but we must remember that peacemaking requires us to maintain a spirit of respect for all parties in a conflict no matter how difficult this might be. This does not mean we turn a blind eye to injustices perpetrated during conflict but rather that we see them as symptomatic expressions of conflict. In working for a common understanding and a resolution of the conflict, we also deal with the injustices.

Constructive advocacy for peace must ensure that parties to the conflict feel that their voice is being heard without judgement being pronounced on them. This can be an important contact point between opposing sides as trust is built up in a neutral third party.

~Mediation~

One of the most common tools for the resolution of conflict is mediation. The Church frequently offers mediation services to conflicting parties and through our normal pastoral activities we also mediate in family or community disputes.

As a Church-based organisation, Caritas may be working with different parties to the conflict and so be able to pave the way for mediation or be agents for mediation as a trusted third party.

Mediation is not as successful in bringing an end to conflict as we might believe. We can look at the example of Northern Ireland and the number of unsuccessful attempts made to mediate in that conflict over a period of thirty years. Why should the Good Friday Agreement have a better chance of success than previous attempts to end the war? There are many variables that influence the outcome of mediation efforts such as the characteristics of the parties, including the relative power of each party and the nature of previous relationships between the parties. Another variable is the nature of the conflict in terms of duration, intensity and issues involved. The timing of mediation is another variable and there is no definite way of knowing when might be the appropriate moment to intervene.

Much mediation work is based on western mediation techniques which may not be appropriate in resolving complex internal conflicts in other parts of the world. Mediation can offer us an opportunity to develop local capacities for peace in terms of culturally relevant mediation techniques. For example, in western mediation models the mediator is normally “outsider neutral” whereas in many cultures an “insider partial” mediator is better understood and more trusted. If we are to engage in mediation, as in any other activity, we need to identify culturally available resources that can positively influence our search for peace.

~Peace building through education~

The Catholic Church has a long and proven tradition in the field of education. Promoting peace programmes through our educational institutions at both formal and informal levels can be a very useful tool in conflict resolution. We can incorporate peace education programmes, which include teachers, students, parents, guardians and the wider community, into regular school activities at primary and post-primary levels.

Non-formal peace education programmes can be provided for local communities as an important extension of strengthening civil society. We also need to provide our staff with conflict resolution skills, including health and development workers, community workers, agricultural extension workers and, in particular, catechists and pastoral workers. All our personnel who engage on a day to day basis with both protagonists and victims must be aware of their potential as peacemakers.

*~ Working with refugees and internally
displaced people ~*

Many local Caritas agencies work with refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) during a conflict. Most of the work done at this stage focuses on various aspects of humanitarian assistance and normally includes the provision of shelter (camps), food, medicine, clothing, water and sanitation. Psychosocial response services may be needed as well as the development of coping mechanisms for war-affected people.

The pastoral dimension of our work should not be neglected or underestimated during times of conflict. Liturgies and other religious services can be an important means of helping people to cope with the loss of loved ones and a source of hope and confidence in the face of adversity.

During the course of war, reconciliation activities can be limited and are determined very much by the security situation in the country. Nonetheless, we should always be alert to the opportunities that arise to incorporate reconciliation activities into our regular work with refugees and IDPs.

Conflicts are not static. They can change in nature very quickly and our programmes need to be flexible enough to adapt to these changes.

Relief work must continue and some pre-emptive reconciliation work can be done in refugee/IDP camps which have a reasonably stable population. This work can include preparation for peace through:

- n peace education;
- n the formation of peace committees;
- n working with local and traditional leaders;
- n building an indigenous capacity for coping with on-going conflict;
- n strengthening local institutions for conflict resolution;
- n exploring traditional and culturally appropriate reconciliation mechanisms;
- n conflict resolution training activities with camp residents and camp personnel;
- n collaboration in peace programmes of other NGOs;
- n suitable liturgies.

~ Post-conflict reconstruction ~

The work of post-war reconstruction is essential to build sustainable peace and achieve reconciliation. This is a time when a country tries to get back on its feet after a prolonged period of war. Much work needs to be done to repair the damage done, to implement the terms of the peace agreement and to redress the grievances which brought about the war in the first place.

The Church can bring a vast array of resources to post-war reconstruction activities. Primary among these is its presence and its network of institutions throughout the country.

~The importance of presence~

If Caritas, as a Church organisation, has a particular strength in being an agent for peace at any period during conflict, it is because it maintains a presence with its people. If we are not present with and to people during conflict it will be exceedingly difficult for us to be agents of reconciliation in the post-conflict period. Our presence during a period of civil strife is a vital sign of solidarity and hope.

~Quality of presence~

While presence is important, the quality of our presence is even more so. There are many examples of Church personnel who have risked or given their lives in their commitment to peace, justice and reconciliation. The Church and its personnel have many positive contributions to building peace in various countries. We have the example of the Church in Chile and El Salvador and the work done in promoting human rights. The Church in Guatemala, in documenting the history of human rights abuses, provided space for victims to tell their stories. We also have the example of the Sant' Egidio Community, Rome, who brokered the peace in Mozambique.

However, there are also examples of war situations where elements within the Church were severely compromised. We can look at the Church in Argentina and the support some of its members gave the government during the dirty war. A similar example could be cited in Haiti. A recent Danish government report on Rwanda indicated that the Church there would find it very difficult to be accepted as an agent of reconciliation because of the complicity of some of its members in the genocide. The Church in South Africa found it necessary to apologise to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission because it felt it did not do enough to bring about the end of apartheid.

There are, of course, individuals and communities within the Church in these countries who continued to exemplify the love and compassion of Christ in the most difficult of circumstances. These examples are intended to illustrate the need to constantly evaluate our own position and partiality in any particular conflict. It is important for us to maintain our credibility in conflict situations so that we can maintain the trust of parties to the conflict and be acceptable agents of reconciliation.

~Strengthening civil society ~

At all stages of the progress towards peace it is vital to strengthen civil society. War-torn countries experience a disintegration of many of the state institutions necessary for the smooth transition to democracy and peaceful society. Reforms are necessary within the political, economic and legal institutions of the country. The country must prepare for and monitor elections. The terms of the peace agreement must be implemented. The demobilisation of warring factions must take place as well as the retraining of former combatants to take their place in civilian society. A spent economy needs to be revitalised and displaced people need rehabilitation. The peace process must redress previous imbalances in terms of access to land, a fair system of justice and the investigation of war crimes. These are some of the tasks facing governments in the post-war period for which they need considerable assistance.

Caritas can be involved at this level by providing training facilities to help various elements of civil society in:

- n actively advocating for necessary reforms;
- n voter education to counteract corruption and violence;
- n planning and implementing elections;
- n monitoring the democratic process and implementation of the peace accord;
- n assisting in demobilisation programmes;
- n restructuring the justice system;
- n working towards justice for victims;
- n participating in and assisting truth commissions.

~Working for reconciliation at community level~

While the state needs much assistance in post-war rehabilitation and Caritas can have a role at that level in national reconstruction, it is perhaps through working with local communities that we can have the greatest impact. To this end it is imperative to incorporate peacebuilding activities into our normal work in education, health and development.

With civil conflicts, the signing of a peace agreement can be the beginning of peace but it does not always mean an end to conflict. At the community level there are many questions still to answer and many conflicts to resolve. As people return home and begin to resettle, questions may arise that include:

- n Who stole my property?
- n Who destroyed my house?
- n Who killed members of my family?
- n Whose brother was a rebel?
- n Whose daughter married a soldier?
- n Who mutilated my limbs?
- n Who harvested my crops?
- n Who raped my sister?

As Caritas we need to keep a perspective on what is happening on the national level with community reintegration and on being alert to issues that may give rise to further conflict. A necessary first step is sensitising our own personnel to the importance of reconciliation and equipping them with the necessary skills to be agents of reconciliation.

There is much work in helping returnees resettle. The rehabilitation of schools, clinics, houses, farms, community structures is important in helping a war-affected community reintegrate and rebuild a sense of identity. The reconstruction of community-type structures is also important since, in many communities, they provide a neutral space where people can meet to acknowledge the past and create the future. This is particularly true among cultural groups whose identity is more community focussed and where recovery takes place more in the context of the community than on an individual basis.

~ Trauma healing ~

In a war which deliberately targets civilian communities and their cultural institutions there is a great need for psychosocial rehabilitation. Helping people to recover from the trauma of war is an activity undertaken by many NGOs in recent years. Caritas agencies can promote culturally appropriate and traditional healing mechanisms, bearing in mind people's ability to find healing within their own culturally defined milieu.

Psychosocial rehabilitation is not an appendage to social rehabilitation but something which must be an integral part of our social development and rehabilitation programmes and an integral part of our work for justice.

~ Co-ordination and co-operation ~

While we should be aware of the various types of activities that we can engage in as Caritas and which can promote reconciliation in times of conflict, it would be detrimental for us to assume all these roles simultaneously. "Co-ordination and sharing of time and efforts is the answer. With so many actors at different levels of the

international system available to intervene in complex emergencies, co-ordination is essential to avoid overlapping, and often counter-productive, responses that result in wasted resources and inefficient operations.”⁵

The search for reconciliation is best done in partnerships and this demands a high level of co-operation between local and international organisations. It is a long term process that demands a great deal of flexibility with the pooling of experience and resources. The kind of co-operation necessary for the effective resolution of complex emergencies includes co-operation between governments, international organisations and international and national NGOs.

There is also a great need for co-operation within the NGO community itself. As Caritas we cannot do everything ourselves - such an assumption would be foolish. We need to develop a clear vision of what we can and cannot achieve in reconciliation. We need to assess our strengths and weaknesses, play constructive roles where possible, not take on what we cannot complete and we must work closely with other agencies in the field in order to maximise the potential for peace and reconciliation.

~ Tool Box ~

Early warning and prevention

- n Examine options from the text. Add other options possible in your context.
- n Examine your capacity for intervention: physical resources, personnel etc.
- n Examine various possible options.
- n Which activities offer us the best possibilities for impact?
(e.g. has the Church a local radio station or newspaper?)
- n Are we lacking expertise? Where can we find the necessary expertise?
- n Can we improve our present interventions?
- n With whom can we collaborate?
(e.g. other agencies, civic groups, Church groups)

Human rights

- n Read United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and regional charter if one exists.
- n Are human rights enshrined in the constitution of your country?
Check wording as some countries have vague wording such as:
“Where possible...”, or “As far as the resources of the state permit...”.
- n Make a list of human rights abuses on scales of “most common”, “most serious”.
- n Check if there are other human rights organisations operating in your country or area.
- n Can you work with them? Network with them?
- n What practical steps can we take to improve human rights?
(e.g. to create public awareness)
- n Can you safeguard against manipulation?
(e.g. by opposition political parties)

Peace advocacy

- n Are you in a credible position to advocate for peace?
- n Do you have sufficient contact with the conflicting parties?
- n Do you have their trust?
- n If you are working with just one side in the conflict how best can you advocate peace?

Peace building through education

- n Can you develop a curriculum on peace education for primary and second level schools?
- n Can you mobilise students for peace?
(e.g. community peace days)
- n Can you involve parents, guardians and the wider community in your peace advocacy work?
- n Are your staff and all the various Church personnel equipped with basic conflict resolution skills? If not can you do something about it?
- n Can you co-operate with other advocacy groups?

Working with refugees and internally displaced people

- n Check the list in the text for options and add others if necessary.
- n If you have a presence in a refugee or IDP camp, either in a pastoral or humanitarian capacity, what opportunities do you have to work for peace?
- n How can you incorporate peace activities into your pastoral or humanitarian assistance work?
- n Can you work actively to build a community which strives for peace in the camp?
- n Can you do pre-emptive peace work in preparing returnees to cope with the effects of conflict?

Post-Conflict Reconstruction

The Importance of Presence

Quality of Presence

- n Which aspects of post-conflict reconstruction are you involved in or are preparing to become involved?
- n Assess the nature, length and quality of your presence to people during the conflict.
- n Did you maintain credibility?
- n How best can you be an agent of post-war reconciliation?

Strengthening civil society

- n Are you familiar with the terms of the peace agreement?
- n Are you aware of government plans for the reconstruction of civil society?
- n Are there areas in the strengthening of civil society to which you can bring a particular expertise?
(e.g. monitoring, advocacy, training)
- n What other agencies are involved in the strengthening of civil society? Can you support them or collaborate with them? How?
- n Can you strengthen local capacities in reconciliation?

Working for reconciliation at community level

- n Have you examined the issues that affect people in the post-war period?
- n Name the issues and divide them into those that concern physical needs (e.g. housing, food etc.) and those that concern attitudes, behaviour or structures related to the conflict or that may give rise to future conflict.
- n Examine unresolved issues from the conflict, particularly root causes that have not been addressed yet.
- n What resources can you provide that will enhance the prospects for reconciliation? (e.g. provide space for victims to tell their story, provide mediation, work with community reconcilers)

Trauma healing

- n Have you access to professional services to help trauma victims?
- n What services are needed to help trauma victims at the community level?
- n What kind of services can you provide? How?
- n Can you strengthen local services? How?

Co-ordination and co-operation

This is general and applies to all interventions at all levels.

- n What other agencies are working in this particular field? What activities are they involved in?
- n Can you work with other grassroots organisations, local NGOs?
- n Can you work with international NGOs in particular activities?
- n Can you work with international agencies such as Red Cross/Red Crescent, UNICEF?
- n Can you work with government departments?

¹ The phrase “multi-track diplomacy” was coined by John McDonald of the Institute of Multi-Track Diplomacy. McDonald also identified the tracks needed for this approach to conflict resolution.

² Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, *Preventing Deadly Conflict, Final Report*, Washington 1997

³ Rakiya Omaar, (Director of African Rights), *Africa: we're missing the point*, in *The Irish Times* Special Report on Human Rights, 4 November 1998

⁴ The Asian Human Rights Commission has produced an Asian Human Rights Charter that has a universal dimension but concentrates on Asian human rights issues. It is highlighted in Section 4.2 of this publication.

⁵ Lederach, J.P. and Wehr, P., “Mediating Conflict in Central America”, *Journal of Peace Research*, 28, 1, 1991; van Tongeren, Paul, “Exploring the local capacity for peace & the role of NGOs”, in *Prevention and Management of Violent Conflicts: An International Directory*, European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, Utrecht, Holland, 1998 edition

3.3 KEEPING A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE IN RECONCILIATION WORK*



~ Introduction ~

In the section 3.1, Planning a Reconciliation Programme, emphasis is placed on the importance of researching and using culturally appropriate interventions in reconciliation and conflict resolution. With the increase in internal conflicts around the world there is a new urgency to conflict resolution and a new emphasis has been given to the importance of cultural awareness in the process of resolving conflict. Research in this area began in the early 1980s and, of course, much earlier in the field of anthropology but is still far from complete. As Caritas workers, we must be sensitive to the cultural dimensions of conflict and conflict resolution and also be aware of culturally informed intervention strategies.

~ What is culture?~

Culture may appear a simple construct but is, in fact, an enormously complex variable. It is the result of a set of beliefs and behaviours, both implicit and explicit, developed over time by a society which are fundamental to its existence and organisation. These learned attributes, through which experience is interpreted, are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society through a process of inculturation.

When we think of culture, we often think of elements like language, dress, food, art and literature, symbols, and other customs and habits. We must also understand that values, beliefs and attitudes are an integral part of culture (e.g. individual autonomy or collective community, competition or co-operation), as well as the social rules and moral obligations which dictate a group's behaviour. In addition, the political structure (institutions of power and authority) and economic organisation (the way people gain and use their livelihood) of a particular society, its social rules and relationships including kinship, marriage and gender obligations and its religious inheritance all combine to form a society's culture.

Culture shapes the way people who identify with a given group perceive the world and represents the explanations and predictions about the course of human behaviour. Culture is central to who we are and, therefore, central to understanding and interpreting how we do everything, from working to playing, even to how we approach conflict and conflict resolution.

*Many thanks to Dr Tamara Duffey, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, UK, for her very constructive suggestions on exploring culturally appropriate responses to conflict.

~ Conflict and culture ~

Conflict exists in all societies and, consequently, has a cultural dimension. This dimension reveals the values, attitudes and ideologies which underpin conflict and the regulation of conflict in any society.

While we recognise the fact that culture and cultural differences can undoubtedly be sources of conflict, our particular emphasis here is to focus on how differences reflect the ways in which conflicts are acted out and resolved.

In analysing a conflict it is important to take into account the various cultural factors that influence the parties' conflict behaviours. Our purpose here is to highlight the need to understand the cultural conceptions of conflict and develop culturally appropriate strategies for reconciliation.

Every society has developed techniques and procedures by which disputes are regulated and settled. Mechanisms vary greatly from one culture to another, depending on how people see their relationships with each other. This worldview includes how conflict and its resolution are perceived.

Conflict resolution in Western societies is generally a formal affair with legally binding agreements being reached through an impartial third party. In many other societies conflict resolution and control of conflict are not always identified or supported by formal institutions but are, nonetheless, binding in their own cultural way. In other words, the need for social harmony determines the way in which disputes are managed and the extent to which conflict resolution is legally, morally, or culturally binding.

~ The use of local resources to promote peace ~

Much international attention is focused on the destruction caused by war and the devastation of peoples who require food, shelter and health services. The appeal for outside agencies and resources to respond to the need to alleviate suffering is common to all conflict areas.

This appeal to outside agencies often includes an appeal for peacemaking and peacebuilding. We forget, however, that the greatest resource for building peace and sustaining peace in the long term is always rooted in the people and their culture. The most important aspect in the development of a framework for sustaining reconciliation is the building of a peace constituency using the resources within the community, including traditional leaders and community representatives and traditional methods for resolving conflict and reconciling communities. People with a vision for peace often emerge from within a community representing an invaluable and irreplaceable resource for moving towards reconciliation and sustaining solutions to the conflict.

In order to develop and support a peace constituency, there is a need to focus attention on discovering and eliciting the resources, modalities, and mechanisms for building peace that exist within a community's cultural setting.

~ The erosion of culture ~

We should, however, keep in mind that there are several factors which have a negative impact on culture and lead to the erosion of traditional cultural authority, cultural values and ways of life, and which may reduce the impact of traditional means of dealing with conflict.

- n Western influenced modernisation has many negative effects on traditional cultures. The emphasis placed on western education, for example, has moved many away from traditional and cultural forms of education. It has led to a large migration of young people from their homes in order to attend school. Those who wish to continue education at a higher level move to the larger urban areas where they are further distanced from traditional practices and values. Many of those who cannot achieve their educational goals find themselves in a cultural no man's land where they do not want to go back, and are unable to move forward. They gravitate towards the more cosmopolitan cities and towns in the hope of eking out an existence. Along the way many cultural values are eroded.
- n The worldwide trend towards urbanisation caused by industrialisation has affected most countries. This impacts on traditional cultures as the hope of better economic futures attracts large numbers of people to the urban areas and continues the cycle of cultural erosion.
- n The impact of war itself has disrupted the traditional life that communities have enjoyed for centuries. The massive displacement of peoples caused by modern wars has led to the abandonment (or, at least, neglect), of many cultural practices and institutions, many of which may be specific to the locality that has to be forcibly abandoned. The development of coping mechanisms to ensure survival takes precedence over everything else.
- n One of the weapons of modern warfare is the deliberate targeting and destruction of cultural institutions which connect people to their traditions, their history and their way of being. This can be done by destroying the physical institutions of the community: houses of worship and sacred shrines or by eliminating respected leaders or the cultural authority within the community.

~ The use of culturally appropriate interventions ~

It may be an important part of the work of Caritas agencies to help re-establish the cultural structures which have been destroyed by war and which could play a vital role in post-conflict reconciliation. It is part of the process of providing space wherein people can reconcile among themselves and with others.

- n One example would be helping people bury their dead. Relatives, friends and community members die during the conflict. Some will have died indirectly as a result of violence or because of illness, neglect or hardship. Some will have disappeared during the course of the conflict, executed by the regime or a faction. Some will have died violently, their deaths unrecorded and the circumstances unknown to their families.

Enabling those who have lost loved ones to grieve and bury their dead in a culturally appropriate manner is an important part of reconciliation.

- n Another activity of post-conflict resolution is the restoration of the cultural structures that support reconciliation in the community. Where there are such structures, there are traditional reconcilers or people in the community who are recognised as mediators or whose responsibility it is to maintain harmony in the community. The skills that these people employ are designed to resolve normal and everyday conflicts that occur in the community and which threaten, to a greater or lesser degree, the stability of that community. These skills may not be adequate to deal with the kinds of conflicts that will inevitably arise as a result of war. Reconciliation work may include the strengthening of the skills of these traditional reconcilers, which would enable them to deal more effectively with post-war conflict in the community.

- n Closely allied to the above is enabling people to gain access to justice. The state judicial system is considerably weakened as a result of war with personnel fleeing or being discredited and institutions (such as courts and court records) being damaged or destroyed. Besides, people returning to their communities after war-induced displacement do not have the resources to pursue genuine grievances through the state legal system which, at best, is time consuming and costly. Many traditional societies have their own legal system, not recognised by the state but, nonetheless, having authority within the community. It may be important to help re-establish these traditional courts and promote their recognition by the state.

Conflicts resulting in various ways from war should be solved as locally as possible, as quickly as possible and in a culturally-appropriate manner. This is an important peacebuilding process.

- n One very disturbing statistic in modern warfare is the increase in the number of civilian casualties, in some cases up to 95% of all casualties, indicating that the civilian populations in internal conflicts are deliberately targeted as victims. This, in turn, has led to an increase in the demand for psychosocial programmes designed to help traumatised people cope with the consequences of war and the impact of violence on their lives. In helping victims of violence cope with trauma, it is essential to use culturally appropriate strategies rather than imported western techniques. A simple example is the fact that western psychosocial rehabilitation is very much on an individual basis whereas many other cultures are more community focused, whereby healing takes place within the context of the community and of interdependent relationships.
- n Another example might be the way in which child victims of trauma are treated. In the west the approach may be to institutionalise children under specialised care. Other cultures would see it as a priority to reunite the child

with his/her family (or other community members) and allow healing to take place in this context. Helping families and communities to recognise symptoms of trauma and enabling them to help the victims of trauma in a culturally sensitive manner is essential.

- n One of the most important tasks that Caritas can perform is the creation of space in a community whereby healing may take place. Each victim of violence has a story to tell which may best be told, not to an individual counsellor, but in the context of an empathetic and understanding community.
- n The provision of training in conflict resolution (so long as it supplements and enhances traditional conflict resolution and does not replace it) for social workers, primary health care workers, development workers, teachers and other people involved in community type work would also be an invaluable contribution to post war healing.

~ Conclusion ~

It is important for each Caritas agency to examine carefully the various cultural influences that might impact on its own reconciliation work. This may involve an investigation of the cultural realities that have had a bearing on the conflict itself or in determining cultural realities that may help the reconciliation process. Keep a culturally informed perspective on the work.



~ Tool Box ~

u

ARE THERE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS TO THE CONFLICT?

(e.g. tribalism, ideology, religion, social inequality etc.)

u

IDENTIFY THE CULTURAL REALITIES THAT IMPACT NEGATIVELY ON THE CONFLICT.

(e.g. prejudice, discrimination, patrimonialism, fear, tribalism etc.)

u

IDENTIFY THE CULTURAL REALITIES THAT MAY HAVE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON RESOLUTION OF THE CONFLICT.

(e.g. shared resources, values regarding cooperation, similar reconciliation customs or processes)

u

DO YOU, AS AN ORGANISATION, WORK WITH DIFFERENT PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT AND IS THERE THE POSSIBILITY OF CROSSING THE CULTURAL DIVIDES IN THE CONFLICT?

u

CAN YOU WORK ON BOTH/ALL SIDES OF THE CONFLICT? HOW CAN YOU MAINTAIN NEUTRALITY, IMPARTIALITY?

u

IF YOU CAN ONLY WORK WITH ONE CULTURAL GROUP, WHAT POSSIBILITIES CAN YOU EXPLORE FOR RECONCILIATION?

u

ARE YOU ABLE TO EXPLORE TRADITIONAL OR CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE MECHANISMS FOR RECONCILIATION?

How do you do this (e.g. meet with community members, traditional leaders)?

How do you reach people?

How does the community view conflict or confrontation? (negatively, positively, in neutral terms)?

How is conflict expressed?

How does the community view social relationships (independent/interdependent, collective/individual, harmonious/competitive)?

Who, traditionally, holds authority and power in the community?

What traditional techniques or processes exist (or existed before the conflict) for resolving conflict? What are the opening/closing rituals in addressing a conflict?

What is the process for addressing information? Who are the common and credible intervenors within the culture? Are they (the practices and individuals) still respected by the community?

Can these practices be strengthened? If so, how?

How does the community define successful management of the conflict (restoring harmony, saving face, defeating others)?

What are the beliefs/practices regarding forgiveness? Revenge?

u

DO YOU HAVE SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF THE CONFLICT?

Do you need help?

Where do you find it?

u

WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER THAT WILL SUPPLEMENT, RATHER THAN REPLACE,
CULTURAL RESOURCES?

u

AT WHAT LEVEL(S) CAN YOU INTERVENE MOST EFFECTIVELY
AND IN A CULTURALLY-SENSITIVE WAY?

3.4 EXAMPLES

OF GOOD PRACTICE IN RECONCILIATION



~ Introduction ~

In presenting examples of good practice in reconciliation we are providing some interesting illustrations of the kind of peacebuilding activities which Caritas members and other organisations have engaged in throughout the world. These examples were designed to meet specific needs in specific conflict situations. We are not suggesting that these examples be duplicated since no two conflicts are exactly the same and what works in one conflict area will not necessarily work in another. The examples selected are also separated from the general context of the conflict within which particular interventions were designed, but they can serve to focus our attention on the possible and they also underline good principles of action in reconciliation work.

A particular strength of Caritas agencies throughout the world comes from decades of relief and development experience. As an agency of the Catholic Church, we have the unique task of delivering the message of Christ through our day to day involvement in the lives of people. All Caritas agencies may not be able to undertake full-time reconciliation programmes but we are all asked to review our present programmes of relief and development and see if we can incorporate a reconciliation component into our work.

By presenting examples of good practice we hope to provide some ideas about ways in which Caritas agencies may be able to involve themselves in reconciliation work. Some of the examples given here come from programmes which have already been undertaken by Caritas agencies, while some are from other agencies which are also interested in reconciliation work. These examples come from all over the world and have been designed to meet particular local needs.

1 Human rights in Guatemala

The Catholic Bishops' Human Rights Office set up its own Truth Commission Project after the war. This was an effort to process and recuperate the historical memory of violence in Guatemala where over 40,000 people disappeared during the war. The project involved truth telling, rebuilding self-esteem, and the healing of broken communities and relationships through animators trained in listening and counselling techniques, documentation, conflict management and reconciliation. Animators worked with both victims and victimizers and promoted forgiveness and pardon as opposed to vengeance (source: Caritas).

2 Trauma healing in Croatia

In Croatia, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) developed a curriculum and training programme in trauma healing for professional people. The project provided four types of training:

- 1 addressing the needs of health care providers suffering from traumatization or burn-out;
- 2 trauma awareness training for those whose work addresses psycho-social needs such as doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers and attorneys;
- 3 leadership training;
- 4 basic and advanced trauma and recovery training (source: CRS).

3 A children's magazine in Lebanon

UNICEF sponsored a project in Lebanon to publish a children's magazine on peace education. The magazine focused on letting children know they were not alone, on expanding their horizons and imagination beyond the shelters, on fostering a sense of being Lebanese, rather than factional identity, on creating links between children and on disseminating health messages. The magazine received an overwhelming response from children and two important lessons were learned:

- 1 peacebuilding activities targeting children were more acceptable and less provocative to the general population and factions than those geared to whole populations;
- 2 the process involved local NGO partners, many of whom were factionally based, in planning and implementation (source: Minear).

4 Islamic women in Somalia

A group of Somali women founded an umbrella organisation called Coalition of Grassroots Women's Organisations which aimed to find means to achieve lasting peace. Working initially in Mogadishu, there are attempts now to link up with other women's groups nationwide. The coalition aims to remove Somali women from the arena of conflict. Although women are not direct participants, they give moral and logistical support to

violence. The coalition has used Islamic values to help solve, rather than perpetuate, conflict. This includes, for instance, teaching the Koran to illiterate or semi-literate women without the filter of local (male) custom. Some women have travelled abroad to learn from the experiences of other women in conflict situations. A group went to South Africa and have since translated training manuals into Somali to enable other women to access them. The process has been slow and sometimes threatening but the hope is that this coalition can influence men in order to create a more peaceful environment in Somalia and to give women a chance to broker peace (source: Network on Conflict, Development and Peace - CODEP).

5 Conflict prevention and mitigation activities in Ahmedabad, India

St Xavier Social Service Society, based in Ahmedabad, India sponsored various types of community activities to reduce and prevent the level of conflict. These included:

- 1 writing street plays by indigenous staff which refer to places, symbols, customs and words of harmony from the community;
- 2 children's creative art competitions with conflict prevention themes;
- 3 writing songs promoting harmony which were then printed on sacks and distributed;
- 4 formation of community committees to develop and foster indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms;
- 5 creating opportunities to discuss violence in conjunction with other activities (such as at a health promotion session in a slum area);
- 6 providing safe havens, usually in Church affiliated buildings, for those at risk of attack by mobs (source: Bock).

6 Building bridges across the frontline in Sudan

In designing a programme in a conflict situation it is important to identify areas of common interest between warring parties. In Sudan in the late 1980s, Oxfam staffed and funded a cattle vaccination programme in south Sudan in which vaccines were taken across war lines to cattle on both sides of the war front. This was possible because both sides appreciated the value of cattle as an essential resource and means of livelihood. Disease on one side would spread to the other and cattle trade across the frontline was still essential in spite of the war. Interestingly, there were personal contacts, occasional ceasefires and mutual respect for pastoralist groups on a small scale. This project could not alone be a stimulus for wider peace, but it was undoubtedly a containment element to build on (source: Oxfam).

7 Culturally appropriate reconciliation in Burundi

The CRS-supported CRID project in Burundi created committees in co-operation with the National Conference of Bishops to promote peace at diocesan and at parish/community level. A pilot project produced a culturally

appropriate model for reconciliation, involving community, political and military leaders. The pilot exercise provided three important lessons:

- 1 The process could be conceived and implemented locally.
- 2 Culturally acceptable terminology had to be used; e.g. mutual acceptance and self-involvement were more acceptable words than reconciliation.
- 3 It was very difficult to include entire populations in the process although local media could be used to promote reconciliation messages effectively (source: CRS).

8 Education for peace in Egypt

This programme focused on raising awareness with intensive training programmes in non-violence, education for peace, and democratic methods targeting schoolchildren, youth and teachers. The public education campaign included support for painting murals on walls in public places, the development of peace cartoons, and the translation of noted works on non-violence (source: CRS).

9 Peace through sports

Several Caritas agencies have sponsored community sports events by providing equipment, rehabilitating sports fields, and organising tournaments. The sporting events provided an outlet for tension, brought together different groups on the sports field, and provided an opportunity for recreational activities between opposing groups (source: Caritas).

10 Housing reconstruction in Rwanda

CRS has supported a housing reconstruction project in Rwanda, identifying particularly vulnerable people. Vulnerability is based on physical ability, female head of household, number of dependants and age. The criteria cut across ethnic and clan divisions and ensure the most needy receive services, even in situations where large populations may be considered needy. Community members participate in the decision making process, deciding who will be their neighbours and who is most vulnerable and in need of assistance. They also participate in building houses (source: CRS).

11 Promoting reconciliation among ethnic groups in Bosnia

In response to divisions among local branches of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) which split along ethnic lines, ICRC implemented a project to promote reconciliation between ethnic groups, working only with those agencies which demonstrated ability to work with and for different sides. The project emphasised the ICRC principle of functional co-operation, establishing a common vocabulary and understanding of roles. Political topics were avoided and the word reconciliation was specifically not mentioned. Meetings included discussions on locally defined issues, needs and priorities. Workshops were held in retreat settings to maintain focus. The project identified three important factors for its success:

- 1 emphasising positive pre-conflict relations between participants;
- 2 a unifying identity as the ICRC branches ignored politics and facilitated functional co-operation;
- 3 the insider/mediator role of the international body (source: Pedersen).

12 Promoting reconciliation across an ethnic divide in Sri Lanka

The Kalumnai Peace Foundation (KPF) was founded in 1994 to build bridges between the different ethnic communities, especially in the so-called border villages in Sri Lanka. Amongst other activities, KPF runs a community based programme placing Moslem and Tamil animators into eight border areas where tensions have run particularly high in the past and where ethnic relations have been strained. The resultant better relationships have meant the return home of people who had previously fled. With a better sense of security, clinics have opened and local action committees have begun to organise activities and work with the animator teams in their area. All training activities include mixed ethnic groups (source: KPF).

13 Information analysis in the Great Lakes Region

ActionAid has established an Emergency Relief Information Centre (ERIC) in Nairobi. ERIC collects information from the local media, the United Nations, NGO contacts and field visits. It reports on a monthly basis and tries to interpret information and speculate on likely emergency scenarios. The sensitivity of the analysis has resulted in some elements being kept confidential. ERIC's work has helped in developing procedural rules of engagement in Burundi and has fed into ActionAid's conflict related advocacy work. Information collected by ActionAid staff considered too sensitive was not made public in order to protect staff (source: CODEP).

14 Conflict resolution training in Sierra Leone

Caritas Sierra Leone has developed a community-based reconciliation and trauma healing programme. This began with consultative meetings with the government, civil authorities, NGOs, community leaders and refugees. This highly participatory approach also ensured high quality information and input on how to address the conflict. Issues arising from the consultation included: the impact of the war on women and children; the involvement of youth in the fighting; social and cultural changes as a result of war and consequences of bad governance. Caritas developed a training manual and the focus of the programme is to strengthen local capacities for conflict resolution by training community animators (source: CODEP).

15 Post-war rehabilitation in Mozambique

An international NGO has helped set up a life skills building programme through a local community association in a village in northern Mozambique. The programme included basic numeracy and literacy, recreation, access to trade skills and mentor relationships with adult role models. The programme was open to a wide range of economically marginalized people, adolescents, including those who had been internally displaced, returning refugees, original local residents and demobilized soldiers. As the long term goal was to promote genuine reintegration into the local community, there were no programmes established for sub-groups such as child soldiers or separated children. There was a conscious effort to address common problems and issues with support being determined by the individual's needs rather than on membership of a particular sub-group (source: Caritas).

16 War affected women in Liberia

CRS supported a programme in Liberia which focused specifically on the effects of war and violence on women who had suffered physical violence and rape, were widowed or single heads of households. The women involved in the project reflect the ethnic diversity of the country, speak a variety of languages, and were directly or indirectly affected by violence. The women received training as project officers and led workshops on trauma healing with traditional midwives. In group sessions plays, songs, stories, and folk tales stimulated discussion on the personal and communal impact of violence and helped to develop strategies to lessen future violence. Participants were challenged to identify their own prejudices and used their stories and plays to rebuild trust between groups. The curriculum became part of the Ministry of Health's midwife training, reinforcing the concept that violence is a health issue. The project also included an economic development component as an important aspect of return to normalcy (source: CRS).

17 Counselling rape victims in Georgia

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) brought together Abkhazi and Georgian rape victims following ethnic conflict in Georgia. At a peaceful setting in Armenia, women from each group stayed in separate quarters during post-trauma counselling sessions. However, there was a door between their two rooms. Over time, as each group came to understand the pain of the other group they opened the door, encountering each other as people rather than the other (source: Caritas).

18 Reconciliation through reconstruction work in Croatia

The Anti-War Campaign of Croatia, an indigenous NGO, implemented a project which involved people from warring parties coming from another community and international volunteers in locally-initiated projects to rebuild the physical infrastructure of a specific community. This led to reconciliation between previously warring groups. Project participants found that:

- 1 Reconciliation and social reconstruction are extremely slow processes. It was more realistic to look at normalising life rather than reconciling relationships.
- 2 Some people felt betrayed and expressed considerable anger that the NGO worked with both sides.
- 3 The existence of the project cast the conflict in a new light. International volunteers living in groups challenged the view that diverse groups of people cannot live together peacefully.
- 4 Outsiders can play creative roles in post-war reconciliation while solutions remain locally initiated and owned (source: Minear).

19 Post-violence reconstruction in Pakistan

Following a slum riot in Karachi, in the Orangi area, one of Asia's largest slums, the Orangi Pilot Project undertook a housing reconstruction programme involving both belligerent groups: one comprising immigrants from India and the other a tribe indigenous to Pakistan. The project sought to heal wounds by encouraging people from one group to help rebuild the homes of those in the other group. It yielded some valuable lessons:

- 1 Self-management and self-financing projects promote community ownership.
- 2 Involvement of the NGO prior to the conflict and its commitment to working in a community provide a measure of safety during conflict and give the agency the credibility needed to undertake a delicate reconstruction programme.
- 3 Agency staff should reflect the ethnic diversity of the community;
- 4 In a post-conflict situation it is sometimes better to do rather than to discuss. Convene groups to rebuild houses rather than discuss tensions.
- 5 It is important to have swift programme action in times of tension (source: Lyke+Bock).

20 The Reconciliation Walk, Germany

On Easter Sunday morning 1996, the Reconciliation Walk started out from Cologne, Germany. 900 years before, the first crusaders who committed many atrocities against Arabs, Jews and fellow Christians supposedly in the name of Christ, had started out from the same place. The walkers intended to march along the route the Crusaders took through former Yugoslavia to Istanbul in Turkey. They prayed at different places and asked forgiveness of Moslems for the actions of the crusaders.

At the start in a Turkish mosque in Cologne they were welcomed into the prayer hall where the worshippers were encouraged by the Imam to read the message of apology which the Christians had brought with them. The Imam then said: "When I heard your message, I was astonished and filled with hope. I thought to myself: 'Whoever had this idea must have had an epiphany, a visit from God our Creator'". He added that the group was an example to his own people and promised to send the message to all 250 mosques in Europe. At the time of the crusades, the people of Cologne also conducted massacres of the Jewish population. So later in the day, the group paused near the synagogue and prayed for blessing and healing (source: Caritas).

21 The Butterfly Garden, Sri Lanka

The Professional Psychological Counselling Centre in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka, provides mental health counselling to individuals traumatized by the war, trains counsellors, runs seminars for war widows and workshops for torture survivors. It also sponsors the Butterfly Garden which allows children traumatized by the war to grow and heal through cultivating a garden, the arts and caring for the earth and for one another. Its own philosophy states: "The Butterfly Garden replaces the war ethos of violence and destruction with one of gentleness and creation. Both those aspects of the child which are wounded and those which remain resilient are addressed. By tending to the garden within the human heart as well as the garden of earthly experience with equal compassion and imagination, the child can heal and become a healer within her or his community."(source: Joe William, Caritas).

22 Promoting peace, reconciliation and development, Mindanao, Philippines

There has been conflict for many years between the Filipino government and the Muslims of the island of Mindanao over land, poverty, injustice and cultural insensitivity. Past efforts to bring Muslims and Christians together have failed but a Council for Peace and Development will oversee a new peace and development zone on Mindanao and work towards autonomous government.

In Miriyama village Cotabato Archdiocese funds a housing project for 250 Muslim and Christian families, supported by CRS. A community bakery produces low-cost food for 2,230 people and employs 12 people with a number of trainees. As well as giving a livelihood the bakery strengthens links between Christian and Muslims. Community leaders now take part in peace workshops and conflict transformation seminars aimed to build on the peacemaking efforts to date (source: CRS).

23 Inter-ethnic schools in Macedonia

Unlike other states in the region, Macedonia gained independence peacefully in 1991. But tensions remain between the country's many ethnic groups, particularly Slavic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. With support from CRS local communities came together to restore dilapidated schools for students, teachers and administrators from ethnically mixed backgrounds. They also ran parent council workshops on tackling prejudice, stereotyping and conflict. From a region which spawned the phrase "ethnic cleansing" there is a small beacon of hope in Macedonia's mixed schools projects (source: Carnegie).

24. Searching for the truth in Chile

Thousands disappeared, presumed murdered, during the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile. The National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation set out to record the massive human rights violations of those 16 years, to help identify victims and their fate, to suggest reparation to survivors or next of kin and to ensure such atrocities could not happen again. Revenge was not part of its remit. Rather, by discovering the truth about the past, even through the grisly process of exhumations, Chile hopes to meet basic requirements of justice and move closer to national reconciliation (source: Carnegie).

Sources

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IV. Resources For Reconciliation

4.1 ORGANISATIONS WORKING IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION



The following is a list of some of the organisations, centres or institutes involved in various aspects of conflict resolution work worldwide.¹ The selection includes a number of organisations from each continent so that local Caritas offices can access resource centres within their own region. These organisations may be able to supply information, advice, training, technical and programme assistance to Caritas members new to reconciliation work. Such support can be of great benefit where conflicts have a regional dimension and may also be more culturally specific.

Information on some of the organisations listed is limited but we have included addresses, telephone and fax numbers as well as e-mail and website addresses where available. The main activities of the various organisations are also listed.

~Africa~

ACCORD

Africa Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes

c/o University of Durban-Westville, PMB X54001, Durban 4000, **South Africa**

Tel: +27 (31) 204 4816/262 9340, Fax: +27 (31) 204 4818/ 262 9346

e-mail: [HYPERLINK mail to:info@accord.udw.ac.za](mailto:info@accord.udw.ac.za); [HYPERLINK](http://accord.org.za)

<http://accord.org.za> Contact: Vasu Gounden (Director)

Activities: Research, Intervention, Training in Preventative Diplomacy and Peacekeeping

AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF POLITICAL SCIENTISTS (AAPS)

P.O. Box MP 1100, Mount Pleasant, Harare, **Zimbabwe**

Tel: +263 (4) 739 023

Fax: +263 (4) 730 403

e-mail: aaps@samara.co.zw

Website: <http://www.aaps.co.zw>

Contact: Kwane A. Ninsin, (Executive Director)

Activities: Political Science Research, Advice, Advocacy

Publications: *African Journal of Political Science*

ALL AFRICAN CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

P.O. Box 14205, Nairobi, **Kenya**

Tel: +254 (2) 441 483/ 441 338

Fax: +254 (2) 443 241

e-mail: aacc@maf.org

Contact: Daniel Mulunda-Nyanga

Activities: Mediation, Citizen Diplomacy, Fact Finding, Early Warning

AMANI PEOPLE'S THEATRE

P.O. Box 8034, Nairobi, **Kenya**

Tel: +254 (2) 560 385

e-mail: koinonia@maf.org

Contact: Babu Ayindo

Activities: Training and Conflict Resolution through Theatre

CATHOLIC JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION

P.O. Box 10-3569, 1000 Monrovia 10, **Liberia**

Tel: +231 227 657/ 225 930

Fax: +231 226 006/ 227 838

Contact: Samuel Kofi Woods (Director)

Activities: Human Rights Monitoring and Advocacy, Grassroots Training

Publications: Situation Reports

CENTRE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

University of Cape Town, Private Bag, 7700 Rondebosch, **South Africa**

Tel: +27 (21) 222 512, Fax: 222 622,

e-mail: [HYPERLINK mail to:mailbox@ccr.uct.ac.za](mailto:mailbox@ccr.uct.ac.za)

Contact: Laurie Nathan (Executive Director)

Activities: Mediation, Training, Research, Education, Capacity Building

COALITION FOR PEACE IN AFRICA

P.O. Box 53 687, 2139 Troyeville, **South Africa**

Tel: +27 (11) 614 4141

Fax: +27 (11) 614 4114

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:copa@iafrica.com

Activities: Training, Capacity Building, Mediation, Advocacy, Peace Education

ETHIOPIAN PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 41879, Addis Ababa, **Ethiopia**

Tel: +251 (1) 511 966

Fax: +251 (1) 515 714

Contact: Yusuf Hassen Noah (Director)

Activities: Training, Research and Education on Conflict Prevention and Resolution

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE GROUP

P.O. Box 76621, Nairobi, **Kenya**

Tel: +254 (2) 574 092/6

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:kilenem@africaonline.co.ke

Contact: Josephine Odera

Activities: Research and Advice on Disarmament and Security

LIFE & PEACE INSTITUTE

P.O. Box 21123, Nairobi, **Kenya**

Tel: +254 (2) 561 158

Fax: +254 (2) 570 614

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:lpihap@users.africaonline

HYPERLINK [Http://www.nordnet.se.lpi](http://www.nordnet.se.lpi)

Contact: Johan Svensson (Regional Representative)

Activities: Research and support for grassroots reconciliation initiatives

MEDIATION & CHANGE

La Trade Fair, P.O. Box 1433, Cantonments, Accra, **Ghana**

Tel: +233 778 507

Fax: +233 762 321

Contact: Kwesi Aaku

Activities: Training, Fact-Finding, Early Warning and Mediation

NAIROBI PEACE INITIATIVE

P.O. Box 14894, Nairobi, **Kenya**

Tel: +254 (2) 441 444/440 098

Fax: 254 (2) 440 097/ 445 177,

E-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:npi@africaonline.co.ke

Contact: George Wachira (Director)

Activities: Peace Building, Conflict Transformation, Training, Research, Mediation.

Publications: *Peace Making and Democratization in Africa: Theoretical Perspectives and Church Initiatives*

OLIVER TAMBO CHAIR OF HUMAN RIGHTS

University of Fort Hare, PMB X1314, Alice 5700, **South Africa**

Tel: +27 (40) 602 2220

Fax: +27 (40) 602 2544

Contact: N.S. Rembe (Professor)

Activities: University Training on Human Rights and Conflict Resolution

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

P.O. Box 3243, Addis Ababa, **Ethiopia**

Tel: +251 (1) 513 822

Fax: +251 (1) 519 274

Contact: Sam Ibok, (Head of Conflict Management Division)

Activities: Defence and Security, Conflict Prevention, Research

PAN-AFRICAN RECONCILIATION COUNCIL

P.O. Box 9354, Marina, Lagos City, **Nigeria**

Tel: +234 (1) 835 004/ 843 578

Fax: +234 (1) 264 6082/4 (Quote FDS 091)

Contact: Ebenezer Adeolu Adenekan

Activities: Research and information on social and economic justice, youth and women, refugees, non-violence, social conflict and interfaith activities

SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIONAL INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES

P.O. Box MP 111, Mount Pleasant, Harare, **Zimbabwe**

Tel: +263 (4) 727 875/ 726 060

Fax: +263 (4) 732 735

E-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:sapes@harare.iafrica.com

Contact: Ibbo Mandaza

Activities: Data Collection, Research

~Asia~

ARKOR FOUNDATION

Zheltoksan St., Almaty, **Kazakhstan**

Tel: Fax: +7 (2372) 699 494

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:nurbulat@eawarn.alma-ata.su

Contact: Nurbulat Masanov (Director)

Activities: Research, NGO Networking

ASIAN CULTURAL FORUM ON DEVELOPMENT

G.P.O. Box 4047, Dhaka 1000, **Bangladesh**

Tel: +880 (2) 120 677

Fax: +880 (2) 813 014

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:acl@bdmail.net

Contact: Ali Ahmed (Secretary General)

Activities: Research, Training

BANGLADESH INTERRELIGIOUS COUNCIL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

14/20 Iqbal Road, Mohammedadpur, Dhaka-1207, **Bangladesh**

Tel: +880 (2) 323 630

Fax: +880 (2) 816 614/460

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:mccoy@bdonline.com

HYPERLINK <http://www3.itu.ch/ibp/members/info/babicpaj>

Contact: Brother J. D'Souza

Activities: Interfaith dialogue, Literacy as a Tool for Peace, Advocacy

CAMBODIAN CENTRE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Cambodia Development, Resource Institute, P.O. Box 622, Phnom Penh 1, **Cambodia**

Tel: +855 (23) 367 115

Fax: +855 (23) 366 094

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:cdri.pp.cam@uni.fi

Contact: Plai Ngarm Soth/ Kevin Malone

Activities: Workshops, Conflict Prevention Programmes

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

GPO Box 1657, Islamabad 46000, **Pakistan**

Tel: +92 (51) 254 336/7

Fax: +92 (51) 262 507

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:mail@sdnpk.undp.org

Contact: James John

Activities: Interfaith collaboration, Training

COOPERATION FOR PEACE UNITY NETWORK

University P.O. Box 1084, University Town, Peshwar, **Pakistan**

Tel: +92 91 44392/45316

Fax: +92 91 840 471,

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:Director@ACBAR.psh.brain.net.pk

Contact: Jawed Ludin

Activities: Networking, Training, Research

DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE CENTRE

c/o NARC, 5th Floor Bhardawadi Hospital, Bhardwadi Rd, Andheri, Bombay, **India**

Tel: +91 (22) 624 9388/5290

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:narc@soochak.ncst.ernet.in

Contact: P.V. Unnikrishnan

Activities: Research, Information on Communal Conflicts

GASTON Z. ORTIGAS PEACE INSTITUTE

2nd Floor, Cardinal Hoeffner Building, Social Development Complex, Alteneo De Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City 1108, **Philippines**

Tel: +63 924 4557/6076/4601

Fax: +63 924 4557

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:peace@codewan.com.ph

Contact: Teresita Quintos-Deles

Activities: Research, Training

INDIAN INSTITUTE FOR PEACE, DISARMAMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

537 Sakkardara Rd., Nagpur 440 009, **India**

Tel: +91 (712) 745 806

Fax: +91 (712) 722 337

Contact: Balkrishna Kurvey

Activities: Research, Education

INDIA PEACE CENTRE

C.K. Naidu Rd., Civil Lines, Nagpur 440 001, Maharashtra, **India**

Tel: +91 (712) 556 952

Fax: +91 (712) 556 952

Contact: Hansi De (Director)

Activities: Interfaith Justice and Peace Initiatives

INSTITUTE FOR PEACE RESEARCH

1-1-89 Higashi-sendamachi, Naka-ku, Hiroshima 730, **Japan**

Tel: +81 (82) 542 6975

Fax: +81 (82) 245 0585

e-mail: [HYPERLINK mail to:ipshu@hiroshima-u.ac.jp](mailto:ipshu@hiroshima-u.ac.jp)

Contact: Masatsugu Matsuo (Director)

Activities: Research

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF ENGAGED BUDDHISTS

Mahadthai Post Office, P.O. Box 19, Bangkok 102 06, **Thailand**

Tel/Fax: +66 (2) 433 7196

e-mail: [HYPERLINK mail to:ineb@loxinfo.co.th](mailto:ineb@loxinfo.co.th)

[HYPERLINK Http://www.igc.apc.org/bpf/ineb](http://www.igc.apc.org/bpf/ineb)

Contact: Martin H. Petrich, (Executive Secretary)

Activities: Networking, Training

KAZAKHSTAN CENTRE FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

57'V' Timiryazev Street, Apt.23, Almaty 480 070, **Kazakhstan**

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Fax: +7 (3272) 479 449

e-mail: [HYPERLINK mail to:ccm@online.ru](mailto:ccm@online.ru)

Contact: Elena Sadovskaya, (President)

Activities: Interethnic Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution Training

NATIONAL PEACE COUNCIL

291/50 Havelock Gardens, Colombo 6, **Sri Lanka**

Tel: +94 (1) 502 522/584378

Fax: +94 (1) 502 522/594 378,

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:peace2@sri.lanka.net

HYPERLINK <http://www.peace-srilanka.org>

Contact: Tyrol Ferdinands, (General Secretary)

Activities: Peace Education, Networking, Advocacy, Mediation

PEACE RESOURCE COOPERATIVE

3-3-1 Minowa-cho, Kohoku-ku, 223-0051 Yokohama, **Japan**

Tel: +81 (45) 563 5101

Fax: +81 (45) 563 9907

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:peacedepot@y.e-mail.ne.jp

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Activities: Education and Research

SANTI PRACHA DHAMMA INSTITUTE

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Fax: +66 (2) 225 9540

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:atc@bkk.a-net.net.th

Contact: Pracha Hutanuwatr, (Project Coordinator)

Activities: Grassroots Leadership Training

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES

PCED Hostel, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, **Philippines**

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Fax: +63 (2) 920 5428

Contact: Maria Serena I. Diokno, (Programme Director)

Activities: Education

~Europe~

(UNIVERSITY PROGRAMMES AND TRAINING CENTRES)

AUSTRIAN STUDY CENTER FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Rochusplatz 1, 7461 Stadtschlaining, **Austria**

Tel: +43 (3355) 2498

Fax: +43 (3355) 2662

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:aspr@aspr.ac.at

HYPERLINK <http://www.uji.es.epd/epu>

Contact: Arno Truger (Deputy of the Executive President)

Courses: MA Programme in Peace and Conflict Studies

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LEUVEN

Van Evenstraat 2B, Leuven 3000, **Belgium**

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e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:Luc.reychler@soc.kuleuven.ac.be

HYPERLINK <http://www.kuleuven.ac.be/facdep/social/pol/cvo.cvo.htm>

Contact: Prof. Dr. Luc Reychler

Courses: MA programme in European Studies, Undergraduate Courses, Research

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF TÜBINGEN

Institute of Political Science, University of Tübingen, Melanchtonstrasse 36, 72074 Tübingen, **Germany**

Tel: +49 (7071) 297 8374

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:volker.rittberger@uni-tuebingen.de

HYPERLINK <http://www.uni.tuebingen.de/uni/spi/ab2menu.hym>

Contact: Volker Rittberger (Director)

Courses: MA International Relations

COMMITTEE FOR CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION SUPPORT (CCTS)

IFOR (International Fellowship of Reconciliation), Spoorstraat 38, 1815 BK Alkmaar, **Netherlands**

Tel: +31 72 512 3014

Fax: +31 72 515 1102

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:ccts@ifor@gn.apc.org

HYPERLINK <http://www.c-r.org/cr/ccts>

Contact: David Grant

Courses: Training Courses, Workshops and Seminars

CONCILIATION RESOURCES

33 Islington High Street, London N1 9LH, **United Kingdom**

Tel: +44 (171) 278 2588

Fax: +44 (171) 837 0337

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:conciliation@gn.apc.org

HYPERLINK <http://www.c-r.org/cr>

Contact: Andy Carl Guus Meijer

Activities: Research, Support to Local Peace Building Organisations

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND CONFLICT RESEARCH, UPPSALA UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 514, 751 20 Uppsala, **Sweden**

Tel: +46 (18) 471 0000

Fax: +46 (18) 695 102

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:info@pcr.uu.se

HYPERLINK [Http://www.peace.uu.se](http://www.peace.uu.se)

Contact: Peter Wallensteen (Director)

Courses: Undergraduate Courses in Peace and Conflict, MA and PhD Programmes

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD

Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, Bradford BD7 1DP **United Kingdom**

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Fax: +44 (1274) 235240

e-mail: HYPERLINK <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/peace/home.html>

Contact: Paul Rogers (Head of Department)

Courses: Undergraduate Courses in Peace Studies, MA and PhD Programmes

INSTITUTO DE LA PAZ Y LOS CONFLICTOS, UNIVERSITY OF GRANADA

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Fax: +34 (58) 248 974

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:eirene@goliat,ugr.es

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Contact: Francisco A. Munoz (Director)

Courses: Undergraduate Peace Studies

THE IRISH SCHOOL OF ECUMENICS

Department of Peace Studies, ISE, Milltown Park, Dublin 6, **Ireland**

Tel: +353 (1) 260 1144

Fax: +353 (1) 260 1158

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:ise.peace@tcd.ie

[Http://www.tcd.ie/Senior.Lecturer/Course/sch_ecum/isepeac.html](http://www.tcd.ie/Senior.Lecturer/Course/sch_ecum/isepeac.html)

Contact: Dr. Bill McSweeney

Courses: D.Phil and Diploma in Peace Studies

MAGEE COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Coleraine, Co. Derry, BT52 1SA, **Northern Ireland**

Tel: +44 (1504) 265 621 ext 5246/5277

Fax: +44 (1504) 264 414

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:s.ryan@ulst.ac.uk

[HYPERLINK http://www.ulst.ac.uk](http://www.ulst.ac.uk)

Contact: S. Ryan

Courses: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Courses in Peace and Conflict Studies

RESPONDING TO CONFLICT

Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, B29 6LJ, **United Kingdom**

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Fax: +44 (121) 415 4119

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:enquiries@respnd.org

[HYPERLINK http://www.iwa.org/rtc.htm](http://www.iwa.org/rtc.htm)

Contact: Simon Fisher, (Director)

Courses: 11 Week Courses in Responding to Conflict

UNIVERSITE PIERRE MENDES FRANCE

Université Pierre Mendès France, 151 Rue des Universités, Domaine Universitaire, B.P. 47, 38040 Grenoble, Cedex 9, **France**

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Contact: Jacques Fontanel, (Director)

Courses: University Course "Economie de la paix et de la défense"

~Latin America and the Caribbean ~

ACADEMIA MEXICANA DE DERECHOS HUMANOS

(MEXICAN ACADEMY OF HUMAN RIGHTS)

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Contact: Oscar Gonzales Cesar, (President)

Activities: Education, Human Rights, Political Rights, Research

ARIAS FOUNDATION FOR PEACE AND HUMAN PROGRESS

P.O. Box 86410-1000, **Costa Rica**

Tel: +506 255 2955/255 2885

Fax: +506 255 2244

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Contact: Fernando Duran Ayanegui

Activities: Women Empowerment , NGO Training, Conflict Resolution and Prevention

CASA DE LA PAZ (HOUSE OF PEACE)

Antonia Lopez de Bello 024, Santiago, **Chile**

Tel: +56 (2) 737 4280

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Contact: Oriana Salazar

Activities: Research and Studies on Environmental Issues

CENTRO DE INVESTIGACION Y EDUCACION POPULAR

(CENTRE FOR INVESTIGATION AND PEOPLE'S EDUCATION)

Apartado Aereo 25916, Carrera 5 no. 33A-08, Santafe de Bogotá, **Colombia**

Tel: +57 (2) 858 977

Fax: +57 (2) 879 089

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:Cinep@colnodo.apc.org

Contact: Padre Gabriel Izquierdo, (Director)

Activities: Research on Human Rights and Armed Conflicts; Library

**CENTRO DE LOS AMIGOS CUAQUEROS PARA LA PAZ
(CENTRE OF QUAKER FRIENDS FOR PEACE)**

Calle 15, Avenida 6 bis cr, Apartado Postal 1507 –1000, San José, **Costa Rica**

Tel:/Fax: +506 233 6168

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:Camigos@sol.racsaco

Contact: Haydee Villalobos S. (President)

Activities: Mediation Services in the Promotion of Peace and Social Justice

**CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS INTERNACIONALES (CIE)
(CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES)**

P.O. Box 1747, Managua, **Nicaragua**

Tel: +505 (2) 785 413

Fax: +505 (2) 670 517

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:cei@nicarao.org.ni

HYPERLINK <http://www.nicarao.org.ni>

Contact: Zoilamerica Ortega, (Executive Director)

Activities: Post-Conflict Peace Building, Education

COMDEPAZ (SOUTH AMERICAN PEACE COMMITTEE)

Juan Williams Noon 643, Santiago, Providencia, **Chile**

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Activities: Organise Workshops and Conferences on Democracy and Social Justice

**CONSEJO DE INVESTIGACIONES PARA EL DESARROLLO DE CENTROAMERICA
(RESEARCH COUNCIL FOR CENTRAL AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT)**

1a Avenisa 'A', 1-48 zona 2, 01002 Guatemala, **Guatemala**

Tel:/Fax: +502 221 3055/6

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:cideca@pronet.net.gt

Contact: Luis Davilla

Activities: Workshops for CBOs and NGOs, Advocacy

**CONSEJO LATINOAMERICANO DE INVESTIGACION PARA LA PAZ
(LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR PEACE INVESTIGATION)**

Iripaz Guatemala, ia Calle 9-52, Zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala, **Guatamala**

Tel: +502 232 8260/ 250 0421, Fax: +502 253 1532,

Activities: Peace Research

Publications: *Paz en las Americas*, (Bulletin)

FUNDAÇION CEPPA (CENTRE FOR PEACE STUDIES)

P.O. Box 8-4820, 1000 San Jose, **Costa Rica**

Tel/Fax: +506 234 0524

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to: ceppa@sol.racsa.co.cr

Contact: Celina Garcia, (Director)

Activities: Training in Conflict Resolution

INSTITUTO DE PAZ (THE PEACE INSTITUTE)

Apartado 4683, Avenida Salaverry 2020, Jesus Maria, Lima 11, **Peru**

Tel: +51 (1) 471 2277/472 9635 (ext. 2247)

Fax: +51 (1) 470 6121.

Activities: Research, Education

**INSTITUTO PERUANA DE RESOLUCION DE CONFLICTOS NEGOCIACION Y MEDIACION
(PERUVIAN INSTITUTE FOR RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS, NEGOTIATION AND MEDIATION)**

Apartado Postal 14-0035, Lima 14, Calle Bernini 318, San Borja, Lima, **Peru**

Tel/Fax: +51 (1) 244 3728/25

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:iormachea@arnauta.rcp.net.po

Contact: Ivan Ormachea Choque

Activities: Research, Training, Mediation

**PROGRAMA POR LA PAZ DE LA COMPAÑA DE JESUS
(JESUIT PROGRAMME FOR PEACE)**

Calle 35 no. 21-19, Santafe de Bogotá, **Colombia**

Tel: +57 (3) 383 790/92

Fax: +57 (3) 383 797/ (2) 456 765.

Contact: Padre Alfredo Ferro

Activities: Peace Dialogue, Supports Local Initiatives

SERVICIO PAZ Y JUSTICIA (THE SERVICE FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE)

General Secretariat, Casilla 09-01-8667, Guayaquil, **Ecuador**

Tel: +593 (4) 201 451

Fax: +593 (4) 230 600

Activities: Conflict Resolution workshops, seminars and conferences

UNIVERSITY FOR PEACE

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Tel: +506 294 1072/1512/1513

Fax: +506 249 1929

e-mail: **HYPERLINK** mail to: upazcult@sol.rasca.co.cr;

HYPERLINK <http://www.centralplaza.net/upaz>

Contact: Francisco Barahona, (Rector)

Activities: Education

~ Middle East and North Africa ~

ALTERNATIVE INFORMATION CENTRE

P.O. Box 31417, Jerusalem, 91313 **Israel**

Tel: +972 (2) 624 1159

Fax: +972 (2) 625 3151

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:aicmail@trendline.co.il

HYPERLINK <http://aic.netgate.net>

Contact: Michel Warschawski, (Director)

Activities: Research, Analysis, Publications, Grassroots Training

CENTRE FOR APPLIED RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

P.O. Box 17421, East Jerusalem, **Palestinian Territories**

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Fax: +972 (2) 998 6127

Contact: Ghassan Abdallah, (Director)

Activities: Education, Grassroots Leadership Training

ISRAEL/PALESTINE CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

P.O. Box 51358, Jerusalem, 91513 **Israel**

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e-mail; HYPERLINK mail to:peace@netvision.net.il

HYPERLINK <http://www.ipcri.org>

Contact: Gershon Baskin (Co-Director)

Activities: Research, Peace Education, Advocacy

LEBANON CONFLICT RESOLUTION NETWORK

c/o Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, Tayyar Center Sin el-Fil, Box 55215, Beirut, **Lebanon**

Tel: +961 (1) 490 561, Fax: +961 (1) 601 787

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:psalem@lcps.org.lb

Contact: Paul Salem

Activities: NGO Training, Advocacy

MOUVEMENT SOCIAL

185 Badaro Street, Beirut 116-5212, **Lebanon**

Tel: +961 (1) 381 879

Fax: +961 (1) 387 736

e-mail: [HYPERLINK mail to:mvsocial@inco.com.lb](mailto:mvsocial@inco.com.lb)

Contact: Mayla Bakhache (Director)

Activities: Training

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

Kasr El-Nil#1 (Second Floor), Cairo 115 13, **Egypt**

Tel: +20 (2) 770 041/2

Fax: +20 (2) 770 063

e-mail: afakhr@idsc.gov.eg

Contact: Maher Khalifa (Head of Division)

Activities: Training Workshops, Research, Policy Advice and Mediation

PEACE NOW

9 Karl Neter, P.O. Box 29828, Tel-Aviv, 61297 **Israel**

Tel: +972 (2) 566 3291

Fax: +972 (20 566 3286

e-mail: [HYPERLINK mail to:peacenow@actcom.co.il](mailto:peacenow@actcom.co.il)

[HYPERLINK http://www.peace-now.org](http://www.peace-now.org)

Contact: Ronen Regev

Activities: Youth Activities, Research, Publications

WI'AM CENTRE (PALASTINIAN CONFLICT RESOLUTION CENTRE)

P.O. Box 326, Bethlehem, West Bank, **Palestine, via Israel**

Tel: +972 (2) 647 0513

Fax: +972 (2) 647 0513

e-mail: [HYPERLINK mail to:alastah@planet.edu](mailto:alastah@planet.edu)

[HYPERLINK http://www.planet.edu/^alastah](http://www.planet.edu/^alastah)

Contact: Zoughbi Zoughbi (Director)

Activities: Mediation, Grassroots Training Networking

~North America ~

CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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Fax: +1 (613) 235 5800

e-mail: **HYPERLINK** mail to:cicr@spu.stpaul.uottawa.ca

Contact: Vern Redekop (Director),

Activities: Education, Training in Conflict Resolution, Mediation and Facilitation

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF APPLIED NEGOTIATION

Suite 1422, 50 O'Connor Street, Ottawa, K1P 6L2, **Canada**

Tel: +1 (613) 237 9050

Fax: +1 (613) 230 1651

e-mail: **HYPERLINK** mail to:conciian@intranet.ca

HYPERLINK <http://www.canadr.com>

Contact: Ben Hoffman (President)

Activities: Skills Training in Negotiation and Alternative Dispute Resolution

CANADIAN SERVICE OVERSEAS

2255 Carling Ave #400, Ottawa, Ontario K2B 1A6, **Canada**

Tel: +1 (613) 829 7445

Fax: +1 (613) 829 7996

e-mail: **HYPERLINK** mail to:jose.garcia-lizano@cuso.ca

HYPERLINK <http://www.cuso.org/ECUSO.htm>

Contact: José Garcia-Lorenzo

Activities: Provides Volunteers in Peace Related Activities

CARNEGIE COMMISSION ON PREVENTING DEADLY CONFLICT

2400 N Street, N.W., Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20037-1153, **USA**

Tel: +1 (202) 429 7979

Fax: +1 (202) 429 9291

e-mail: **HYPERLINK** mail to:pdc@carnegie.org

HYPERLINK <http://www.ccpdc.org>

Contact: Jane E. Holl (Executive Director)

Activities: Research, Publications

THE CARTER CENTER

One Copenhill, 453 Freedom Parkway, Atlanta, Georgia 30307, USA

Tel: +1 (404) 5100

Fax: +1 (404) 420 5196

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:carterweb@emory.edu
HYPERLINK http://www.emory.edu/carter_center

Contact: Joyce Neu (Associate Director)

Activities: Diplomacy, Mediation, Capacity Building

CENTRE FOR THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES OF WOMEN

1701 K Street NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20006, USA

Tel: +1 (202) 223 7956

Fax: +1 (202) 223 7947

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:csiw@csiw.org

Contact: Hibaaq Osman (Director)

Activities: Focus on Women's Leadership for Peace

EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

Harrisonburg, Virginia 22802-2464, USA

Tel: +1 (540) 432 4490

Fax: +1 (540) 432 4449

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:ctprogram@emu.edu
HYPERLINK <http://www.emu.edu/units/ctp/ctp>

Contact: John Paul Lederach, (Director)

Activities: MA Degree in Conflict Transformation, Support for Local Initiatives

GRADUATE CENTER FOR SOCIAL AND PUBLIC POLICY

600 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, 15282 USA

Tel: +1 (412) 396 6485/90

Fax: +1 (412) 396 5197

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:headley@duq2cc.duq.edu
HYPERLINK <http://www.duq.edu/liberalarts/gradsocial/policy>

Contact: William Headly

Activities: Education

THE INSTITUTE FOR CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND RESOLUTION (ICAR)

George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, 22032-4444 USA

Tel: +1 (703) 933 1305

Fax: +1 (703) 993 1302

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:kclement@gmu.edu

HYPERLINK <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/ICAR>

Contact: Kevin P. Clements (Director)

Activities: Education, Research, Outreach Activities

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

63 rue des Bresoles, Montreal, H2Y 1V7 Canada

Tel: +1 (514) 283 6073

Fax: +1 (514) 283 3792

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:ichrdd@ichrdd.ca

HYPERLINK <http://www.idrc.ca>

Contact: Nancy Thede (Co-ordinator)

Activities: Training Programmes in Conflict Resolution, Advocacy

LOCAL CAPACITIES FOR PEACE PROJECT

Collaborative for Development Action, 26 Walker Street, Cambridge,
Massachusetts, 02138 USA

Tel: +1 (617) 661 6310

Fax: +1 (617) 661 3805

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:mba@cdainc.com

Contact: Mary B. Anderson

Activities: Research.

~Oceania~

CONFLICT RESOLUTION NETWORK

P.O. Box 1016, Chatswood NSW, 2057 **Australia**

Tel: +61 (2) 9419 8500

Fax: +61 (2) 9413 1148

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:crn@crnhq.org

HYPERLINK <http://www.crnhq.org>

Contact: Stella and Helena Cornelius (Directors)

Activities: Conflict Resolution, Training, Publications

FOUNDATION FOR PEACE STUDIES AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

29 Princes Street, P.O. Box 4110, Auckland, 1015 Aotearoa/New Zealand

Tel: +64 (9) 373 2379

Fax: +64 (9) 379 3017

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:peace@fps.ak.planet.co.nz

Contact: Yvonne Duncan (Co-ordinator)

Activities: Conflict Resolution, Social Justice, Disarmament, Security

INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION CENTRE

School of Behavioural Science, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria, 3052 **Australia**

Tel: +61 (3) 9344 7035

Fax: +61 (3) 9347 6618

e-mail: HYPERLINK mail to:dbretherton@post.psych.unimelb.edu.au

HYPERLINK [Http://www.psych.unimelb.edu.au/CRC.html](http://www.psych.unimelb.edu.au/CRC.html)

Contact: Di Bretherton (Director)

Activities: Research, Education, Publications

PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

Department of Government, University of Queensland, Brisbane, 4072 **Australia**

Tel: +61 (7) 3365 2324

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Contact: Di Zetlin (Director)

Activities: Education

¹ This listing is compiled from *Prevention and Management of Deadly Conflict: An International Directory*, 1998 Edition, European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation, P.O. Box 14069, 3508 SC, Utrecht, The Netherlands

4.2 THE ASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER – A PEOPLE’S INITIATIVE



To mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Asian Human Rights Commission produced the *Asian Human Rights Charter*. There was widespread consultation in the development of the Charter. One of the great strengths of the document is the fact that thousands of men and women from different nations and identities and with different viewpoints contributed to the four year consultation and drafting process. The document reflects the growing strength of the human rights movement in the Asia-Pacific region and the contribution it can make to the international debate on human rights.

Only the first article of the Asian Human Rights Charter (section 2: the Right to Life) is quoted in full as an example of how specific the document is to the Asian situation. All other articles are partially quoted so as to allow those regions who wish to expand on them in terms appropriate to their own regions to do so. We offer this to the other regions of Caritas Internationalis as one way of delineating a “peace with justice” vision for their work

1 Introduction

During the last 50 years we have witnessed some of the most horrific human rights abuses throughout the world and we are acutely aware that the international community has a long way to go in order to achieve the goals set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Many countries around the world have enshrined the Declaration in their own constitutions. This, however, does not guarantee that human rights are respected in those countries. The constitutions of some countries do not mention the guarantee of human rights while other countries dispute the universality of human rights and use historical or cultural arguments to justify human rights violations. The international community struggles to find ways to make the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a reality and perhaps one way forward may be the creation of regional bodies who are concerned with monitoring and publicising human rights abuses in their regions.

The Asian Human Rights Charter is very “Asia specific” in that it makes a serious attempt to highlight human rights violations specific to the region. It stresses the necessity for any dialogue on human rights to address the political, economic and social causes of poverty and repression and suggests practical ways to redress the human wrongs that force wretched conditions on millions of Asian people. While endorsing the rights that are contained in international instruments, the charter emphasises that these rights need to be seen in a holistic manner and individual rights are best pursued through a broader conceptualisation of the Asian situation.

Caritas agencies may wish to pursue human rights issues either on a national level or through their regional structures as part of human rights advocacy. This document is a summary version of the Asian Human Rights

Charter and highlights the principal human rights issues of concern to Asian countries. It is included in this Handbook as an example of good practice that can be adapted by national and regional Caritas organisations.

2 The right to life

“Foremost among rights is the right to life from which flow other rights and freedoms. This is not confined to mere physical or animal existence but includes the right to every faculty through which life is enjoyed. It signifies the right to live with basic human dignity, the right to a livelihood, the right to a habitat or home, the right to education and the right to a clean and healthy environment for without these there can be no real and effective exercise or the enjoyment of the right to life. The state must take all possible measures to prevent infant mortality, eliminate malnutrition and epidemics, and increase life expectancy through a clean and healthy environment and adequate preventive as well as curative medical facilities. It must make primary education free and compulsory.

Yet in many parts of Asia, wars, ethnic conflicts, cultural and religious oppression, corruption in politics, environmental pollution, disappearances, torture, state or private terrorism, violence against women, and other acts of mass violence continue to be a scourge to humanity resulting in the loss of innocent human lives.

To ensure the right to life, propagation of war or ethnic conflict or incitement to hatred and violence in all spheres of individual or societal or national or international life should be prohibited. The state has the responsibility to thoroughly investigate cases of torture, disappearances and custodial deaths, rapes and sexual abuses and to bring culprits to justice.

There must be no arbitrary deprivation of life. States should take measures not only to prevent and mete out punishment for the deprivation of life by criminal acts and terrorist acts but also prevent arbitrary disappearances and killings by their own security forces. The law must strictly control and limit the circumstances in which a person may be deprived of his or her life by state authorities or officials.

All states must abolish the death penalty. Where it exists, it may be imposed only rarely for the most serious crimes. Before a person can be deprived of life by the imposition of the death penalty, he or she must be ensured a fair trial before an independent and impartial tribunal with full opportunity of legal representation of his or her choice, adequate time for preparation of defence, presumption of innocence and right to review by a higher tribunal. Execution should never be carried out in public or otherwise exhibited in public.”

3 The right to peace

All persons have the right to live in peace so that they can fully develop all their capacities, physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual without being the target of any kind of violence. The right to live in peace requires that political, economic or social activities of the state, the corporate sector and civil society should

respect the security of all peoples, especially vulnerable groups. People must be ensured security in relation to their natural environment, the political, economic and social conditions which permit them to satisfy their needs and aspirations without recourse to oppression, exploitation, violence and without detracting from all that is of value in their society.

4 The right to democracy

The democratisation and humanisation of the state is a pre-condition for the respect and protection of human rights. The state, which claims to have the primary responsibility for the development and well being of the people, should be humane, open and accountable. The corollary of the respect for human rights is a tolerant and pluralistic system, in which people are free to express their views, to seek to persuade others and in which the rights of minorities are respected. People must participate in public affairs, through the electoral and other decision-making and implementing processes, free from racial, religious and gender discriminations.

5 The right to cultural identity and freedom of conscience

The right to cultural identity and freedom of conscience reinforces the principle that the right to life involves not only material but also the moral conditions which permit a person to lead a meaningful existence based on shared living with other human beings. Cultural identities help individuals and communities to cope with the pressures of economic and social change and give meaning to life in a period of rapid transformation. They are the source of pride and security. There is also the need to eliminate those features in cultures which are contrary to the universal principles of human rights which include gender inequality, discrimination based on caste, ethnic origins, occupation, places of origin and others, while enhancing in our respective cultures all values related to mutual tolerance and support. Many find their primary identity in religion. However, religious tolerance is essential for the enjoyment of the right of conscience of others.

6 The right to development and social justice

The right to development and social justice reinforces the right of every individual to the basic necessities of life and to protection against abuse and exploitation. Development means the realisation of the full potential of the human person including the right to artistic freedom, freedom of expression and the cultivation of cultural and spiritual capacities. It means the right to participate in the affairs of the state and the community. It implies that states have the right to determine their own economic, social and cultural policies free from the pressures and influences of the powerful.

7 Rights of vulnerable groups

There are vulnerable groups who suffer from discrimination and oppression and require special protection for the equal and effective enjoyment of their human rights. They include people who through civil conflict, government policies or economic hardships are displaced from their homes and seek refuge in other places internally or outside of their countries. Many societies have become less tolerant of minorities and indigenous people whose rights are frequently violated. Various economic groups, like peasants and fishing communities, suffer from great deprivation and live in constant fear of threats to their livelihood from landlords and business interests.

7.1 Women

The oppression of women takes many forms, but is most evident in sexual slavery, domestic violence, trafficking in women and rape. They suffer discrimination in public and private spheres. The increasing militarisation of many societies has led to the increase in violence against women in situations of armed conflict, including mass rape, forced labour, racism, kidnapping and displacement from their homes. In the field of employment, they often suffer from lack of suitable opportunities and equal remuneration, protection of health and safe working conditions. There are few legal provisions to protect them against violation of their rights within the domestic and patriarchal realm. Their rights in the public law are rarely observed. A considerable increase in the presence of women in the various institutions of state power and in the fields of business, agriculture and land ownership must be provided by way of affirmative action. The political, social and economic empowerment of women is essential for the defence of their legal rights.

7.2 Children

As with women, the oppression of children takes many forms, the most pervasive of which are child labour, sexual slavery, child pornography, the sale and trafficking of children, prostitution, sale of organs, conscription into drug trafficking, physical, sexual and psychological abuse within families, discrimination due to HIV/AIDS, forced religious conversions, displacement with or without families by armed conflicts. An increasing number of children are forced to live on the streets. There is widespread poverty, lack of access to education, bonded labour, the use of children for begging and female infanticide among others. There is a need to put pressure on governments to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in this regard, the role of communities in taking responsibility for monitoring violations of children's rights is crucial.

7.3 Differently abled persons

In Asian societies, communal values and structures under new forms of economic pressure have become less tolerant to differently abled persons. They suffer enormous discrimination in access to education, employment and housing. They are unable to enjoy many of their human rights due to prejudice against them and the absence of provisions responding to their special needs. Their abilities are often not recognised and they are thus unable to realise their full potential.

7.4 Workers

The rapid industrialisation of societies often undermines traditional forms of the subsistence economy and threatens the livelihood of large numbers of rural people. They are forced into wage employment, often in industry, working under appalling conditions. For the majority of the workers there is little or no protection from unfair labour laws. The fundamental rights to form trade unions and bargain collectively are denied to many. Globalisation adds to the pressures on workers as states seek to reduce production costs, often in collusion with foreign corporations and international financial institutions. Migrant workers are particularly vulnerable. Frequently separated from their families, they are exploited in foreign countries whose laws they do not understand and are afraid to invoke. In many cases migrant workers suffer from racism and xenophobia, and domestic helpers are subjected to humiliation and sometimes, sexual abuse.

7.5 Students

As a result of their fearless commitment to social transformation, students have often suffered from state violence and repression and remain one of the key targets for counter-insurgency operations and internal security laws and operations. They are frequently denied the right to academic freedom and freedoms of expression and association.

7.6 Prisoners and political detainees

In few areas is there such massive violation of internationally recognised norms as in relation to prisoners and political detainees. Arbitrary arrests, detention, imprisonment, ill treatment, torture, cruel and inhuman punishment are common occurrences in many parts of Asia. Detainees and prisoners are often forced to live in unhygienic conditions, denied adequate food and health care and prevented from contact with, and support from, their families. Often national security legislation is used to arrest and detain political opponents. Freedom of thought, belief and conscience have often been restricted by administrative limits on freedom of speech and association.

8 The enforcement of rights

Many Asian states have guarantees of human rights in their constitutions, and many of them have ratified international instruments on human rights. However, there continues to be a wide gap between rights enshrined in these documents and the abject reality that denies people their rights. The state, civil society and business corporations violate human rights. The legal protection of rights has to be extended against violations by all these groups by strengthening their ethical foundation and values and inculcating in them a sense of responsibility towards the disadvantaged and oppressed.

Protecting human rights

The *promotion and enforcement of rights* is the responsibility of all groups in society, although the primary responsibility is that of the state. The enjoyment of many rights, especially social and economic, requires a positive and proactive role for governments. There is a clear and legitimate role for NGOs in raising consciousness of rights, formulating standards, and ensuring their protection by governments and other groups. Professional groups like lawyers and doctors have special responsibilities connected with the nature of their work to promote the enforcement of rights and prevent abuses of power.

Since *rights are seriously violated in civil strife and are strengthened where there is peace*, it is the duty of the state and other organisations to find peaceful ways to resolve social and ethnic conflicts and to promote tolerance and harmony. For the same reasons no state should seek to dominate other states and states should settle their differences peacefully.

A humane and vigorous civil society is necessary to promote and protect human rights and freedoms, to secure rights within civil society and to act as a check on state institutions. Freedoms of expression and association are necessary for the establishment and functioning of civil society.

It is essential to *secure the legal framework for rights*. All states should include guarantees of rights in their constitution, which should be constitutionally protected against erosion by legislative amendments. They should also ratify international human rights instruments.

Knowledge and consciousness of rights should be raised among the general public, the state and civil society institutions. Individuals and groups should be acquainted with the legal and administrative procedures whereby they can secure their rights and prevent abuse of authority. NGOs should be encouraged to become familiar with and deploy mechanisms, both national and international, to monitor and review rights. Judicial and administrative decisions on the protection of rights should be widely published. Governments and educational institutions should co-operate in disseminating information about the importance and content of human rights.

The judiciary is a major means for the protection of rights. It has the power to receive complaints of the violation of rights, to hear evidence, and to provide redress for violations, including punishment for violators. The judiciary can only perform this function if the legal system is strong and well organised.

The legal profession must be independent. There should be legal aid for those who are unable to pay for a lawyer or have access to the courts to protect their rights.

All states should establish a Human Rights Commission and specialised institutions for the protection of rights, particularly vulnerable members of society. They can provide easy, friendly and inexpensive access to justice for victims of human rights violations. These bodies can supplement the role of the judiciary. They enjoy special advantages: they can help establish standards for the implementation of human rights norms; they can disseminate information about human rights; they can investigate allegations of violations of rights; they can promote conciliation and mediation; and they can seek to enforce human rights through administrative or judicial means. They can act on their own initiative as well as on complaints from the public.

The protection of human rights should be pursued at all levels - local, national, regional and international. Institutions at each level have their special advantages and skills. The primary responsibility for the protection of rights is that of states, therefore priority should be given to the enhancement of state capacity to fulfil this obligation.

~ *Conclusion* ~

The international community is continuing its search for ways to strengthen the machinery required to achieve a practical realisation of the rights enumerated in the 50-year old Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While there have been tremendous strides in the development of the international law of human rights, there is still much to be done to ensure its implementation and observance. This may appear a daunting task, but it is a challenge that should be taken up by concerned individuals and organisations. In the transformation of legal rights into practical realities, the pressure of public opinion is crucial, and the first requisite for an effective public opinion is that it must be informed. There are many excellent publications that cover all aspects of human rights. This is not a specialised and esoteric field of learning but one of comparatively simple rules applicable to everyday life situations.

International human rights law provides legally binding standards by which the conduct of the state towards its own subjects can be measured. These standards are on the whole easy to understand and seldom require special expertise on the part of an intelligent citizen who takes a normal interest in public affairs. Learning these standards, and watching how the performance of government authorities measures up to them, is an activity in which men and women of diverse walks of life can and should participate. The protection of human rights must not be regarded by society as the concern of lawyers and politicians or any other professional or special interest group only. It is the responsibility of every citizen to work towards transforming human rights standards into living realities. The foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world is in the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.

Asian Human Rights Charter – A People’s Charter, published by the Asian Human Rights Commission, Hong Kong on the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The full text of the *Asian Human Rights Charter* is available from Asian Human Rights Commission, Asian Legal Resource Centre, Unit 4, 7 Floor, Mongkok Commercial Centre, 16 Argyle Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong, SAR China.

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