

***CREATIVE APPROACHES
TO CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION
IN SOCIETIES AFFECTED BY
EXTREMIST RELIGION***

A Manual Prepared by

David A. Steele

For University of California, San Diego

September 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Author's Biography	1
Introduction	2
1. The Nature of Contemporary War and the Conflict Drivers that Fuel Modern Violence	3
• A New Paradigm for the Modern World	
• The Nature of Contemporary War/Violence	
• Conflict Drivers that Fuel Modern Violence	
2. The Role Played by Identity-Based Drivers	8
• The Nature of Identity	
• The Identity Formation Process	
• Reframing Identity: First Step toward Bridging	
3. The Importance of Values	11
• Variation in Cultural Values	
• Religious Values: Common Bond or Distinctive Challenge?	
4. The Role Played by Religion as a Conflict Driver	14
• Types of Contemporary Conflict Involving Religion	
• Relationship between Extremist Religious Sects and Their Wider Faith Traditions: Three Types of Linkage – Ideological, Relational, and Functional	
5. Preventing and Transforming Conflicts Involving Extremist Religion: Dealing with the Three Linkages	30
• Bridging the Ideological	
• Practicing Reconciliation: Addressing Relational Dynamics	
• Addressing Basic Needs	
Conclusion	63
List of Organizations Involved in Conflict Transformation in Societies Affected by Extremist Religion	64

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

David Steele is adjunct faculty in the Masters Program on Coexistence and Conflict at Brandeis University, near Boston, MA. He has a Ph. D. in Christian Ethics and Practical Theology from the University of Edinburgh, has written numerous publications on faith-based reconciliation, and has 22 years' experience facilitating conflict transformation in violence-prone situations, often utilizing both indigenous and Western approaches.

Since 2006, he has worked as an independent consultant. His contracts have included:

- Facilitating inter-religious reconciliation to support peace agreements negotiated by the African Union between the two Sudans;
- Assisting Israelis/Palestinians on cooperative response to natural disaster risk reduction and emergency response;
- Developing manuals - on historical conciliation, countering extremist religion, and Muslim/Christian reconciliation in Nigeria;
- Building capacity among local NGOs to resolve ethnic conflicts and support constitutional reform following post-election violence in Kenya;
- Serving as Senior Reconciliation Facilitator in Iraq with U.S. Institute of Peace – working with a US Government Provincial Reconstruction Team, Coalition Forces, and indigenous governmental and civil society leaders to resolve disputes;
- Facilitating participation of minorities in negotiations over independence of Kosovo and in the emerging democratic process; and
- Writing briefing papers on religion and conflict resolution for an Oslo Forum meeting of top-level international mediators; on peacebuilding vision and strategy for the African Catholic Bishops Conference; and on conflict prevention and transformation for a World Assembly of 450 religious leaders, sponsored by Religions for Peace.

Previously he worked as:

- Program manager at Mercy Corps for projects in Iraq, Sri Lanka and Indonesia that combined conflict transformation with aid and development (2004-2006);
- Program manager for a conflict transformation project in Macedonia, then interim executive director, at Conflict Management Group in Cambridge, MA (2003-2004); and
- A fellow at the Center for Strategic & International Studies, directing a project on conflict transformation among religious communities in the former Yugoslavia and functioning as back-channel of communication between governments to help end the Kosovo War (1994-2003).

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this manual is to address one of the prominent issues facing the modern world in the 21st century - how best to counter religious extremism. We begin with a brief outline of the nature of the contemporary context, including the diffusion of power among greater numbers of stakeholders, the changing nature of contemporary war/violence (especially focusing on intra-state insurgency and anti-state terrorism), and the variety of conflict drivers (substantive and identity-based) that trigger and escalate tensions (covered in part 1). Specific attention will then be given to the role that identity plays and what might be done to support any positive contribution and transform any negative impact (part 2). The impact of identity cannot be adequately addressed, however, without examining the important connection between identity and values, as they are informed by culture and, especially by religion. Does the diversity that exists inevitably lead to fundamentally threatening values conflicts and a clash of civilizations? Or is there a way to affirm one's own values, and handle any diversity creatively (part 3)?

Given the importance of religion as an identity-based conflict driver, undergirded by a strong value system, it is necessary to explore the variety of manifestations of contemporary conflict that involve religion and look especially at the role played by extremist groups. What characterizes these groups and how do they succeed, very often, to embed themselves within their own wider faith tradition? We will explore three linkages – ideological, relational and functional – that frequently connect them, providing extremists with an operational base (part 4).

We come then to the critical challenge which is the focal point of this manual: What can be done, either to prevent or transform, conflict situations in which religious extremism is entrenched? We will look, in detail, at how interveners might assist indigenous faith communities, or at times directly engage extremists, in order to counter the latter's ability to utilize each of the three linkages to their advantage. In large part, this will involve demonstrating how moderates might become better, themselves, at developing each of these linkages. Examples from the author's experience, working in many conflict-infested societies, will be used to illustrate how such steps have, and can be, taken (part 5). Finally, in conclusion, we will look back to evaluate what constitutes success; and look forward to ask what needs to happen in order to make sustainable the efforts to counter religious extremism.

Before getting immersed in the presentation of this challenge and examining best approaches to extremist religion, it is important to note that the purpose of this manual is to stimulate thought and reflection on the problem and present alternatives that address it creatively. But this is not a training manual. It does not include exercises, role plays, discussion questions or other tools used in training workshops. Although it does rely on the author's engagement as a trainer and a facilitator of problem solving and conflict transformation in a variety of deeply entrenched conflicts in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. It also relies, even more heavily, on the peacebuilding roles performed by those whom the author has trained, a courageous and resilient group of partners representing a very wide variety of faith-based actors.

1. THE NATURE OF CONTEMPORARY WAR AND THE CONFLICT DRIVERS THAT FUEL MODERN VIOLENCE

A New Paradigm for the Modern World

There are a number of socio-political phenomena that are changing rapidly in the 21st century and have a significant impact on the nature of contemporary conflict. One result from the acceleration of social/political change is a significant increase in the variety of actors with sufficient influence on conflict dynamics worldwide. Former Australian diplomat, John Burton, began 40 years ago to identify a diffusion of power in international relations (Burton, 1972). The old “Billiard ball” model, in which national governments were the decisive actors and powerful states competed to knock less powerful ones into their pockets, was fading, though not extinct. Today’s actors, therefore, include:

- State power: Still a major factor (influencing commerce, fighting wars, negotiating treaties, etc.). But national governments have also lost the nearly exclusive control they used to have over the flow of money, ideas, technology, goods, people, and even legal jurisdiction.
- Pan-governmental: Some aspects of state sovereignty have been relinquished to pan-governmental organizations which, with international norms and laws, can constrain and judge individual citizens and determine what states can do within their own territory. International protection forces have also taken on some military roles. Their primary purpose is protection of civilians (more than states) and stabilizing the situation (rather than “winning” battles). Common tasks include: protection of convoys, disarmament and demobilization, establishing safe havens and secure elections, return of refugees/IDPs, and capturing war criminals. The success/failure ratio of such efforts, however, is clearly mixed.
- Sub-state and non-state: In many cases, power has also devolved to sub-state political entities - regional, provincial, or municipal. In addition, it has shifted to a wide variety of non-state actors. In many cases, power has also devolved to sub-state political entities - regional, provincial, or municipal. In addition, it has shifted to a wide variety of non-state actors. These include: government sub-contractors, private security forces (security guards, warlords, or terrorist cells that often thrive in failed or failing states), social media, financial and trade institutions (private philanthropy and big business), and NGOs (including faith-based and one’s working on conflict transformation). Some of the larger entities actually have greater resources and influence than many governments. The eight largest International NGOs, for example, provided 50% of all aid and development, worldwide, in 2004 (Abiew and Keating, 2004). Even individuals have acquired power to an extent unimaginable a decade ago. Consider the impact of the Tunisian fruit vendor, Mohammed Bouazizi, who started the Arab Spring or Edward Snowden who leaked NSA secret documents revealing the extent of US intelligence gathering.

The Nature of Contemporary War/Violence

Violence in the modern world, therefore, also takes many forms. Although state-sponsored violence and organized crime remain important, we will look briefly at two distinct types of contemporary violence in which religion tends to play an exacerbating role. Insurgency and terrorism commonly ignore previously accepted codes of war, resulting in a significant rise in

corruption and predatory behavior – much like the feudal system and piracy common during the Middle Ages in Europe. The impact of these anarchic trends has led to disproportionate suffering and death among vulnerable civilian populations at increasing levels (Kaldor, 2001).

- **Insurgency**: an armed rebellion by an identity group that wishes to assume power within a state, leading frequently to civil war against a constituted authority. In response, the strategy of *counter-insurgency* attempts to stabilize a failed or failing state, not only by defeating the insurgent military, but engaging in nation-building on both state and civil society levels. Such a strategy was predominant following the downfall of the Ba'athist regime in Iraq. Great effort was invested in the name of building a democratic society.
- **Terrorism**: a systematic use of violence, often trans-national and anti-state that is driven by ideological conviction and desire for revenge. Its purpose is to create fear and reaction (hoping either for repression or capitulation) that serves to legitimize its worldview and enhance its recruitment (Richardson, 2006). *Counter-terrorism* focuses on providing security and does not attempt to implement the grand strategy of nation building. The goal is to disable the terrorist network and capacity to the extent that such groups cannot carry out successful major violent attacks.

Conflict Drivers that Fuel Modern Violence

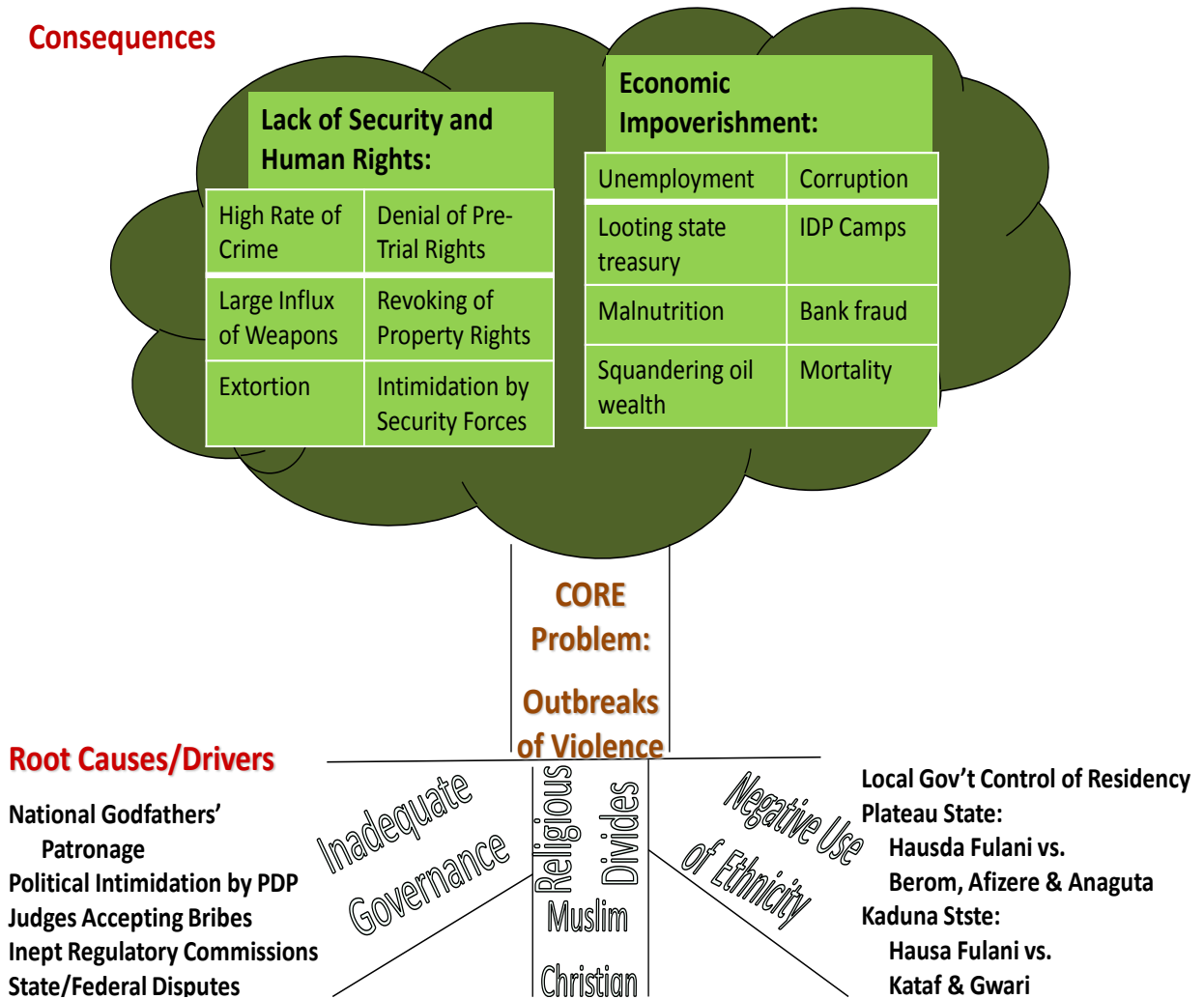
Specialists in conflict analysis have frequently been divided between those who tend to view conflicts as primarily focused around the party's identity issues and those who see them primarily through the lens of each party's interests. Those who see conflicts as primarily interest-based normally see the primary issues to be *substantive drivers* such as disputes over territory, resources, freedom of expression, or other economic, political, or security issues. Those who see conflicts as primarily identity-based tend to view the primary factors as basic affiliations (what people belong to), roles (what people do) and status (often determining how people are viewed). These *identity drivers* are markers of belonging. All conflicts actually involve interplay between both substantive and identity drivers. In some conflicts one type will be primary and the other secondary. However, it is more common to find that certain specific identity and specific substantive drivers are important, while other drivers of both kinds are secondary.

So, what role does identity play, as opposed to the role played by substantive issues? Some would say that identity simply gets used by those actors driving the substantive issues (e.g. politicians using ethnicity or religion in order to gain power, control territory and resources, etc.). Sometimes this is true. Serbian dictator Milosevic, who was not religious himself, certainly played the religion card in stoking Serbian nationalism in his quest to gain political and military control over major portions of the former Yugoslavia. But he could not have succeeded unless the Serbian Orthodox Christian faith tradition had real meaning to enough Serbian people. The Serbian Orthodox Church had, in fact, served as one of the pillars of Serbian nationalism since the 19th century. Some analysts admit that religion as a world view and value system is critically important, but argue that it takes a substantive "trigger event" like a fraudulent election to spark the conflict. Again, sometimes this is the case, but not always. Publication of the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed illustrates the power of religion as a possible trigger event. The exact roles played by identity or substantive drivers are not easy to categorize, but both are important. One must look carefully at each specific

conflict in order to accurately discern the relationships between multiple identity factors and multiple substantive issues.

The following diagram and subsequent explanation illustrates the inter-relationship of conflict drivers in Nigeria in 2011. It is important to note that, as in any protracted conflict, the consequences at the top can also become drivers themselves, just like seeds from the top of a tree continue to sow more of the same (Steele, 2011).

Conflict Drivers and Their Consequences in Nigeria



Religious Divides:

Muslim North (centuries old); Christian South (recent conversions); and conflict in Middle Belt (a region stretching east to west across the middle of the country). One primary issue is the status of Sharia, or Islamic Law. Many Muslims wanted Sharia imposed throughout country; Christians opposed all Sharia courts. Prior to 1999, however, Sharia had been applied only to Muslims and only regarding civil law, including issues such as inheritance and divorce. But in

2000, twelve northern states extended Sharia to govern their criminal justice system, resulting in extreme court sentences involving the death penalty, amputation and floggings. Since these laws were applied to non-Muslims as well, this fueled violent conflict between Christians and Muslims in the religiously mixed Middle Belt region of the country, an area including Plateau and Kaduna States. Some jurisdictions (e.g. certain municipalities) have developed compromises, allowing for different legal systems to operate for each religious groups (or simply not enforcing the dominant group's will on the minority), but this is still not the case everywhere.

Negative Use of Ethnicity: Local Government Control of Residency: Nigerian law (as of Feb. 2010) allowed local governments to determine residency qualification, giving local administrators the ability to decide such matters on the basis of ethnic heritage and ancestral control of land. As a result, many Nigerians are considered "residents" of ethnic homelands from which their forebears had migrated and where they may never have even visited. On this basis, people can be denied residency even in locations where they were born. The distinction between "settler/newcomer" and "indigenous" is a major legal problem. In both Plateau and Kaduna States, the ethnic Hausa Fulani, who are Muslim, are considered "settlers" by the other ethnicities listed in the diagram, all of whom are Christian. In some municipalities, the Hausa Fulani Muslims, who have lived there for three centuries, now constitute the majority of the population and have been able to reverse the law, depriving the Christian ethnic groups of residency. In a very few cases, municipalities have begun taking inclusive measures, but a federal effort to abolish indigeneship has languished in parliament for years. The result in both Plateau and Kaduna States has been violence.

Inadequate Governance:

On the national level, a system of Godfather's patronage prevails in which ethnic, political and religious elites cooperate. As a result of an informal agreement, executive power is supposed to alternate between Christian South and Muslim North. However, the current Christian president has refused to step aside at the end of his term, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has held a dominant role in controlling political process, political corruption has been massive and widespread at all levels of government, indictments are frequently overturned by judges accepting bribes, inept regulatory commissions fail to bring most serious investigations of corruption and violence to closure, and federal jurisdictions often dismiss charges of criminal activity reported by state prosecutors.

Related Bibliography

- Abiew, Francis and Tom Keating. 2004. "Defining a Role for Civil Society." In *Building Sustainable Peace*. Edited by Tom Keating and Andy Knight. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew. 2012. *Strategic Vision*. New York: Basic Books
- Burton, John W. 1972. *World Society*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America
- Denoeux, Guilain, with Lynn Carter. 2009. *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism*. Washington: United States Agency for International Development.
<http://www.coffey.com/international-development/our-work/our-thought-leadership/security-justice/guide-to-the-drivers-of-violent-extremism>.

- Duyvesteyn, Isabelle and Jan Angstrum, eds. 2005. *Rethinking the Nature of War*. London: Frank Cass.
- Goldin, Ian. 2013. *Divided Nations: Why Global Governance is Failing and What We Can Do about It*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kaldor, Mary. 2001. "Beyond Militarism, Arms Races and Arms Control." New York: Social Science Research Council. <http://essays.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/kaldor.htm>
- Kupchan, Charles, Emanuel Adler, Jean-Marc Coicaud and Yuen Foong Khong. 2001. *Power in Transition: The Peaceful Change of International Order*. Tokyo: United Nations Press.
- Pinker, Steven. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature*. New York: The Penguin Group.
- Richardson, Louise. 2006. *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*. New York, Random House.
- Steele, David. 2011. *A Manual to Facilitate Conversations on Religious Peacebuilding and Reconciliation*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
<http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/DavidSteeleManual.pdf>

2. THE ROLE PLAYED BY IDENTITY-BASED DRIVERS

(Ayindo, Isolio and Steele, 2010)

The Nature of Identity

Our need for recognition and inclusion, for understanding and response, indicate the central importance of identity. Yet identity formation is a complicated process involving multiple layers of belonging. We all belong to different groups, each one contributing to our identity. It is helpful to identify the spectrum of groups/associations that form our sense of who we are. These identity makers include:

- *Basic affiliations:* e.g. name, family, ethnicity, tribe, language, race, gender, religion, nation, locality of birth or current residence
- *Roles performed:* e.g. profession, traditional leadership function, voluntary service, leisure activity (e.g. a sport)
- *Indicators of status:* e.g. age, social class, education level

The Identity Formation Process

Identity functions on both individual and communal levels in all societies. In some cultures, individual perceptions and choices predominate; while in other cultures, social norms, myths and relationships place the emphasis on the communal. In both cases, certain identity markers become primary, while others are secondary, and some remain relatively obscure to conscious recognition. The priorities given to specific identity groups tend to form the major boundary markers that distinguish in-groups and out-groups within a society, “us” vs. “them.” Such designations enable groups to differentiate themselves from others, or to be distinguished by others. When societies are drawn into the brutalities of war and one’s sense of self or community is severely enough threatened, denied legitimacy or respect, the parameters of identity are drawn ever more narrowly. Instead of affirming one’s many layers of identity, there is a tendency to become attached exclusively to one marker. This exclusive marker is then bounded by increasingly fixed and rigid definition and becomes entrenched. All members of the in-group are tested for their loyalty, while all those marked with other identity labels are viewed with suspicion and are likely to be targeted for attack. Enemy images are created which tend to strengthen association with the dominant identity.

At the same time, many social scientists insist that “us/them” differentiation plays a very important role in healthy identity formation. They point to the necessity of a “bonding process” with one’s own group, especially for minority or low status groups. If this is the case, then how does one avoid the tendency for this inclusion and differentiation to degenerate into attack on all who belong to a “demonized” identity group? Marilyn Brewer points to a number of stages one passes through when moving from healthy bonding to aggression (Brewer, 2001). These include:

- Social categorization: in which “us” is differentiated from “them”
- In-group trust and preference: still very important for bonding within an oppressed identity group
- Fixation on a single identity marker: which becomes all important

- Perception of superiority over other identity groups: the point where negative stereotyping begins
- Antagonism and aggression

Only the last two steps in this progression are clearly problematic, though the third step may represent one critical point at which an intervener can help to redirect the trajectory into a positive bridging process.

Reframing Identity: First Step toward Bridging

How can an intervener help an individual or group begin the process of moving away from a fixed, entrenched single identity without denying the importance of bonding with one's own group? Here are three possibilities to consider. In each case, it could be suggested that one reframe it, at first, only for a particular moment or interaction:

- Choose to emphasize a different identity. For e.g.
 - A secondary one (e.g. professional identity – bring together medical people, educators, engineers, farmers, etc. from different ethnicities, religions, nations, or other groups.)
 - One not previously considered (e.g. grandmothers from adversarial groups sharing about their families; youth from rival groups playing football or another sport)
- Redefine their primary identity in more flexible (& accurate?) terms. For e.g.
 - Define one's self as part of a larger unit (e.g. as a member of an Abrahamic religion, instead of just one of those traditions – emphasizing what they have in common)
 - Shift the goals associated with the identity (What does it mean to be Israeli? Are Biblically-based borders required? Or can it be negotiated? Must one be a religious Jew? Or can one be a secular Jew, non-Jew, or from another religious tradition?)
- Affirm identity of “the other” and allow it to influence how one sees oneself
 - Tie groups together (e.g. marriage between people from different tribes, ethnicities, races, religions, social classes, etc. has often built bonds between antagonistic groups)
 - Provide ritual space between identities (e.g. shared artistic, musical or theatrical expression, and engagement in common religious or tribal rituals of healing can often break barriers, change stereotypes, and help move from in-group bonding to bridging).

Faith communities are well placed to reframe the identity formation process when it has become destructive. For instance, members of a given faith community can help others among them to shift the goals by calling the community back to its basic tenets, values and practices. Examples include the US Civil Rights movement and the end of apartheid in South Africa. In both cases, black and white churches struggled to understand racism, combat it, end it, and usher in equal rights for black people. Black churches drew upon the strength and resources of their faith to engage in non-violent action in the face of oppression and even violence. White churches were confronted with, and eventually accepted, the sin of racism, segregation

and white supremacy. Without these transformations, rooted in faith traditions, neither movement would likely have succeeded.

Related Bibliography

- Ayindo, Babu, Mabel Isolio and David Steele. 2010. *Strengthening the Capacities of Kenyan Actors in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation: A Source Book and Training Guide*. Nairobi: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.
- Brewer, Marilynn. 2001. "Intergroup Identification and Intergroup Conflict: When Does In-Group Love Become Out-Group Hate?" in *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict and Conflict Resolution*. Ed. by Lee Jussim, Richard Ashmore, and David Wilder. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hicks, Donna. 2001. "The Role of Identity Reconstruction in Promoting Reconciliation," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, ed. by Raymond Helmick and Rodney Petersen (Radnor, Pennsylvania: Templeton Foundation Press.
- Inman, Peacock and Patricia Thornton, eds. 2007. *Identity Matters: Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict*. Oxford: Berghahn Books
- Korostelina, Karina. 2007. *Social Identity and Conflict*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sen, Amartya. 2006. *Identity and Violence*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Steele, David A. Sept. 2008. "Reconciliation Strategies in Iraq." *Special Report 213*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace. <http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr213.pdf>.
- Vertigans, Stephen. 2011. *The Sociology of Terrorism*. London: Routledge.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUES

(Ayindo, Isolio and Steele, 2010)

Values are principles, standards or qualities that are deemed to be of high worth, importance or use to the possessor. They provide the basic framework or worldview that gives meaning to life and provides a foundation upon which a moral sense of right and wrong is determined. At stake are the ethical principles that inform how one should treat others and how one expects to be treated in return. Any challenge to this value system is likely to be perceived as a threat to what one holds to be most important. When each of the conflicted parties experiences this threat to fundamental values, then the conflict rapidly escalates. This is often the case even if the differences appear to be small and much is held in common (e.g. the large degree of commonality within the value systems of most Sunni and Shia or Protestant and Catholic, yet a small number of contentious differences, given the right circumstances, can have disastrous impact). They become conflicted identity groups which often feel a great need to protect, and sometimes impose, their own value system. Conflicts that are primarily focused around values, especially when tied to identity, are among the most difficult to resolve.

Variations in Cultural Values

Since culture is central to any identity formation process, cultural and sub-cultural differences are especially important in understanding values differences. Typical types of variation include cultures which value:

- Change vs. Tradition
- Specific vs. Diverse social norms
- Distance between People vs. Interaction
- Equality of Access/Opportunity vs. Hierarchy/Status/Rank
- Individualism vs. Group Welfare
- Individual Initiative vs. Birthright/Inheritance
- Competition vs. Cooperation
- Future Orientation vs. Past Orientation
- Action Oriented vs. “Being” Oriented
- Informality vs. Formality
- Privacy vs. Self-revelation
- Directness/Openness/Honesty vs. Indirectness/Ritual/”Saving Face”
- Accountability/Punishment vs. Forgiveness/Restoration of Relationship
- Emphasis on verbal or non-verbal
- Loud/Extroversion vs. Quiet/Introversion
- Practicality vs. Idealism
- Quick vs. Methodical Decision Making
- Idea/task-centered or person/relationship-centered
- Materialism vs. Spirituality

Many of these values differences are reflected in the tensions between what anthropologists have called guilt-oriented cultures (typical of Western society) and shame oriented cultures (typical of many traditional societies). The basic difference is that the value structure of traditional societies focuses more around communal honor and shame rather than individual

guilt over breaking a law. In shame-oriented societies, though punishment may be enacted, the ultimate goal is not prosecution and prison, but restoration of proper relationships. Seeking of honor and avoidance of shame are the primary motivators of behavior. Honor is important to the whole community, not just the individual. Conversely, taking away one's honor brings shame on both the individual and his/her group. In societies where shame is the dominant motif, tensions occur not because laws have been broken but because someone has violated the proper ordering of relationships. The practice of conflict transformation, then, in such societies is tied very closely to traditional practices of reconciliation within family, clan, ethnic and religious groups.

Religious Values: Common Bond or Distinctive Challenge?

Since values are informed by a group's foundational norms, beliefs and any accompanying practices, religion frequently plays a central role in forming the value system of a community. Even when religion is not the primary identity marker, a community's sense of belonging, the motivations of its members, and the moral compass that guides and legitimizes their behavior are profoundly affected by the faith-based values inherited from its religious tradition and still espoused by influential segments of the population. The potential for religious value differences to lead to deeply entrenched conflict can be seen throughout history, as well as in some of the greatest tension points in our modern world. For this very reason, Samuel Huntington (1996) has predicted an inevitable clash of civilizations. On the other hand, others put emphasis on the fact that most faith traditions have numerous common values (e.g. charity, hospitality, or justice) and insist that focusing on the commonalities, rather than the differences, provides a promising roadmap of cooperation. Both visions, however, the negative and the positive, fail to provide a full picture of possible outcomes.

Despite the commonality of many overall values among various faith traditions, it is often the distinctive perspectives, histories, and practices that inform and resonate with one's own faith community and, at times, raise questions and even disagreements, in the minds of others. Scott Thomas points out that appeals to moral values within religious traditions are not free-floating propositions. He contends that faith communities do not exert influence merely through generalized ethical frameworks that are proposed universally, but through the particular practices that demonstrate and give meaning to those frameworks. Instead of proposing "thin practices," based on generalized values, he calls for "thick practices," shaped by the particular meanings given to those values by specific faith communities and exemplified by its own framers and practitioners (Thomas, 2005).

In reality, the impact of faith-based values (or any value system) on conflict escalation or conflict mitigation depends on how people hold their values and how they handle their differences. Faith traditions do provide a moral compass to guide behavior, but this worldview can potentially be used either to legitimize violence or to undergird attitudinal and behavioral transformation. All members of faith communities, clergy and laity, should be challenged with the questions: How do they apply their religious values to their own lives? How do they relate to the values of others? What application do they articulate publically, thereby, encouraging what attitudes and behavior on the part of the rest of their faith communities?

Related Bibliography

- Avruch, Kevin. 2002. *Culture and Conflict Resolution*. 2nd ed. Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press
- Ayindo, Babu, Mabel Isolio and David Steele. 2010. *Strengthening the Capacities of Kenyan Actors in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation: A Source Book and Training Guide*. Nairobi: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.
- Burton, John. 1979. *Deviance, Terrorism and War*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Fraser, Julius T. 1999. *Time, Conflict, and Human Values*. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press
- Hannes, Wiher. 2003. *Shame and Guilt*. Bonn: Culture and Science Publication.
- Huntington, Samuel. 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York : Simon & Schuster.
- Thomas, Scott M. 2005. *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Ting-Toomey Stella. 1999. *Communicating across Cultures*. New York: Guilford Press

4. THE ROLE PLAYED BY RELIGION AS A CONFLICT DRIVER

Types of Contemporary Conflict Involving Religion

Any assessment of concrete characteristics of conflict today must evaluate the entanglement of religion when it serves as an influential identity marker. Religion as a driver of conflict takes many forms. Actual conflict situations are always more complex than any attempt to classify. Some conflicts will fit into more than one of the categories below and some religious groups propagating conflict may not fit easily into any of them. Some believers may espouse perspectives consistent with one or more of these categories yet not condone or practice violence. However, the following typology does provide a framework for understanding much of the role religion plays as a conflict driver in the modern world:

- **Ethno-Religious:** When religion and ethnicity are united as one identity marker. In this case, religion is often used to legitimize the ethnic quest. This type can exist even within largely secular societies, where “folk religion” persists, with its collective memory, values, superstitions, half-forgotten scriptures, and customs. Sometimes the ethno-religious connection is extremely apparent, especially in cases where a particular ethnic or tribal distinction exists primarily because of religious heritage. When such highly integrated ethno-religious identities exist, many people perceive a single identity marker and are unable to accept that some people may identify with one marker (say ethnicity) but not the other (e.g. religion). Yet, ethno-religious ties are not limited to cases of total integration. Even when religion is clearly a secondary identity marker, it is often used by the ethnic group leadership to legitimize increased tension or violence and delegitimize the other group. Some examples of each kind:
 - Mostly integrated
 - Nigeria: Most tribal groups, today, are either Christian or Muslim. The Muslims have a long history of dominance in the northern half of the country where the British colonialists refused to allow Christian missionaries to convert the population. However, the British did allow Christian missionaries to convert the southern population for traditional African Shamanistic traditions to Christianity. This has led to a population that is half Christian, half Muslim, with the Middle Belt of the country (a band stretching from west to east) the place where there is the greatest mixture of religious groups and a place of primary tension and violence between them. This sectarian violence has even created violent conflict within the one tribe, the Yoruba, which is composed of both Muslims and Christians – showing that religion is actually the dominant factor within the ethno-religious integration. (For further information, see diagram on “Conflict Drivers and Their Consequences in Nigeria” at the end of part 1.)
 - The Former Yugoslavia: Despite the secularization of vast portions of this society through the imposition of communism following WWII, ethno-religious identity still fuelled the violence that tore that former nation apart in the 1990s. In the minds of most of the population, to be ethnic Serb, Montenegrin or Macedonian meant you were Orthodox Christian; to be ethnic Croatian or Slovenian meant you were Catholic Christian; to be ethnic Albanian in Kosovo or ethnic Slavic Bosniac meant

- you were Muslim. Even those who resisted this total ethno-religious integration (including some minority religious groups) were often placed in these categories, and often treated accordingly, by the bulk of society.
- Where religion is secondary
 - Kenya: When post-election violence erupted in Kenya following the presidential elections in late 2007, it pitted one set of ethnic/tribal groups against another, each group constituting the membership of the rival political parties. Although religion was not the primary identity marker that separated the two sides, it did contribute, in many cases to the violence. Kenya is a very religious society and people are influenced greatly by their faith traditions and its leaders. In such a situation, the legitimization of violence by religious leaders did play a role in providing each side with a moral rationale for their aggressive behavior. So, in one location in the Rift Valley, which suffered some of the greatest violence, clergy from the Salvation Army and clergy from the Seventh Day Adventists legitimized “the defense of their people” through participation in extreme forms of violence against each other. More recently, Muslim dominant regions along Kenya’s coast have experienced increasing conflict with its majority Christian population, again exacerbating long-standing ethnic/tribal divides.
 - Religio-Racial: When purity of faith is equated with racial dominance (e.g. Christian white supremacists in the US or South Africa). The struggle against slavery and then racial equality in the US involved serious splits within many Christian Churches of the same denomination. One of the largest Protestant dominations in the US today, Southern Baptists, separated from northern Baptists over the defense of slavery in the 19th century. Such divisions still divided many, though not all, northern and southern Christians in the US during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Similar theological justifications of white supremacy dominated theology in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa for decades, providing the presumed moral legitimacy of the political policy of Apartheid. As described in part 1, in both countries, it took internal pressure for theological and political change within the white churches and non-violent protest within black churches to overcome the political oppression created by theologically rationalized racial discrimination.
 - Religious Nationalism: When religion is seen as central to the nation’s identity. In this case, it is not just a people’s ethnicity or race that feels threatened, but the essence of the identity of the entire nation state. Examples include:
 - Hindu nationalism in India: The rise of tension between Hindus and Muslims is related to developments within each group. However, the rise of Hindutva, a Hindu nationalist movement which emphasizes the centrality of Hinduism for Indian identity, is one of the primary drivers on that side. Through this movement, Hinduism has become a basis for political identity in order to counter what has been perceived as the marginalization of Hindu tradition’s rightful place of spiritual dominance. The creation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and its success in securing major political influence in the current Indian government, is a strong indication of the degree to which current attitudes and behavior, in the name of preserving Hindu India, has deviated from long espoused Hindu values of tolerance (Sharma, 2004).
 - Sri Lanka: There is a long history in Sri Lanka (going back to the introduction of Buddhism in the 3rd century BCE) of tension and violence between Sinhalese

Buddhists and Tamil Hindus for control over territory. There is a series of ancient chronicles about the glories of warrior Buddhist kings as Buddhism was consolidating its control over that country. In one such account, King Duttagamani became the ruler of all Sri Lanka after a bloody battle with a non-Buddhist, Tamil king in the 2nd century BCE. After the battle, feeling remorse for having killed thousands of Tamils while just two Buddhist's died, the king sent for some "enlightened" Buddhist monks who told the king not to worry about any non-Buddhist victims since they were deemed to be no more than beasts (Mahanama, 1912). Despite the fact that Buddhism is perceived throughout most of the world as a peaceful religion, Singhalese Buddhists have felt that the fundamental values of their society (values very much associated, from their perspective, with Buddhist faith) have been threatened by Tamil Hindu identity (as well as any other religions plus Western secularism). Therefore, very many devout Buddhists, including leading monks, feel compelled to fight and win in order to preserve their sense of who they are. An organization established in 2012, named Bodu Bala Sena (meaning "Forces of Buddhist Power" and led by a group of Buddhist monks) is but the most recent expression of Buddhist Singhalese claim to Buddhism's rightful place as a fundamental cornerstone of national identity (Colombage, 2013).

- Religious Zionists in Israel: The ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel see themselves as the definers and guarantors of the nation state. They were initially among the strongest supporters of the creation of a Jewish State, always in their mind, one defined by ethnic and religious purity within God-given borders promised to Abraham centuries ago. This position has actually placed them in conflict with the Israeli Government ever since its negotiation of the Oslo Accords and its giving up rights to some of this Biblical Promised land to Palestinians. Their response has been continuous resistance to such policies (as seen in the settlements) and a determination to repossess control of the Israeli Government in order to prevent further deterioration, and roll back previous concessions which they deem to have undermined Jewish Israeli national identity.
- Islamists: The most recent demonstration of Islamist claims on national identity has been in Egypt. The attempt on the part of the Muslim Brotherhood to impose their understanding of Egyptian Islamic identity on the entire nation met with great resistance, though the attempt demonstrates the degree to which the Muslim Brotherhood still see themselves as the rightful definers and rulers of the nation. Another example is Hamas in Palestine. Unlike Fatah, they do not see their struggle with Israel as just one for ethnic/national independence. For Hamas, it is the establishment of an "authentic" Islamic Palestinian state; it is a religio-national war. Finally, there is some debate over whether the Islamic Republic of Iran, or its client, Hezbollah, in Lebanon fit this category or the next one, religious globalization. First, it needs to be acknowledged that these are both Shi'ite, not Sunni, movements and, therefore, there is no dream of re-establishing the international Caliphate which last existed in the Sunni Ottoman Empire. However, some Iranian and Hezbollah leading clerics, like their Sunni counterparts, do speak of a worldwide Islamic Community (or *umma*). The activism of both Iran and Hezbollah does extend beyond their own borders, targeting Israel and the US, hijacking airlines and taking hostages, and bolstering the regime of Bashar Assad in Syria. Yet, fundamentally, I would argue that the Iran's Islamic Republic and Hezbollah are primarily nationalist. Their main goals appear to be control of their own countries and the interests of those nation states, taking actions for/against other countries only if it is

deemed to be out of concern for their own security and defense. The primary targets in Hezbollah's sights have been Christian Maronites and Sunni political parties within Lebanon. Israel is targeted primarily because of the threat of reoccupation. Iran's biggest campaign of violence has been against its own people following the presidential election in 2009. The primary purpose of its militarism, clearly, is to maintain its power within Iran and a few neighboring clients, more than to project power globally.

- Religious Globalization: When pan-national religious identity is paramount.
 - Sometimes this involves an effort to reestablish an international sphere of influence, such as the Sunni Islamic Caliphate in which Sharia (Islamic Law) is applied over a wide geographical region, especially, but not exclusively, in countries which are predominantly Muslim.
 - Other times, religious globalism is motivated by a cosmic, worldview that is dominated by a spiritual perspective in which one believes that the final victory is not to be experienced on earth, or as a result of any battle won or lost on terra firma, but is seen in apocalyptic terms. (Aslan, 2010). This worldview sees religious identity, not only as primary, but as all important, to the exclusion of national, ethnic, or any other identity marker. In its most extreme form, this represents the ultimate "us/them" conflict. Unlike the Holy Wars of the past, which were usually fought over control of territory and gave the victor the right to propagate one's religious beliefs over the conquered, these wars are increasingly conceived as battles of good vs. evil, fought and won, ultimately, on an otherworldly plane far above and beyond any human activity.

Examples of both include:

- Bin Laden, beyond his desire to reestablish the caliphate, was convinced that the forces of Allah, as represented by Al-Qaeda, would ultimately win, no matter what was the outcome of the current skirmish. This jihadist war could never be lost. The end times would usher in the ultimate victory.
 - Some Protestant Christian Fundamentalists, for whom pan-Evangelicalism surpasses the importance of national or ethnic boundaries, fit into this category when they not only call upon all believers to adopt an Armageddon cosmic worldview, but encourage militant action which will engage themselves explicitly on "God's" side of the ultimate supernatural fight between good and evil.
- Religious Liberation: When religion is tied to class struggle and violence is justified as a means to achieve freedom from oppression. One of the most unusual developments in modern day political-religious relations is the marriage between Christian Catholicism and political Marxism that occurred in Latin America and later spread to other parts of the world (e.g. Africa, Asia, and even Western Europe and North America) where other Christian churches also embraced some form of a Marxist political ideology. How does one explain how an atheistic political philosophy could gain credence within the Catholic Church, especially at a time when there was an ardently, anti-communist Polish Pope? The answer lies in the centuries old class struggle in Latin America, where the Catholic Church had traditionally sided with wealth and power, holding the peasant classes in a subservient, oppressed condition that was sanctioned and legitimized by the Church. In the late 20th century, a growing movement of Liberation theologians, primarily within the Latin American Catholic Church (though including a few Protestants) called upon the Catholic

Church to recognize its ancient Social Theology of solidarity with the poor and seized upon political Marxism as the most effective means by which to challenge the “powers that be,” including the Catholic Church and its legacy of oppression. Many, though not all, liberation theologians legitimized violence against the dominant classes. Today, such movements are still strong and even growing in Latin America. With the failure of many nascent democracy movements in the 21st century, and the ascendance of leftist political governments in eleven countries (accounting for three-quarters of Latin America’s population), liberation theology is not dead. With a Latin American populist pope now in the Vatican, who gives priority to solidarity with the poor (though he would never describe himself as Marxist), many of the concerns at the heart of this movement have begun quietly to enter mainstream Catholicism.

- **Intra-Faith:** When conflict exists between branches within one religious tradition. Some of the most significant conflicts in which religion plays a major role are of this type. Frequently such conflicts are fuelled by histories of dominance and by competition over which brand represents the true faith. These conflicts are also often trans-national. Some examples:
 - **Islamic:** The very explosive current tensions between Sunnis and Shia in the region extending from the Arabian Peninsula to Central Asia. The divide between Sunni and Shia dates back to a battle in 680 AD over who would exercise both religious and political control over the newly created Islamic world. The survivors of the defeated army, loyal to the grandson of the Prophet Mohammed, became the founders of Shi’ite Islam. Later in history, the Shi’ite dominated Persian Empire and the Sunni dominated Ottoman Empire would clash at many points, with modern Iraq often becoming the battlefield. Today’s Sunni/Shi’ite conflict in Iraq, therefore, represents not only modern Sunni domination and persecution of Shia under Saddam Hussein, but centuries of shifting ethnic and religious populations that were frequently in conflict. European colonialism during the 20th century often enflamed tensions by drawing artificial boundaries irrespective of ethnic, tribal or religious affiliation and sometimes placing minority religious groups in power when the Europeans left. Consequently, until recently Iraq was governed by a Sunni minority, Syria is still governed by an Alawite Shia minority, and Bahrain by a Sunni minority. In addition to the existence of Sunni/Shia tensions throughout the Middle East and very evident during the Arab spring and its aftermath, significant Sunni/Shia tensions exist in Central and South Asia. In Iran, the Sunni Baluchistan Province experiences repression by the Shi’ite regime. Similarly, the Shi’ite population in Pakistan (second largest in the world) experiences discrimination by the Sunni dominated government. Iranian American analyst, Vali Nasr (*The Shia Revival*, 2007), considers this intra-Islamic conflict to be one of the potentially most explosive dynamics confronting the modern world. The spread of Syria’s current crisis into neighboring countries highlights this point.
 - **Christian:** The fault lines between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Catholicism have existed for centuries, involving not only theological divides, but political and military as well. During the Crusades, for example, Catholics attacked not only Muslims in the Middle East, but also fought Eastern Orthodox Christian populations. More recently, with the end of communism in Eastern Europe, the Eastern Orthodox/Catholic tensions re-emerged in the former Yugoslavia and the Ukraine, along with Eastern Orthodox/Protestant tensions in Romania. Historically, the Protestant Reformation

brought endless wars to Western and Central Europe, wars not only between Catholic and Protestant, but between different branches of Protestantism. We still see lingering tensions in Western Europe, especially Protestant/Catholic in Northern Ireland. At the same time, a different set of tensions have arisen in many parts of the Christian world between emergent and historical/traditional church (e.g. Pentecostalism vs. Catholicism in Latin America); and break-away elements within Eastern Orthodoxy (e.g. the autocephalous movements in Eastern Europe). Following long-standing Eastern Orthodox tradition, many groups have sought to establish, or re-establish, separate ethnic-dominated churches within Eastern Orthodoxy. Within the Macedonian and Montenegrin Orthodox Churches, there have been strong factions calling for independence from the Serbian Orthodox Church. The same is true of Orthodox Churches in the Ukraine where tensions have existed over the separation of Ukrainian from Russian Orthodox Churches.

Relationship between Extremist Religious Sects and their Wider Faith Traditions

When religion contributes to conflict escalation, it often is labeled as “fundamentalist,” “extremist,” or “radical.” However, one needs to be careful when attaching labels such as these. The impression conveyed is not always accurate or informative. First of all, fundamentalism is a term used as a self-description by some very conservative Protestant Christians. Although it can be said that many conservative religious sects, from various faith traditions, see themselves as movements to purify their tradition by returning to the fundamentals of their faith, the term itself is often rejected by religious groups other than Protestants. Neither are the terms extremist or radical likely to be the designation of first choice by those who are usually targeted. Although these designations do not always carry precise or universal meanings, there are somewhat different connotations associated with each. The Free Online dictionary describes radical as revolutionary, subversive and fanatical, while defining extremist as one who passionately and fervently resorts to measures beyond the norm. Given these connotations and the common usage of the phrase “countering violent extremism,” or “CEV,” when describing how to address insurgency and terrorism, the two distinct forms of contemporary violence most associated with religious drivers, “extremist” has been selected as the terminology to be used in this manual.

Yet, the inferences drawn must be carefully evaluated. For example, some violent religiously-motivated groups may not fit within the characteristics of religious extremism noted below. Plus there are those who do fit much of the description, yet are not violent or degrading of other groups. If someone believes that their faith is superior to any other, are they an extremist? How many people do you know who would say that their religion is true and that it is the most important thing in their life? It is important to recognize that not everyone who views religion as their primary identity is an extremist, though this factor might, along with other commonalities in worldview, make them susceptible to an alliance with extremists, given the right set of circumstances.

There is an inherent tension within each faith tradition between the call to “truth” (to affirm the importance of one’s own spiritual tradition) and the call to “love” (to embrace the “other”). The task confronting each faith community, then, is to find a creative way to affirm its roles as both the custodian of their tradition and a channel of compassion for those who

may embrace seemingly incompatible values. Dealing with this tension becomes especially problematic when religious education and formation are inadequate, leading to significant ignorance due to misinterpretation and knowledge of only part of the tradition's authoritative source material. The way in which religious traditions approach this task will determine whether or not they contribute to religion as a driver/exacerbator, or a preventer/mitigator/resolver, of conflict (Ayindo, Isolio and Steele, 2010).

So, susceptibility to extremism, though important to recognize, does not determine the attitudes or behavior of all people of faith within crisis zones. This is true even for societies in which religious extremists from the same wider faith tradition have become embedded. In one workshop on conflict management that I led for Iraqis in 2006, every person present selected religion as their number one identity, yet they had all come with the intention of countering violence and building peace. Subsequently, a number of them mediated ceasefires between armed groups and conflicts over religion (Steele, *Reconciliation Strategies in Iraq*, 2008). The distinction between these people and what we might label as extremists seems to be that their religion, though primary, was not their only important identity marker, they refused to see themselves as superior even if they believe their faith to be best, and they completely rejected any resort to antagonism and aggression. In other words, they did not allow their in-group bonding to move to the last three stages in Marilyn Brewer's trajectory of dysfunctional identity formation as described in part 2.

Yet, because religious extremists often do gain significant influence by embedding themselves within a wider, like-minded faith community, it is important to ask: When does this tend to happen and why? Especially in the developing world, where religious belief and custom is often more conservative, very many committed believers within a given wider faith community do actually share with extremists a number of common perspectives, which shall be examined below. But what makes even nominally religious peoples sometime give priority to a religious identity they may have all but ignored? What makes committed believers elevate what they share with extremists above what they have previously questioned or even strongly opposed? Sometimes members of the wider faith tradition feel forced by the social pressure of their own community or the labeling of them by an adversary. However, when fear levels grow within an entire society due to discrimination, economic collapse, oppression, violence, and dislocation, or even a serious threat to a people's security, it is easy for even the nominally religious members to fear a loss of their identity and challenge to their value system. At such a point of vulnerability, the extremists may appear to be the only ones with a credible answer and the ability to speak a language the community understands. Often, the result is at least some attachment to, or acceptance of, an extremist presence.

A symbiosis occurs. Some buy in completely (look at the number of Muslims adopting violent jihad, especially in places like Northwest Pakistan). Others form an alliance of convenience: "Our co-religionists" are closer to us than the enemy (for example, many of the Sunni religious and tribal leadership in Iraq allied themselves with Al-Qaeda in 2003 against a common enemy invader). Still others tolerate what they perceive as the "the lesser of two evils – the one that at least understands us and whom we understand." Many of the Ba-athist party members, and some tribal leaders, with whom I worked in Tikrit Iraq in 2008 had initially fought alongside Al-Qaeda. Later some of them switched sides, forming what was

called the Sunni Awakening Movement, when they became disillusioned with extremist Al-Qaeda forms of justice and when the US military offered to pay the tribal sheiks to provide security in their region. However, now, many of the Sunni Awakening leaders have re-affiliated with Al-Qaeda in response to their strong perception of discrimination and oppression by the Shi'ite dominated Iraqi government and the influence of Syrian-based jihadists.

A symbiosis between moderates and extremists can occur, however, even when the extremists have not been violent themselves. A good case in point is the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Throughout much of their decades-long history, they have suffered more violence than they have perpetrated. However, the extremist who knows how to fight brings added value to those who suffer from great atrocities. It is no accident that Al-Qaeda did a much better job of creating linkage with the Sunni insurgency in Iraq than did the US or the newly dominant Iraqi Shi'ite community.

Three Types of Linkage (Appleby, 2000 and Steele, Cha. 33 in Petersen and Simion, 2010) are typically used by either violent or non-violent religious extremists, especially during moments of crisis, in order to embed themselves within their wider faith community: (1) *Ideological* (based on identity and values), (2) *Relational* (based on identification with grievance, degree of trust, and channels of persuasion) and (3) *Functional* (based on response to needs/interests of the community). It is important for all concerned, both the wider faith traditions and any external interveners, to understand the nature of these linkages and ask what one might do either to prevent the consummation of the linkage or supplant it if already entrenched. As important as it is to ask how to break the hold extremism has on those already invested, it is equally imperative to engage, first, in prevention of any linkage (whether by violent or non-violent extremists). Later, when necessary, it is essential to engage in linkage transformation, which usually involves enabling elements of the wider faith community to develop other ties more beneficial to them. In either case, one must first understand the linkages and what gives them credence.

Ideological Linkage: This is very much related to the role of religion as an underlying world view or value system which provides a framework of meaning that helps cultivate a sense of belonging, process information, and provide a moral code that legitimizes behavior. So it is important to determine what the characteristics of extremist religious ideology are (whether violent or non-violent) and how are they linked to beliefs of the wider faith community:

- Aversion to secularization: Throughout the developing world, most religious people don't want their values overrun by secularism. There is as much fear that Western secularism will destroy their values, by separating the sacred and the secular, as will the incursion of a different faith tradition. For example, this concern was as great among extremist Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka as was their concern about being threatened by Hindu Tamils. The same is true for the Hindutva movement in India and all the religious communities in the former Yugoslavia who blame secular communism for destroying their values. These religious traditions strongly believe that if the socio-political world is intrinsically connected with issues of justice that it can't exclude the faith-based values fundamental to their understanding of justice. Therefore, we often see resistance to

democratization, or at least a Western understanding of it, which purports to separate religion and the state. Witness the emergence of various forms of Islamic democratic movements that have substantial, though not universal, support within the wider faith traditions of some countries – e.g. Turkey, Indonesia and Tunisia.

- Belief in absolute truth embodied in one's own tradition: All religious traditions have their sacred source material, even if it has been transmitted through oral history. Religious leaders of all types see themselves as custodians of beliefs and values which they view as beneficial to everyone and which, if threatened must be defended. In most Abrahamic traditions, the faith is seen as a direct revelation from God, leading many adherents, especially conservative ones, to see themselves as emissaries of the truth, contending against falsehood. This missionary spirit, calling for propagation of the faith, is in fact central to key tenets of Christianity and Islam. Ashoka, the first Buddhist King of India, in the 3rd century BCE attempted to convert all his citizens and sent emissaries to introduce this faith to numerous lands, including what is today Sri Lanka and Myanmar (Seneviratna, 1994). Many Buddhists in both of these lands have inherited a view that perceives their faith as “the best,” thus contributing to a heritage of religious nationalism, in which Buddhist monks lead efforts to incite intolerance and violence. Outsiders view such activity as proselytizing, but insiders view it as spreading “good news,” reflecting the actual meaning of the term “gospel.” Insiders view this as offering everyone a right and holy relationship with their Creator, while outsiders see it as a coercive intrusion that violates the very core of their well-being. Yet, there are different ways in which the faithful in any tradition “hold” their truths. While there is much commonality that extremists share with their wider community, especially among conservatives, there are also differences. These distinctions often depend on what sacred texts are selected, what interpretation is proposed, and how the teaching is applied within a given context. For example, what is the Islamic understanding of “jihad?” Any devout Muslim will see it as a fundamental struggle to submit oneself to Allah and oppose evil. For many, it first involves a personal struggle to purify oneself, but also requires the building a good and just society. What this struggle requires varies tremendously, depending on selection, interpretation and application of texts from the Qur'an and various Hadiths. Extremists usually insist on a narrower interpretation and a broad application, very often using jihad to justify severe punishment of any perceived violators and to legitimize war against any threat to the good and just society which they perceive to be dictated by select tenets of Sharia Law.
- Purification of one's own tradition: An emphasis on purification is common throughout many, if not all, entire faith communities (with one Islamic example already cited above). Yet both the purpose and the approach to the purification process can differ. In most religious traditions, there is emphasis on both personal and social purification. Furthermore, in some faith communities, social purification is limited to that faith tradition itself, while in others the goal includes purification of the whole society or even all of humanity. In addition to distinctions regarding the scope, there are different understandings of the appropriate, or necessary, process. Among many devout Serbian Orthodox in the former Yugoslavia, gaining prominence for their faith as the rightful, dominant religion was an essential step in the process of purifying their faith and their

nation (a common perception when ethno-religious conflict drivers are prominent). However, many other devout religious groups will call for purification of their own tradition first, in preparation for influencing the purification of their own society or all humanity. One example of this approach is the role played by the Dalai Lama in calling all Tibetans to purify themselves from all that destroys harmonious living, with the conviction that a purified Tibetan people will emerge which can then have positive influence on their Chinese rulers and beyond. Gandhian Hinduism provides another example, one in which a mass non-violent movement that ended British colonial rule in India, emerged out of what Gandhi called “soul force,” the result of personal purification and commitment to doing what was right (Bondurant, 1958). Though the examples cited here, which focus first on self-purification are positive, there is no guarantee that beginning with self will never lead to negative consequences. There are plenty of examples throughout history of those who have come out of the obscurity of a cloistered existence, where one is steeped in a certain doctrine or process of purification, and proceeded to force others into compliance. Examples include some Christian monasteries during the crusades and some Islamist doctrination camps today. The problem comes when purification becomes a forced social phenomenon, often the case within the mindset of the religious extremist and sometimes transferred to the wider faith community within violence-prone societies.

- Ingrained sense of suffering & victimization; combined with belief in ultimate victory/redemption (Gopin, 2003): All religious traditions (not just extremist ones) have some means by which they offer hope in the midst of suffering. Sometimes the sacrifice experienced by a whole people is seen as a form of atonement, bringing the entire religious community or society into one-ness with the divine. When extremist perspectives prevail, martyrdom is often viewed as a sacrificial obligation, even a preparation for war. Martyrdom transforms the victim into a warrior, willing to die for the cause – with a promise of hope beyond the violence. In the midst of war or mass violence, even those outside the extremist movement become attracted to a belief system that gives meaning to their suffering, yet promises hope beyond. In Diyala Iraq, widows with children began carrying out suicide bombings in increasing numbers, attacking Shi’ites, foreigners, and even Sunni Muslims they had been told were working to undermine the vision of a pure Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, the name given by Al-Qaeda to the nation they hoped to establish. As widows of Al-Qaeda fighters who had been killed, these women, most of whom were illiterate and poor, had been promised that all their suffering, and that of their families, would be rewarded in the next life if they committed themselves wholly to a violent jihad.

There are also cases where the ingrained sense of suffering and victimization, combined with a promise of distant hope, is carried through generations in a given faith tradition. Shi’ite Islam in Iraq provides one example where the ritualization of suffering and redemption has recently been revived after having been banned by Saddam Hussein. The tragedy of Karbala (the battle that gave birth to Shi’ite Islam in 680 AD) is commemorated each year on the anniversary of the death of Hussein, the Prophet Mohammed’s grandson. It has become a focal point for remembering both 7th century trauma as well as any recent or present persecution. Masses of Shi’ite men walk through

the streets, flagellating themselves until blood runs down their bodies. The throngs of Pilgrims watching this re-enactment join with weeping and grieving. Yet, toward the end of the ritual, the voice of the vanquished Hussein promises all the faithful that they will “be relieved from their grief” and invites them “to the mansions of the blest”(Steele, *Reconciliation Strategies in Iraq*, 2008). Whether this becomes a process of genuine grief or an incitement to violence against today’s enemies depends on whether it is accompanied by enemy imaging, stereotyping and antagonism, followed by a call to take revenge into their own hands.

The second historical example involves Serbian Orthodox mythology. In the Battle of Kosovo, the Muslim Turks defeated Christian Serbs in June 1389. The Serbian Orthodox Church played a central role transforming the story of this defeat into a Kosovo myth in order to support the Serbian nationalist quest for liberation from the Ottoman Empire. This myth took on clear theological dimensions, identifying the death of the Serbian Prince with the crucifixion of Christ and equating the vanquished Serb nation with the suffering of the people of God. By the mid-19th century, the Kosovo myth was used to justify territorial expansion in pursuit of liberation and to define all perceived Serbian enemies (not only the Turks, but all Muslim people) as demonic, identifying them with the anti-Christ. In the 1990s this negative religious branding was applied to the Kosovo Albanian population, most of whom were current-day Muslim, despite the fact that in 1389, the Albanians were Catholic Christians who were also defeated by the Turks at the Battle of Kosovo. In this case, we clearly see one of the key ideological components of an extremist religious mentality and the power it continues to exert over a whole religious tradition and even an entire nation.

- Identity as a chosen people with a divine mission: All the Abrahamic traditions have a built-in claim to be a “chosen people” with a divine mission.” But “chosenness” can become distorted, particularly when it is borne out of an identity framed by a sense of historical grievance. The Serbian Orthodox Kosovo Myth provides one example of the kind of “divine chosenness,” born out of historical grievance, which can incite hatred and violence. A “Kosovo pledge,” to work toward the institution of a Heavenly Serbia, has motivated many Serbs to revolt against foreign domination. WWI started with the assassination of Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serb who had taken this pledge. During the two decades prior to the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, some figures from the Serbian Orthodox Church again took a leading role in nurturing the remembrance of the victimization of the Serbian people by appealing to the Kosovo myth. Serbian political leaders used this victimization theme to advance their political careers during the late 1980s. Most notably, Slobodan Milosevic appeared, alongside the Serbian Orthodox patriarch, to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo in 1989. At this event, Milosevic ominously referred to the need for Serbs to be engaged in battle, wrapping his political credentials around the Kosovo myth and presenting himself as national savior. Subsequent wars in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo witnessed the resulting ethno-religious-political linkage in which many (though not all) Serbian priests and even bishops blessed genocide and ethnic cleansing in the pursuit of Greater Heavenly Serbia.

In like manner, remembrance of centuries of grievance has played the same role for some Shi'ite leaders in Iraq. Martyrs have always been revered in this tradition and continue to have great influence even after their demise. The former leader of Iraqi Shi'ites, Ayatollah Mohammed Al-Sadr (along with most of his family), was assassinated in 1999 for criticizing Saddam's regime. His only surviving son, Shia cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr ascended into prominence following the 2003 invasion. The younger Al-Sadr then called for an Islamic state in which Shi'ites would play the dominant role. Despite the presence of a new Iraqi ayatollah committed to multi-faith cooperation and reconciliation, Al-Sadr formed a militia, named the Mahdi Army, a name associated with the return of a 9th century Shi'ite imam who would redeem the people and inaugurate a perfect Islamic society. With his inherited martyred family lineage, plus the self-anointed mantle of messianic leadership, Al Sadr could symbolize the plight of his victimized people, embody the promise of redemption, and define a mission for the now "chosen people" whose time had come. During the eight months I worked in Iraq for the US Institute of Peace in 2008, Al-Sadr controlled significant portions of southern Iraq as well as part of Baghdad, had been the dealmaker in the selection of Iraq's two Prime Ministers, had turned his militias against Sunni Iraqis during fierce sectarian fighting that almost culminated in civil war, fought the Shi'ite dominated Iraqi Army, attacked Coalition Forces and targeted Baghdad's international Green Zone on numerous occasions.

Although the Dharmic traditions and traditional Shamanistic folk religions do not use this exact terminology, there can still be a sense of specialness, with preferential access to sources of wisdom and a privileged role given to those most enlightened. Hinduism has its class system, with the elite Brahman's at the top, the predominant class constituting the nationalist Hindutva movement. Traditional Shamans can utilize their special link to ancestors and "other worldly beings" to dominate. Even Buddhism, as documented previously, has a history of campaigns to convert others. All of these examples demonstrate that the lure of extremist understandings of a chosen people with a sense of sacred calling can infect at least significant portions of the wider community. This is especially true when people fear for their survival, as was the case among Serbs living in the region, but outside of Serbia proper, and is still the case throughout Arab regions of Iraq, among the Hindutva in India, and among many Buddhists in Sri Lanka and Myanmar. When threat is elevated to this level, the "chosen people" myth can be used to justify any action to protect the community from a perceived ongoing threat, even actions that are normally forbidden within the particular faith tradition.

- Dualistic perspective - a "Good vs. Evil" Crusade (Appleby, 2000 and Aslan, 2010): Most religious traditions believe that both good and evil exist and that one should stand against evil. Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi, St. Francis of Assisi, the Dalai Lama, and others are examples of a nonviolent approach to the problem of evil. In the case of the extremist, however, the reality of evil becomes a rationale for participating in a "cosmic war," where victory on earth is not of ultimate significance. It is a spiritual battle to implement the divine will of God, or Allah, who in the end will prevail, no matter any current setbacks. In fact, this dualistic perspective often expects the annihilation of the present world, in the quest for its purification. But even this dualistic perspective only becomes problematic when two conditions are met. First, it is dangerous if good and evil

are entirely correlated with “us” vs. “them” - if “we” are entirely pure and “they” are entirely immoral. Second, it is problematic only if human agency is required – if there is a call for believers to join in the fight. Is it not acceptable for a devout religious person to believe that, in the end, God will bring justice, perhaps through some form of punishment that might even include the use of force? Is it not even more acceptable if this devout person calls for self-examination and repentance on the part of one’s own group? These caveats serve to show the thin line that can exist between the extremist’s perspective, and that of the wider community, when it comes to standing for good and against evil. How much suffering does it take, how many atrocities does one need to witness or experience, before the believer develops a firm perception that “they,” in contrast with “us,” are really evil and that God’s justice does, in fact, require human participation in violence. The use of force is now perceived as the only way to preserve the “good cause.” Such a transition in perspective appears to be what happened to Frederick Douglass in the lead up to the US civil war, when he separated himself from the nonviolent abolitionist movement and embraced John Brown’s call for violence to overthrow slavery. Such a transition in perspective is exactly what happened when some Catholic priests adopted liberation theology and began to support, or even participate in, violence against corrupt regimes in Latin America. It also likely explains the transitions made by many devout Sunni civilians in Syria who have struggled to form the very non-professional Free Syrian Army and are now at least indebted to, if not converted by, the experienced Al-Qaeda fighters who are part of their alliance. Given these examples, especially the current Syrian dilemma, the potential for ideological linkage, formed around dualistic perceptions of good vs. evil, should not be difficult to understand. Furthermore, since such a cosmic worldview is impossible to defeat militarily, it may become even more attractive to a wider faith community, afraid for its survival or domination.

Relational Linkage: How are contacts made that enable extremists to promulgate their perceptions of the situation and their vision/mission within the wider faith tradition and even the wider society in general?

- Use of religious and tribal leaders to persuade, mandate and legitimize an extremist agenda: Channels of authority and persuasion come through authority figures in most societies. This is especially true in non-Western, collectivist, shame-oriented societies where the focus is not on personal choice, but loyalty to religion, tribe, or family. Al-Qaeda in Iraq, with its roots in Middle Eastern societies, understood the importance of the role of religious and tribal leaders and knew how to approach and convince them. They would go to the local imam or the tribal sheik in order to gain acceptance by the wider community. Then they used these communal structures to bring dominance and infuse extremism. In particular, they understood and utilized the critical role that religion played in defining ultimate values, reinforcing a sense of in-group loyalty, processing information so as to support a desired perception, and providing a moral code that could legitimize any behavior deemed essential to achieve the sanctioned purpose. One of the biggest initial failures of the US presence was its lack of understanding of this dynamic and, therefore, lack of effort placed in relational linkage through both religious and tribal leaders.
- Connection with people’s sense of victimization and grievance: The extremist often builds on an understanding of the typical dynamics of aggression and victimization and the

framework of meaning the faith tradition provides regarding suffering. Very typically, there is a cyclical dynamic to the process of experiencing and responding to violence. It is very common for the strong sense of victimization in the wake of aggression to lead to an escalating desire for revenge and thus perpetuate the violence. Here are seven stages which people frequently experience in this cycle. (1) *Injury and Pain*: Though the aggression may be severe, many people initially are in a state of denial; “this can’t really be happening to us.” (2) *Realization of Loss*: of home, health, loved ones, possessions, identity, job, culture, etc. (3) *Suppression of Grief and Fears*: This is a common survival mechanism in the face of trauma. For example, if militiamen arrive and give a family five minutes to leave their home, perhaps injuring or killing some members, there is no time to grieve, only time to grab your children and flee. (4) *Anger*: at anyone associated with the perpetrators. In many cultures there is a deep sense of violation which carries all the weight of communal shame, dishonor and humiliation - *Why are they doing this to me/us?* (5) *Desire for Revenge*: The quest for justice has turned from a strategy for defense into a crusade of revenge. To rectify the group’s diminished strength and blemished honor, the perpetrators and members of their group are to pay dearly, perhaps be completely destroyed. (6) *Creating Myths, Heroes/Villains and the “Right Conflict History”*: This creates a web of understanding that explains all that has happened, convinces the identity group that they are absolutely right, and justifies the act of revenge. Actual events are separated from their context and mixed with popular beliefs, stereotypes and legends from the historical memory of one’s group. It is a black and white mentality that excludes the possibility of acknowledging any other perceptions that might reflect the complexity of the issues or the interests of other parties. Finally (7) *An Act of Justified Aggression*: After the mobilization of moral justification, the victim is ready to strike back. The previous victim has now also become an aggressor. However, there is no justification for this action from the perspective of the other who may or may not be exactly the same person or group responsible for the initial aggressive action. The new victim now perceives this act as the beginning of the conflict and will trace everything back to this moment of his own suffering in order to justify his own subsequent retaliation. The cycle has been completed, the roles are now reversed, and the cycle continues, spiraling to encompass more and more people with each round of retaliation. (See a diagrammatic presentation of these stages, along with an alternative transformative process, in the sub-section on “Practicing Reconciliation: Addressing Relational Dynamics” in part 5 of this manual.)

Functional Linkage: This involves addressing and fulfilling any of the basic needs of the population. Who is it that is providing basic services, such as: shelter, health, food, education, employment, security, access to communication, transportation, etc.?

- Gap in basic services left by failure of governments and moderate civil society to provide: Outside interveners, as well as weak or failed indigenous governments, are often unable to do an effective job in providing these services, due to lack of resources or ignorance of the culture. In order to supplant/replace this linkage, other actors will need to find creative approaches that will require, first, gaining some degree of trust on the part of the local population, and then actually delivering the services.
- Gap often filled by extremist religious sects: Extremist groups have often been better able to provide such services to their wider faith communities, thereby gaining their support and confidence. Numerous examples include: Hamas in Gaza, the Serbian Orthodox Church in the former Yugoslavia, Muqtada al-Sadr in Iraq, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and

increasingly Al-Qaeda affiliates in Syria and Iraq today (having learned from their earlier neglect of this in Iraq). For example, Muqtada al-Sadr aimed to meet basic needs of the Iraqi Shi'ite population by using his political influence to gain initial control of the Interior and Health Ministries in the new Iraqi Government. The Interior Ministry controls the police. They determine who are hired, who are protected and who are harassed. The Health Ministry controls medical services, again determining who are hired, who has privileged access and treatment, and who are neglected. Reports of discrimination, favoring the Shia and oppressing the Sunnis, were rampant regarding the conduct of both ministries. From 2003-2008, in the Shi'ite section of Baghdad named Sadr City, Al-Sadr was *the* provider of all basic services and security for a population that gave him unquestioned loyalty. Neither the Iraqi Government nor the Coalition forces and all the international actors combined (including government and civil society) could begin to match the services provided by Al-Sadr. Likewise, in Lebanon, Hezbollah was the provider of basic services to its loyal Shi'ite population. They redistributed wealth, restored damaged buildings, provided fresh water and food, gave guidance on farming techniques, provided utilities (free or for a nominal fee), offered medical care, scholarships for education, career and guidance orientation, etc. In the eyes of poor Shi'ite people in south Lebanon, it is Hezbollah, not the Lebanese Government or the West, that provides.

Related Bibliography

- Appleby, R. Scott. 2000. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence and Reconciliation*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Aslan, Reza. 2010. *Beyond Fundamentalism*. New York: Random House.
- Ayindo, Babu, Mabel Isolio and David Steele. 2010. *Strengthening the Capacities of Kenyan Actors in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation: A Source Book and Training Guide*. Nairobi: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.
- Bondurant, Joan V. 1958. *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Violence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Center on Global Counterterrorism cooperation. 2012. "EU Workshop on Effective Programming for Countering Violent Extremism: Final Summary Report." Brussels: Center on Global Counterterrorism.
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news/documents/20121217_eu_cve_workshop_summary_report.pdf
- Colombage, Dinouk. (April 15, 2013). "Sri Lanka's Racism Juggernaut and the War Against it." Colombo: *Groundviews*. <http://groundviews.org/2013/04/15/sri-lankas-racism-juggernaut-and-the-war-against-it/>
- Dalaoura, Katerina. 2011. *Islamist Terrorism and Democracy in the Middle East*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Desai, Meghnad. 2007. *Rethinking Islamism: The Ideology of the New Terror*. London: I.B. Tauris
- Gopin, Marc. 2003. *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence and Peacemaking*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hafez, Kai. 2010. Translated by Alex Skinner. *Radicalism and Political Reform in the Islamic and Western Worlds*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Hamilton, Daniel, ed. 2006. *Terrorism and International Relations*. Washington: Center for Transatlantic Relations, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University.
- James, Patrick. 2011. *Religion, Identity, and Global Governance: Ideas, Evidence and Practice*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Johnston, Douglas. 2011. *Religion, Terror and Error*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
- Mahanama, 1912. *Mahavamsa*. Cha. 25. Translated by Wilhelm Geiger, with the title, *The Great Chronicle of Lanka*. Colombo: Ceylon Government Information Department.
Translation available at <http://lakdiva.org/mahavamsa/chap025.html>
- Marty, Martin and R. Scott Appleby, eds. 1993. *Fundamentalisms and the State*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nasr, Vali. 2007. *The Shia Revival*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.
- Petersen, Rodney L. and Marian Gh. Simion, eds. 2010. *Overcoming Violence: Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding*. Newton Centre, MA: Boston Theological Institute.
- Popovski, Gregory, ed. 2009. *World Religions and Norms of War*. Tokyo: United nations University Press.
- Rapoport, David C. 1984. "Fear and Trembling: Terrorism in Three Religious Traditions" *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 78, No. 3 (Sep., 1984), pp. 658-677.
- Reich, Walter, ed. 1998. *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, State of Mind*. Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.
- Seneviratna, Anuradha. Ed. 1994. *King Asoka and Buddhism*. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society. http://www.urbandharma.org/pdf/king_asoka.pdf
- Sharma, Jyotirmaya. 2004. *Hindutva: Exploring the Idea of Hindu Nationalism*. New York: Penguin Global
- Slim, Hugo. 2005. *Violent Beliefs: Faith, Hope and Violence in Religious Movements*. Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.
http://www.hdcentre.org/uploads/tx_news/157ViolentBeliefs-FaithHopeandViolenceinReligiousMovements.pdf
- Sosis, Richard & Candace S. Alcorta. 2008. "Militants and Martyrs: Evolutionary Perspectives on Religion and Terrorism," *National Security: a Darwinian Approach to a Dangerous World*, eds. Rafe Sagarin & Terrence Taylor. Berkeley: University of California Press. <http://www.efiko.org/material/Militants%20and%20Martyrs-%20Evolutionary%20Perspectives%20on%20Religion%20and%20Terrorism%20by%20Richard%20Sosis.pdf>
- Steele, David A. Sept. 2008. "Reconciliation Strategies in Iraq." *Special Report 213*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.
<http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr213.pdf>.
- Stern, Jessica. 2003. *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Vertigans, Stephen. 2011. *The Sociology of Terrorism*. London: Routledge.
- Zulaika, Joseba. 2009. *Terrorism: The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

5. PREVENTING AND TRANSFORMING CONFLICTS INVOLVING EXTREMIST RELIGION:

Dealing with the Three Linkages

The central question being addressed in this manual is: How best to counter religious extremism? Often, solutions have been sought through confrontation and coercion – via legal measures, repression, or the use of force. Yet, unless the causes are addressed, the threat is likely to remain or reappear. Since connection with the wider community is one of the main factors that empowers and sustains these movements beyond the more limited (though sometimes lethal) capability of terrorist sleeper cells, we must address these linkages.

What can be done to assist vulnerable religious communities in conflict zones to become agents of conflict prevention, if religious extremism is not yet embedded, or to become agents of conflict transformation if religious extremism has already infiltrated the social and religious fabric? In the first case, we must examine ways to assist indigenous faith communities to prevent the consummation of the linkage. In the second case, the task is to replace the linkage with beneficial relationships that foster the best of their values and provide the services essential to well-being. This linkage transformation must, then, find ways to bridge the ideological divide, practice reconciliation and address basic needs of the community.

This final part of the manual will explore possible ways to prevent or transform each type of linkage. In addition to presenting analysis that can shift how one perceives the situation and the possibilities for change, I will be illustrating the ways in which I have observed the countering of religious extremism, drawing upon my personal experience in many conflict prone and conflict infested societies, especially the former Yugoslavia, Iraq, Kenya, the Sudan, Indonesia, and Israel/Palestine.

Bridging the Ideological Divide

Whether dealing with extremist groups or the wider community in which they are (or intend to be) embedded, if we don't want to fight a cosmic war, which we will never be able to win, what does one do? The fundamental requirement, for both indigenous and foreign interveners, is to examine one's own fundamental mentalities and behavior patterns. What are the attitudes, assumptions, perceptions and biases that prevent one from being a welcoming ideological bridge builder? The key is to realize one is engaged in conflicts of worldviews and learn how to handle conflicts of values. The following guidelines, for bridge building with extremists or communities that embed them, provide useful principles for dealing with any relationship involving differences in values.

- Understand their perspective as they see it; not as an outsider who may view them as simply “using” or “distorting” religion.” The issue is not agreement, but accurate perception of the perspectives, assumptions, motivations, rationalizations and conclusions which are part of the worldview of those with whom we are dealing. It will be important to remember that, even among those who may be categorized as extremist, there is likely to be a spectrum of perspectives. When we include the broader communities in which extremists embed themselves, we will certainly not find a homogeneous entity. As already

noted, religious extremists and their wider faith communities share many aspects of the characteristics normally used to define the former. More moderate believers within the same traditions affirm much of the same worldview, though with less rigidity due to greater flexibility in interpretation and application. In other words, the whole spectrum of diversity is important to understand and great care should be taken before voicing, if not making, judgments.

For example, there are different understandings of Sharia, or Islamic Law, among Muslims, based on different selection, interpretation and application of sacred texts within particular historical, legal and religious contexts. At the same time, even the most liberal interpretations would insist that issues of law, justice and human rights be understood within a religious (in this case Muslim) context. The most conservative perspectives apply, even impose, a strict rendering of Sharia, including the harshest forms of punishment, on all aspects of private and public life. Other Muslim jurists, however, have argued for Sharia to be applied only in cases of civil law (for e.g. involving family disputes or religious issues), but not criminal law. Some have also stated that it should only be applied to Muslims, not others. Some modern Muslim jurists have even attempted to formulate a Sharia which is more compatible with the standards of international law and human rights. Most Muslims, however, would insist on their own standards which, to varying degrees, fall short of internationally accepted norms as perceived by Westerners. Most, but not all, contemporary Muslim governments do apply Sharia only in the private sphere and most affirm some human rights (Eslami-Somea, Cha. 7 in Ul-Huda, 2010). Sometimes, different perspectives regarding Sharia exist among Muslims within the same country. For example, see the differences already noted within Nigeria, as presented in the description of “Religious Divides” in that country at the end of part 1 of this manual.

- Correctly understand the limitations of one’s own perspective: Conflict interveners need to realize that they are not above the ideological fray. Pretending that one does not bring one’s own ultimate values is a delusion, whether the intervener is religious or secular. For many religious interveners, the challenge may be that one comes with a recognized different belief system, but must know how to remain true to one’s own worldview without imposing it on the other. For the secular or religious pluralists, the initial challenge may be even recognizing that they come with a set of strong beliefs which they believe to be universally applicable.

Western liberalism tends to equate a belief in absolute truths with a mindset that legitimizes coercive behavior. Such a reaction grows out of liberal unease with the kind of absolute belief systems held by many conservative religious people and the common tactics used by them to propagate their faith out of a conviction that it will, by definition, bring good to all people. It is seldom admitted that both the secularist and liberal religious pluralist, at times, have equally uncompromising worldviews, pervasive ideologies, and dogmatic certainties, and use equally coercive tactics to further their prized causes. Like their conservative counterparts, this approach is based on the same kind of conviction that implementation of "Enlightenment" values, which have come from the world’s dominant cultures, will benefit all and woe be to the one who challenges these "sacred" norms. It must not be forgotten that secular humanism and western liberalism are not seen universally as the broad-minded alternative they purport to be. The inherent narrow-

mindedness and exclusivity of these western perspectives are usually apparent to others. Liberal pluralists have to change the way they deal with devout religious people on such questions. They cannot view religious attempts to convert/persuade/coerce people to accept their orientation as problematic, yet view positively their own attempt to convert/persuade/coerce others to accept a worldview they define as “tolerant.” Adamant belief systems, coupled with coercive tactics, should not be seen as simply the prerogative of pariahs. We need to understand that the conflict is one of differing worldviews and engage extremists and the communities in which they are embedded accordingly. We must start by recognizing that they, like us, hold their truths “to be self-evident” and that their perspective has as much claim to legitimacy as does ours. We cannot come from a position of superiority, but must come as equals to address a common problem. We need to meet them on a level playing field and ask how can we confront/challenge/dialogue with each other about these fundamental issues.

This does not mean that the intervener has to abandon or compromise his/her own values. Rather, the task is to hold them in perspective, though not necessarily without passion. Of central importance is the ability to distinguish between one’s perception and “the truth.” If we realize that “full truth” is much larger than “our truth,” a distinction made by Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr (1943), we can gain a measure of tolerance that enables us to listen more attentively to the “other” and put a hold on our own “enemy imaging.” But this requires perceiving one’s own truth as partial, limited, or even distorted and then opening oneself to the corrective truth that comes from the “other.” Modeling this kind of humility is, in fact, critical to the intervener’s ability to encourage indigenous people, enmeshed in the conflict context, to extend this kind of empathy to each other. When basic values are in conflict, the limitations and distortions of “their truth,” and the need to integrate the truth that comes from the “other,” are not easily apparent.

An African parable captures the dilemma of unrecognized bias inherent in the limitations of one’s own worldview (Centre for Human Development and Social Transformation, 2007):

The Man and the Lion

A Man and a Lion traveled together through the forest. They soon began to boast of their respective superiority to each other in strength and prowess. As they were disputing, they passed a statue carved in stone, which represented "a Lion strangled by a Man." The traveler pointed to it and said: "See there! How strong we are, and how we prevail over even the king of beasts." The Lion replied: "This statue was made by one of you men. If we Lions knew how to erect statues, you would see the Man placed under the paw of the Lion."

- The potential added value of a faith perspective: Often forgotten, in this debate, is the fact that religious understandings of truth are primarily experiential and relational, not rational or ideological. Most religious traditions affirm that truth is fundamentally understood to be found in relationship; only secondarily is it framed in abstract conception (what we call theology or doctrine). This puts the emphasis on values of faithfulness, reliability, and

fidelity, rather than on accuracy of knowledge. Furthermore, each religious tradition does include an understanding of relational truth that is rooted beyond an exclusive human community. Can this oneness with the divine, or with humanity, help to inform a given community's perspective on truth and enmity, even in the context of violent conflict?

- Building solidarity on the “other’s” terms: utilizing wisdom from their own traditions to affirm common values, when possible, or to raise questions and pose alternative viewpoints. Within all religious traditions, there are elements of the tradition that can be used to stretch believer's perceptions. If done with sensitivity, it is possible to help believers of all kinds to assess the degree to which their current attitudes or behavior is consistent with their espoused values. Orthodox Rabbi Marc Gopin (2003) speaks of the need for cognitive dissonance, the reflective process which raises awareness of any disconnect between one's values and one's behavior. But he insists, when relating to religious people, on the need to use religious concepts and values. In line with Scott Thomas' call for “thick practices,” shaped by the distinctive, not generalized, values (as explained in part 3), Gopin calls for use of the values inherent within a given tradition, not secular concepts which, at best, will not make sense and, at worst, provoke alienation. He also suggests that creating cognitive dissonance can strengthen those within a given tradition who favor accommodation, while isolating the most violent elements.

During a workshop I led in a region of Serbia, close to the border of Bosnia, known for its extremist Serbian Orthodox nationalism, a Serbian Orthodox deputy bishop provided a profound demonstration of the power of cognitive dissonance when framed within the local tradition. In an interfaith workshop, composed of Muslims as well as Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christians, we had just introduced confession of sin as a practice considered central to all Abrahamic traditions. Immediately, the deputy bishop, dressed in his flowing black robes, stood and spoke as one who assumed he had authority in this situation. He told a story about a young Serbian soldier who had recently come to him in confession. The soldier told him that he had been a commander of a Serbian militia in Bosnia and had ordered his men to attack and kill everyone – women, children, and elderly – in a Muslim village. The man then begged him to know if he could possibly be forgiven for what he had done. At this point, the deputy bishop stopped the story and pointed to every Serbian Orthodox priest in attendance, saying “We have a lot to be accountable for in this war – not just our militias, not just our government, but our church which has legitimized this terrible violence.” The call to confess one's sin was common to all the faiths present at this workshop, but the deputy bishop had placed it in the context, and with the vocabulary, of the Serbian Orthodox Church. In so doing, he illustrated that the “call to truth” and the call to love,” when rightly understood within their tradition, were one and the same. The immediate response on the part of the Muslims present was shock and astonishment. Having come with great skepticism that anything could be accomplished, they decided they could work with this man.

Although Gopin's recommended target audience for the use of cognitive dissonance is obviously the wider community, in my experience, such an approach can potentially reach even with those affiliated with extremist movements. When I worked in Iraq in 2008, I met an Iraqi imam who claimed to have dialogue with al-Qaeda. I asked him what they talked about. His answer – hospitality. Every Muslim, he said, has to have some

understanding of hospitality. “I want to know what theirs is and hopefully they will want to know mine.” Here was a local Muslim leader engaging extremists within his own faith tradition with knowledge of a core value they held in common, yet with great sensitivity to understand the particularity of the extremist’s perspective. It was very clear that his intention was to facilitate creative reflection on the relationship between their espoused values and their behavior, in the light of their Muslim faith.

Most religious traditions call for attitude change on the part of believers. Can we look, together with adherents of a particular religion, at what attitude changes are desirable? Or how change of attitude/transformation/conversion can help in the resolution of conflict? What conditions (mental, spiritual, relational, and situational) promote, as opposed to inhibit, personal or communal transformation? What would it mean to embark on a process of value transformation based on religious principles that are distinct, yet overlap to some extent with those of other faiths? The transformation of basic values involves a probing process of self-examination and confession. Can such a self-examination process go beyond simple perception alteration to unmask, as well as eliminate, adversarial relations? What does the particular faith tradition say to these questions? How can we engage believers in a way that expands their horizons within their own framework?

Assuming a willingness on the part of interveners to ask questions about the relationship between their own behavior and espoused values, it is important to offer this kind of spiritual reflection to those living in the midst of entrenched conflict. Below is a four-step process of action/reflection/action that I have used to work with religious people to help them reassess the congruence of their values and behavior.

1. *Begin by sharing experience:*

Ask for as much detail as possible, including inner experience, interpersonal experience, intra-group and inter-group experience. Include feelings as well as facts.

2. *Identify the spiritual issues:*

What are the spiritual realities/concerns implicit in the situation? With what spiritual questions/problems/principles is the person/group dealing?

- What problem in the human condition is addressed?
- How is the divine seen to be at work in this situation? in the human relationships in the community?

Can the resources of their religious tradition suggest possible responses to the spiritual issues stated above? What Scripture passages/stories/metaphors/ images are analogous with the issues identified in this situation? Can they sharpen your/their understanding of the spiritual dynamics in this case?

3. *Assess the Ability of the Person/Group to Respond:*

- Does the experience shared offer a critical challenge to the religious tradition of the person/group?
- What beliefs/values does the person/group have that bear on these issues? Are stated beliefs/values congruent with behavior? If not, where is the variance? To what extent have patterns of belief or behavior been influenced by particular teaching, interpretation, and application?

4. *Design an Intervention Strategy:*

- What decisions need to be made in order to enable these people, in this situation, to respond most constructively?
- How can their tradition be used in a way to nurture this change? What other resources are available for you to use?

If the intervener can bridge the ideological divide by facilitating understanding of another's perspective, distinguishing truth from perception, building solidarity using the wisdom of "others" traditions, and facilitating evaluation of the congruence between values and behavior, then one has begun to handle a conflict values effectively. One will then be better able to assist parties in conflict to re-perceive the situation, re-conceptualize possibilities, re-align primary commitments, reframe identity, and begin the process of reconciliation.

Practicing Reconciliation - Addressing the Relational Dynamics:

Addressing the relational dynamics in the wake of severe violence, though, often involves traumatic loss that is not easily forgotten. An African parable, again, illustrates the dilemma:

The Laborer and the Snake (Centre for Human Development & Social Transformation, 2007)

A Snake, having made his hole close to the porch of a cottage, inflicted a mortal bite on the Cottager's infant son. Grieving over his loss, the Father resolved to kill the Snake. The next day, when it came out of its hole for food, he took up his axe, but by swinging too hastily, missed its head and cut off only the end of its tail. After some time the Cottager, afraid that the Snake would bite him also, endeavored to make peace, and placed some bread and salt in the hole. The Snake, slightly hissing, said: "There can henceforth be no peace between us; for whenever I see you I shall remember the loss of my tail, and whenever you see me you will be thinking of the death of your son."

Essential to reconciliation, then is the building of trust (from the very beginning of a relationship) and finding some way to break the vicious cycle of victimhood and revenge.

Building Trust

The first step in any conflict prevention or transformation process, however, is to build the trust necessary to set the context for interaction. Building this trust will depend on a number of contextual factors: the degree of conflict or violence, whom the intervener represents (one's employer, contractor or other institutional affiliation), the intervener's own identity markers (nationality, ethnicity, religious affiliation, etc.) - in the mind of the conflict parties, not just one's own self-perception, the intervener's degree of experience in the field, familiarity with the country or region, choice of indigenous staff or partners, and ability to maintain an open, accepting relationship while assisting participants to become agents of conflict transformation in ways they perceive as feasible and constructive. This can be a difficult task. It involves a significant degree of risk and can, at any moment unravel. I will share some of my own experience in order to illustrate some principles and challenges.

- In the former Yugoslavia

My first practical experience in leading trainings in conflict transformation occurred in the former Yugoslavia in the mid-1990s. I worked, first, very briefly as a consultant for a project led by the Mennonite Central Committee in 1993 and later, for a decade beginning in 1994 as director of a project designed for this purpose at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. The first war in Croatia had ended, while the second one was still to come. Bosnia-Herzegovina was in the midst of its very brutal 4 ½ year war. Assisting in the Mennonite program, which was led by the former head of MCC's program in Yugoslavia, introduced me to a whole range of religious leaders and influential laity within the region. The high regard with which the Mennonites were regarded gave me an instant credibility that would have taken years to develop by myself. These introductions were especially significant in Bosnia.

My initial contacts with the whole spectrum of religious communities of Sarajevo came through two Franciscan priests I had met in 1993. One of them, who was director of an interfaith organization, Zajedno, invited me to a conference on religion and nationalism in Sarajevo. At that conference, in the midst of the siege of Sarajevo, I met many religious leaders, hired a Bosnian Muslim consultant, and established a relationship with the academy of sciences and arts which agreed to host our first interfaith workshop on conflict transformation. The second Franciscan introduced me to religious leaders of all communities throughout the Muslim-Croat Federation within Bosnia-Herzegovina and urged me, specifically, to hold the first workshop in Sarajevo. He and a third Franciscan, then arranged for the only transportation possible into this besieged city for our four-person leadership team.

We were taken by skilled Franciscan drivers who had been sneaking aid supplies past Serbian militias for months, finally crawling through a tunnel which was the only access Sarajevo's had to the outside world. All the arrangements had been made by our Franciscan intermediaries and our partner organization, the Academy of Sciences and Arts. When we arrived in this besieged city, we found a group of eager participants, representing all of Sarajevo's ethnic and religious diversity (including two Serbian Orthodox priests) gathered for training in conflict transformation and peacemaking while rockets continued to fall on their city.

What became apparent during this workshop, and later as the project developed, was the degree to which we had established credibility simply by coming in the midst of a war zone. Later, I would have numerous Bosnians, many of whom I had not met during the war, tell me that I understood what they had suffered because I had been there, in fact had been trapped in Sarajevo for a while, unable to leave following that first workshop. One always has to evaluate the degree of risk one is willing or able to take. However, it was very clear that taking this kind of risk established a depth of rapport that no words could achieve.

The most difficult relationships to build within the former Yugoslavia, however, were not with Muslims, but with the Serbs. I was an American Protestant attempting to gain credibility among people in the Serbian Orthodox Church. Many of them viewed Protestants as usurpers attempting to convert their "Orthodox nation" and undermine it

from within, and saw Americans as an external threat to their security since we had sided with those who were tearing their nation apart through secession. Consequently, I spent two years talking with episkops (bishops) and priests within this church, building key relationships before I even attempted to hold any workshop in Serbia or in the Bosnian Serb Republic of Bosnia.

Every time I visited Serbia (four to five times a year) I went to see the bishop in the northern most region of Serbia, a region that is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse in Europe. The bishop and I talked theology. I learned a great deal about the Orthodox tradition and the Serbian Church specifically. I came to appreciate the iconography which had previously actually offended my low church aesthetics and sense of authenticity. At first, this bishop refused to talk about any interfaith activity. Whenever I began to speak about what I hoped to do in this regard, either the conversation would end or he would change the subject. Yet, he was always cordial and welcoming to me as an individual. I was invited to the midnight Easter celebration in his church (an all-night liturgy during which everyone stands for the duration) and then the only foreigner to be escorted into the special breakfast the bishop had planned at daybreak. After two years of relationship building, I finally determined, with the advice of my half-Serb, half-Croat consultant in that region, to hold the first workshop in Serbia. We selected the northernmost city, on the Hungarian border, a municipality where Serbs and Orthodox Christians were actually a minority (the majority were Catholics - Hungarian and Croatian). We figured that even if no Serbian Orthodox priest came, we could still hold a multi-religious, multi-ethnic workshop. Yet we sent an invitation, requesting the Serbian Orthodox bishop to send some representatives. Three of his priests came. At the end they returned home and we heard no response. We planned a second workshop, this time to be held in Hungary for religious people from Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Again my Serbian Orthodox Bishop friend sent representatives. By the time I asked, in person, the third time, he said “permission granted” before I could even complete my request. This began a relationship with the Serbian Orthodox Church that resulted in bishops co-sponsoring training workshops in interfaith conflict transformation in both Serbia and the Bosnian Serb Republic, access I had to the much of the church leadership, including the Patriarch, and through church leaders and influential laity, eventual contacts with high ranking officials in the Yugoslav Government of Slobodan Milosevic.

- With Iraqis

A second very different example is the relationship I built with Iraqis, first as a program manager in conflict management for Mercy Corps, then as senior reconciliation facilitator for the United States Institute of Peace. Unlike my work in the former Yugoslavia, I was not the director of any project and had to work within parameters established by my employers. The advantages included immediate access to a wide range of local actors – political, religious and other civil society leadership. I was not responsible, most of the time, for recruiting either local staff or workshop participants. I was also not able to determine where I would go, when and how I would travel, and sometimes even who I could meet. During the wars in the former Yugoslavia I had constantly depended on local people to advise me where I could go and often take me there themselves. When working with Iraqis, however, Mercy Corps brought the Iraqis to workshops in Jordan in 2005 and 2006. They determined that it was not safe for Americans to travel in Iraq and not safe for

Arab Iraqis to go to Iraqi Kurdistan, the part of that country where some Americans did work. So, trust building in that context had the advantage of the rapport established by Mercy Corps' very extensive aid and development activities, but also the disadvantage of establishing personal rapport primarily during the initial workshop and conducting most of the follow-up remotely. Yet, the success of these efforts was unmistakable, as demonstrated by examples provided later in the manual.

When I worked for the U.S. Institute of Peace, first as a consultant for a workshop in 2007, then as an employee during most of 2008, the events were always in Iraq and I lived there for eight months in 2008. Again, I was not responsible for recruiting either staff or workshop participants, and travel was very strictly confined by USIP policy which required armed security at all times outside of US military-controlled zones. Most of the time, this meant travel with the U.S. military or contractors hired by the State Department. There is no question that it was dangerous for an American to travel in Iraq, a reality confirmed to me by a number of Iraqis as well as the frequent rocket fire that hit the Green Zone in Baghdad while I was living there. However, these restrictions did have an effect on rapport. For one month, I was sent to Tikrit, home city of Saddam Hussein, with an assignment to establish a dialogue process, including all the Iraqi stakeholders affected by, or involved in, the largest corruption scheme in Iraq.

A month before I was to begin, the seventeen year old son of the governor of the province was killed by US soldiers while in bed in the governor's sister's home. The sister's teenage son went into the room to see what was happening and was also killed. The governor, who was from one of only two tribes that had agreed to take part in US-sponsored elections, then refused to work with any Americans. I wrote a letter of apology to the governor, sending it through the Iraqi from Tikrit who had asked USIP to assist in this mission and who I, along with other staff, had trained in conflict transformation. When I attempted to fly to Tikrit with the US military for my first workshop, the plane circled the city and refused to land, citing security reasons, returning half-way to Baghdad. The Iraqis who had assembled for the workshop, at the invitation of our Iraqi colleague, were told by the deputy governor of the province to go home before he even knew I had not arrived.

How does one then establish trust and rapport in such a context? When I finally arrived and was embedded with one of the US State Departments Provincial Reconstruction Teams, my Iraqi colleague did a remarkable job of establishing meetings for me with a very wide spectrum of actors. I met with municipal and provincial government officials (including a meeting with the heads of all government departments), with twenty-six tribal sheiks (twenty-four who had boycotted the elections, many of whom had never met an American), numbers of imams known for their fiery anti-American sermons, industrial managers from the oil refinery (cite of the massive corruption) and other industrial plants (e.g. the manager of the electric power company), and eight Iraqis I was training to lead the proposed dialogue process.

All of this was possible only due to the exceptional quality of my Iraqi interlocutor. At various points, the US military refused to take me to meetings and twice interrupted a workshop I was leading, insisting that I leave with them immediately. With the Iraqis, including the colleague who had extended the invitations, left sitting in the room I had just

vacated, I later asked this very perceptive and gifted man, what the reaction had been. He honestly told me that every one of those Iraqis was in as much danger as I had been and they all wondered if my mission was indeed a serious effort. I then asked how my status as a staff member of the US Institute of Peace was viewed. He said you are embedded with a US State Department run operation, living on a US military base, and dependent on the US military and State Department approval for anything you do (all of which was true). He continued, very frankly, to tell me, “You are not seen as an objective, non-partisan, third-party intervener. You are seen as part of the conflict, bound and indebted to an occupying power. However, I want you to stay. This is the best chance we have to address the most destructive and powerful element that stands in the way of progress here. Even if we could redirect 1% of the stolen resources into legitimate hands, we could revitalize the economy of this province.”

I stayed for a month, though I redirected the target of the dialogue process. Confronting an operation that was the largest fundraiser for al-Qaeda in Iraq, supplied funding to Shi’ite militias and Kurdish rebels, and lined the pockets of politicians from the local to the central government – was too dangerous. I recommended a dialogue process that focused on provision of basic services (electricity, water, etc.), an arena in which there was also rampant corruption. The difference was that everyone was willing to sign on to this kind of dialogue and I was able to convince the dialogue facilitators I was training that this would certainly provide entry into the world of corruption, a world whose tentacles reached all the way to the big money.

The governor agreed to sponsor the dialogue. The State Department’s Provincial Reconstruction Team agreed to support and fund it. Even the distribution manager of the oil refinery agreed to participate (as he had done in previous workshops). All seemed set by the time I left Tikrit. However, I later learned that the US military, again for “security” reasons, refused to allow the Iraqis to meet for the dialogue on the site the governor chose, despite the fact that no Americans were even going to be present. My ability to influence events was at an end. I’m not even sure what finally happened. I know that my Iraqi colleague and I managed to establish tremendous rapport with the whole spectrum of Iraqi stakeholders. But was that personal rapport enough? That experience leaves many unanswered questions about institutional and governmental trust-building.

Throughout my experience in many contexts, I have faced the challenges of building personal trust and attempting to facilitate trust among very powerful actors, sometimes ones with which I am affiliated, sometimes those with which I have no formal relationship. There are times when powerful parties appear to have disrupted final success; there are moments when, against all the odds, powerful parties have been swayed to move toward effective conflict transformation; and there are times when, at least in the moment, one does not know the outcome. What I do believe is that the personal trust that has been built still has the potential to transform people and societies, long after one has left.

Breaking the Cycle of Victimhood and Revenge (Steele, *Reconciliation Strategies in Iraq*, 2008)

Building trust is actually a process that never ends. But once at least a foundation of trust has been established, it is critically important, in the context of excessive violence, to foster a

reconciliation process that breaks the typical cycle of victimhood and revenge. Such a process must begin by giving special attention to the expression and acknowledgment of grievance. People must find a different way to address humiliation and injustice than by resorting to retaliation. In order to facilitate the transformation from hostility to reconciliation, it is essential to begin with people's experience, starting where they are, not where we might wish them to be. At any stage in the life cycle of a conflict (before, during or after violence), this necessitates empathizing with people's experience of being a victim of aggression. We must find creative ways to deal with everyone's sense of victimization.

For over twenty years I have led numerous workshops designed to assist people facing situations of extreme conflict. Over the course of this time, various colleagues and I have developed and revised a training process designed to help people come to terms with their sense of victimization. We have helped people from a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds to examine ways by which they can break the cycle of revenge. To facilitate this exploration, we have used a diagram (see next page) depicting both the cyclical trap of aggression/victimhood (described in part 4) and a series of steps one can take to break this cycle and transform relationships.

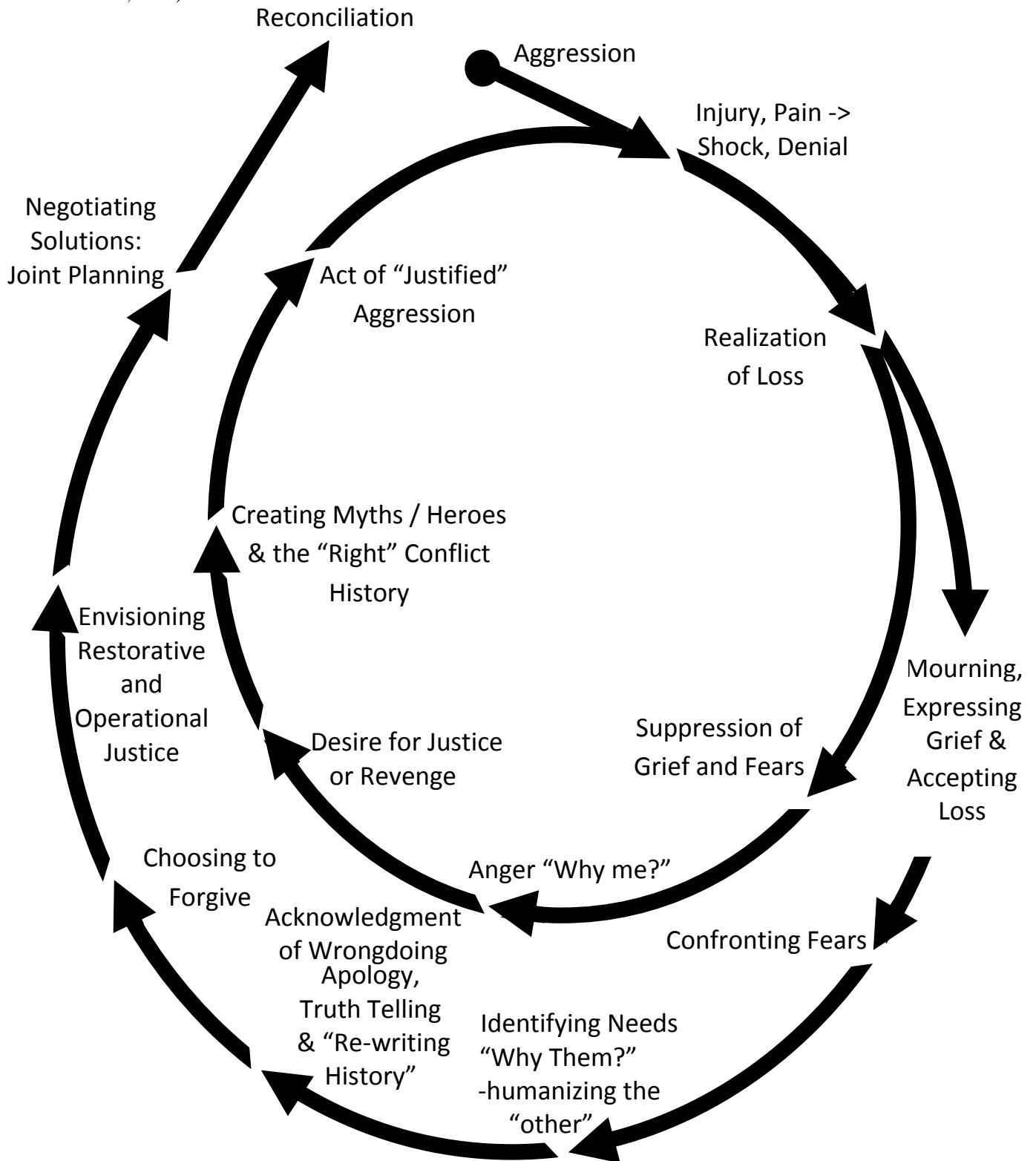
Step 1: Mourning: Expressing Grief and Accepting Loss: When I began working in Bosnia during the war, I asked religious leaders what they spent their time doing. Clerics from all traditions answered that they conducted funerals more than anything else. In the face of the tragedy of war, religious leaders, to whom people initially turn, become “first responders.” Enabling people to experience an effective grief process is an essential first step in reconciliation and peacebuilding. Without a sensitive process of mourning, one that encompasses religious ritual as well as empathetic understanding, traumatized individuals and communities cannot prevent their understandable hurt and anger from developing into revenge and counter-aggression. As important as these faith-based rituals are, there are also other vehicles for healing and transformation that all faith-based people can lead. My experience in numerous cultural contexts indicates that storytelling in small groups of six to eight people is one of the most effective ways to address grief and loss. If care is taken to design an environment where each group member can feel safe enough to share his or her personal experience of loss and what helped the person to live through the loss, then participants can experience being heard even by “the other.” When they discover that their hurts, whether great or comparatively small, are taken seriously by others, cross-cutting bonds begin to develop. Refugees from one group have listened and cried with refugees from a rival group as they realized the depth of their common experience. In this way, people's deep pain, rather than becoming a barrier, becomes a bridge. A couple of examples will serve to illustrate the power of this shared grief process.

In Croatia

In the first workshop I led in Eastern Croatia, where the war had been devastating, I listened as two members of a small group shared what had happened to them during the war. A Croatian Baptist pastor told of an incident in which he and his teenage daughter were stopped by Serbian soldiers. He was stabbed with a knife (pulling up his shirt to show a wound winding half way around his waist) and his daughter was raped in front of him. The soldiers then asked him to sing Serbian songs. He replied that he could not sing Serbian songs, but

CYCLES OF VICTIMHOOD AND TRANSFORMATION

(Revised from original version, created by Olga Botcharova, my assistant on the project in the former Yugoslavia at the Center for Strategic & International Studies. Original found in chapter by Botcharova in Helmick and Petersen, 2001)



could sing gospel songs for them. The soldiers, taken back by the comment, began to ask each other what they should do with him. Then they asked him that question, to which he responded, “Why don’t you ask God what to do with me?” At that point, they left him and his daughter alone.

The other five members of the group (of mixed ethnic and religious background) had listened attentively throughout and offered expressions of care. When the pastor had finished his story and others had given response, a Serbian Orthodox priest who had stayed in Croatia during the war (an unusual decision) recounted that he had been taking his wife to the hospital one day during the war. They encountered ten Croatian soldiers who shot him three times, once in the head, and then left him for dead. Months later, after he had healed enough to return home from the hospital, one of the Croatian soldiers came to his home to ask for his forgiveness. He told the man he had already forgiven him a long time before. Such a response astounded the Croats present. Their stereotype of a Serbian priest was a warmonger who had legitimized the brutality many had suffered – all in the name of establishing the mythical “Heavenly Serbia.” They asked how this Serbian Orthodox priest was ever able to forgive such a traumatic attack. The priest replied that he had learned to practice tranquility in a Serbian monastery years before.

Two religious leaders, representing opposite sides in a brutal war, had just demonstrated how their faith had enabled them to grieve in a way that brought healing to both them and their attackers. As news of these stories spread throughout the workshop, others turned to these two men wanting to learn how best to process their own hurt and pain.

In Iraq

During a workshop on interfaith dialogue in Iraq (composed of Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims, as well as Christians and some other small religious groups), we used the same storytelling process. Out of the many devastating stories that were told, one in particular stands out. A Sunni woman, who now served in the Iraqi Parliament, gave a long litany of one loss after another. First her husband was assassinated; then her two sons and two brothers were kidnapped; and finally she was forced to flee her home when Shi’ite militiamen attacked her community. She shared how she spent months in a refugee camp. Eventually she was released and returned to her community to find her home destroyed and all her belongings gone. She then recounted working through her loss and grief to the point where she could say, “Allah will bring justice. I don’t need to enact revenge.” This victimized woman was able to stop short of allowing her pain to push her to take any punishment into her own hands. It was a refusal to presume that retribution could be achieved through her own human agency. Allah, she said, had instead called her to come to a workshop to learn how to become an agent of interfaith dialogue and reconciliation.

This sharing of experience, as powerful as it is, can be reinforced when interspersed with interpretive information on the grief process. Here, it is important to draw on local religious knowledge as well as professional psychological theories. Finally, attempts to ritualize this process by pulling together elements from all the stories, weaving similar and dissimilar components into a shared catharsis (for example using the prayer of lament, found in all the Abrahamic traditions, as a model), guarantees everyone’s experience has been remembered and grieved. Reference can also be made to communal practices, such as the Karbala re-

enactment for Shi'ites, noting that when practiced in a way that is true to long-standing Shia tradition, this serves as an important communal healing process. Faith-based grief processes, whether individual or communal, can help an entire community to limit vindictive response even though many will still disagree about the perceptions, causes, diagnoses, and solutions regarding the conflict.

Step 2: Confronting Fears: Moving from grievance to fear involves turning one's attention from the past to the future. In many cases, there is, in fact, an intrinsic connection. Victims of atrocities, for example, tend to believe that the trauma they have experienced will happen again, that the perpetrator will come back. People in the midst of war are legitimately afraid of many things: threats to personal safety, social transformation, economic crisis, political manipulation, and so forth. Iraqi Sunnis fear Iranian influence over Shiite political parties running the government as well as attacks by Shiite militias and Iraqi police. Shiites fear loss of long-awaited political power as well as attacks by Sunni insurgents. Kurds fear loss of autonomy and potential independence. All groups fear foreign control, indigenous threats to security, and the loss of dignity and honor.

Yet if reconciliation is to occur, people must not to be controlled by fear, which makes it important to help people make wise choices in handling anxieties. Sometimes it is advisable to begin a discussion by speaking of external fears, making a list of fears that people know exist within the population, or within their whole religious group. It might also be necessary with some people to ask about threats or dangers, rather than fears. This allows the person to objectify the fear, focusing on the outside stimulus rather than the internal emotion. As one talks about the fears of the group or the external danger, one's own feelings will be apparent, even if not self-acknowledged.

Though there is value in owning ones fear, rather than simply blaming others, there can still be cathartic value to this process if someone needs to distance themselves from direct acknowledgment. People can be helped to explore the degree to which the danger is real, re-perceive the situation and one's response in the light of new information received, and experience support from their religious faith as well as the empathy (and perhaps shared apprehension) of others, possibly including people from the feared community.

In Bosnia

Immediately following the war in Bosnia, a woman who, with her young children, spent time in a concentration camp, shared with other workshop participants how her faith in God helped her to control fear in the face of torture and use of her as a human shield against outside attack. Her honest recounting of the surprising strength she found when confronting past fears, as well as a realistic acknowledgment of her ongoing struggle with post-traumatic stress, helped stimulate others, from each ethnic/sectarian community, to express their own fears and examine best ways to respond. This kind of honest, open, and faith-oriented engagement with fear, as opposed to suppressing it, can assist many traumatized people to avoid the descent into increasingly fixated antagonism, rage, and revenge.

With Iraqis

Third party interveners, even within the war-torn society, can assist in such a process. Workshop participants from Amarah, Iraq, for example, had no problem identifying the fears present within two local tribes, Bani Malik and Beet Slaim, which had recently been involved in a blood feud following the murder of a member of one tribe by a member of the other. One tribe feared that justice would not be done and the murderer would go free. The tribe also feared the intervention of a political party affiliated with the other tribe, an action that would escalate the conflict into a political one. Members of the other tribe feared that the murderer would go to jail, that their tribe would be banned from certain areas, that the conflict would expand to include a larger tribal confederation, and that a cease-fire would become impossible. Recognizing these fears helped one workshop participant to better assess how to mediate the conflict and, in the process, restore honor to the offended tribe. After making a careful assessment of the concerns and interests of both tribes, the mediator convinced the tribe of the murderer to acknowledge the unlawful killing and pay some compensation to the tribe of the murdered person. An agreement was finally reached that the fighting would stop and the murderer would go to jail, but other consequences would be averted. There would be no intervention by a political party or escalation of the conflict by any tribal confederation, and the tribe of the murderer would not be humiliated by being banned from any locations.

Step 3: Identifying Needs and Re-humanizing the “Other”- “Why Them?:

The danger of ignoring the needs of the other is dramatically illustrated by another African parable (Centre for Human Development & Social Transformation, 2007).

The Donkey and His Shadow

A traveler hired a donkey to convey him to a distant place. The day being intensely hot, and the sun shining in its strength, the traveler stopped to rest, and sought shelter from the heat under the shadow of the donkey. As this afforded only protection for one, and as the Traveler and the owner of the donkey both claimed it, a violent dispute arose between them as to which of them had the right to the shadow. The owner maintained that he had rented only the donkey, and not its shadow. The traveler contended that he had, with the hire of the Donkey, hired its shadow also. The quarrel proceeded from words to blows, and while the men fought, the donkey galloped off.

At this point in a process of dealing with the effects of violent conflict, despite one’s own desperate needs, attention shifts from oneself and one’s group to the “other.” Now the main question to be addressed is, “Why did *they* do this to us?” The tone must not be accusatory, but honestly inquisitive. One must really want to know who the other is—their needs, concerns, and motivations. It is not easy to ask this question due to the existence of persistent stereotypes—distortions functioning as a group survival mechanism and often fueled by anger. These biases quickly become entrenched, misrepresenting and contaminating one group’s perception of another.

Yet it is possible to recognize that the actions of one’s adversary are motivated by legitimate human needs. In fact, the only approach likely to change the adversarial dynamic is an effort

to understand the other's fears and concerns. If workshop participants have previously identified each other's fears in step 2, they have already recognized some needs. Fear, by definition, is related to the potential deprivation of perceived needs. While adversaries' demands may be unacceptable (as was the case with the quarrel over the donkey's shadow), it is always important to re-humanize the adversaries themselves by expressing solidarity with basic needs as well as any legitimate pursuit of them. Some needs and fears, in fact, are held in common by supposedly incompatible groups. Discovery of such compatibility where it is not expected can help build bridges of understanding or even empathy.

In Bosnia

During the first workshop that I led in Sarajevo, an imam, who had come to the besieged city after his own village had been overrun by Serbian soldiers, shared how he had asked about the needs of the Serbs who were laying siege against his Muslim people. He did this while still in his village, with his people eating grass to survive, while Serbian guns shelled his village day and night. In an honest attempt to answer the question about *Serbian* needs, he recollected times in past history when it was his Muslim people who had victimized Serbs. This was a very unusual admission for anyone in the former Yugoslavia to make at that time, especially one who had suffered as greatly as this man.

The entire interfaith group of workshop participants listened carefully as he concluded that the Serbs, as a minority population in Bosnia with historical memories of their own victimization, were afraid of the same fate as his Muslim people. They all feared for their survival. This Muslim man was still upset about the terror that his people had endured. He still viewed the act of aggression against them as evil. But the aggressor was not labeled as Serbian devils, a common accusation by non-Serbs. Instead they were real people with legitimate fears and needs. As the imam finished speaking, the whole room – including Muslim, Serbian and Croatian participants – was quiet. They had witnessed an act of re-humanizing an enemy group.

In Kenya

A story told by a young participant at a workshop in Kenya demonstrated much the same ability to step into the shoes of one's adversary. During the post-election violence in early 2008, this young man had been attacked by members of a rival ethnic group in one of the cities in the Rift Valley that suffered the worst violence. He told other participants that, after the attack, he kept asking himself why they would do something so vicious. He knew all the ethnic rivalries that had been exacerbated by a flawed political election process. But why attack him?

He decided to gather a group of inter-ethnic friends, representing tribal groups which had been adversaries during the violence and which had a long history of antagonism. We went with these friends to find his attackers. When they finally met, he told them that he really wanted to understand why they had done this. He and his friends listened carefully as these youths shared their litany of grievances against his tribe. He took care to acknowledge their need for protection for their families, for fair political representation in the government, for the chance to compete equally for economic and educational opportunities, for their right to preserve their tribal homeland from intrusion by others, etc. His affirmation of the legitimacy of these

needs led to this gang of rival youths joining with his friends to see what they might be able to accomplish together to meet the needs of all. In the process, everyone was humanized and cooperative effort replaced antagonism.

Step 4: Acknowledgment of Wrongdoing: Apology, Truth-Telling and “Re-Writing History”:

In a society rife with targeted violence, accountability is even more difficult to ensure than normally is the case. Yet, calls for accountability will necessarily become part of any successful effort even to initiate a stable and just peace. When approached with sensitivity, acknowledgment of responsibility is possible, even in the wake of endemic violence. But it must be preceded by identification with the suffering experienced by the group (step 1). If reconciliation begins with an effective grief process that acknowledges the suffering of all groups, then one must be prepared to admit that, for each group afflicted, responsibility exists somewhere. This does not mean that all groups are equally guilty or that all accusations are correct. At the same time, when violence is pervasive throughout a society, one needs to understand that pain has been inflicted not only by the other side but also by one’s own group.

Although joint contribution and responsibility are important to affirm in contexts involving mass violence, it is also important to recognize some important distinctions. First, it is necessary to distinguish acknowledgment from apology. Acknowledgment involves recognizing that wrong has been done by members of one’s own group, even if the person speaking has not participated in any of this activity. Apology, on the other hand, involves taking responsibility for wrongs in which the person speaking has participated. Apology implies personal liability and, if sincere, should be accompanied by contrition, sorrow and remorse. Second, it is also important to recognize what the Catholic Church calls sins of commission and sins of omission. The question is, not only “What did you do”, but “What did you fail to do and should have?” Third, it is important to recognize that acknowledgement of, and even apology for, attitudes can be significant. The issue at stake is more than behavior; it is also about the attitudes (including biases, prejudices, and stereotypes) that underlie the hurtful things one does. Finally, the impact of the acknowledgment or apology is sometimes affected by the context. Is it done in a quiet, private, individual manner or done publically for many or all to hear? Is it communicated by someone in a position of authority or by many members of a group or just a lone individual? Acknowledgement or apology by an individual is not meaningless. In fact, at times it can have great significance, and at other times it can be a steppingstone to wider acknowledgment. Any process of self-assessment and truth-telling, if done with sensitivity, saves face, protects honor, and avoids undue shame. It also has the effect of revising each group’s historical record to reflect what has been learned. Now some examples to illustrate the variety of ways in which individuals and groups have begun to take responsibility for wrongs committed.

In Bosnia

The Franciscan, referred to previously, who enabled our team to enter Sarajevo during the siege, attended the very first workshop I ever led. During the initial storytelling period, he had shared how he had been held captive for months by Serbian soldiers, was almost killed by one soldier; then was released in a prisoner exchange shortly before coming to our workshop. After his release, he went to his family home in central Bosnia, only to find the Croatian men from his village and the Muslim men from a neighboring village, lined up on opposite sides of a field, ready to join in the fighting that had just begun between their peoples when his ethnic

group, the Croats temporarily switched sides in the war. When we came to the point in the workshop to talk about confession of sin, this Franciscan was the first to speak. He addressed all the Serbs in the room (none of them from Bosnia; all from Serbia and Croatia). He told them that he had to apologize for the fact that he had come to the workshop with a grudge against all Serbs as a result of what had happened to him. He quickly followed this by telling them that none of the Serbs at this workshop had ever done him any harm and he had no right to his negative attitude toward them. As soon as he was finished a Serbian Orthodox priest spoke and told him that his own Serbian people had done great harm to this Franciscan brother and to many innocent Croats and Muslims in Bosnia. In the space of five minutes we had examples of both an apology for an attitude and an acknowledgment of wrongs done, not by oneself, but by one's group. The quick succession of statements demonstrated the catalytic potential of even a lone apology for an attitude.

In Iraq

At the workshop on interfaith dialogue in Iraq, during which the female parliamentarian told her story about learning to cope effectively with traumatic loss, participants were later divided into homogenous religious groupings. Shi'ites met with Shi'ites, Sunnis with Sunnis and a third group included all religious minorities. Each group was asked to share either actions done or attitudes held, by members of their religious community which had been harmful to others. After so many atrocities had been shared earlier, as experience by every group, there was no escaping joint responsibility. Each group came back with an extremely detailed, honest list of wrongs committed by their group against others. They admitted killings, kidnappings, ethnic cleansing, burning of mosques and churches, etc.

One participating official from the Iraqi Foreign Ministry was so moved that he called for the formation of a working group to examine if this kind of process could lead to the development of a truth and reconciliation commission in Iraq. He promised, himself, that as a Shi'ite he would acknowledge, in public media, the wrongs committed by his group against the Sunnis if a prominent Sunni would do the same. On the last day of that workshop, this man facilitated a group discussion (the first among many sponsored by the US Institute of Peace) to examine what it might take to hold a TRC in Iraq. USIP brought in specialists and video presentations of TRC efforts in numerous other countries, including one other Arab state, to assist a growing number of prominent Iraqis in their examination of this possibility.

After careful consideration, this group concluded that Iraq was not ready for such a process and lacked the charismatic moral leadership of persons like Nelson Mandela and Bishop Tutu who provided the impetus for the best known TRC in South Africa. Yet still, seeds had been sown and more people began to recognize the need for public, as well as private acknowledgment. Even if the attempt to launch a TRC failed, it is hard to image that this process did not contribute to a re-writing of the history of the sectarian conflict in Iraq. Detailed records of wrongdoing were included in the minutes of meetings of many high ranking officials, and even more details were stored in personal memories, information that was likely, at some point, to influence how this period in their history was remembered.

In the Sudan

A final example demonstrates the power of a very large and public process of acknowledgment. The first event in which I participated in the Sudan, as a consultant for the African Union in December 2012, was a prayer meeting attended by upwards of a thousand people at a soccer stadium in Khartoum. Hired to facilitate inter-religious reconciliation, as a support to the AU's official peace negotiations, my first assignment was to help lead this prayer meeting in order to facilitate unity among sixteen feuding Christian Churches and convince their representatives to attend an inter-religious conference on reconciliation with their Muslim counterparts beginning the next day.

This was an attempt at fast-track reconciliation on a scale I had never experienced before. Yet I had worked in sub-Saharan Africa and knew that this kind of ritual had the potential to open Sudan's mostly black Christian population (which is culturally more closely related to black Africa than to the Arab world) to a spiritual transformation process. After about three hours of singing that sounded more like joyous celebration than heartfelt repentance, but preaching that left no doubt about the call to confession, the leaders of the sixteen churches were called onto the stage, each one asked to pray a prayer of confession admitting what his church had done to harm the others. There was a long list of accusations and deeply held grudges which had splintered the Sudan Council of Churches, leaving it dysfunctional.

After at least a half hour of prayers of confession, not only by the church leaders, but also by Christian women's groups and Christian youth movements, I was invited to the stage to offer a prayer of restitution. My prayer included moments of silent meditation, laying hands of blessing on those standing near while offering silent prayers for healing, a ritual of light coming into darkness as candle light was passed person to person throughout this large crowd, and singing together a song of promise about the coming of Emmanuel. The stadium was full of emotion as the singing continued while I left the stage.

The next day fifty Christian leaders, not just the twenty who had been expected, joined with the same number of Muslims to begin the first interfaith conference on reconciliation to be held in the Sudan in years. This prayer meeting by no means has solved all the tensions in the Sudan, but it did facilitate the beginning of a reconciliation process which is still ongoing.

Step 5: Choosing to Forgive: There are two basic understandings of forgiveness - as an interactive or a unilateral practice - each suggesting its own approach or methodology:

(1) Forgiveness is most commonly seen as an interactive process between parties, one in which the parties negotiate their way from violation to restoration of relationship. Offenders acknowledge their wrongdoing, express remorse, and engage in restitution or reparation as agreed and appropriate. Victims refrain from vengeance, express empathy for offenders as fellow human beings, and may release offenders from all or part of their deserved penalty.

In fact there is quite a variety of religious and tribal practices that ritualize this understanding of forgiveness. One common Islamic reconciliation process, *sulha*, which originated in the Arab world, includes many of the stages being presented in this sub-section on "breaking the cycle of victimhood and revenge." Although practiced somewhat distinctly in different Muslim (even various Arab) cultures, *Sulha* generally calls for acknowledgment of

responsibility, pursuit of justice, and forgiveness (noting that the last two stages are presented in reverse order from that presented in this manual – typical of a specifically Muslim approach to the reconciliation process). Despite the variations in different cultures, the basic outline of *sulha* includes the following steps (Lang, 2002):

- Delegation of local (traditionally tribal) leaders visits family of victim to hear grievances
- Acknowledgment of Responsibility
- Pursuit of Justice
- Forgiveness
- Rehabilitation of the Wrongdoer
- Restitution (exact repayment of what was lost) to the wronged party, or
Reparation (payment in lieu) to the wronged party
- Ritual of shaking hands (*Musafaha*)
- Breaking of bread together (*Mumalaha*)

In fragile states recovering from war, however, the task of separating victims from offenders is by no means easy. Another complicating factor is the fact that all people, at least by extension into ethnicity or tribe and religious sect, are potentially on both sides of this dynamic. Furthermore, this kind of process is not always possible. Sometimes one's counterpart may be dead, or inaccessible, or unwilling to communicate. In such a case, one needs to find another approach to forgiveness.

(2) Forgiveness can be seen as a unilateral act in which a wronged party decides, for its own sake, to set aside its anger and resentment, neither requiring nor eliminating the need for action on the part of the other party. This approach to forgiveness can be described as giving up all hope of a better past and investing oneself in the future. A unilateral process like this is undoubtedly more difficult in shame-oriented cultures, in which acceptance depends more heavily on social status rather than on individual decision and in which vehement venting of one's anger is often encouraged. Yet, the strong desire to recreate harmonious community, a central goal for shame-oriented cultures, might encourage people to alter their perspective.

To contain anger and hatred, however, does not mean stifling them. In order to place effective controls over them, one needs to find appropriate ways to vent the hurt that underlies anger and hatred in order to eventually free oneself from their captivity. It is instructive to note that when Shi'ite pilgrims in Iraq participate in the re-enactment of the Karbala tragedy during Muharram, they are encouraged to connect their suffering with intercession and forgiveness.

Storytelling remains an excellent way to approach the topic of forgiveness in training workshops. What has been the experience of people in offering or receiving forgiveness? What difficulties have they experienced in being on either end of the process? As people begin to share their experience, many questions get raised, yet bonds are also built between groups. Experience frequently shows that people who enter a workshop determined that they will never consider forgiving the other side, leave believing that forgiveness is possible, even if they are not yet ready to act on that conviction.

In Croatia

This was exactly the experience of a young Croatian woman who declared at the beginning of a workshop in Eastern Croatia that she could never forgive the Serbs for killing someone very dear to her. Joining the sharing at the end of the three days, she announced that she was not yet there, but knew now that someday she would be able to forgive and allow her life to move on. She, like many, had gained a better understanding of how she might view the process with new insights and what benefits there might be for her. For the Croatian Franciscan co-leading the workshop with me, that amount of movement in the heart of one person made the whole effort worthwhile.

Step 6: Envisioning Restorative and Operational Justice: When individuals or groups within a society have begun a mutual process of identifying needs and acknowledging wrongs vis-à-vis all significant stakeholders, then they are ready to examine the question of justice. However, the justice that needs examination is radically different from that emanating out of the revenge mentality expressed in the victimhood-aggression cycle. In fact, an adequate definition of justice needs to start from a different reference point than the monitoring and punishment of unjust acts. Although vitally important to the maintenance of a stable society, exposure and retribution represent only the negative side of justice. A fully adequate understanding must begin with an evaluation of the norms and values that form the foundation for a positive vision of right relationships between all units within the society (a concept of justice that actually has its roots in all three major Abrahamic faith traditions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam).

Restorative justice programming (a concept recently articulated by Mennonite Protestants (Zehr, 1995) and then mainstreamed into the peacebuilding field) can be developed through interethnic/ inter-sectarian working groups that grow out of training workshops held in various contexts. Focusing on the restoration of right relationships between individuals and groups can flow quite naturally out of progress made while addressing the previous steps discussed. Because restorative justice focuses on harm inflicted on victims, rather than on blame and punishment of offenders, the grievances and fears shared in steps 1 and 2 can provide a natural starting point in the identification of specific justice concerns. Because restorative justice requires giving attention to the needs of all parties, the mutual needs identified in step 3 can help disparate groups to discover common and/or compatible justice concerns. Because restorative justice is concerned to identify the obligations of each party, the acknowledgments of responsibility made in step 4 can provide the initial impetus toward taking corrective measures. During the whole process of helping working groups to explore possibilities and then implement specific projects, the purpose is to find justice concerns that all ethnic/sectarian units within the society can affirm and to identify positive measures that can be undertaken jointly to meet these needs. Yet, there must be some kind of selection process among the various justice concerns. Meeting all the needs of any society is unrealistic. One way to make justice operative is to invite workshop participants to select a few critically important needs and then evaluate which one they believe, given their resources and any obstacles, they could develop a feasible action plan which could effectively address the need. The locus of activity need not relate to the legal system, although it might be beneficial in some cases to work in concert.

In Bosnia

One example illustrates the whole process - identification of justice needs, selection of priorities, recognition of obstacles, and implementation of a plan – all within a three day workshop. This interfaith workshop was held in Sipovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina in March 2000, four-and-a-half years following the end of the war in that country. Care was taken to invite equal numbers of Serbian Orthodox, Croatian Catholic and Bosnian Muslim participants, as well as one Jewish person. Approximately half the participants came from the Bosnia Serb Republic (where the workshop was held) and half from the Muslim-Croat Federation. During the second day, participants then spent considerable time outlining a number of specific justice concerns facing Bosnia-Herzegovina. They selected the need for creation of jobs and a viable economy as most important. The biggest obstacle to meeting this need was then identified as corruption, a topic I had long thought was critical to address, but had not yet been selected for attention by any workshop participants (a criteria of local ownership I always consider primary). After proposing a number of actions that required long-term planning and implementation, these workshop participants decided that use of the media to raise awareness of the problem with the entire population could be started immediately. On day three, the Bosnian Serb media were invited to interview one participant from each of the three major faith communities represented, one of whom was a Serbian Orthodox bishop. All the participants took part in preparation for this event by meeting with their designated representative to share their concerns. During the interview itself, all three representatives criticized the role played by political and religious leadership of each group and shared the conviction that all citizens in the country shared in responsibility for corruption. Bosnian Serb media produced an hour-long show on corruption that evening. Shorter programs on radio and TV were also broadcast in the Muslim-Croat Federation. During the next couple days, workshop participants reported frequent mention of the program throughout the country. What started as simply a training workshop on interfaith reconciliation had ended with the design and implementation of a specific restorative justice project which had highlighted one of Bosnia's most pressing needs and called for universal responsibility on the part of the entire public. The problem of corruption was certainly not solved, but at least at this moment, could not be ignored.

Step 7: Negotiating Solutions: Joint Planning: When good groundwork has been laid in relationship building, then groups in conflict are better able to engage in constructive negotiation and mutual planning that can search for solutions that address concrete justice concerns within their society. When a third party intervener is involved, there are a variety of different roles one can play in order to facilitate settlement of a dispute. I will briefly enumerate three roles, listed in order of the degree of influence the third party has over the outcome.

- *Arbitration* gives the third party complete control over the outcome. The arbitrator is very involved with the parties, going through many of the steps a mediator will take, but commitment to a final decision is in the hands of the arbitrator.

With Iraqis

One excellent example of arbitration was carried out by an Iraqi Shi'ite participant, after attending just one training workshop in 2005. This participant, who was the head of the education committee in the provincial council of Qadissiyah Governorate, was confronted with a demand by an extremist Shi'ite religious group that they be allowed to teach Islam in a school in the village of Sadeer. Aware of the highly religious orientation of the entire community, he consulted with other religious workshop participants from his province, in developing a conflict assessment and problem solving process. Together, they identified the complicated set of interests represented by multiple parties: the principal of the school, the group that wanted Islam to be taught, students, teachers, an Islamic religious leader, tribal leaders, the Education Department in the Governorate, the Provincial Council, and the Ministry of Education in Baghdad. They also brainstormed numerous options, mapped out the relationships between the stakeholders and set out an action plan, including the sequencing of meetings which the provincial head of education had with each party. In his official role, he then took the initiative to resolve the dispute by demonstrating that venues did exist which provided adequate religious education, thereby meeting the interests of the vast majority of the community. He also questioned the appropriateness of the request by reaffirming a consensus among most of the stakeholders that the school needed to operate on the basis of standard procedures for introducing curriculum and hiring teachers. To the surprise of many Iraqi Sunnis, the decision was made to forbid the teaching of extremist Shi'ite Islam in the school. This arbitrator had led a cooperative problem solving process that resulted in a demonstration of community mobilization involving a combination of both reconciliation and advocacy among a highly faith-based population (Steele, *Reconciliation Strategies in Iraq*, 2008).

A second example of arbitration was performed by a member of the political wing of Al-Sadr's Mahdi extremists, a highly unusual occurrence. Following attendance of two workshops on negotiation, held in 2005-2006, this Shi'ite "extremist" dealt with the fatal shooting of a policeman who had been killed by a rival police faction. The commander of the police force which had suffered the loss demanded the arrest of the killer. But the commander of the killer refused to allow his officer to be arrested. In the midst of tremendous Shi'ite on Shi'ite violence in southern Iraq, supported by various anti-government Shia militias vying for control within the newly liberated Shia majority, this killing had the potential of major escalation. The Sadrist arbitrator met with both the parties and told them that they must put aside any selfish attitudes, utilizing Islamic principles that he knew would have influence on both parties. As a result, he gained the acceptance of both commanders and explained the rationale for his decision. He told them that the security situation in this community was so precarious that justice had to be done. He called on the commander of the murderer to respect the law and allow the arrest of his officer. It is unclear how much of the arbitrator's authority came because he was a political associate of Al-Sadr (quite a likely possibility in Maysan Governorate at that time). But the conflict did end with the murderer's arrest and his commanding officer agreeing to uphold the law.

- *Mediation* places the third party in charge of a process designed to help the conflicted parties come to a decision. Effective mediation will assist the parties to come to a decision themselves. Like arbitration, successful mediation usually begins with some form of relationship building, with the mediator ensuring a safe environment and encouraging the sharing of narratives. Normally the mediator attempts, next, to help the parties to generate a variety of options that have the potential to meet at least some of the needs and interests of all stakeholders. Then he/she facilitates a process of evaluating which options are of greatest value and are most feasible, leading hopefully to finalization of an agreement and a strategy for implementation and evaluation. An alternative approach that gives the mediator greater control is called a one-text process. In this case, the mediator develops a draft agreement, taking it first to one party, then to the next, in a type of shuttle diplomacy. Based on feedback received from each party, in turn, the mediator revises the draft. The shuttling is repeated as many times as necessary in order to reach agreement.

With Iraqis

Three examples from Iraq, again, illustrate the mediation processes outlined above. In the first two cases, officials from the Provincial Government in Maysan Governorate combined indigenous practices with Western approaches to mediation (Steele, *Reconciliation Strategies in Iraq*, 2008). When fighting broke out in Amarah, the provincial capital, killing twenty-five people in two days in October 2006, two of the Shi'ite members of the provincial council, who had attended two of our negotiation workshops, were asked to mediate between the Shi'ite dominated Iraqi Army and Muqtada Al-Sadr's extremist Shi'ite Mahdi Militia, a battle that also pitted local tribes and rival Shi'ite militias against one another. The mediators stopped the fighting by utilizing tribal customs and informing the fighters that, as Muslims, the Qur'an forbade them from fighting each other. The mediators met with tribal sheiks in the home of one of the mediators, agreed to raise tribal flags and walk between the two sides, then met with each party alone and negotiated a partial agreement, a three-day ceasefire. The prime minister then sent a team from Baghdad which joined with the two mediators from Amarah to negotiate a twenty-day ceasefire and set up an ongoing process to raise suggestions for addressing the remaining issues.

In a similar conflict in another Iraqi village in Maysan Governorate in January 2006, violent fighting broke out between two Shi'ite families within the same tribe. This conflict occurred when a decision was announced regarding who had obtained a contract for construction of a new police station. Since poverty was rampant within this region of Iraq, the loss of such a contract could place an extended family in dire circumstances. Another official from the provincial government who had attended two of our workshops on negotiation, led a mediation process, working with the tribal sheik to negotiate a ten-day ceasefire. In this case, the tribal leader then successfully completed a final settlement whereby the family which gained the contract agreed, among other stipulations, to pay the unsuccessful family a sum of money to compensate for their loss of the contract. The case for this solution was based on typical practices of reparation payment and legitimized by referring to the Islamic concept of Zakat (charity) whereby every Muslim is required to

care for the poor among them. Once this practice of reparation/charity was made and publicly acknowledged, the conflict was successfully resolved.

The third case was mediated by a second member of the Sadrist political wing, a man from Maysan Governorate who had also attended two workshops on negotiation. This case involved conflict between a fuel station owner who had greatly increased the cost of benzene and a very powerful, though non-governmental, figure in that community. The political or militia affiliations of both parties were never revealed by the mediator. However, when the powerful figure asked the station owner to lower his price and the latter refused, a threat was made to burn down the station if the owner did not comply. At his point, the mediator met with the man making the threat and explained the negative effect that burning one of the few fuel stations would have on the community and the entire region, including a negative effect on his own personal access to fuel. The mediator also informed the man that the government would certainly compensate the station owner in order to ensure that he could rebuild so that benzene would continue to be available. In response, the previously intransigent powerful figure understood the larger picture, including all the potential consequences of carrying out his threat. He then told the mediator that he would withdraw his threat if the station owner would not take advantage of the poor population and accept a modest increase in the price of benzene, one that would be considered fair to all. In a shuttle diplomacy fashion, the mediator conveyed these conditions to the station owner who, in turn, quite readily agreed to the terms, thus granting him some economic gain, but without adding to the economic strain on a population already suffering from significant impoverishment.

- *Facilitated problem solving* is a role in which the third party leads a brainstorming process which is designed to generate a number of good options for the parties in conflict to consider, but stops short of any decision to commit. It is often private, confidential, off-the-record, and non-binding, therefore increasing the likelihood of creativity and risk-taking. The participants in the process are often not the official representatives of the conflicted parties, but are usually well respected people of influence. Usually participants come from the broad range of parties and sub-parties involved in the conflict, but sometimes a group composed only of members from one side of a conflict (or even just one influential individual) can still generate creative alternatives. Facilitated problem solving frequently is utilized when there is no formal negotiation in progress or when official negotiations are not proceeding well. The options generated are commonly given to potential decision makers, possibly fed into a formal negotiation process if there is one, in an attempt to stimulate creative movement toward resolving a problem. Action plans are often developed in order for the problem solving group to find creative strategies that will enhance the likelihood that their ideas will be heard and seriously considered by the decision makers.

In Kosovo

I was personally involved in a facilitated problem solving process that contributed to ending the Kosovo war (Steele, *The Lessons of Kosovo for US Foreign Policy*, 1999). Together with Serbian and American colleagues, I was privileged to be part of a back

channel of communication between Yugoslav and American governments plus the unofficial, “shadow” Albanian government in Kosovo. We began this process before the war in what ended up as a failed effort to prevent it. However, the channel of communication remained open during the war. As a team, we then conducted a brainstorming process that fed new ideas into the very top levels of both Yugoslav and American governments. These ideas were checked with the Yugoslav desk at the State department and with the former U.S. Ambassador to NATO. With a clear indication from both these sources that all our suggestions were negotiable, the proposals were then sent directly to Milosevic and to an American Under Secretary of State. About six weeks before the end of the war, my American colleague and I went to Belgrade as part of a delegation, headed by Jesse Jackson, to negotiate the release of three US soldiers who had been captured by the Yugoslav military when they inadvertently crossed the border from Macedonia where they had been stationed. In addition to assisting in the successful release of the American soldiers, my colleague and I met numerous times with one of Milosevic’s top advisors in an effort to find an acceptable pathway to end the war. Throughout our three days in Baghdad, while US bombs were falling on the city, we explored a number of detailed options which could contribute toward a final peace agreement. The Yugoslav Government official shuttled back and forth between meeting with us and meeting with Milosevic. Just before we left Belgrade, in the company of the released American soldiers, the Yugoslav official told us Milosevic had agreed to end the war. It was the first indication Milosevic had made that a breakthrough was possible. My colleague then left to consult with the US State department and I left to brief the Kosovo Albanian President on the developments. It then took six weeks for the official negotiating team to actually finalize the peace agreement. However, both Yugoslav and US Governments informed us that the role we had played was critical to the success.

In Bosnia

A number of participants in workshops I have led have also functioned as facilitated problem solvers. One of the most dramatic examples involved the role played by the President of the Academy of Sciences and Arts in Sarajevo, the host of our workshop held during the siege of that city. At the end of that workshop, I had left wondering exactly what we had accomplished in the middle of a war zone, other than bringing together representatives of every religious and ethnic group in the city. A year later, when I returned after the end of the war, the President of the Academy invited me to his home. While there, he gave me a book on conflict resolution, written by him (probably one of the first in the Bosnian language). He told me that everything in the book he had learned at our workshop and then he had used what he learned to convince the Bosnian Muslim political leadership to accept the ceasefire that led to the Dayton accords that ended the Bosnian War. It was the first experience that taught me not to underestimate what was possible, even when all indications seemed to point to minimal success.

Addressing Basic Needs

The restorative justice process, in which working groups begin to explore mutually agreed-upon needs and then devise action plans to implement specific projects, frequently results in

also addressing the functional linkage problem. By empowering local people to begin to identify and meet their own needs, it enhances the likelihood of success in supplanting the role that extremist groups often play as best providers. The most successful working groups continue to meet long after a given workshop in which they were formed. Sometimes they fail to succeed in implementing one project and so turn their attention to another. Whatever their current success rate, it is important to continue to provide the external support that indigenous moderates need to keep exploring, to locate the necessary resources, to devise realistic plans that deal with the inevitable obstacles, and to change course when necessary. The first rule, however, must always be to make sure that, despite ones best intentions, we don't end up doing more harm than good. Another African parable may help us to understand how easy it is to make this mistake (Centre for Human Development and Social Transformation, 2007).

How the Monkeys Saved the Fish

The rainy season that year had been the strongest ever and the river had broken its banks. There were floods everywhere and the animals were all running up into the hills. The floods came so fast that many drowned except the lucky monkeys who used their proverbial agility to climb up into the treetops. They looked down on the surface of the water where the fish were swimming and gracefully jumping out of the water as if they were the only ones enjoying the devastating flood. One of the monkeys saw the fish and shouted to his companion: "Look down, my friend, look at those poor creatures. They are going to drown. Do you see how they struggle in the water?" "Yes," said the other monkey. "What a pity! Probably they were late in escaping to the hills because they seem to have no legs. How can we save them?" "I think we must do something. Let's go close to the edge of the flood where the water is not deep enough to cover us, and we can help them to get out." So the monkeys did just that. They started catching the fish, but not without difficulty. One by one, they brought them out of the water and put them carefully on the dry land. After a short time there was a pile of fish lying on the grass motionless. One of the monkeys said, "Do you see? They were tired, but now they are just sleeping and resting. Had it not been for us, my friend, all these poor people without legs would have drowned." The other monkey said: "They were trying to escape from us because they could not understand our good intentions. But when they wake up they will be very grateful because we have brought them salvation."

Local faith-based actors (both clerics and faith-based NGOs) are in a primary position to fulfill this kind of role. The mandates of most religious communities include a call to serve those most vulnerable. In the developing world, they already constitute the first line of response, have the most established and locally-led social infrastructure, are present throughout societies, and are committed long-term. For these reasons, they have unparalleled capacity to function as comprehensive and adaptable service providers, especially if they are part of a network of multi-faith and secular partners. Therefore, it is critically important to empower faith-based working groups which might evolve from problem solving groups established within workshops or independently. Sometime such inter-religious working groups might work alone, but frequently they do coordinate their activities with secular or religious international humanitarian agencies or existing community based organizations.

Such groups can address problems related to a given social or political condition at local, regional, national or even international levels. The groups can be formed around specific concerns, or within specific localities, or designed to include specific identity groups.

To fully address the basic needs of post-conflict reconstruction, though, requires a three-step process: (1) formulating an initial response (emergency crisis intervention), (2) transformation of structures and enhancing indigenous capacity, and (3) fostering sustainability which consolidates long-term recovery efforts. Many examples already mentioned serve to illustrate the first two steps - refugee/IDP return, emergency aid distribution, business corruption, role of religion in schools, community policing, the price of fuel, etc. Other examples of these steps that have been implemented by faith-based efforts in various countries include - election monitoring, support for unbiased media, disarmament/demobilization/reintegration programs, early warning/early response mechanisms, rebuilding/repairing places of worship, prison reform – the list of possibilities is as infinite as people’s imaginations.

The examples presented at the end of this manual will illustrate efforts to enhance indigenous capacity building and foster sustainability over the long-term (step 3 in post-conflict reconstruction). Examples from my experience include:

In the former Yugoslavia

In Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia, we made a concerted effort to build indigenous institutional capacity that would adequately empower and sustain faith-based peacebuilding. At the beginning of our project in that region, we developed a network of local consultants and cosponsoring institutions that helped immensely with expanding networks, planning workshops, and initiating any follow-up. Many of the consultants later assumed staff positions within either the indigenous organizations we created or the new programs we helped to create within ongoing local NGOs. As a result, after four years of work in Croatia, we successfully transferred responsibility for the program on religion and conflict resolution in that country to our partner organization, the Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights in Osijek (Steele, Ecumenical Community Building and Conflict Resolution Training in the Balkans, 1999). This program within the Centre, led by my former consultant in Osijek, then focused on establishing inter-faith youth programs in the territory of Eastern Croatia that was being transferred, through a negotiated agreement, from Serbian to Croatian sovereignty.

Having not found existing indigenous organizations in Bosnia or Serbia which we felt were prepared to undertake this kind of programming, we spent a year or two more assisting our local consultants and a network of workshop alumni to establish completely new NGOs in both countries (Steele, 2002). In Bosnia, despite tremendous post-war tensions that continued to exist, especially between the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Bosnian Serb Republic, the Center for Religious Dialogue was formally registered as an NGO in the Muslim-Croat Federation in 1998 and in the Bosnian Serb Republic in 1999. The success of this transfer to indigenous leadership was due to the extraordinary efforts of my former consultant in Sarajevo. As a Croatian Catholic he had developed such a level of trust with the Metropolitan of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Bosnia, that this Orthodox Church leader relied principally on him to arrange and transport the Metropolitan to the Serbian Churches in the Muslim-Croat Federation. My consultant also helped to negotiate the creation of the Inter-Religious Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina, an institution composed of the leaders of the four major religious

groups in the country – Catholic, Serbian Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish. After the establishment of the new center, they conducted trainings of their own, assisted in co-leading trainings with Kosovars and Bosnians, and supported a variety of ongoing interfaith activities, including outreach to, and dialogue with, the small community of Muslim extremists that had come to Bosnia from other countries.

In Serbia, a process of interfaith cooperation that began in 1997, after the Serbian Orthodox deputy bishop acknowledged church complicity in war crimes in Bosnia, culminated in the establishment of the Inter-Religious Center in Belgrade in 2000. This organization then conducted trainings of its own and developed interfaith projects within Serbia and well as with Bosnian and Croatian partners. These included efforts to develop an approach to the teaching of religion in the public schools that was sensitive to the needs of each faith community, support for the protest movement that eventually deposed Milosevic from power, and creation of various venues, oral and written, for interfaith dialogue.

In Iraq

The work I did in Tikrit Iraq with the United States Institute of Peace in 2008 is a very good example of a great plan to deal with a cancerous element, massive corruption that was bleeding the society to death. Yet it was still necessary to refocus the project due to assessment of extreme danger and seemingly insurmountable obstacles (as recorded earlier in the sub-section on “Building Trust”). The revised plan was designed to address a whole range of services, including: water, electricity, waste disposal, pollution, agriculture, health care, and communication. We had all the right buy-in by the most moderate elements of the local community, but (as described earlier) were hindered by well-meaning concerns over safety on the part of an occupying power.

In Bosnia (Steele, Cha. 5 in Smock 2002)

The hindrances and obstacles, however, are not always the result of outsider interference. There can be many such road blocks set by indigenous peoples as well. During a problem-solving workshop held in Bosnia just after the war ended, a group of Catholic and Muslim religious people met together in a working group to discuss how they might support the creation of a new water system that would serve both the Muslim community of Fojnica and the Croat community of Kiseljak, two cities that had experienced great violence during the Muslim-Croat fighting in 1993-94. An American NGO had promised money to build the new water system, provided the two communities could work together on the project.

Due to an immense amount of suspicion, the municipal leadership of these cities could not agree to share a water supply. One of the imams from this working group proposed that the religious leaders form a team that could mediate the conflict between municipal leaders, bringing benefit to both communities. Despite genuine interest in the idea, and support from clerics of both communities, it was never implemented. They were unable to overcome the fears that a joint water supply would be susceptible to poisoning, a tactic that had been used during the war.

However, the imam who had led this effort was not ready to give up. Instead he decided to institute a refugee return program to bring Croat families back into his now Muslim controlled

city of Fojnica. Over the course of the next few years, he helped repatriate 1600 Croat families. When I asked at one point, how the program was going, he said he was now dealing with the inevitable conflicts between his own Muslim people and the Croats who had returned. Yet he was undaunted in his commitment to protect everyone's right to return and then enable everyone to coexist peacefully. A few years later, the Serbian Orthodox Bishop who was one of the leading proponents of highlighting corruption during the Sipovo workshop, also started his own refugee return program. As the leading Serbian Orthodox authority in Banja Luka, the largest city in the Bosnian Serb Republic, he personally walked with Croat and Muslim refugees as they returned to their homes, announcing to his Serbian people, that these refugees had a right also to live there. Both of these clerics, singlehandedly, gave a stamp of approval to coexistence.

In Kenya

I was part of a team that trained participants from approximately one hundred local non-governmental organizations in three provinces in western Kenya. One major component of this training was designed to assist participants to lead dialogue sessions in their local communities over the adoption of a new constitution which would institute major government reform. This much needed structural change had the potential to eliminate some of the major tensions that had led to post-election violence a few years earlier. However, it was also very controversial since it would diminish the influence and power of some ethnic groups and increase that of others. Ethnic extremists and political operatives were jockeying for leverage prior to a referendum that was to be held in August 2010 in which the Kenyan people would decide to accept or to reject the new constitution. Even our workshop participants were split between "Yes" and "No" camps.

The issues at stake would affect devolution of political power, land reform, minority rights, and sensitive religious issues such as legalization of abortion and institution of Muslim Khadis courts into the Kenyan legal system. During the workshops, we helped participants to face the issues themselves, dialoguing with one another about their differences, and developing action plans to facilitate dialogues in their home communities. Reports from numerous communities that had suffered the worst violence indicated that the dialogues had been successful, not only in providing information, and correcting misinformation, about the new constitution, but also healing the lingering wounds from the post-election violence. In the Rift Valley, Kalenjin and Kikuyu tribal leaders (the two most contentious ethnic groups) resolved never again to allow violence. They walked "side-by-side" during the referendum, keeping their communities free from violence and able to vote. The "Yes" campaign for the constitution, which had been trailing in opinion polls in June, prevailed in August when the referendum was adopted. Our 300 trainees had helped to infuse new life into acceptance of a much needed structural reform.

In other contexts

The list of local people and groups who produced major changes and met basic needs in their communities could go on for pages. (1) There is the Macedonian team that began to work on environmental protection involving human waste disposal in multi-ethnic/sectarian communities which had never had such systems. After succeeding on a number of pollution projects, they used their working relationships and mutual influence to resolve tensions that were reaching a boiling point in the City of Struga in 2004. According to them, they stopped a

second civil war in their country. (2) There is the group of local residents from Aceh Indonesia who, in 2005, took some creative post-conflict reconstructive efforts into their own hands. They began piecing life back together after both human and natural disasters. Soon after the massive tsunami and the end of the civil war in which that province had been fighting for its independence, they struggle to restart the fishing industry in their coastal community. Despite the slow movement of most major international aid agencies, they developed their own action plans and found the resources to begin to put people back to work. (3) There are the minority representatives in Kosovo who I trained to take part in the Final Status Talks to determine the independence of Kosovo in 2006. Although the final decision did not turn out according to the liking of many, there were some who adjusted to the new reality and made a determination to work with, not against the new Kosovo government. One such participant had been the leader of a gang of Serbs in the divided City of Mitrovica. He presided over numerous assaults against Albanians, French peacekeeping troops, and anyone considered non-sympathetic to the cause of Serbian nationalism who dared cross the bridge into North Mitrovica. I crossed that bridge many times in order to talk with him in his office or in a café, gradually building rapport. Finally, he announced to me one day that the Serbs had lost control of his homeland, Kosovo, but that he had decided to stay rather than move to Serbia proper. He indicated his plan to run for a seat in the new Kosovo parliament from North Mitrovica, a seat he would surely win. In preparation for a new role as fellow parliamentarian, he asked me to introduce him to former commanders of the Kosovo Liberation Army who he knew he would be serving with in the new parliament. He was requesting assistance in making the transition from militant thug to becoming a legislator willing to work with his adversaries to meet the basic needs of the entire population. (4) Finally, there is the team of seismologists and engineers from Israel and Palestine who requested assistance in building a cooperative network that would collaborate on earthquake preparedness and recovery, a preventive measure that could benefit both populations. At a workshop held in the Palestinian territory in 2012, they formed two problem solving working groups: one to create educational training programs to raise public awareness and the other to develop avenues to affect public policy of both governments. All this is but a first stage in what they call “disaster diplomacy.” It is support for all indigenous efforts like these, even ones initiated by reformed extremists, which can make a difference by providing services that meet the basic needs of the entire populations.

Related Bibliography

- Abu-Nimer, Mohammed. 2003. *Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam*. Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press.
- Amstutz, Mark. 2005. *The Healing of Nations: The Promise and Limits of Political Forgiveness*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Appleby, R. Scott. 2000. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence and Reconciliation*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Bjoergo, Tore and John Horgan, eds. 2009. *Leaving Terrorism Behind*. London: Routledge.
- Bock, Joseph G. 2001. *Sharpening Conflict Management: Religious Leadership and the Double-Edged Sword*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers.
- Bole, William, Drew Christiansen and Robert Hennemeyer. 2004. *Forgiveness in International Politics*. Washington: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

- Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation. 2012. "EU Workshop on Effective Programming for Countering Violent Extremism: Final Summary Report." Brussels: Center on Global Counterterrorism.
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news/documents/20121217_eu_cve_workshop_summary_report.pdf
- Centre for Human Development and Social Transformation. 2007. *Peace Manual for Peace Clubs in Nigeria*. Port Harcourt: Centre for Human Development and Social Transformation.
- De Gruchy, John W. 2003. *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers.
- Denooux, Guilain, with Lynn Carter. 2009. *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism*. Washington: United States Agency for International Development.
<http://www.coffey.com/international-development/our-work/our-thought-leadership/security-justice/guide-to-the-drivers-of-violent-extremism>.
- Gopin, Marc. 2003. *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence and Peacemaking*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hadley, Michael. 2001. *The Spiritual Roots of Restorative Justice*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Hamidaddin, Abdullah. Sept. 11, 2013. "How to Kill a Terrorist." *Al Arabiya English*.
<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/views/news/world/2013/09/11/How-to-kill-a-terrorist.html>
- Hamilton, Daniel, ed. 2006. *Terrorism and International Relations*. Washington: Center for Transatlantic Relations, Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University.
- Helmick, Raymond G. and Rodney L. Petersen, eds. 2001. *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*. Radnor, Pennsylvania: Templeton Foundation Press.
- Helmus, Todd C., Erin York and Peter Chalk. 2013. "Promoting Online Voices for Countering Violent Extremism." Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR130.html
- James, Patrick. 2011. *Religion, Identity, and Global Governance: Ideas, Evidence and Practice*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Johnston, Douglas, ed. 2003. *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Johnston, Douglas and Cynthia Sampson, eds. 1994. *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lang, Sharon. 2002. "Sulha Peacemaking and the Politics of Persuasion." *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXXI, No. 3, pp. 52-66
- Lederach, John Paul. 1997. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.
- McCullough, Michael, Kenneth Pargament and Carl Thoresen. 2000. *Forgiveness: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Narvaez, Leonel, ed. 2010. *Political Culture of Forgiveness and Reconciliation*. Bogota: Fundacion Para La Reconciliacion.
- Neibuhr, Reinhold. 1943. *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. Vol. II. *Human Destiny*. London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd.

- Petersen, Rodney L. and Marian Gh. Simion, eds. 2010. *Overcoming Violence: Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding*. Newton Centre, MA: Boston Theological Institute.
- Philpott, Daniel. 2012. *Just and Unjust Peace: An Ethic of Political Reconciliation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Philpott, Daniel, ed. 2006. *The Politics of Past Evil: Religion, Reconciliation, and the Dilemmas of Transitional Justice*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Rabasa, Angel, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, Jeremy J. Ghez and Christopher Boucek. 2010. "Deradicalizing Islamist Extremism." Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
<http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1053.html>
- Rogers, Mark M., Tom Bamat and Julie Ideh, eds. 2008. *Pursuing Just Peace: An Overview and Case Studies for Faith-Based Peacebuilders*. Baltimore: Catholic Relief Services.
http://www.crsprogramquality.org/storage/pubs/peacebuilding/pursuing_just_peace.pdf.
- Sachedina, Abdulaziz. 2001. *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Schirch, Lisa. 2005. *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding*. Bloomfield, Connecticut: Kumarian Press.
- Smock, David, ed. 2002. *Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding*. Washington: US Institute of Peace.
- Stassen, Glen, ed. 1998. *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press.
- Steele, David. 1999. *Ecumenical Community Building and Conflict Resolution Training in the Balkans*. Peaceworks: Occasional Papers Series. Edited by David Smock. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.
- Steele, David. 1999. "The Lessons of Kosovo for U.S. Foreign Policy." *Northwestern Journal of International Affairs*. II (1999), 4-12.
- Steele, David. 2011. *A Manual to Facilitate Conversations on Religious Peacebuilding and Reconciliation*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
<http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/DavidSteeleManual.pdf>
- Steele, David A. Sept. 2008. "Reconciliation Strategies in Iraq." *Special Report 213*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.
<http://www.usip.org/files/resources/sr213.pdf>.
- Ul-Huda, Qamar, ed. 2010. *Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam*. Washington: United States Institute of Peace.
- Vertigans, Stephen. 2011. *The Sociology of Terrorism*. London: Routledge.
- Zehr, Howard. 1995. *Changing Lenses*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press

CONCLUSION

The critical challenge addressed in this manual has been: What can be done, either to prevent or transform, conflict situations in which religious extremism is entrenched? After assessing various factors that contribute to the dynamics involved, we have concluded by looking, in detail, at how interveners can, and have assisted indigenous faith communities, and sometimes extremists themselves, to accomplish this task. Primarily, this requires addressing the linkages that bind the wider faith community to extremist factions, especially during the vulnerability inducing realities of war. Many examples have been provided which demonstrate transformation, of both attitudes and behavior, both small steps and momentous turning points, in various contexts, in different parts of the world. Yet, when one looks today at Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, the Sudan, Israel/Palestine, even Kenya or Indonesia, one still sees injustice and unresolved conflicts in most places. In some cases the tensions are latent, as they have been at points in the past. In others, like the Sudan and Iraq, major violence has either remained or returned. Plus religious extremism certainly is not dead. It continues to mutate from one al-Qaeda offshoot to another, from one failed state to another.

So, how does one measure success? A relatively new process has recently been introduced into monitoring and evaluating peacebuilding. “Developmental evaluation” was created to fit the changing, complex, turbulent conditions encountered when dealing with violent and post-violent societies. Rather than being tied to measurable results, the aim is to facilitate and support dynamic innovation. Rather than identifying what is provable, one is encouraged to aim beyond perceived possibilities. Instead of looking for predictable, preprogrammed outcomes, the hope is to discover unanticipated, emergent ones. Rather than assuming that fixed, standard interventions are best, one is encouraged to explore alternatives. Such an approach may actually fit better with religious faith than social science. Trusting in the Almighty for justice; believing in the power of forgiveness to transform; acting out of “soul or truth force” (the heart of Gandhi’s spirituality) with the conviction that one’s efforts will bear fruit whether or not it is apparent. To challenge a cosmic war mentality just might necessitate a perspective that sees beyond the tangible.

Yet, this does not eliminate the need for vision and goals, or even for a sound strategy. It merely requires that even these be flexible. As I look forward and ask what needs to happen now, I keep returning to the centrality of building and rebuilding community as the crucial focal point in empowering faith-based moderates. Sustainability of any effort to counter religious extremism requires an ongoing, consistent nurturing of relationships with those who are their vulnerable co-religionists. This takes much more extensive investment of time, energy and resources than most donors are willing to provide without proven, measurable results. Yet it is the strengthening of these relationships with indigenous actors, and the building of their local capacities, that must take priority if we are going to be able to see beyond the obvious, recognize the emergent, and be part of whatever innovation becomes necessary for effective conflict transformation in the future.

List of Organizations Involved in Conflict Transformation in Societies Affected by Extremist Religion

American Friends Service Committee

Boston Theological Institute

Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA

Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, Washington

Center for World Religions, Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution, George Mason University, Arlington, VA

Fellowship of Reconciliation, Nyack, NY

The Interfaith Center of New York, New York, NY

International Committee for the Peace Council, Madison, WI

International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, Washington, DC

Joan B. Kroc Institute for peace and Justice, University of San Diego, San Diego, CA

Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN

Quaker UN Office, New York, NY

Religions for Peace, New York, NY

Salaam Institute, Washington, DC

United States Institute of Peace, Religion and Peacemaking Program, Washington, DC