

# Publishers' Page

Welcome to Transcendence Magazine!

I'm so glad you've joined us for the launch of the online journal we're calling Transcendence Magazine. The beginning of the third millennium has made evident that there is much to be discussed and much to be accomplished if we are going to create a sustainable future that will be a blessing to tomorrow's inhabitants of this sphere we call home.

The challenges before us are so great – in both scope and sheer quantity – that we believe nothing short of transcendence will begin to address them. More than ever humankind is being called to transcend geopolitical concerns and unite in a world-wide collaboration to find solutions for comprehensive healthcare, ecological renewal, global economy, issues of social justice, human rights, war and peace and an almost innumerable host of other issues that press in upon us.

In some areas, such as ecology, the damage already done is at the brink of being irreversible and at no other time in history have the realities of addressing such problems been so pressing. In other areas, such as the way we frame our sacred narratives and the stories that we most closely link with our identity, the present holds great potential for advancement toward global peace, reconciliation and unification.

Releasing quarterly, Transcendence Magazine will bring together some of the world's top minds and opinion leaders to address an entire array of challenges faced by the world today. In this issue of Transcendence we are specifically focusing upon the theme of 'Pathways to Peace' to anticipate an upcoming conference of the same theme being held later this year in Amman Jordan.

Three-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee Elias Chacour contributes from his perspective as a Palestinian Christian while theologian Dr. Stephen Sizer, a world renowned expert in the field of Zionism writes on 'Justice in the Eyes of Jesus.'

Dr. Ian Campbell will be bringing us a case study based upon his many years as a medical professional working toward the alleviation of AIDS/HIV disease in impoverished countries. And finally, Dr. Jay Gary will present on the prospect of an Islamo-Christian culture.

Thank you again for joining us for our inaugural issue of Transcendence – I hope you'll return often!

Blessings,

Tim King

# STANDING IN DEATH... STANDING AMONGST FEAR... STANDING IN THE GAP.

By Elias Chacour  
(Haifa Israel)

Friends,

It doesn't happen every day that I am invited to write a column in a promising and ambitious E-zine such as *Transcendence*. Who am I to be asked to write for the wider public? Is what I live, what I am and what I know of any real value to anyone except myself and my close relatives and kindred?

I am not a man who has enjoyed peace. For most of my life I have been living in the midst of repeatedly murderous conflict – the longest of the past century. I have witnessed the killing of my brothers and of my people on both sides of the conflict, and both were part of myself. Every time one has been killed it was as though an important part of my own self was mutilated. In a very real way it has been as though I have died.

Whenever a Jew or a Palestinian dies—killed by each other's hands—I ache deeply because both are persecuted nations. They both have suffered too long to deserve more suffering.

The two parties are blood brothers; each claiming to be the children of one father whose name was Abraham. He, Abraham, does not identify with either of them exclusively. He is their common father, the Iraqi *Friend of God*, the *Bearer of the Promise* and the *Patriarch* seated at the right hand of God the Father. He is the *gentile* living among *gentile* nations.

Why me? Who am I? It might be helpful for you to know whose writing you are invited to read. Doctors know somehow about the various diseases, but patients experience the disease. As patients long for their doctors to truly understand the nature of their complaint, so do I long for you to acknowledge us, the Palestinian people, our very presence and who we are and then for you to embrace us in solidarity, partnership and friendship.

Let me introduce myself. I am another man from Galilee. I am a peasant from the village Baram, born in the north of Israel, not far from the Sea of Galilee. I know who I am but I can't identify with any of the human labels, Palestinian-Arab-Christian-Citizen of Israel, as being the main feature of my identity. Indeed, I bear all the contradictions, whether religious, national or ethnic. I am a Palestinian-Arab-Christian-Israeli. I am at the same time none of these facets. It is virtually impossible to give any scale of priority to any

one of the four sides. I love my socio-political and religious reality and yet I am none of them exclusively.

Who, then, am I? What and which one was I at my birth? I was born a baby in the image and with the likeness of God. Not more—but not less either. I am exactly like you; you are exactly born like me. We are alike, no matter whether we were born in a Palestinian home and family, or in a Christian family, an Arab family, or born and became citizen of Israel. I have survived eight wars and two big intifadas. I am living with and have become an integral part of two nations. One wanted independence and won physical independence and the other is still struggling for independence, for liberation. The road to freedom still seems to be very long and the price for freedom very high.

I have learned that one is never given freedom and independence. Freedom and independence are earned, not given. They are taken with much determination—never given as a charity. Both peoples will not give each other the pragmatic and real recognition of their origins and their roots—being born babies in the image and with the likeness of the almighty Creator (Genesis 1:27).

I wish I could invite them all, every one of them, to look in the mirror in my study, to look alone once and then with the others. No matter who the others might be, friends or enemies, and in the mirror to read, and remember, and accept the fact, they are looking at what God has created as most beautiful. They should remember that God does not kill his own creatures, God does not kill.

This is the reason we human beings have abused and are abusing God's silence. We oppress and kill after persecuting each other. We justify our crimes by registering them on God's account. And because God is now silent, we forget to ask the crucial questions He asked humanity early in our history: *Man, where are you?* In other terms, why are you hiding? The second question is, *Man, where is your brother?* Cain killed his brother. He did not accept responsibility for his brother's life and survival. That is why he answered the Creator's question with *Am I my brother's custodian?* If you look into my mirror and read what is written underneath it, you would rather answer the Creator, *Yes Lord, I am my brother's custodian.*

From this attitude and from this faith comes the truth that we are all—every one of us—responsible for what happens to anyone else anywhere. The responsibility does not always need to be coupled with guilt. This kind of responsibility of facing evil should mean to create an alliance that stands in front of every persecutor. This means to do everything possible in order to respect every human being, and to stop the persecution against anybody, anywhere, at any time. I am not what others have labeled me so easily, without any consideration for what I am. Any portrait of me, other than the one the Creator gave me, is totally wrong and discriminatory.

Consider the roots—our roots, and my roots—the essence of human beings. The additive qualities or appellations should aim at awakening the awareness of everyone,

at our origins. In Byzantine theology the other is an icon of God. You see God on your neighbor's face. The face of the other is the face of God.

This vision, although easily related to the three monotheistic religions, remains nonetheless far from identifying with any of them. The three monotheistic religions are, so far, unable to create unity within the diversity of human groups. Did they become, or even were born, to segregate and to divide people instead of uniting them? Is there any possible way to live together and bring to completion doing good and pursuing justice? Is there a way to collaborate together in order to make human society more human for humans? Is there a way to convince all of us, or at least the leaders, that everyone is created a baby in the image and with the likeness of God? Why do we continue to hide behind our preconceived ideas and our prejudices? Can we—are we—ready to set human beings free from our own preset agendas?

Sometimes I get angry at our human sectarianism because it makes us blind to reality. We are preconditioned to see only our own sector of life, belief and culture. Those who are more enlightened risk being overcome by despair. There is so much violence, so much anger and hatred. We are tempted to give up; to raise our arms saying I can do no more. It is too much for me. I would rather let go. There is no hope any more. To all these brothers and sisters I wish to end with this Galilean short story:

*The storm was madly raging and the wind was blowing fast and destructively. No pity and no kindness above the beautiful green forests. The branches of the trees started beating each other, destroying each other's leaves. Even the fresh branches were mercilessly broken from beating against each other. It was a kind of apocalyptic vision of destruction. Every tree lost so many of its branches and these were hanging in chaotic order on the bigger branches. At that time a passerby saw the damaged forest and started blaming these crazy foolish trees. The trees are destroying each other. One of the trees that was severely damaged heard the passerby. She said to him, My friend, don't you see the cruel storm? Don't you feel the merciless wind? We the trees are the victims of the storm and of the wind. Nonetheless, I wish you knew that no matter what, all the time our roots are embracing, we are stronger than the storm. We shall survive!*

Abuna Elias Chacour is Archbishop of Galilee of the Melkite Catholic Church. He is the author of *Blood Brothers* (1984) and has been nominated three times for the *Nobel Peace Prize* for his work throughout Galilee.

# Justice in the Eyes of Jesus: The Concept of Justice in the New Testament

By Dr. Stephen Sizer  
(Surrey England)

“Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: <sup>18</sup>“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, <sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” <sup>20</sup> Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, <sup>21</sup> and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:17-21)

In this paper I want us to examine the concept of justice in the eyes of Jesus. How did Jesus understand, teach and deliver justice? I want us to consider this question under five headings and see that biblical justice is relational; is creative; is liberating; vindicates; and restores. [1]

## 1. Biblical Justice is Relational

“Justice in the Bible is pre-eminently a *relational* bond which links persons together in a community of mutual responsibility and mutual rights.”[2] Specifically, biblical justice defines and creates a relationship between a holy God and his people and with one another in a community of faith. Biblical justice is then, first and foremost, relational. It is founded on God’s gracious initiative.

The dilemma we face is this. How can we who are unholy, relate to a holy and righteous God? Christians believe that divine justice was fully personified in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus said of himself, without a trace of arrogance,

“By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.” (John 5:30)

Citing the Hebrew scriptures, Paul summarizes our condition before a holy just God in this way:

“As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.” (Romans 3:10-12)

On the basis of God’s holy nature, he continues,

“every mouth will be silenced, and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.” (Romans 3:19-20).

How then can we be made right with a just and holy God? Paul goes on to explain that Jesus died in our place to take upon himself the judgment we deserve, so that we can be justified and made right with God. This is the basis for our relationship with God.

“There is no difference, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup> God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood... he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.” (Romans 3:22-26)

Jesus died to bring us back into a right relationship with God. This is the basis for our relationship with God. It is also the same basis for our relationships with one another.

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

Matthew uses similar imagery to describe Jesus as God’s chosen servant. He quotes from Isaiah 42 to describe Jesus’ unique role in bringing forth justice and establishing justice on earth:

“Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen one in whom I delight;  
I will put my Spirit on him  
and he will bring justice to the nations.  
He will not shout or cry out,  
or raise his voice in the streets.  
A bruised reed he will not break,

and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;  
he will not falter or be discouraged  
till he establishes justice on earth.  
In his law the islands will put their hope.”  
(Isaiah 42:1-4, see Matthew 12:15-21)

Justice is therefore God’s initiative and our hope. Living under, and by, the justice of God, is an act of faith and fidelity. Jesus specifically rebukes the Pharisees of his day for their hypocrisy and disregard for justice because it was a sign of their disregard for God.

“Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God.” (Luke 11:42)

Notice Jesus links justice with love. If we love God, we will desire to become like him in our values, in our priorities and actions. Biblical justice is therefore a quality of ‘mutual bondedness’ – the foundation of our individual, as well as shared, covenant relationship with God. This is why Jesus insists with great authority that our heart attitude toward God and our motives toward others are more revealing, and more critical, than our ability to keep to the letter of the law.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explains God’s attitude to such things as murder, adultery, divorce and right to retaliation. In doing so he calls us to a higher ethic.

“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment... You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’<sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart...” (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28)

Ultimately we will be judged on the basis of how we have treated others. Not because we are saved by good works, but rather because our actions demonstrate our heart attitude, our faith and trust in God’s justice. Our actions reveal our trust in Jesus, who has reconciled us to God. Jesus says how we treat others ultimately demonstrates how we treat God.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’<sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something

to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,<sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’<sup>37</sup>

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’<sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?’<sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’<sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’” (Matthew 25:34-40)

So, in a society that prizes personal freedom and affluence, “both the rugged individualism of the free-enterprise capitalist and the narcissistic individualism of the ‘me generation’”, [3] biblical justice holds us accountable to God, calls us back to a right relationship with him, builds faith and strengthens community. First and foremost then, biblical justice is relational.

## **2. Biblical Justice is Creative**

God has initiated a covenant relationship with his people based on his character. This is why the apostle Peter cites Leviticus 19:2 to show why we must be holy. Because God is holy.

“Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.<sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.<sup>15</sup> But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;<sup>16</sup> for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”<sup>17</sup> Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.” (1 Peter 1:13-17)

Therefore because of this new covenant relationship, God is also calling his people to be a new community to demonstrate it.

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.<sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.<sup>11</sup> Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.<sup>12</sup> Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.” (1 Peter 2:9-12)

Biblical justice is therefore *creative*. God's initiative creates a people who once were no people. Hollenbach says, "It is a justice which ever seeks new and deeper levels of mutual relatedness, not simply the preservation of those familiar bonds which already exist. Thus it goes beyond a *quid pro quo* fairness in social interaction and economic exchanges." [4] This new creation community is one that draws all – especially the stranger and the alien into the neighborhood. If genuine, it will be infectious. It will be evangelistic – eager to share the good news – eager to welcome others into the community. Jesus told the Parable of the Good Samaritan to define our responsibility to build community. He was asked a question "who is my neighbor?" The lawyer wanted Jesus to define the limit of his neighborly responsibility – those living within a mile? Two miles? Five miles? Jesus turned the question around and asked What kind of neighbour are you?

"On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" <sup>26</sup> "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" <sup>27</sup> He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' " <sup>28</sup> "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live." <sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" <sup>30</sup> In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' <sup>36</sup> "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" <sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:25-37)

Jesus, very cleverly, creates a dilemma. The person at the centre of the story is left naked and unconscious. Therefore no one traveling along the road could tell from his clothing or accent whether he was one of their tribe or not. The man is reduced to stripped to his bare humanity. The Samaritan, an enemy of the Jews is the only one who stops. The only one who acts as a neighbor. The Parable of the Good Samaritan, illustrates our responsibility toward who ever we meet. In

these divine encounters we are called to be creative, inclusive and compassionate toward those in need – who ever they are because they are created in the image of God. In this regard, Jesus explicitly denies us the right to retaliation.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’<sup>44</sup> But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,<sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.<sup>46</sup> If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?<sup>47</sup> And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?<sup>48</sup> Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:43-48)

Jesus insists that we break the spiral of violence and create an environment in which even our enemy can be reconciled and drawn into our community. Biblical justice is therefore not only relational, it is also creative in transcending the boundaries of race, politics or religion. Biblical justice is relational and creative.

### **3. Biblical Justice is Liberating**

The Hebrew scriptures trace the liberation of God’s people from slavery. In the Exodus we see the people of God emerge from bondage. Their liberty is assured only as they obey God’s leading and relate to him and one another in the ways he proscribes. The Law given at Mount Sinai was intended to liberate God’s people – to protect them and provide for their future. Notice the way in which their liberation is intended to shape the way they treat others.

“For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.<sup>18</sup> He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.<sup>19</sup> And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.<sup>20</sup> Fear the LORD your God and serve him.” (Deuteronomy 10:17-20)

The Law, which defined the rights and responsibilities of God’s people, included the idea of the Sabbath – a weekly day of rest, but also the Sabbath year – every seventh year the land was given rest. And after every seven sevens – after 49 years, there was to be a year of Jubilee. “Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.” (Leviticus 25:10)

The Year of Jubilee injunctions ensured that every 50 years, slaves were freed, debts were cancelled, and ancestral property was returned. The intention was that, whatever their circumstances in the intervening years, broad equality among God's people was maintained. God warns, "Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God." (Leviticus 25:17). Later, Isaiah predicted that God would send the Messiah to inaugurate a spiritual year of Jubilee (Isaiah 61:1-3). And it is with these words that Jesus begins his first recorded message delivered in the synagogue of Nazareth,

"The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'" (Luke 4:17-21)

Jesus came to proclaim the good news of liberation, freedom, recovery, release, the season of God's favor especially to the poor, to prisoners, to the blind and to those who were oppressed. To these people, in particular, Jesus brought hope, justice and liberation. Biblical justice is relational, it is creative and liberating.

#### **4. Biblical Justice Vindicates**

Biblical justice vindicates – as it liberates. Stephen Mott observes: "Often people think of justice in the Bible only in the ... sense as God's wrath on evil. This aspect of justice indeed is present... [but] Justice in the Bible very frequently also deals with benefits. Cultures differ widely in determining the basis by which the benefits are to be justly distributed. For some it is by birth and nobility. For others the basis is might or ability or merit. Or it might simply be whatever is the law or whatever has been established by contracts. The Bible takes another possibility. Benefits are distributed according to need. Justice then is very close to love and grace. God "executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and... loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing" Deuteronomy 10:18)... To oppress is to use power for one's own advantage in depriving others of their basic rights in the community (see Mark 12:40). To do justice is to correct that abuse and to meet those needs (Isaiah 1:17). [5]

When Jesus read from the prophecy in Isaiah 61 in the synagogue of Nazareth, he claimed it was being fulfilled as he spoke the words.

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
<sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD’S favor.”  
(Luke 4:18-19)

However, significantly, Jesus does not complete the sentence. Isaiah 61:2 goes on to say:

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
<sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD’S favour  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,  
<sup>3</sup> and provide for those who grieve in Zion—  
to bestow on them a crown of beauty  
instead of ashes, the oil of gladness  
instead of mourning, and a garment of praise  
instead of a spirit of despair.” (Isaiah 61:1-3)

In his first coming Jesus did not come to judge. It was not yet “the day of vengeance of our God”. The first time Jesus came to save. We believe he will return to fulfil the second half of this prophecy.

Ruth Foster observes,

“Recalling the themes of Mary’s song in Luke 1:46-55, Jesus revealed His upside-down kingdom as a radical reversal of normal human values. The focus then of His coming was on the poor, the enslaved, the blind, and the downtrodden, a focus that embodied God’s nature as defender of the weak. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament teaching concerning justice for the needy and helpless in his teaching (Luke 4:16ff) and in his attention to the physical as well as the spiritual needs of people. If any doubt exists about how Jesus understood his mission, his reply to John the Baptist’s poignant question from prison, “Are You the Coming One, or shall we look for someone else?”, clarifies for us his thinking. Jesus sent John the answer

that “the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them” (Matt. 11:5).

The church then becomes the stage on which Jesus’ radical way of living is acted out. Brueggemann argues that the church “as a wedge of newness, as a foretaste of what is coming, as home for the odd ones, is the work of God’s originary mercy.”[6]

These peculiar people that Brueggemann calls “that odd community” are those who question what the content of “neighbor justice” is and who consistently seek to act out the answers.”[7]

Jesus promises vindication for the poor, the outcasts, the marginalised, the abused and the oppressed. That is why his message is good news. Knowing that vindication and vengeance will come on the day of judgement, should temper the way we treat others. In his letter to the Romans, Paul insists:

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse... Do not repay evil for evil... Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.<sup>20</sup> On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”<sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:14-21)

It is God’s role to avenge, not ours. Jesus told another parable to illustrate this and to motivate his followers not to get despair.

“He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men.<sup>3</sup> And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’<sup>4</sup> “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men,<sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’ ”<sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says.<sup>7</sup> And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?<sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:2-8)

Hollenbach observes, “The complete fulfillment of this vindication will occur only on the eschatological day of judgment. But the resurrection of Jesus is the down

payment on its complete realization, and the Spirit of God has been given to a groaning world as the first fruits of the harvest in which vindication and judgment will be complete. Christians who seek to remain faithful to the Spirit which has been given them are both called and enabled to act in the task of bringing vindication to all who are poor and oppressed. Such action is central in the biblical understanding of the Christian's participation in the justice of God.”[8] In this sense, as Stephen Mott points out, biblical “Justice delivers; it does not merely relieve the immediate needs of those in dire straits... In the act of restoration, those who were victims of justice receive benefits while their exploiters are punished.”[9]

So, to summarize – we have seen that biblical justice, in the eyes of Jesus is first relational, second creative, third liberating and fourth, vindicating. Finally...

## **5. Biblical Justice is Restorative**

God's intention is that people be reconciled to himself and to one another in community. As we have seen, it is specifically those who are vulnerable, the poor, the weak, the widow and orphan and the stranger who are the focus of God's compassion and protection, so that they can survive and remain in the community. In this sense maintaining justice for them is a central demand on God's people.

“He has showed you, O man, what is good.  
And what does the LORD require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

The apostle James summarizes the meaning of religion in this way:

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” (James 1:27)

God's intention is therefore that justice be restorative. Naim Ateek points out, “To talk about the righteousness of God, therefore, means to talk about God's compassion and mercy. In fact, God's concern for justice grows out of compassion and mercy. Injustice is condemned biblically not because the law has been broken, but because a merciful God is flouted and people are hurt.”[10]

Jesus demonstrated this in the encounter with an adulterous woman.

“At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.<sup>3</sup> The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group<sup>4</sup> and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.<sup>5</sup> In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?”<sup>6</sup> They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.<sup>7</sup> When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”<sup>8</sup> Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.<sup>9</sup> At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.<sup>10</sup> Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”<sup>11</sup> “No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.” (John 8:2-11)

Jesus did not condone her sin. But he would not condemn either. Ruth Foster observes, “The woman had committed a crime. Jesus did not condone or excuse her crime. Rather, he illustrated his trust in the power of redemptive love by forgiving the woman of her sin. With mercy and compassion he told her, “Go and sin no more.” At the same time he focused attention on the hypocrisy of her accusers: “Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.” Many Christians have found in this story an insight into the core of the Christian gospel.”[11]

In another encounter Jesus is having a meal at the home of a Pharisee when a prostitute enters and anoints his feet with perfume, wets them with her tears and dries them with her hair. The Pharisee is appalled that Jesus is allowing her to touch him. Jesus responds with a story about two men who each owed money. One owed a little and the other owed a great deal. The money lender cancelled the debts of both. Jesus asks which will love the money lender the most. The Pharisee replies, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt cancelled.” Jesus then applies the principle.

“Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.<sup>45</sup> You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.<sup>46</sup> You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.”<sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”<sup>49</sup> The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is

this who even forgives sins?”<sup>50</sup> Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” (Luke 7:44-50)

Another group of people in society specifically mentioned in need of compassion and restoration are prisoners. In Matthew 25 we find proof that God intends us to be involved with restorative justice.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’<sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,<sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’... Then the righteous will answer... When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’<sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ (Matthew 25:34-40)

Our attitude toward prisoners is indicative of our attitude toward the Lord. “Consider this also, the first saint in Heaven was a thief—the thief who cried out to Jesus from the cross “Remember me when you enter to your kingdom”. Jesus did not just remember him, he took him along. “Today you will be with me in paradise.” God’s actions on our behalf on the cross have to do with justice. The cross is, in fact, God’s plan for justice that restores.”[12] In this sense we should all be able to identify with the thief. For we all fall short of the glory of God; we do not live up to God’s expectations; we all deserve God’s judgment. The good news is that when we are honest and confess our guilt we can all experience the restorative aspect of God’s justice.

“if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.<sup>8</sup> If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:7-9)

God is just. We deserve condemnation. But because Jesus died in our place, God can justly forgive and restore us. And that is why we must seek justice and restoration for others also.

## **Conclusions**

We have seen that justice, in the eyes of Jesus, is first relational, second creative, third liberating, fourth vindicating and fifth, restorative. Each is complimentary and inseparable. Hollenbach again.

“There can be no vindication of the oppressed apart from a creative restructuring of the conditions of exchange and interaction in economic and political life. There can be no liberation which is not simultaneously a movement into a relationship of truly mutual relatedness. The biblical vision acknowledges the reality of injustice and deep conflict in history. Thus it sees the fullness of justice as an eschatological hope.

Injustice is the conflict-ridden exclusion of persons or groups from participation in the richness of social relationship. It leads to oppression and poverty. The remedy for injustice is the struggle to overcome this exclusion and domination, a struggle that is often filled with conflict. But the conflicts of injustice as biblically portrayed are most definitely not conflicts between freedom and social solidarity or between personal faithfulness and corporate responsibility. These are inseparable both in a fully just community and in the process of moving toward such a community.

It must also be noted that the biblical vision of justice will sometimes call Christian citizens to question and challenge the presuppositions which underlie current movements in the political process... A justice which is integrally relational, creative, liberating, [and] vindicating of the poor [and restorative] cuts against some of the bias and self-interests of nearly all political movements and ideologies to be found on the political scene. So though Christians need to employ reason and persuasion fully in their civil pursuit of justice, they also need to recognize its tendency to become infected with what Niebuhr called ideological taint. The defense against this danger is not retreat into an uncritical fundamentalism. The pathway of such a retreat is closed off by the fact that the Bible does not contain the concepts or analyses that can fully illuminate real policy choices.

The strongest secular warrant for the biblical vision of justice is its appositeness for a pluralist and conflicted world. Mutual relatedness, creative restructuring, liberating inclusiveness, and a forthright commitment to the vindication of the poor and oppressed are simultaneously the conditions of religious faithfulness and public civility today... The civil task of the public church is to help nurture them and act on them in both the religious and political domains. Failure to do so would be both unbiblical and uncivil.”[13]

Ruth Foster concludes:

“The waters of justice and righteousness are dangerous to those of us who have promised to follow Christ and to live in covenant with His people. God’s justice is dangerous because:

- to ignore it reveals we are not truly his;
- to misunderstand it can lead to depersonalizing and compartmentalizing those made in God’s image;
- to rationalize away its demands hardens our hearts to God;
- to seek to live out the demands of God’s justice is risky and goes against the grain of normal behavior and cultural norms;
- to pray for God’s justice calls us into involvement with those who need justice.

Are we courageous disciples? Are we brave enough to be God’s light and justice to those in the shadows? If we are to know God fully through his Son Jesus Christ, we must live justly. If the world is to know Jesus Christ through us, we must risk entering into the dangerous waters of God’s justice and righteousness.”[14]

Alan Storkey also offers this closing challenge:

“our relation to God’s justice is unavoidable. It delineates our lives and shapes our history. Moreover, both in the Scriptures and in two thousand years of Christian history, we have the greatest formative tradition of justice in world history. When we walk out of the ghetto, we already know the city, have a good map and have access to its ruler. Surely it is time so to do.”[15]

The Reverend Dr **Stephen Sizer** is the incumbent at Christ Church, Virginia Water, an Anglican parish in Surrey, England. In addition to his parish ministry, he has a number of external roles and is known internationally as an author and speaker specializing in topics relating to the land of Israel. He has written numerous books and articles on this subject and is regularly invited to teach in churches, seminaries and universities in Europe, the Middle East and USA, as a theologian and evangelist. His views on Zionism and Christian Zionism have proved controversial, attracting both praise and condemnation.

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# HIV Breakthrough Through Reconciliation

Dr Ian D. Campbell  
(London England)

Twenty years of implementation of home care relating to HIV/AIDS in the context of family, friends and neighbourhood have led to the realisation that local conflict and reconciliation within and between local communities are highly significant factors influencing the scaling out of integrated care and prevention.

## **Snapshot: Narva, Estonia:**

*A young man of 18 years is living in a house with his grandmother in the city of Narva in Estonia. Russia is just across the border – his mother lives in the adjoining city on the other side of the river. At the time of the dissolution of the ‘Soviet Union’ in the early 1990s, many thousands of Russians did not go back across the river to Russia to their ‘homeland’. For one or another reason they were not able to go. They stayed in Estonia, but they are stateless. They do not have citizenship. They are marginalised in many ways.*

*In the context of AIDS and associated risk factors such as injecting drug use, the experience of personal stigma within local Estonian neighbourhoods grows, as is the case of the young man. The sense of corporate stigma for the marginalized ‘Russians’ living in Estonia is significantly negative. This is a well established realization within the country, and the emergence of HIV in this Estonian city in particular has been a window into self-examination by national policymakers concerned with responses to HIV.*

*The young man had become infected through sharing needles. He was diagnosed at the local hospital, but was refused further treatment. He met a Salvation Army officer at a bus-stop, who heard his story, and who referred him to the National Reference Hospital in Tallinn. After some weeks, he found his way there, was treated well, and is now taking antiretroviral drugs. He has behavioural problems and is in constant conflict with authorities, his grandmother and his mother, whom he occasionally visits. His father lives somewhere in Narva, but there is no active link.*

Local conflict links to other cofactors, which help expand the quality and quantity of response. These cofactors are characterized by relationship, intimacy and conflict resolution.

**1. Care has a dynamic link to prevention**, particularly when the care process is a practice of presence, accompaniment, support, and solidarity that is relational. This takes into account the effect on family, friends, and neighbourhood.

## **Snapshot: Kituthuni, Kenya:**

*A local church group fostered positive relationships with local community members by home visits and by community conversations.*

*Over 12 months at least ten local, walking-distance neighbourhoods determined their own response to HIV through home care, community determined behaviour change, youth response and referral for treatment.*

*Now, two years later, over 55 neighbourhoods are responding. They each have their own plan. They are connected yet autonomous. They are watching each other in a positive way – if one neighbourhood stops caring and preventing, or if there are conflicts, then at least one other neighbourhood will engage to help them make progress again. Each neighbourhood is committed to action, self measurement and transfer. Each can share a story of needing to overcome local family and neighbourhood conflicts, so that shared acknowledgement can happen and shared action can result.*

*Such a response is indivisible from the necessity of local reconciliation.*

The link between people's care – especially in homes – and motivated, sustained, shared response by others who watch and feel is well documented. This is a core foundation for expansion of local response that is characterised by care, support, prevention and transfer of inspiration and action from community to community.

Care and stigma walk in the same pathways – person to person, attention to attention. The difference is intention.

The critical approach that activates a positive destigmatizing care and prevention relationship is the connection of the experience of persons in the home environment to acknowledgement of pain, anxiety and loss in surrounding community members – through an intentional facilitation of community conversation. It is important that counselling occur in the same geographic area in which the home care process is taking place.

Some key strengths distilled through local exposure learning – which are consistently found in local communities under stress, and which can be embedded within the behaviour or organizations – include:

- Care moves beyond treatment. It is participatory identification with pain, loss and hope.
- Community response development through the facilitation of positive belonging. The experience is not easy or comfortable, but transparent, conflict resolving, and satisfying because it is associated with learning and growth.
- Capacity for change is not something induced from outside. It is brought out by a nurturing, counselling presence.
- Hope is about faith for the future that cannot be seen, as well as concrete action in the present.

Grounded in these beliefs – that infected and affected people have the capacity to respond – it should not be surprising to discover that expansion of home care and community change is mediated, amongst other elements, by spiritual intimacy and comfort. This is an intrinsic element for many in the reconciliation process.

A transition is often experienced from home-grown stigma to shared responsibility for care, support and change within the whole community. The transition does not need to take very long. Such paradigm shift requires the presence of authentic care expressed through action, including counselling that is group-based, helping people in their neighbourhood relationships reflect on their own situations and redirect their anxiety from projection on those with HIV, to their own family and behavioural context.

This transition is mediated through shared confidentiality. People in local neighbourhoods live in an environment of shared confidentiality, referring to the inevitable diffusion of information that helps shift secrets to shared knowledge, shared understanding and shared safe intimacy.

***Snapshot: Narva, Estonia:***

*During some home visits in Narva in February 2005, a young married couple, both of whom are HIV positive, spoke of their secret joy – their newborn baby appears to be HIV negative.*

*Initially they said that no-one else knows of their situation. They also said that they know another couple who are HIV+ who have a child.*

*When asked how it is that they know of this other couple, they said that they know quite a few people who have been at risk from drug use, and who are HIV+. They said they would be willing to share their story with other people and to help others seek testing. They acknowledged this should happen because the people they know with HIV are holding their secret who are lonely and in conflict with each other very often.*

*They reflected on their own experience and explained how much better they feel now that they can share their thoughts confidentially. They want to help others do this because they think it will bring about better safety, prevention, and much relief.*

The dynamic link between care and prevention is crucial to expansion of response. Shared concerns are interwoven with shared hope. People begin to come together across perceived boundaries to talk, share concern, and respond. This is a reconciliation process.

**2. The dynamic link between the home, the neighbourhood and institutional support.**

Organizations are usually insulated from the reality of home and neighbourhood life. However, local reconciliation requires engagement in all three environments.

A strategic context for shared response is generated when staff from any support institution take on the mindset that community response needs to be supported above all else, rather than being preoccupied with delivery of services as the primary contribution to the HIV/AIDS situation. A shift from the solely empirical to including the equally vital (though intangible) networks of interdependent concern are crucial.

This principle could be applied to other areas of reconciliation. Advocacy alone is insufficient. Organizational response alone does not touch the places where values, viewpoints, and relationships are formed.

Organizations need to explore a relational approach – one of listening, reflecting, experiential learning, being prepared to go out of the building and into the living situation. SALT team methodology fosters links between people at policy, organizational, and local areas of response. The word SALT describes the approach:

S : Support and stimulation  
A : Appreciation  
L : Learning  
T : Transfer

It is a method that is very low cost yet that has high returns in terms of stimulation for the visitors and growth of dignity for those visited. It is the precursor to the 'facilitation team'. It is a learning tool where the learning is based in local experience and action.

This does not happen easily. It happens most often and most effectively where there are committed people who are prepared to break their schedules, add to their loads, and explore the unfamiliar. It is usually activated by people who are respectful of relationship and the intimacy of others.

### **3. Religious response – a cofactor in reconciliation and stigma**

#### ***(1) Perceptions and realities***

Religious groups, in general, have a reputation for responding to the issue of HIV in negative terms. Factors that have influenced this perception have included judgmental comment from religious leaders, debate about condoms, and an obstructive stance towards policy development – particularly regarding drug use, commercial sex, and harm reduction approaches. Engagement by the religious sector that implies dilution of moral standards has been discouraged, and so some people with HIV have experienced rejection by religious people, congregations or institutions.

Such experiences have been widely shared, yet is this the whole story? Have religious organizations been stigmatised before they are given a chance to respond? Why has it

taken so long (20 years) for the role of religion to be affirmed in contributing to responses? What have been the assumptions on the part of governments, WHO (GPA), UN co-sponsors, and UNAIDS (since 1996)?

Consider some other experiences of assertive engagement which has reduced stigma dramatically. Home care systematically linked to a multi-disciplinary community development approach, including counselling for care, support and neighbourhood behavioural change; income generating approaches linked to skills and vocational development; advocacy by religious leaders to other leaders within the religious sector; interfaith collaboration; pastoral support not only in local communities but in organizations and in civil society.

Efforts have been made to analyse the effect of accumulating loss on the hope of persons with HIV, their families and communities. This has been linked to faith, to views about the future and to stigma reduction.

A newer, relationally-based community development approach has been characterized – one that affirms a wider confidentiality determined by the community and is a safe haven for expansion of response for inclusion. This is in contrast to community fear, lack of inclusion, and stigma. The fact that religious communities are usually interwoven into the wider community is a major asset and strength for scaling up, for sustaining response, and for promoting mutual healthy accountability for care, support and change.

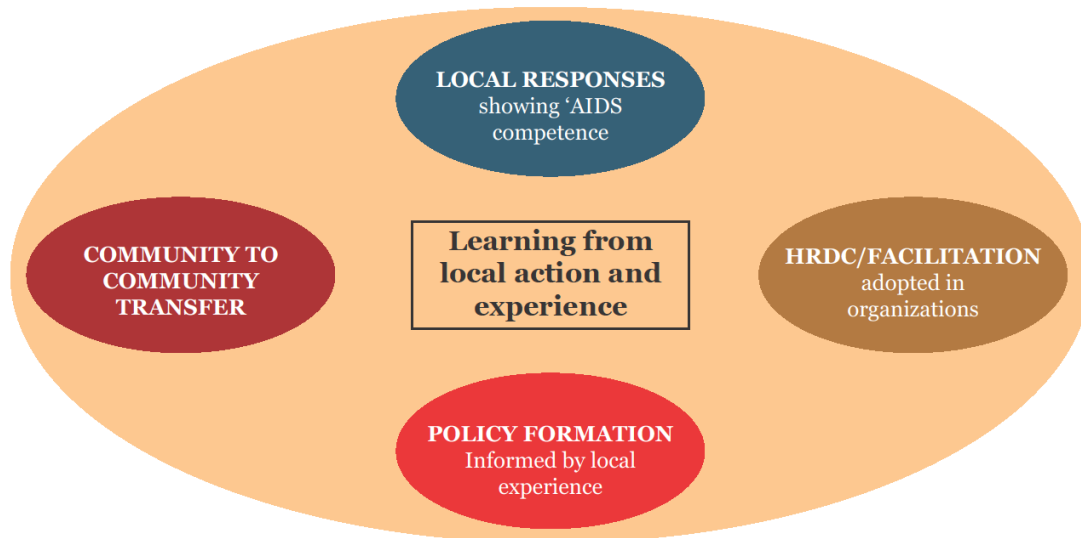
Not all religious organizations or congregations are responding – many have not yet taken it as their concern. At the same time, congregational and personal response has been happening; it is more difficult to accumulatively measure than the more visible organizational response. The perception and reality are not always matched.

## **(2) *Some distinctions***

- There is a difference in context between religious organizations, religious leadership and personal faith. All are valued facets of religious identity, yet the fact that most people hold some form of personal, spiritual faith is too rarely acknowledged within international policy that is concerned with societal response. Why is this so? Is it that personal spiritual faith is the ultimate intimacy? Has spirituality been left out of the term 'holistic health'? Is this why reconciliation and spirituality linkage is insufficiently acknowledged?
- 'Morality' can be received as affirmation of the mutual good, without assumption or judgement or exclusion. It can be an expression of solidarity, containing beliefs that are offered and often owned by the wider community. Articulation of religious values and norms can be part of the community identity rather than an imposition.
- There can be dysfunction between beliefs and practice in any organization. Vision is not generally in question with religious leaders, because it is not difficult for people to easily subscribe to the concepts of loving care and the need for hope. However, corresponding practices are often in question. For example,

instead of a participatory approach, an imposing or provider approach is dominant.

#### 4. Human capacity development – a framework for expanding responses



The diagram illustrates the five essential dimensions of an HCDR approach, each of which interact and stimulate the development of the others. The expansion of local responses, and community to community transfer of action and response is enhanced by facilitation, rather than a dominance of interventionist approaches by organizations. Learning from local action is the medium through which organizations understand the dynamic of community response and therefore adapt approaches and adopt HCDR-based policies. Through participation in facilitation teams, people from organizations are exposed to learning from the local responses, and by applying this learning organizational communication and service provision become responsive to community leadership.

Some key elements for going to scale in a country on HIV/AIDS and reconciliation processes:

- *Local responses* demonstrate capacity for care and change. These responses can and should be the voice of conscience for organizations exploring their responses.
- *A facilitation working culture* by organizations, in contrast to assumption of the right to impose knowledge, expertise and – implicitly – desire for control, no matter how philanthropically obscured.
- *Commitment to experientially-based mutual learning* by communities and organizations – e.g. district level programme to programme visits based in local neighbourhoods and homes – can rapidly catalyse concept transfer and practice design and action on returning.

- *Community to community transfer*. Lamboray(3) says “*Community competence is contagious; combined with a shared ambition it can be shared to community to community*”.
- *Exploration of collaboration with other organizations*(4) through the pathways of shared vision, shared ways of working, and shared desirable results. (5)
- *Policy formation by inclusion*, involving local community experience of people

Within the desperate need to ‘scale up’ approaches, there is temptation to replace participation with intervention and externally determined expectations. Yet participation is necessary to bring about community-determined change. Communities and programmes are often invalidated because the approaches that have helped bring out the capacity of local communities – even within situations of high stress, to name, act for and measure their own change – have been undervalued.

In particular the team approach to home care, and the connections between team and home environment participants to the wider community for prevention, has not been recognised. This connection happens through complex circles of confidentiality and in association with a synergistic process of community counselling that depends often non-verbally and almost invisibly on the authenticity of the caring approach for its success.

There is opportunity to strengthen the local community capacity development approach and that opportunity needs to be taken now. It is relevant not only to countries of the global south but to the north, where a dilution of a relational approach to link care with change has happened to a greater extent than in the south, related to the availability of treatments and associated complacency about prevention. Wealthier nations often insulate themselves with professionals and programs, and impoverish themselves relationally.

The surprising finding by people in the organizations that truly do facilitate is that mutual learning is possible, the burden lifts, and this in turn can enhance the capacity and the environment for reconciliation.

## **5. Some key operational research questions**

- Within the local community experience, how can local capacity for care and behaviour change be explored, respected and affirmed as a fundamental strength for community response?
- What are the characteristics of an integrated approach to care and change that allows for conflict resolution and stigma reduction?
- Regarding partnerships of the religious sector (with other organizations), how can theological principles and identity be expressed respectfully, and linked to practices that are encouraged by the partners?
- How can organizational responses be improved by learning from the local response? How can policy be proactively informed? How is conflict in local settings influenced by HIV/AIDS related accumulating loss in communities and

families? How can human capacity development approaches help resolve conflict, foster reconciliation, care and prevention?

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**Ian Campbell** is a physician and international health programme consultant facilitating participatory design and evaluation of home and community based approaches to a range of health issues, often resourced by hospitals or clinic systems, and by faith leaders and structures. He currently coordinates 'Affirm Facilitation Associates,' a global community of practice connecting local faith-linked responses to HIV with change in health systems and organisations.

# Self-Sacrificial Leadership: Is it time for Islamo-Christian culture?

By Dr. Jay Gary

***“An Islamo-Christian civilization will require self-sacrificial leadership from both Western and Islamic civilizations. Evangelicals must see it consistent within their biblical meaning-making to transform conflict with Islam.”***

Yesterday I woke up to learn that President Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for “his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples” (Norwegian, 2009, para 1). While this award for global leadership dealt with his “work for a world without nuclear weapons,” many also view Obama’s “new beginning” speech to Cairo Egypt (Obama, 2009) as a sign that a better future can be created between the West and Islam.

Not all Americans are ready to seek common ground with their Muslim neighbors and co-workers. Two weeks before Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize, a New Jersey mosque called for 50,000 Muslims to gather in front of the U.S. Capitol building “for the sole purpose of prayer” (Islamoncapitolhill.com, 2009). This massive Muslim prayer rally incited a counter call by Lou Engle, Pentecostal evangelist, for “five days of concerted prayer” to “restrain the spiritual powers behind Islam” and counter more mainstream prayer invitations to “understand our Muslim friends” (Engle, 2009). At a time when Muslims are seeking to peacefully pray for the welfare of their families and America, Christian evangelists can’t resist throwing gasoline on the fire. They intentionally insult one-fourth of humanity.

Is evangelical rhetoric widening Huntington’s (1993, 1996) ‘clash of civilizations’ between Islamic and Western civilization? Even after the faith-based presidency of George Bush, are evangelicals still itching for a civilizational fight (Hoover, 2004)?

Bulliet (2004) maintains that Huntington’s ‘clash of civilization’ phraseology reformulated Middle East confrontation rhetoric. Where once it had been dominated by nationalistic and Cold War rhetoric, the new formulation took on cosmic proportions, reinforcing conservative Christian thinking that Christianity and Islam are irreconcilable.

Cimino (2005) examined anti-Islamic polemics in evangelical literature over a two-year period after the tragedy of September 11th as part of a pattern of encounter, competition and conflict. The polemic against Islam took shape in three forms: (a) evangelical apologetics to prove the truth of Christianity against Islam; (b) speculative prophetic literature linking Islam as the main protagonist in end-times scenarios; and (c) charismatic literature applying ‘spiritual warfare’ teachings to Islam.

While the events of September 11th did rally evangelicals to support the war on terrorism, evangelicals were simultaneously unsettled by Bush’s comments that Islam

was a religion of peace (Bush, 2001). Cimino argues the main effect of September 11th was to intensify evangelical concerns about religious pluralism, the threat of syncretism, and the mixing of Christianity with other religions.

In this polarized context, Bulliet argues that Middle East experts, historians and religionists must make the case for an “Islam-Christian” civilization. He concedes that the omission of “Judeo-” from this phrase might initially jar consciousness. Yet Bulliet aims to draw attention to something different than the generic Abrahamic religions (Al-Faruqi, 1995; Dirks, 2004). He argues the phrase “Islam-Christian” civilization “denotes a prolonged and fateful intertwining of sibling societies enjoying sovereignty in neighboring geographic regions and following parallel historic trajectories” (p. 10). He claims neither the Christian society of Western Europe, nor the Muslim society of the Middle East and North Africa, can be understood without relation to the Other.

Central to this paper’s argument is that the construction of an Islam-Christian civilization will require self-sacrificial leadership from both Western and Islamic civilizations. Its corollary is: if this is to happen, evangelicals must see it as consistent within their biblical meaning-making to transform their conflict with Islam.

More than sixty-five years ago William Ernest Hocking called for Christianity to reject both imperialism and synthesis in favor of ‘the way of reconception’ (1940). The way of reconception meant that the positive religions would come to understand how their historically conditioned particularity created different symbol sets, reflecting different formulations of truth. Hocking envisioned a time when religions would grow more intimate with each other. In the process, each faith would become more true to its roots.

Paul Tillich likewise envisioned the living religions breaking through their particularities and using them to affirm the divine presence and human choice found in other traditions (1963). At the time, before World War II, Hocking’s proposal for re-conception appeared too optimistic and relativistic to Christian missionaries (Hogg, 1952). On what basis, then, could we hope that evangelical leaders in our time might enter into deep dialogue (Swidler, 1990) with Muslims to recognize and strengthen an Islam-Christian civilization?

Evangelical scholars, such as Netland (1991, 2001), Tennent (2002) or Yong (2003, 2005) have addressed the epistemological and pneumatological issues that relate Christian inclusivism or exclusivism to religious dialogue. To compliment these studies, this paper draws from leadership studies to argue that evangelicals should embrace the civic reality of Islam-Christian civilization, based on hermeneutical and organizational dynamics.

This paper compares two models of leadership: one contemporary and one ancient. The contemporary model is Choi and Mai-Dalton’s (1998, 1999) organizational theory of self-sacrificial leadership. The ancient model is Saint Paul’s kenosis hymn of Christ in Philippians 2:5-11. Both models depend on leaders making sacrifices in view of the

incompleteness of their organizational designs. Both models look to their leaders to rebalance their organization following systemic breakdowns with a chaotic environment.

## **An Ancient Model of Leadership**

Philippians 2:5-11 is one of the most well known passages in Saint Paul's writings. Known as the Kenosis Hymn, it is thought to be an ancient affirmation of faith. Kenosis is from the Greek word *ekenosen*, "he emptied," v. 7, referring to the self-sacrifice of Jesus-the-Christ (Bratcher, 2005). Using socio-rhetorical criticism (Robbins, 1996), this section explores the sacred, social and cultural texture of this text to probe its "dynamics across a spectrum of relationships between the human and divine" (p. 5).

This text, portrayed in the sacred story of Jesus' passion, offered the Christian-Jewish diaspora in Philippi an alternative to the clash of civilizations of their day, the clash between Roman imperialism and Second Temple Judaism, which ended in the destruction of Herodian Jerusalem in C.E. 70 (Mendels, 1997).

There are six constituent elements of the Pauline leadership model: (a) human commitment, (b) holy servant, (c) divine action, (d) divine history, (e) human redemption, and (f) religious community.

### **Human commitment**

Paul opens this passage with a call to commitment (v. 2:5): "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus" (Bible, NRSV, 1991). This emergent faith community faced external pressure (cf. v. 1:28) from teachers motivated by "envy and rivalry" and "selfish ambition" (v. 1:15; 1:17). Longenecker (2000) argues that the apostle's opponents in Philippi were "Judaizers" or Jewish-Christian believers in Jesus, like those he faced in Galatia and Corinth. Paul wrote the Philippians to warn this community "of the dogs... the evil workers... who mutilate the flesh!" (v. 3:2); Paul's adversaries were insisting that Gentile believers should be circumcised to uphold the Law of Moses. This message had left "internal division (cf. v. 1:27) in its wake, and possibly divided two local workers (cf. v. 4:2). Therefore, as their leader, Paul calls for human commitment, to stand "firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel" (v. 1:27b).

### **Holy servant**

Central to Paul's appeal to organizational unity is the holy person of Jesus, the righteous servant. Bratcher claims this messianic hymn follows a "pattern of privilege-servanthood-exaltation" (2005, para. 19). Verse 6 speaks of Jesus' privilege being in "the form of God." Next the passage speaks of his servanthood and self-abasement (v. 7-8). Jesus "emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness," and in this state, he "humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death." Verses 9-11 speak of Jesus' exaltation as vice regent to the divine. Later Paul draws attention to his own example as a holy person, a servant without ambition. He describes

how he gave up Pharisaic privilege to follow Christ. He calls the Philippians to sacrifice and suffer at the hands of Judaizers, as he is now suffering through Roman imprisonment (v. 1:29).

### **Divine action**

Speaking of Jesus' vindication in verse 2:9, Paul writes, "Therefore God also highly exalted him." This worked "to the glory of God the Father" (v. 11). Immediately following the hymn, Paul writes, "for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (v. 2:13). Unlike contemporary models of leadership, Paul's model included a divine dynamic. This was not seen as a deterministic force, akin to structuralism in sociology (Wallerstein, 1997), but the intervention of a personal God, in response to human agency.

### **Divine history**

The Pauline model of leadership is based on a larger story of God restoring his people, who find themselves in exile (Wright, 1992). Just as Jesus, the righteous servant, is raised from death, so those who embrace him receive covenantal life upon the collapse of the Herodian temple (cf. Phil. 3:21). Paul, like Jesus, stood over and against the rising militant tide of Jewish temple nationalism, and zealotry against Rome, which ended in civil war and the destruction of Jerusalem. Against this clash of civilizations, Paul saw Jesus offering a post-crisis path for survival (Akenson, 2000; Horsley & Silberman, 1997; Gary, 2008).

### **Human redemption**

Seely (1994) proposes this hymn is a call to redemption. He sees this as a combination of three sacred elements, the Maccabean stories of the Suffering Righteous (Apocrypha, 2 Maccabees 7), the aversion to Greco-Roman worship, and the triumph stories from Isaiah 45. Pressured to reject the ways of their ancestors, the Maccabees chose Yahweh and were tortured as martyrs. They faced death obediently, but were vindicated, as the Jewish nation won political independence. Likewise these believers were to refrain from Emperor worship. Paul reapplies a text from Isaiah (45:23) to Christ, "To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." This echo in Philippians 2:11 places the early Jesus followers in contrast to the Empire. The follower attribution of charisma to Jesus, instead, is considered a sign of imminent salvation.

### **Religious community**

The context for this vindication and transformation is the faithful religious community. The story of Jesus' exaltation and resurrection in C.E. 30 pointed to an eschatological community in resurrection. Those who followed the righteous servant would be recognized as good servants once the old economy, the old order collapsed (King, 1987).

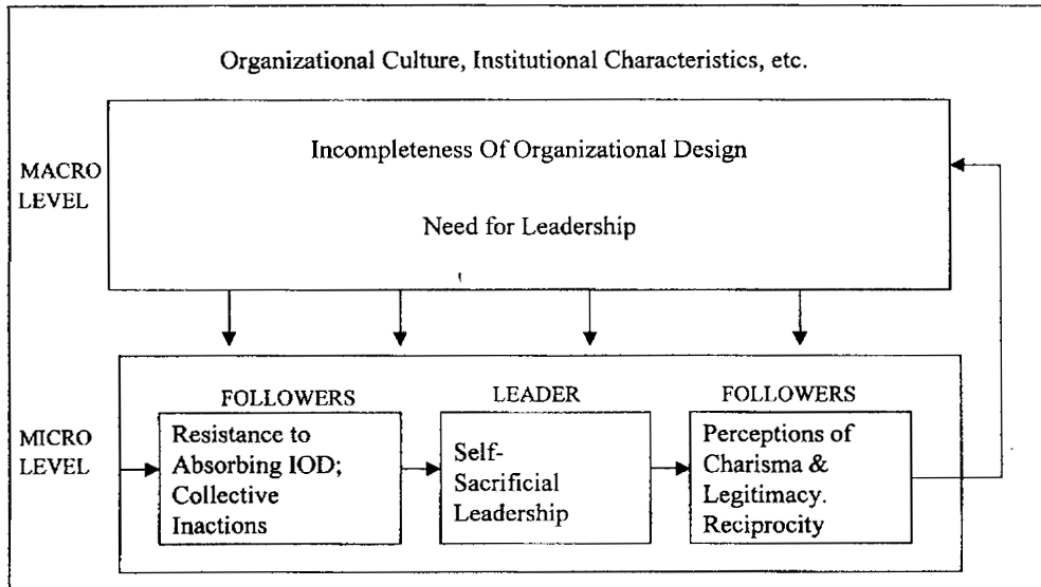
## **Summary**

Examining Jesus through Pauline eyes has normally been the domain of sacred theology. Socio-rhetorical criticism, however, allows us to examine the contextual variables that defined this deviant sub-system of Second Temple Judaism, and its aim toward organizational adaptation and transformation. Self-sacrificial leadership, enacted by Jesus, was a call to a third way, standing against the clash of civilizations, over and against imperial Hellenism and its counter opposite, Jewish nationalism. If evangelicals came to view redemption in this historical context, this could offer internal religious justification to resist the contemporary demands of Caesar and Herod, expressed in our day as American empire and Israeli expansionism (Horsley, 2003; Sizer, 2004).

## **A Contemporary Model of Leadership**

Greenleaf's (1977) premise that leaders must first be servants to their followers has strengthened a number of research traditions in leadership studies (Matteson & Irving, 2005), including transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985, 1996), charismatic leadership (Conger & Kanungo, 1987), and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977; Patterson, 2004). In this context, increased theoretical and empirical attention has been given to leader self-sacrifice in organizational settings (Choi & Mai-Dalton, 1999; Halverson, et al, 2005). These studies have explored the effects of selfless leader behavior on followers and organizational culture.

In organizational settings, self-sacrificial leadership can be defined as "the total/partial abandonment, and/or permanent/temporary postponement of personal interests, privileges, or welfare in the (a) division of labor, (b) distribution of rewards, and/or (c) exercise of power" (Choi and Mai-Dalton, 1998, p. 479). Following the terrorist attacks on September 11th, various airline executives took a cut in personal pay to help their companies survive the airline industry turndown (Halverson et al, 2004). The self-sacrificial theory of leadership is a contingent model of leadership that integrates macro-variables, such as industry environment and situational crisis, with micro variables, such as leader self-sacrifice and follower attribution. It is also concerned about leadership effectiveness and team productivity (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005).



**Figure 1: A schematic model of self-sacrificial leadership**

**Note.** From Choi, Y., & Mai-Dalton, R. R. (1998, p. 479).

In Figure 1, Choi and Mai-Dalton (1998) conceptualize leadership as both a macro and micro-level process. The macro level deals with organizational design and leadership discretion. The micro-level process deals with leader-follower interactions at the dyadic or group level. When organizational design is found incomplete, the role of self-sacrifice by leaders comes into play. "Self-sacrifice is seen as such a resolution mechanism, thus, a mechanism of organizational adaptation" (p. 483). The Choi and Mai-Dalton model distinguishes between incremental self-sacrifice to influence organizational culture and radical self-sacrifice to rescue an organization in crisis. Various propositions are offered, including:

1. The greater the environmental uncertainty, the greater the incompleteness of organizational design and the greater the need for leadership.
2. Organizations are sustained when the participants share the understanding that there is a potential for sacrifices in organizational settings which needs to be absorbed.
3. Self-sacrificial leadership will facilitate individual adaptations to incomplete organizational design and organizational adaptations to changing situations.
4. Self-sacrificial leadership will be positively associated with the followers' perceptions of the leader's charisma.
5. Self-sacrificial leadership will be positively associated with the followers' intentions to reciprocate the leader's self-sacrificial behaviors (p. 485-491).

The Pauline model compares well with the Choi and Mai-Dalton model of self-sacrificial leadership in five ways. First, the macro-level emphasis on environmental uncertainty,

or situational crisis, fits the context of the early Jesus movement's view of an impending collapse of Second Temple Judaism (Phil. 3:18-21). Second, like the Choi and Mai-Dalton model, the early church was voluntarily sustained through leader and follower suffering (v. 1:29-30). Third, self-sacrifice in the early church functioned as an adaptive resolution mechanism to environmental change. The radical sacrifice of Jesus, or altruistic suicide (Durkheim, 1951), was seen as addressing covenantal design flaws in Second Temple Judaism (Phil. 4:21, cf. 2 Corinth. 5:1-5). Fourth, Paul encourages his followers to acknowledge the divine attribution of charisma given to Jesus as vindication for his suffering (v. 2:9-11). Fifth, Paul expected his followers to reciprocate his self-sacrificial behavior, and viewed their financial offerings as "giving and receiving," in prison sufferings (v. 4:15). In every way, except for the attribution of divine vindication, the Choi and Mai-Dalton model of self-sacrificial leadership corresponds well to the leadership dynamics of the first-century Jesus movement.

### **America, Jesus and Empire?**

In their attempts to excavate Jesus, Crossan and Reed (2001) suggest that the Baptist Movement of John and the Kingdom Movement of Jesus, which appeared in the mid-20s, was in direct relationship to the grip of economic Romanization sweeping upper Galilee. Drawing parallels from the first-century to globalization today, Crossan asks, "Is America the 21st century Rome?" (Crossan, n.d.).

Horsley (2003) further develops this understanding of Jesus as a resistance leader to Roman imperial domination. He sees a strong resemblance between contemporary Islamic resistance to America's global capitalist empire and ancient Judean-Galilean resistance against Romanization. Both resistance movements are deeply rooted in keeping tradition and covenant law, whether mediated by the prophet Moses or Muhammad. Horsley also notes the analogy is unsettling. Both ancient Judean resistance and contemporary Islamic resistance employ terrorism, whether through Sicarii assassins then or suicide bombers now.

### **Jesus and Bin Laden?**

Does this put Jesus and Osama Bin Laden in the same ideological camp with regards to martyrdom? Don't both Islam and Christianity draw upon religious metaphors of altruistic suicide to address situational crisis? Here is where Christianity and Islam must make a distinction. Self-sacrificial leaders like Jesus, Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr. or perhaps today's Iraqi Shiite Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani (not ordering attacks in kind on Sunnis) take society's violence upon themselves; they do not project it outward. Based on the incomplete organizational design of their sub-cultures, they model non-violence to absorb the surrounding state violence. In contrast to absorbing violence, Bin Laden's insurgency and in particular, his suicide bombers, reflect back state violence (Gano, 2007). This is the antithesis of self-sacrificial leadership.

Wink (1998) argues that the gospel expressed as non-violent resistance is universal and stands against "the Domination system that has oppressed the earth for the past

five thousand years.” He continues, “The failure of churches to continue Jesus’ struggle to overcome domination is one of the most damning apostasies in history. With some thrilling exceptions, the churches of the world have never yet decided that domination is wrong” (p. 11).

Wink’s interrogation could easily be turned on Islam or Judaism, for that matter. Yet Christianity cannot be let off the witness stand, given its own history of colonial alliance. This leads us to the 64 million dollar question: Are evangelical leaders ready to subdue their militarist campaigns, and model self-sacrificial behavior to build an Islamo-Christian civilization? Yes, and pigs might also fly comes the rejoinder!

Yet within the Christian meaning-making world, as Castelli (2004) reminds us, lies the memories of past martyrs in its first 300 years, who inverted and subverted the Empire’s notion of a Pax Romana through non-violence.

### **Conflict Transformation Project**

One encouraging sign in April 2005 was the first joint conference of American Muslims and Christian evangelical participants. The Salaam Institute for Peace and Justice of Washington, D.C. joined hands with Fuller Theological Seminary of Pasadena to launch the Conflict Transformation Project. The project, funded through a grant from the Department of Justice, aims to build mutual understanding between American evangelicals and American Muslims in the aftermath of September 11th and promote joint conflict transformation projects, manuals and scholarship (Salaam, n.d.).

### **Conclusion**

This paper explored evangelical capacity to build the Islamo-Christian civilizations of tomorrow. In this regard, we explored Christian meaning-making capacity to defuse religious violence in its midst. Using social rhetorical criticism we examined the Pauline model of Jesus’ leadership found in the Kenosis Hymn of Philippians. We also considered Choi and Mai-Dalton’s (1998) theory of self-sacrificial leadership, and how its dynamics matched the Pauline situational crisis, the need for organizational adaptation, the leader’s behavior of self-sacrifice, and the call for members to reciprocate sacrificial behavior. Finally we considered alternative understandings of American empire and Islamic resistance.

So what are we to make of Obama’s open hand to Islam or of Muslims gathering to pray at the U.S. Capital? Rather than throw gasoline on the fire, perhaps we should set controlled burnings ahead of the fire to extinguish the flame within our own cultural attics. What would be refined through fire, however, would be ancient and contemporary models of self-sacrificial leadership that are inherently non-violent. Over and against prevailing interpretations of Christ for sectarian and political power, domination-free spirituality must intentionally work to eliminate violence from its margins.

The construct of Islamo-Christian civilization is a viable way to talk about conflict transformation and shared meaning in public contexts. Islamo-Christian civilization is not a threat to the Christian tradition, nor Islam, nor Judaism, anymore than Judeo-Christian consensus was.

Pursued with cultural and multilateral diplomacy, Islamo-Christian reconciliation efforts have the possibility to enrich all traditions and make the world safer for our grandchildren. It will require sacrifice, however, to all human constructed ideologies and institutions which feed off of violating the Other. Putting the interest of the other first is what servant leadership is all about. "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:12, NRSV).

Dr. Jay Gary is president of PeakFutures, a Virginia based consulting group. He is dedicated to helping non-profit, public and private enterprises use long-term foresight to transform conflict and create regional innovation. He presently teaches students from the MBA to PhD level and directs the Master of Strategic Foresight at Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA.

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