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Conflict Transformation and the Spiritual Practices for the Military Chaplain

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CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

AND THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR THE MILITARY CHAPLAIN

Daniel Njoroge Karanja

(B.A. East Africa School of Theology, 1989.,

M.Div. Boston University School of Theology, 1994.,

D.Min. Andover Newton Theological School, 1999.,

M.A. California State University, 2008)

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CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

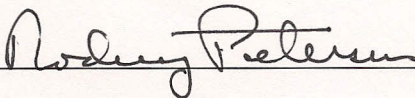## AND THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR THE MILITARY CHAPLAIN

By

Daniel Njoroge Karanja

APPROVED

by

Reader _____

Dr. Rodney L. Petersen

Professor of Religion and Conflict Transformation

Executive Director, Boston Theological Institute

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Preface

Chaplains across the United States military are called and charged to humbly execute the work of a shepherd with simplicity and humility of heart, to remote deployed locations, going in and out of work stations, motor pools, bomb damps, and security forces guard mounts and outposts across their military installation. Visiting with the civil engineering squadron personnel repairing a runaway or conducting convoy operations in combat zones are just a few of the numerous opportunities for making deep and meaningful connections with military personnel in order to know their joys and hurts. Chaplains are literally visible reminders of the holy embedded with the military as a reminder that they are not alone regardless of the nature of duty or location.

The Religious Support Team (RST) brings a freshness and presence to the lives of Airmen facing various degrees of estrangement, isolation and loneliness as a result of an interpersonal conflict with a peer or a supervisor. The chaplain with a shepherd's heart is called and charged to lead and feed the flock. The ministry of reconciliation is at the heart of spiritual fitness and nurturing. A new strategy of pursuing excellence, investing in the area of interpersonal and organizational relationships will open other doors to truly honor and serve all. Chaplains have unprecedented opportunity to influence change in relationships between individuals, organizations and by extension improving the holistic health of all at a national level.

Conflict transformation, reconciliation and healing provide a unique brand capable of addressing immediate needs and long term challenges across the chain of command. What would our military communities look like if our RSTs were known as the most effective and resourceful in diagnosis, treatment and care for strained workplace relationships, conflicted organizational relationships and family situations? Jesus was once moved with compassion because the people were like sheep, scattered, estranged,

exhausted, distressed and without a shepherd. The chaplain is called to be the shepherd to this kind of flock.

Spiritual leadership for the 21st century and beyond demands a new skill set in order to generate growth in the communities military chaplains lead. Effective spiritual leaders have a rare opportunity to provide a new vector, inspiration and mentorship to resolve conflicts and become agents of restoration and healing where brokenness has happened. While much has been written about this topic, there is still a great need to explore and expand on the skills of a shepherd-leader who believes in the power of negotiation and mediation to heal conflict. Drawing examples from the United States Air Force, this study will explore the role of a military chaplain in conflict, its prevention and recommended spiritual practices of the minister of reconciliation.

Acknowledgements

To my family, Joyce, Saraphina, Joseph and Gideon, thank you for teaching me the

basics of negotiation on a daily basis. You willingly and generously gave up many family

opportunities to make time for this program of study and research.

CHAPTER ONE

UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

Defining Conflict

Conflict is a common phenomenon that all human beings experience in life. Pruitt and Rubin define conflict "as a sharp disagreement or opposition, as of interests, ideas and includes the perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously."[1]The inability to agree could be partially driven by incompatible goals as Louis Kriesberg states, "conflict encompasses a situation where two or more persons or groups manifest the belief that they have incompatible objectives."[2] Joseph Montville concurs with Kriesberg and Pruitt's definition adding that conflict is "a perception of the incompatibility of interests."[3] At the interpersonal level, conflict alludes to the inability to get along, strained relationships and feelings of internal and external strife. Kraybill adds that the Latin root word *confligere* means "to strike or clash together."[4] The meaning carries further the idea of disharmony and misalignment leading to constructive or destructive conflicts. At the heart of conflict is a sense of incompatibility, contest and destructive clashes between people. With this understanding, four levels of conflict are discussed next to show the interrelationship of conflict in individuals, groups and society.

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[1] Dean G. Pruitt and Jeffrey Z. Rubin, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement* (New York: Random House, 1986), 4.

[2] Louis Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), 3.

[3] Joseph V. Montville, *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies* (Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1990), 9.

[4] Ronald S. Kraybill, Robert A. Evans, and Alice Frazier Evans, *Peace Skills: Manual for Community Mediators* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2001), 12.

I experienced my first significant conflict in my first Parish assignment where three quarters of the parish council members had unsuccessfully tried to declare independence from their "mother" church without success. The senior minister wasn't willing to let go of the younger congregation which was vibrant and financially stable. My appointment letter stated that my mission was to build the congregation and help establish a full fledged self sustaining independent parish. After three months of fruitless negotiations with the senior minister, I increasingly became frustrated. I felt powerless and compromised. I visited the Bishop over the issue and he delegated the matter to a mid-level church official to mediate between the senior minister, myself and the congregation. The senior minister cut off all communications with me. Cold attitudes between the mother church and our small congregation emerged. Within four months, the parish council from the younger congregation declared independence and severed ties with the mother church. This conflict progressed through all the levels of conflict described by Roy J. Lewicki , Bruce Barry and David M. Saunders where they categorize conflict into four levels ;intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup.[5] The conflict referred to above, intensified at the interpersonal and intragroup level leading to the breaking away. The conflict levels are defined further next.

Intrapersonal

At the intrapersonal level, conflict occurs within oneself as a result of ideas, emotions, moral-ethical dilemmas, or conflicted internal psychological drives. For example, faced with the annual military unit compliance inspection (UCI), the reporting official noted that a key safety

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[5] Roy J. Lewicki, Bruce Barry and David M. Saunders, *Essentials of Negotiations* (McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2006), 17.

requirement had not been documented. No one could remember whether it was accomplished or not. The reporting official struggled with his integrity and honesty especially knowing the consequences of falsifying a military document. Another example might be a supervisor who consistently annoyed others by yelling at others in the work place. A subordinate was afraid of letting him know of his annoying habit fearing a misunderstanding or accusation of insubordination and she chose not to engage him. Having a self awareness around intrapersonal conflicts can help one in choosing when to engage in constructive conflict while preventing destructive conflicts from happening.

<p style="text-align:center">Interpersonal</p>

This refers to conflicts between individuals in a team, neighbors, or family members with conflicting interests or goals. An intrapersonal conflict could easily provoke an interpersonal conflict. Self awareness prevents destructive approach and encourages a constructive response. For example, if one believed that her religious convictions were the only true and complete, she might encounter difficulty in an environment where religious pluralism and respect and acknowledgment of other faiths is expected. An intrapersonal conflict of this nature might close the boundary to the interpersonal level, where conflicts are more complex and relationships become difficult to nurture.

<p style="text-align:center">Intragroup</p>

Conflict occurs between groups. In circumstances where teamwork and consensus are required an intragroup conflict could easily become a barrier to effective functioning or productive progress. Elements of conflict from intrapersonal and interpersonal could easily fuel intragroup conflict and hence the need for addressing conflict at the earliest level possible. The example cited above about the conflict between the mother church and a younger congregation,

individual parish council members felt wronged by the mother church and its leadership. At the intrapersonal and intergroup level, a unanimous decision to separate and declare independence was made. Eventually the conflict shifted to the intergroup level and the final decision to leave seemed like the only alternative.

Intergroup

Conflict occurs between groups, be they tribal, religious organizations, or squadrons within the same Wing, or companies under battalions. It's not unusual for one subordinate commander to assume that the senior commander has her/his favorites. The real or imagined duality of "us" and "them" within the same organization becomes divisive. National and international conflicts could also fit in this category where nations competing for territorial control or resources and go to war against each other. In all the four levels of conflict, there is a high price to pay and hence the urgent need to prevent conflict. The earlier the conflict can be addressed across the four levels, the better the outcome. If people are unable to resolve the conflict early, it festers and progresses from intragroup to intergroup involving more stakeholders and making it more complex and challenging to resolve.

In 2005, an allegation was made against the United States Air Force Chaplain Corps based on religious disrespect and accommodation of various faith groups at the Air Force academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The senior Air Force leadership appointed a panel to assess the religious climate at the academy. In a report entitled, *"U.S. Air Force Report on the Religious Climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy"*, the working panel concluded that there was no evidence of widespread religious disrespect of the cadets as alleged. After convening 27 focus groups, 7 questionable cases were referred to the chain of command for further review and action. The following three conclusions were observed:

First, some academy practices left a perception among some groups at the academy that the academy was not addressing their religious needs, particularly groups that were less numerically represented in the population. Secondly, there's the ongoing challenge of dealing with 18- to 22-year-olds and making sure that they understand the values of our Air Force, most notably respect for the beliefs of others, in this case. Every 1st of July, we bring in 1,300-plus fine young Americans. They come from very different backgrounds in terms of their experience with diversity. The only thing they have in common is, they are really smart. Most of them are athletic. Some of them come from very small towns that are very homogenous. Some of them come from very diverse backgrounds…Finally, there was a lack of awareness on the part of some faculty and staff, and perhaps cadets in positions of authority, that…as to what constitutes appropriate expressions of faith, particularly in this setting, in superior-subordinate relationships in a government institution.[6]

The genesis of the above conflict can be tracked through all the four levels of conflict. As the conflict progressed, there were various opportunities when the allegations could have been addressed preventing an escalation to the next level. For example, a person of faith in a leadership position driven by the desire to tell her faith story may not realize that some cadets in the audience might be offended or misunderstand depending on how the faith story is narrated. Unless such a meeting takes place in a chapel setting where participants are voluntarily in attendance, confusion is likely to ensue. Escalation could shift from individuals to different religious groups. Having clear religious guidelines for all participants could prevent confusion and misunderstanding. While this conflict directly involved chaplains and academy leaders, it demonstrates the urgent need for understanding conflict, its escalation and how it can be deescalated at the earliest opportunity and at the lowest level possible on the chain of command.

Louis Kriesberg attributes escalation to cognitive dissonance and entrapment whereby parties feel invested in completing a process they started even if they incur losses.[7] For example,

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[6] *U.S. Air Force Report on the Religious Climate at the U.S. Air Force Academy*, http://www.defenselink.mil/utility/printitem.aspx?print=http://www.defenselink.mil/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=3233. Presented by Lieutenant General Roger Brady, Panel Chair (accessed March 9, 2009).

[7] Kriesberg, 171-174.

hypothetically, at any military installation, an innocent invitation to a chapel sponsored social gathering by a high ranking person could send mixed messages to invited subordinates if someone at the social gathering further invited the same audience to a bible study meeting. Feelings of coercion or manipulation are likely to emerge. Escalation of commitment leads from one aspect of disregard of the other all the way to what may now seem to be an intentional indirect plan to proselytize others or trap others into an environment they have no control over. In the military environment the disrespected individuals might experience anger and frustration internally at the intrapersonal level, questioning themselves whether they could have said no. However, as low ranking members, they lack the means of addressing their struggle fearing potential reprisals. While military leaders are educated on religious pluralism and respect of all faiths or no faith, the burden of proof will always be with the one with rank and power.

Destructive escalation of conflict can be avoided by identifying the entrapment and finding a means to stop it. Failure to stop the escalation could result into polarization and eventually broken relationships. Kriesberg argues that de-escalation of conflict is possible when parties learn how to evaluate and control entrapment or by avoiding the path leading to the conflict entirely. Understanding the hurt of the other can potentially build an emotional bond of desire to assist the hurting one. Back to the USAFA Academy story, if the people who allegedly communicated religious disrespect to others were placed in circumstances where they themselves would be subjected to the same disrespect, they probably would deeply feel with the other side what it meant to be labeled or disrespected. Empathizing with other, could prevent further escalation of the conflict. Besides the broken relationships, escalating destructive conflicts have a high price tag discussed next.

Cost of destructive conflict

Conflict is part of the human condition capable of positive and negative outcomes. The tangible and intangible costs of conflict in the work place have a negative impact on morale, mission readiness and overall productivity. 60-80% of all conflicts in organizations emerge from strained interpersonal relationships between employees.[8] Supervisors spend 25-40% of their time (1 to 2 days a week) handling workplace conflicts.[9] Ernst and Young report that the cost of losing and replacing an employee may be as high as 150% of the departing employee's annual salary.[10] Workplace conflicts increase stress levels leading to increased absenteeism, decreased productivity, toxic work environment, and erosion of teamwork.[11] Decreased conflict increases a sense of wellness, high morale and work productivity. Other signs of a healthy work environment include a sense of goodwill between people, deep reflective listening, acknowledgement of different lenses and filters for processing information and a genuine desire for exploring options and alternatives when disagreements arise.

The United States Air Force (USAF) Chaplain Corps is strategically placed at the heart of holistic wellness of Airmen and has the capacity to identify and respond to conflicts at all levels. Understanding conflict and its prevention through negotiation and reconciliation is a critical skill

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[8] Daniel Dana, *Managing Differences: How to Build Better Relationships at Work and Home, Insights into Employee Motivation, Commitment and Retention* (1996, M&T Books).

[9] Bob Willard, *The Sustainability Advantage: Seven Business Case Benefits of a Triple Bottom Line* (British Columbia: New Society Publishers, 2002).

[10] *Ten elements for a successful effective corporation*, http://www.workforce.com/archive/feature/26/23/98/index.php (accessed March 13, 2009).

[11] Thomas W. Calligan and Eileen M. Higgins, Workplace Stress: Etiology and Consequences, *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*; 2005, Vol. 21 Issue 2, p89-97. Available at http://0-web.ebscohost.com.torofind.csudh.edu/ehost/detail?vid=11&hid=21&sid=6212a7cd-38fa-43dc-a4dd-53ad8528b930%40SRCSM1&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=aph&AN=22416522 (accessed March 3, 2009)

set the Religious Support Team (RST) should bring across the range of military operations (ROMO). The Chaplain Corps mission and vision provides the right azimuth towards understanding conflict and its prevention under the auspices of spiritual care, free exercise of religion and honoring Airmen.[12] This mission and vision offers an excellent opportunity for chaplains to be proactive in conflict prevention, negotiating and mediating conflicts and reconciling estranged individuals and organizations. Understanding the core processes of advising leadership, modeling ethical leadership, providing pastoral care and conducting religious observances as the primary locus for reconciliation and conflict transformation could revitalize the chaplaincy at home and abroad at deployed locations. The power of respect of the other cannot be overemphasized. Fostering the spirit of teamwork, a willingness to give up personal ambitions in the interest of group ambition transforms interpersonal relationships. In other words, all parties work to foster compatibility which is the opposite of incompatibility, a known cause of conflict.[13]

In order to fulfill the USAF Chaplain Service Mission, optimal spiritual practices from which to draw inspiration, motivation, and self spiritual wellness are required in the work of conflict prevention, negotiation and healing. In the words of Henri Nouwen, healing the wounded healer first is paramount in this work.[14] After all, it's only by being aware of our own woundedness and facing it, are we able to become more sensitive to the needs of the people

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[12] The USAF Chaplain Corps mission and vision states, "As visible reminders of the Holy, the United States Air Force Chaplain Corps provides spiritual care and the opportunity for Air Force members and their families to exercise their constitutional right to freedom of religion." Its vision states, "Glorifying God, honoring Airmen, pursuing excellence."

[13] Morton Deutsch, *The Resolution of Conflict* (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1973), 7.

[14] Henri Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (Image, 1979)

around us. Having offered an understanding of conflict and its cost, defining the "other" person or party involved in conflict is discussed next. A proactive response in seeking conflicted individuals and groups out, investing the time to truly know them, deeply listen and understand the parties locked in conflict could go a long way in helping resolve it.

CHAPTER TWO

PROACTIVE RESPONSE TO CONFLICT

Root causes of conflicts

Deutsch, Coleman and Marcus identify competition, fairness, conflicted needs, distrust, faulty communication, attribution, emotions, distribution of power, biases, personality styles, culture, and gender to name a few as processes that generate or fuel conflict.[1] All these processes are in agreement with Kriesberg and Montville understanding of conflict as incompatibility.[2] Tension is the underlying factor rooted in disagreements with incompatible objectives across the four levels of conflict discussed above (intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup). If left unaddressed, this tension could lead to the clashing or striking of the two sides, an understanding of conflict expressed by Lederach.[3] David B. Lott builds on Kriesberg and Montville's understanding of the root causes of conflict offering eight sources of conflict.[4] A proactive response requires a thorough understanding of these sources before responding.

First, conflicts occur over beliefs and deeply held values. These are complicated in the sense that beliefs and values are at the core of a person's or group's identity. Attack or disrespect of the beliefs is experienced at a deep personal level and are the most difficult to negotiate. For example, religious conflicts no matter how minor could easily become volatile and intractable.

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[1] Morton Deutsch, Peter Coleman, and Eric Marcus, *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice* (California: Jossey-Bass, 2006).

[2] For more discussion see Louis Kriesberg, *Constructive Conflicts*, 1998 and Joseph Montville *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, 1990 works where they both define conflict as incompatibility.

[3] John Paul Lederach, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures* (Syracuse University Press, 1995).

[4] David B. Lott, ed, *Conflict Management in Congregations* (The Alban Insitute, 2001).

The tendency to humiliate and shame the other enlarges the chasm between the two sides. The example of the conflict at the US Air Force Academy noted earlier demonstrates the need for multiple religious accommodation and respect of other faiths through intentional religious participation, interfaith celebrations and joint programs to foster unity and understanding of the religious other.

Second, conflict happens when there is a structural ambiguity within organizations. When the lines of responsibilities are unclear, disagreements over tasks and how they're executed become common. For example, in a medium sized military chapel of 200 members, the protestant women of the chapel organization decided to disregard the local standard operating procedures outlined by the chaplain. The ladies ran the group by consensus. When a disagreement about funding a trip to a three day retreat arose, the ladies who were inconsistent in their participation were denied funding. The conflict spread quickly to the point where a breakaway led to the formation of a new "home group" for women outside the chapel structure.

Third, when the leader's role and responsibilities are conflicted. This is not unusual in the military context where a commander happens to be an active participant in the chapel program. If one chose to teach a Sunday school class, her role as commander and Sunday school teacher could be easily confused by subordinate military members serving at the chapel. Drawing the line between these two different roles is critical for the health of the military community. Religious participation must be protected from undue command influence.

Fourth, change can generate conflict and the leaders have the burden of proof to explain the why of the changes before they happen. Involving the team through a needs assessment process to determine whether the changes are necessarily promotes people participation, trust and loyalty. People support what they have helped to create.

Fifth, the senior leadership and the team member's expectations could be out of balance. Blake and Mouton recommended a leadership that balances the tasks on hand and the needs of people. The Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid is based on two behavioral dimensions.[5] First, concern for people and second, concern for tasks or the mission. An effective leader balances the needs of his team members as well as the mission. Showing great concern for the people and the mission generates respect and loyalty. An Impoverished leader is identified with low production, poor people skills which make the work environment ripe for conflict. Tension dominates the workplace, the job never gets done and unmotivated, dissatisfied team members effectiveness is slowed by the toxic work place ripe for conflict.

Six, breakdown in communication: Lott suggests that communication breakdown is as a result of conflict than they are causes of it. People or groups in conflict tend to avoid speaking to the other side. If unattended, this communication based conflict could escalate leading to more hurtful actions driving the two sides further apart. What initially started as a communication conflict grows into personality and relational aspects drawing supporters and opponents and hence, spreading the infection around the organization.

Seven, when stakeholders manage the conflict poorly, more conflict is generated. For example, the traditional view that conflict is wrong and evil could lead to poor responses like ignoring its existence or counterproductive reactive response escalating the circumstances. Realizing that conflict produces the energy that sometimes makes positive change possible deserves further reflection and response. Edwin Friedman warns about triangulation in conflict

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[5] Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid. *Balancing Task- and People-Oriented Leadership,* http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_73.htm (accessed September 18, 2008).

where individuals avoid going directly to the person who has caused the hurt and instead go to a third person expanding and entrenching the conflict further within the group.[6]

Eight, disaffected members withhold commitment and supportive loyalty due to the leader's unilateral actions. The morale dips as tension and fear takes over. When arbitrary decisions are made by the leader(s), the team feels hurt, disrespected and excluded. The potential for the team to provide future feedback is severely limited. The team has no sense of ownership and in the military setting, when subordinates obey the orders out of respect for the superior's rank but without respect for the individual as a person, it takes away the moral authority of that particular leader.

In summary, beliefs and deeply held values, structural ambiguity, conflicted roles and responsibilities, change, mismatched expectations, communication failure, poor management of conflict and unilateral actions by the leadership are identified as some of the eight root causes of conflict. These root causes of conflict, pose significant challenges across intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup, and intergroup relationships. Bush and Folger provide an entire different view of conflict by stating that "disputes can be viewed not as problems at all but as opportunities for moral growth and transformation. This transformative orientation to conflict recognizes the other (the offender) as a fellow human being by attempting to place oneself in the place of the other.

In a conflict resolution process known as the circle process discussed in chapter four, the setting requires all participants to sit in a circle and each takes time to talk using the talking piece. Only one person talks at a time while the others give her all the attention. Empathy is

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[6] Edwin H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (The Guilford Press, 1985).

bound to occur in this setting encouraging more openness between the parties. Folger states that the recognition and affirmation of the offender humanizes him. The emphasis placed on transforming the offender or the enemy has the potential to minimize the harm and caution is necessarily to ensure that the victim doesn't end up getting re-traumatized all over again by the group.[7] Transformation in conflict can occur with a new understanding of the "other". Military chaplains participate in the role of building transformative narratives in the communities they serve as they respond to conflict across the four levels identified in chapter one.

As noted earlier, identity and value based conflicts are the most difficult to negotiate. Donna Hicks claims that identity based conflicts create a win-loose dynamic. While I concur with her observation, not all conflicts are traumatizing and hence the construction of the "other" isn't necessarily always negative following a conflict. In the event of the relationship becoming severed as a result of the conflict, restoration may be a necessarily step before a negotiated agreement is sought. In a hierarchical military chain of command, empowerment of the party without power because of the rank structure is necessarily; a process Hicks refers to as the "re-humanization of the other"[8]. Willing the well being of the other is also what Marjorie Suchocki, a process theologian, refers to as the ability to view one who has caused harm as human too. According to Hicks, the idea that both sides could reach a "mutually tolerable" place with each side taking the time to work on laying aside claims in order to move forward is possible but requires patience and perseverance depending on the level of the wounding that has happened. The privileged group in this equation ought to remember that the underprivileged group has been

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[7] Robert A. Baruch Bush and Joseph P. Folger, *The Promise of Mediation. Responding to Conflict Through Empowerment and Recognition* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994), 81.

[8] Rodney L. Petersen and Raymond G. Helmick, ed., *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Transformation* (Pennsylvania: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001), 144.

the outside one, treated as inferior, rejected and abandoned. Vulnerability remains high even as

the lower group strives to make concessions for a shared future. Miroslav Volf, a Croatian

theologian, amplifies our understanding of otherness claiming that the identity of privilege and

power is used to exclude and fuel conflict and that it has to be deliberately transformed in order

to erase the negative mindset of the "other".

<div align="center">Identity Formation: Who is the other?</div>

Volf's discussion of exclusion highlights the definition of the "other" also known as the

enemy:

> The other then emerges either as an enemy that must be pushed away from the self and
> driven out of its space or as a nonentity-a superfluous being-that can be disregarded and
> abandoned. Second, exclusion can entail erasure of separation, not recognizing the other
> as someone who is in his or her otherness belongs to the pattern of interdependence. The
> other then emerges as an inferior being who must either be assimilated by being made
> like the self or be subjugated to the self. [9]

In the context of conflict, the "other" is the enemy. For Volf, the murderous Serbian

soldier was the ultimate symbol of the other given the atrocities carried out in Croatia and other

parts of the former Yugoslavian republic by the Serb military forces. At the intrapersonal level,

one is torn between the demands of justice for the enemy and the possibilities of willing the good

of the enemy. Hicks is right in cautioning the importance of mutual accountability but most

important helping the powerful side to recognize its power and take responsibility for it without

applying pressure on the powerless side to reach a premature forgiveness. The powerful side

creates space for the weak side even as both embrace mutual responsibility for repairing the

harm.

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[9] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 67.

At the root of interpersonal conflicts lies a secret and unfavorable description of the "other" especially when engaged in conflict. Vamik Volkan shares a similar concept stating that, "if we are to get out of destructive cycles of war and violence, we have to change our mental representations of our SELVES as well as of others."[10] For forgiveness, healing and embrace to happen, a deletion of unfavorable mental images and scripts of the "other" is necessarily. Volf argues that part of the deletion process includes the need to embrace the "other", the enemy. Joseph Montville warns that the dehumanization process of one group of people by another should be an instant red flag to the rest of the world that the first seeds of a potential genocide are in the process of being sawn[11]. Dehumanization of the other is then a precursor of worse things to come as the conflict escalates. Re-humanizing the "other" becomes the central locus of a military chaplain as a minister of reconciliation committed to conflict transformation and its prevention.

The future hope for effectively responding to conflict lies in the capacity to see the enemy as a human being in need of understanding. Hence making space for the other becomes an important consideration as a proactive response to conflict. Most theological frameworks bear the message of "making space for the other". Integrating the theology of grace (God's unconditional acceptance) of all humans with peacemaking provides a strong foundation for forgiveness and reconciliation. Making space for the other also includes honor which I now turn to.

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[10] Vamik Volkan, *The Need to Have Enemies and Allies: From Clinical Practice to International Relationships* (Jason Aronson, 1994).

[11] Joseph Montville, *Religion and Peacemaking*, George Mason University, http://www.gmu.edu/departments/crdc/ (accessed November 30, 2008).

A closer examination of the US Air Force Airman's Creed reveals what could be termed as a group oriented military culture where harmony and team identification is highly sought after as a tool for strengthening *esprit de corps*. The fear of shaming or failing self, group and even nation is of primary concern to military personnel. Proactive conflict prevention in this environment finds ready ground where team members might be mutually tolerable to one another and since the wellbeing of a single person affects the whole, effort are made to safeguard the tradition and heritage of honor by taking care of the individual at risk of bringing shame to self and the organization.

Honoring the Other

The military is an honor based institution. In 2007, the US Air Force released a new creed entitled, "The Airman's Creed" reminding personnel of the proud heritage and a common tradition of honor all belong to:[12]

> I am an American Airman
> I am a warrior
> I have answered my nation's call
> I am an American Airman.
> My mission is to fly, fight and win.
> I am faithful to a proud heritage,
> A tradition of honor, and a legacy of valor
> I am an American Airman,
> Guardian of freedom and justice
> My nation's sword and shield
> Its sentry and avenger
> I defend my country with my life
> I am an American Airman: Wingman, Leader, Warrior.
> I will never leave an Airman behind
> I will never falter
> And I will not fail

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[12] The Airman's Creed." *Air & Space Power Journal* 21.4 (Winter 2007): 108(1). Academic OneFile. Gale. Boston Univ, Mugar Memorial Library, http://find.galegroup.com .ezproxy.bu.edu /itx/start.do?prodId=AONE>. Gale Document Number:A179817871 (accessed April 1, 2009).

The Airman's creed is a concise statement summarizing the ethos expected to be borne by all Airmen. It exemplifies the trust and camaraderie shared across the military and a commitment to always live up to the standards of the leader-warrior. The sense of kinship is deep suggesting mutual accountability and honor for the other as two high values. The United States Army Soldier's creed communicates a similar sense of close ties and kinship with the other:[13]

> I am an American Soldier.
> I am a Warrior and member of a team.
> I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.
> *I will always place the mission first.*
> *I will never accept defeat.*
> *I will never quit.*
> *I will never leave a fallen comrade.*
> I am disciplined,. physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills. I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.
> I am an expert and I am a professional.
> I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.
> I am guardian of freedom and the American way of life.
> I am an American Soldier.

Making space for the other through honor and shared sense of kinship is highly cherished and restores lost dignity by repairing what has been torn by shame and humiliation. The United States Marine Corps prayer picks up the themes of shame and bringing honor to fellow marines and family while upholding the traditions of the Corps:[14]

> Almighty Father, whose command is over all and whose love never fails,
> Make me aware of Thy presence and obedient to Thy will.

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[13] United States Army, *Soldier's Creed*, available at the Fort Eustis, Virginia website, http://www.eustis.army.mil/OCOT/Documents/ENLISTED_PROPONENCY/SoldiersCreed.html (accessed April 2, 2009).

[14] Marion F. Sturkey, "*The Marines Prayer*", http://www.usmcpress.com/heritage/marines_prayer.htm (accessed April 2, 2009).

Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and deed and helping me to live so that I can face my fellow Marines, my loved ones, and Thee without shame or fear. Protect my family.

Give me the will to do the work of a Marine and to accept my share of responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. Grant me the courage to be proficient in my daily performance. Keep me loyal and faithful to my superiors and to the duties my Country and the Marine Corps have entrusted to me. Help me to wear my uniform with dignity, and let it remind me daily of the traditions which I must uphold.

If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith; if I am tempted, make me strong to resist; if I should miss the mark, give me courage to try again.
Guide me with the light of truth and grant me wisdom by which I may understand the answer to my prayer.

The two creeds and a prayer form a "liturgical trilogy" highlighting the importance of the code of honor for the other. Soldiers, Sailors, Marine and Airmen fight, live and die for the "other". I now offer cross cultural lenses and closer examination of otherness through the African Ubuntu philosophy as a perspective that could bring a new experience and understanding of what it truly means to make space for the other through a shared understanding of common humanity.

<p align="center">Relationship with the other: Ubuntu</p>

The word 'Ubuntu' is traced from one of the Bantu dialects of Africa. It is a traditional African philosophy that provides a native understanding of the African people in relation to others. Ubuntu claims that, there is a common bond between all humanity nurtured by interactions with other fellow human beings. Human fullness is experienced through this bond. Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa goes further and affirms that every person is complete and fully human and, "without qualification, a child of God."[15] For Tutu, Ubuntu is the one indispensable quality of being a human where, "my humanity is caught up and is

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[15] Desmond Tutu, *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time* (Random House, 2004), 47.

inextricably bound up in yours". If then we are bound together as human beings, compassion, hospitality, and generosity ought to be in abundance in human interactions. The military creeds and prayer identified above communicate a sense of deep awareness and need for the other who needs to be protected from shame, harm, and any threat that might weaken her because my well being is inextricably bound up in hers. We belong to one team and one fight. Each Airman, Soldier, Sailor and Marine can count on his fellow comrades not to falter, fail or leave one behind in case they fall on the day of battle. The sense of "we belong together" is incredibly strong and beyond being a catchy phase.

Ubuntu acknowledges human vulnerability as well as the strength of belonging to a greater whole. The suffering of others in the human family becomes ours, their humiliation becomes ours, their oppression, becomes ours. In other words, the dividing line between "us" and "them" is erased and replaced by "ours". Ubuntu has the capacity to birth fresh compassion and understanding of fellow humans whom society would rather marginalize, dehumanize and deem them as non-persons. The Zulu people express this fullness best by stating, "*Umuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu*", which means that a person is a person through other persons. The Gikuyu people of central Kenya affirm the same understanding that when we acknowledge other people, we affirm our humanity as well. This is expressed in another term, *Umundu*. The Swahili word *binaadamu*, shares the same meaning of shared common humanness. Ubuntu invites all to re-humanize the other since their wellbeing is inter-connected with ours.

Ubuntu, a belief in a shared humanity is a philosophy that highly influenced the architects of non violent path to peace in South Africa especially Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. They believed the power of restorative justice rested in acknowledging the offender as fully human in spite of the offense. Ubuntu, understood and practiced correctly could

become the glue that holds the people together in solidarity as they acknowledge each others humanity.[16] Enshrined in Ubuntu, is the capacity to see the other humans as humans and that one isn't complete without the other, including the "enemy". Dehumanization of the other accelerates conflict and blocks creative imagination of getting to a better place during conflict. According to Michele Maiese, "dehumanization is the psychological process of demonizing the enemy, making them seem less than human and hence not worthy of humane treatment."[17] Parties locked in a conflict cease to acknowledge their shared humanity, attributing hostility to the other. Hatred becomes a dominant theme. For example, racial and ethnic hatred follows this pattern as witnessed in Nazi Germany and the dehumanization of the Jews, apartheid years in South Africa, and the Rwandan genocide. The process of constructing the "enemy" image isn't an instant one but gradual and learned. Embracing ubuntu invites parties and individuals to reevaluate their stance of the other in the light of shared humanity.

During his 90th birthday interview, Mandela shared lessons of leadership based on Ubuntu challenging leaders encountering conflict to find ways of inspiring the other. Yield to others and let them believe they are in front. Take the time to know your enemy and learn about his favorite sport. Keep your friends' close and your rivals even closer, nothing is black or white. These enduring principles of leadership are applicable to restorative justice in casting away fear, striving for balanced leadership, acknowledging the humanity of the other including having a place for the other at the table. At the core of Ubuntu is the desire to express care and well being

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[16] Richard Stengel, Nelson Mandela's Eight Lessons of Leadership, *Time Magazine*, July 8, 2008, 10.

[17] Michelle Maiese, "*What it means to dehumanize*", http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/dehumanization/?nid=1082 (accessed April 6, 2009).

of the other. The South African national government adopted the philosophy which also became

a central core of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

> The principle of caring for each other's well-being will be promoted, and a spirit of mutual support fostered. Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through recognition of the individual's humanity. Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being.[18]

In conclusion ubuntu isn't unique to South Africa alone but is traceable across the

continent dating back to pre-colonial Africa.[19] Making space for the other can nurture trust,

eliminate negative attributions and biases of the "other". Effective management of conflict can

increase commitment, communication, and a balanced leadership that focuses on the people

needs first and the mission and not one at the cost of the other. Identifying with the "other"

through recognition and honor could lead to forgiveness and reconciliation.[20] All grievances

need to be named and each side acknowledges obligations for the harm caused including the

willingness to right the wrongs.

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[18] Sonal Panse, *Ubuntu African Philosophy*, http://www.tsabcc.org/ubuntu/philosophy.html. (accessed on March 15, 2009). The policy of *Ubuntu* is explained in the White Paper, published in August 1997, in Point 24 of Chapter 2. National Developmental Social Welfare Strategy, 2006 (accessed March 25, 2009).

[19] Johnson, David, Pete, Steve and Du Plessis, Max, *Jurisprudence: a South African perspective (*Durban, South Africa: Butterworths, 2001).

[20] Dani W. Nabudere, *Ubuntu Philosophy, Memory and Reconciliaiton*, http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000510/index.php He is the Executive Director, Afrika Study Centre, South African Regional Poverty Network in Uganda, East Africa (accessed March 16, 2009).

Robert Sturdy explained "Indaba" as a Zulu term like ubuntu; simply defined, it's a get together of disputants where every effort goes into resolving differences at the village level.[21] The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams adopted this format for the 2008 Lambeth Conference, a gathering that brings together all the Bishops from the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion is currently experiencing major disagreements on theology and human sexuality. Simply, put, it's an attempt to help two sides at loggerheads talk again. Indaba is a village based face to face negotiation and dispute resolution process that is designed to take place over weeks and months as people work towards relationship building and understanding.

The Episcopal Church (TEC), which is the North American branch of the Anglican Communion, has also witnessed severe conflicts including civil litigation. In its upcoming July 2009 General Convention, the Church has adopted the theme of "ubuntu" in an effort to seek new ways to forge ahead and navigate around tense, divisive and polarizing matters.

Mary Jane Cherry is a communications director for the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky.[22] In May 2008, the Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori visited the Diocese of Kentucky and shared her understanding of "ubuntu", she said, for her, ubuntu means ""I am because we are." She further continued to exhort the Kentuckians to seek to learn more about ubuntu in the context of a multiethnic community of faith. Reconciliation and healing can be birthed with a renewed understanding of how people are interconnected and are

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[21] Robert Sturdy, Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, http://trinityepiscopalchurch.net/blog.html (accessed April 18, 2009).

[22] Mary Jane Cherry, *Presiding Bishop brings message of reconciliation on three day diocesan visit,* http://www.episcopalchurch.org/78695_97491_ENG_HTM.html (accessed April 17, 2009).

interdependent in community. This concept of ubuntu has now been adopted as the 2009 General Convention theme for the Episcopal Church meeting in Anaheim, California in July 2009. The convention's leadership intends to use ubuntu as a means of encouraging a new approach to a healthy public narrative and possibly civil public conversation in a church that has seen many conflicts based on a traditional hierarchical top-down structure of leadership with Bishops and Clergy at the top and the laity at the very bottom. Simply put, empowered church members rightfully taking their places in the priesthood of all believers must take ownership of their faith communities, nurture their identities in the grassroots, resolve conflicts at the grassroots and basically go back to the basics of building relationships with enriching narratives of faith and a sense of ownership and belonging.

Nabudere gives the example of the Acholi practice known as "*Mato Oput* reconciliation process", where parties utilizing long straws simultaneously drink a bitterroot extract from a calabash (a traditional African bowl). All parties have a place at the table and bear the capacity to be reconciled and healed.[23] Ubuntu and Indaba claims that all humans share a sacred common bond that should be nurtured, protected and utilized in transforming conflict through understanding and relationship buildging. These two processes demonstrate the power of making space for another as one of the keys of transforming conflict, opening up healing and reconciliation possibilities. With this rich understanding of Ubuntu and Indaba, I will now turn to the process of negotiating conflict.

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[23] Dani W. Nabudere, *Ubuntu Philosophy, Memory and Reconciliaiton*, http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0000510/index.php. He is the Executive Director, Afrika Study Centre, South African Regional Poverty Network in Uganda, East Africa (accessed March 16, 2009).

CHAPTER THREE

NEGOTIATING CONFLICT

Preparing to negotiate

In 2004, the 755th Logistics and Readiness Squadron a Geographically Separated Unit (GSU) at Hope Air Force Base experienced a protracted conflict. The Squadron had a spike of workplace accidents, persisting senior-subordinate conflicts and complaints about abusive team leaders. Morale was down and a sense of pride and ownership lacking. The Squadron Commander determined that there was a communication breakdown among other challenges between supervisors and their subordinates.

Geographically Separated Units (GSUs) are unique in that they heavily rely on strong leadership, teamwork and resiliency to operate effectively. They are not staffed to full strength and sometimes suffer from fewer resources. The isolating environment and conflicted personalities could quickly lead to severe interpersonal conflicts. A survey administered to the Squadron personnel revealed that the commander was proactive in getting around his assigned personnel. The rank structure didn't get in the way and even the most junior enlisted personnel were comfortable communicating with the senior leadership. The proximity and access of the senior leadership to the junior ranks made the mid-level supervisors insecure and they in turn developed a negative perception towards their senior leadership.

The insecure mid-level supervisors resulted into passive-aggressive tactics including unjustified negative formal counseling filed in the member's Unfavorable Information File (UIF), a step detrimental to the counselee's career and chances for promotion. Unexplained increased work load, intolerance towards routine mistakes became rampant and tension

dominated the workplace. Escalation and polarization between junior and mid-level supervisors continued to rise.

In the meantime, as the level of mistrust continued to increase, five allegations of gender and racial insults surfaced in a period of two months. Two black females alleged that they were insulted by a white male supervisor. Following thorough investigations, one allegation was deemed unsubstantiated while one was substantiated. It took two months for the Airmen to file a formal complaint fearing reprisals. Within the same timeframe, ten junior airmen turned down their reenlistments and left the military shortly. The Group Commander required the squadron commander to initiate investigations in order to establish the causes for the breakdown in discipline and morale.

The results confirmed what was suspected all along. The chain of command was dysfunctional and boundaries were unclear between senior squadron leadership, mid-level supervisors and the junior ranks personnel. The two alleged perpetrators received internal transfers and mandatory diversity training. The victims received voluntary pastoral care and counseling from their unit chaplain. Could the outcome have been different if trained negotiators intervened to assist all the parties involved in this conflict? A response will be offered after discussing negotiation approaches.

As ministers of reconciliation, chaplains share a conviction that all conflicts can be engaged in an attempt to get disputing parties to a better place. The underlying assumption is that chaplains are spiritually grounded and anchored in sound spiritual practices that prepare and equip them to engage conflict through optimal negotiation practices. I will now turn to the importance of negotiation preparation and an evaluation of integrative and distributive approaches. Besides spiritual preparation, negotiation demands other systematic forms of

preparation. Roger Fisher and Danny Ertel attest that lack of prepared parties at the negotiation table is probably the leading major weakness in the field and that's why at the Harvard Negotiation Project, teaching negotiators how to prepare for negotiation is at the core of their training.[1] Their recommended theory for practitioners involves seven steps: focusing on shared interests, mutual options, clarified alternatives available if agreement isn't reached, (BATNA) legitimacy steps to protect all parties from manipulation, listening skills/asking good questions, relationship building skills and what to commit once an agreement is reached. Fisher and Ertel believe that interest based negotiation also known as integrative bargaining is most preferred and primarily focuses on interests not positions.[2]

Understanding the other party's interests can help craft a productive negotiation strategy that seeks to honor the interests of both sides. Jayne Seminare Docherty describes the two negotiation approaches as competitive (distributive) or cooperative.[3] She suggests that prepared parties clearly articulate their BATNAs (Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement). If negotiations fail, both sides should be clear of what to do next. For example, in the 755th LRS racial and gender alleged conflicts, if parties failed to reach a consensus, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) could have been a fair compromise for a BATNA. Armed with the right preparation skills, a clarified BATNA, agreement on who should be at the table and who shouldn't, parties can either focus on mutual interests (win-win) or take positions (win-loose).

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[1] Roger Fisher and Danny Ertel, *Getting Ready to Negotiate: The Getting to Yes Workbook* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 3-6.

[2] Fisher and Ertel, 38.

[3] Jayne Seminare Docherty, *The Little Book of Strategic Negotiation: Negotiating During Turbulent Times*, (Pennsylvania: Intercourse, 2005), 18, 38.

Understanding the two commonly used approaches to negotiation empowers all the stakeholders in proceeding with the best method possible in order to get to a better place.

Integrative negotiation

In all disputes, the expectation that there will be a winner and a looser creates tension. Embracing the perspective that all can win have been proved to be an optimal strategy. The 755th Logistics and Readiness Squadron leadership had lost key intervention and preventative opportunities by failing to encourage a work environment where Airmen felt deeply listened to and respected. The failure to report the racial and gender insults allegations when they first occurred suggested that personnel distrusted and felt distanced with their immediate chain of command. Lewicki concurs with Fisher's seven steps adding the concept of creating and claiming value.[4] A commonly used example when resources are at the heart of the conflict is the idea of adding more resources or expanding the pie (creating value) before slicing it so that all parties could have an equal share. Attempting to get as many slices of the pie as possible (claiming value) does not always encourage cooperation. The power of interest based negotiation experienced in honoring the other side's interests, promotes motivation to work together, mutual and honest information exchange at the negotiation table.

Distributive negotiation

Distributive bargaining is a win-lose negotiation technique. The goals of the parties seem incompatible and conflicted. One side attempts to dehumanize the other. Winning as much as one can regardless of the circumstances is a common practice in this approach. The highly

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[4] Roy J. Lewicki, Bruce Barry and David M. Saunders, *Essentials of Negotiations* (McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2006), 59-82.

structured chain of command system in the military doesn't necessarily follow integrative or distributive styles in conflict resolution. The Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) is the military equivalent of the civilian jurisprudence process which is retributive and focuses on the punishment of the offender. Intragroup conflicts are best resolved through a third party intervention at the lowest level possible in the chain of command. The chaplain's pastoral intervention and engagement with disputants could have identified the shared interests of respect across gender and racial lines. The racial and gender insult (one substantiated and the other unsubstantiated) highlight a deeper need for an open dialogue that moves beyond the normal gender sensitive training. An interdisciplinary team of chaplains, military equal opportunity workers, and legal would be better positioned to offer a balanced response to address the conflict. Deep listening and asking clarifying questions could instill a healthy ongoing dialogue and transform gender and racial relationships in the squadron. Jayne Seminare Docherty reminds us that negotiations should address short and long-term relationships.[5]

Envisioning a new future together in the 755th LRS where members feel like a family, protect and care for one another could be a starting point of a new shared narrative replacing the previous narrative of a conflicted past. Fisher, Ury, and Patton, authors of the negotiation best-seller *Getting to Yes* endorse integrative bargaining as superior and best preferred than distributive bargaining. Integrative negotiation enables disputing sides to separate people from the problem.[6] In a military unit, relationships are vital for mission execution and hence managing people even when locked in conflict is expected since the mission must continue. Conflict theorists Lax and Sebenius point out that a combination of integrative and distributive negotiation styles may be warranted in some conflict

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[5] Docherty, 3.

[6] Fisher, Roger and William L. Ury, *Getting to Yes* (New York: Penguin, 1991), 21.

situations.[7] They affirm Lewicki's theory mentioned earlier using the terms "creating value" and "claiming value". They propose that once the pie has been enlarged, (create value) then each side should attempt to get as much as they can (claim value). The risk in creating and claiming value is the possibility for the parties to fall back into their familiar win-loose mode potentially derailing the negotiations or hitting an impasse. In the event of this happening, reverting to a clarified BATNA might bring the parties back to cooperative negotiation reaching an outcome they could all endorse.

As visible reminders of the holy, chaplains engage the conflict transformation process by creating value for all disputants. Disputants are helped to acknowledging the goodwill residing in one another and the need to view the conflict differently from a half full glass perspective. Appreciative Inquiry is the ability to see the world a new through the unique abilities and moments full of grace, recognizing the best in people. Appreciative Inquiry has the capacity to generate new inspiration, creativity and enthusiasm in improving the overall morale and spiritual wellness of the US Air Force community. Appreciative inquiry focuses on the positive, affirming the past while looking to a future filled with the hope for new possibilities between individuals and groups experiencing brokenness in their relationship. The four stages of Appreciative Inquiry are Discovery (rehearsing collective stories of past healthy relationships), Dream (challenging the status quo with new possibilities), Design (realignment of values to sustain the new dreamed future relationships) and Delivery (concrete implementation steps). These steps are also known as the 4-D cycle. Inserting Appreciative Inquiry into integrative negotiation process

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[7] D. Lax and J. Sebenius, "*The Manager as Negotiator: The Negotiator's Dilemma: Creating and Claiming Value*," in Dispute Resolution, 2nd ed., edited by Stephen Goldberg, Frank Sander and Nancy Rogers, (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1992), p. 49-62. Conflict Research Consortium, http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/treatment/lax7543.html (accessed March 12, 2009).

adds greater value, buy-in, commitment and determination to accomplish the best options and outcomes possible.[8]

A renewed desire to see new possibilities, vitality and fresh hope in new relationships changes the negative attitudes. Parties are filled with hope as they anticipate constructive change around their conflict. The power of asking the right questions in this kind of environment opens new possibilities as well as building confidence as people face an unknown future. Similar to "appreciative inquiry" is the "Blue Ocean" orientation that invites people to creative imagination exploring places in life where competition doesn't exist. Instead of focusing on the same competitive and conflict ridden tendencies, "Blue Ocean" calls for creativity and high imagination.

Taken from a business model, blue oceans are new territories where business competition doesn't exist compared with red oceans flowing with the "blood" of fierce and bruising competition and prone to conflicts.[9] Appreciative Inquiry and Blue Ocean orientations have the capacity to initiate new energy and excitement around the process of conflict transformation resulting into new and life changing paradigm of handling disputes.

With integrated negotiation informed by Appreciative Inquiry and Blue Ocean Strategy perspectives, resources are not limited and both sides are interdependent and hence heavily invested in their present and future relationships. The "other" side isn't demonized or labeled as the "enemy" rather; the problems are identified and clearly separated from the people. The goal

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[8] Cynthia Sampson, et al, *Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding* (Washington DC: Pact Publications, 2003), 64-69.

[9] Chin Kim and Mauborgne, R., *Blue Ocean Strategy. How to create uncontested market space and make the competition irrelevant* (Harvard Business School Press, 2005).

is for all to win. Both sides acknowledge their unlimited resources and shared mutual interests.

The problems are attacked as relationships are sheltered and protected with utmost respect for the

other. As visible reminders of the holy in the military, the chaplains fulfill their prophetic

mission including speaking truth to power and advocating for the interests of those deemed as

powerless and without influence. Advocating for others generates more trust and respect.

Embodying deep listening and reflection, the chaplain ensures that both sides have been heard

and understood. The prospect of change and new adjustment on all the stakeholders takes time

especially in the military environment stippled with years of tradition, history and elaborate

chains of command.

<div align="center">Conflict prevention work: landing gear metaphor</div>

<div align="center">Functioning landing gear is required for safe launching and recovery of aircraft[10]</div>

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[10]*Airbus 330 Landing Gear*, available at
http://images.google/.com/imgres?imgurl=://files.turbosquid.com/Preview/Content_on_1_10_2007_14_25_54/A330
LandingGear03.jpga5c7caea-7fa1-41bb-8b5f-
16ed48b06bb3Large.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.turbosquid.com/FullPreview/Index.cfm/ID/336827&usg=__6CwO
6L6JG68yeWGbgawnofW04Hs=&h=400&w=400&sz=35&hl=en&start=3&um=1&tbnid=igesYkY3BAVlVM:&tb
nh=124&tbnw=124&prev=/images%3Fq%3Daircraft%2Blanding%2Bgear%26hl%3Den%26rlz%3D1T4RNWN_e
nGB248GB256%26sa%3DX%26um%3D1 (accessed April 4, 2009)

In the business of military and commercial flying, it takes dozens of experts to service, maintain, and launch aircraft. Regardless of the engines strength, Pilot and Crew experience, a functioning landing gear is required for a successful launching of the aircraft and its recovery. The chaplain's ministry of reconciliation is at the heart of the US Air Forces health and wellness and her ability to discern the hazards of a toxic work environment and a quick intervention strategy to prevent destructive conflict can be compared with the functions of a landing gear. Assisted by the Religious Support Team (RST), the chaplain can systematically identify and respond to interpersonal and intergroup conflicts using the six step intervention process based on the landing gear metaphor:

i). Pre-Flight Checklist – Intentional self spiritual practices and pastoral presence.

ii). Gear up – proactive engagement with potentially conflict situations.

iii). In Flight – Deep listening and conflict dynamics discernment

iv). Recovery to Home Station – Intentional engagement with Airmen locked in conflict.

v). Routine Maintenance and Inspection – proactive conflict and negotiation prevention workshops.

vi). Troubleshooting and repair – proactive pastoral leadership, identifying best practices and employing them across the organization.

Constant routine walkabouts in workstations, munitions depots, motor pools, aircraft maintenance hangars, civil engineering maintenance and construction sites, and military police guard mounts (morning parades), deployed locations and others, the Religious Support Team can identify troubled relationships and respond to them expeditiously. The next image shows an unidentified Airman inspecting the landing gear of a military aircraft at a deployed location.

Religious Support Teams meticulously engage personnel to detect problem areas[11]

Malfunctioning of the landing gear could result into the destruction of life and property. Similarly, if a conflict goes undetected, it could become intractable and like a stuck landing gear, the outcome could be devastating. In 2005, a JetBlue airbus, A320-300 had a close call when its landing gear malfunctioned with 140 passengers and a crew of 6 onboard.

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[11] An Airman Inspecting a military aircraft landing gear, http://www.af.mil/shared/media/photodb/photos/040503-F-0000S-002.jpg (accessed on April 4, 2009)

The pilots of this jetBlue couldn't retract the landing gear[12]

In summary, integrative negotiations are most effective in conflict transformation across intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup spectrum. The chaplain's ability to diagnose and respond early with the ministry of reconciliation requires moral courage and a strong sense of confidence. The burden of sustaining the negotiated agreement falls on all the stakeholders. The negotiated agreement will require protection. For example, when rumors start spreading, leaders provide detailed information on the subject in question. When resistance starts to build up, leaders create an open forum to allow the team to express their feelings. When innovative members start thinking out of the box, leaders support their discovery efforts. Once commitment is fully embraced, productivity rises and leaders should get out of the way and allow the organization to thrive.

Prevention of future conflicts will require intentional proactive preventative work, transparency, accountability, and interdependent decision making synchronized at all levels across the chain of command. The RST and the Squadron leadership will know they've been successful when Airmen are free to question and innovate within acceptable limits determined by

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[12] JetBlue's close call with an intractable landing gear, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/JetBlue_Airways_Flight_292 (accessed on April 4, 2009)

the Air Force instructions and regulations. Relationships between supervisors and subordinates become inspiring and motivating. Continuous learning and execution of best practices may turn the organization into a life changing environment where team members are highly valued, less conflicted, healthy and productive. It's that healing process that produces healthy team members I now turn to.

CHAPTER FOUR

HEALING AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The traditional military response to interpersonal harm is largely through the Uniform

Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) which is equivalent to the civilian retributive justice system.

While there are crimes that require a UCMJ response, probably not all crimes and disputes

should. Working on the premise that hurt people hurt people, the Chaplain Corps and the Judge

Advocate General (JAG) Corps could collaboratively explore the possibilities of a justice that

heals. Focusing on healing and restoration for the victim, offender and the community depending

on the nature of the dispute and the stakeholders' willingness to work within a non UCMJ

construct to repair the harm done. In the 755th LRS discussed earlier, the harm done was the

alleged racial and gender insults. The hurt caused by the alleged verbal insults left a permanent

stain in the lives of the victims and offenders whether they were substantiated or unsubstantiated.

The unit members were also indirectly affected by this crime because two people in their team

were hurt by a fellow team member. Restorative ministry invites all the stakeholders to consider

a higher moral ground in repairing harm.

Restorative Justice: Victim, Offender and Community

Restorative Justice creates a unique opportunity for the most impacted in every case; the

victim, the offender and the community. The possibility that they could all come together, face-

to-face to discuss the harm caused and its impact with the desire to heal the brokenness in a non

punitive way should not go unexplored. The potential for repairing harm and restoring the

dignity and honor of all the unit members would save time, resources and most important, make

the stakeholder's better citizen and Airmen. According to Umbreit, restorative justice has

proved to yield better outcomes and in some cases transformed lives.[1] Comparing UCMJ

(retributive) and Restorative Justice reveals the differences on Table 1 below.[2]

Paradigms of Justice

Retributive	Restorative
Crime defined as violation of the state	Crime defined as violation of one person by another
Focus on establishing blame, on guilt, on past (did he/she do it?)	Focus on problem solving, on liabilities, and obligations, on future (what should be done?)
Adversarial relationship and process normative	Dialogue and negotiation normative
Imposition of pain to punish and deter/prevent	Restitution as a means of restoring both parties; goal of reconciliation/restoration
Justice defined by intent and process: right rules	Justice defined as right relationship; judged by outcome
Interpersonal, conflictual nature of crime obscured, repressed; conflict seen as individual versus the state	Crime recognized as interpersonal conflict; value of conflict is recognized
One social injury replaced by another	Focus on repair of social injury
Community on sideline, represented abstractly by state	Community as facilitator in restorative process

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[1] Mark S. Umbreit, "Restorative Justice Through Victim-Offender Mediation: A Multi-Site Assessment." *Western Criminology Review* 1(1), 1998, http://wcr.sonoma.edu/v1n1/umbreit.html. (accessed April 14, 2009).

[2] Howard Zehr, *Retributive Justice, Restorative Justice* (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1995).

Encouragement of competitive, individualistic values	Encouragement of mutuality
Action directed from state to offender -victim ignored -offender passive	Victim and offenders roles recognized in problem/solution -victim rights/needs recognized -offender encouraged to take responsibility
Offender accountability defined as taking punishment	Offender accountability defined as understanding impact of action and helping decide how to make things right
Offense defined in purely legal terms, devoid of moral, social, social, economic, or political dimensions	Offense understood in whole context - moral, economic and political
"Debt" owed to state and society in the abstract	Debt/liability to victim recognized
Response focused on offender's past behavior	Response focused on harmful consequences of offender's behavior
Stigma of crime unremoveable	Stigma of crime removable through restorative action
No encouragement for repentance and forgiveness	Possibilities for repentance and forgiveness
Dependence upon proxy professionals	Direct involvement by participants

The UCMJ process does not create right relationships, yet the dissatisfied victim and the offender and their sympathizers continue to co-exist together even after the punishment though

with strained relationships. Restorative justice offers a holistic approach that has the potential for transforming offenders and integrating them back into the community than the retributive process would. The UCMJ follows the traditional adversarial pain-punishment route with the goal of punishing the offender as indicated on the left column above. Restorative justice focuses on obligations, collaborative dialogue and restoration of the victim, offender and the community. Having the right rules without the right outcomes says something about our legal system. The UCMJ process leaves the affected community out of the process, as speculators on the sidelines, restorative justice requires the community to realize its obligations and responsibilities in restoring and healing both the victim and the offender. The last four lines of our US Air Force Airman's creed discussed in chapter two, sum up our mutual responsibility for the well being of one another in peace time and wartime:

> I am an American Airman: Wingman, Leader, Warrior.
> I will never leave an Airman behind
> I will never falter
> And I will never fail.[3]

Similar sentiments of mutual belonging and the power and tradition of teamwork is found in the first seven lines of the US Army Soldier's creed also discussed in chapter two:

> I am an American soldier.
> I am a Warrior and member of a team.
> I serve the people of the United States and live the Army values
> I will always place the mission first
> I will never accept defeat.
> I will never quit.
> I will never leave a fallen comrade.[4]

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[3] Airman's Creed.

[4] The Soldier's Creed.

Howard Zehr often referred to as the father of the restorative justice movement says that a proper description of the victim, offender, concerned community and requirements for victims is a necessarily initial process in understanding restorative justice.[5] While the military legal system has not adopted restorative justice, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) has taken root in the US Air Force civilian workforce. As visible reminders of the holy, chaplains have the opportunity to liaison with the chain of command especially the Judge Advocate General's (JAG) office to carefully evaluate how restorative justice can be applied to internal interpersonal disputes with the focus on healing, restoration and rehabilitation of the victim, the offender and the community.

The 755th LRS racial and gender abuse case study within the context of restorative justice discussed earlier would list the three groups as follows:

*Description of Victims***:** The two Airmen who suffered racial and gender abuse, the alleged perpetrators and their unit of assignment.

Description of the offender: Airmen who allegedly used racial and gender slurs.

*Description of the concerned community***:** The concerned community includes the entire Wing, squadrons, and family members of all the stakeholders.

<div align="center">Requirements for victims</div>

Four important considerations are offered to address the needs of the victims.[6] First, information is critical. In the racial and gender insult cases, the offenders should be able to explain the reasons why and how they thought what they were saying wasn't insulting. A face to face encounter would provide the best setting for sharing information. Second, truth-telling

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[5] Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (Pennsylvania: Intercourse, Good Books, 2002).

[6] Zehr, 14-15.

regardless of re-experiencing emotional pain or "re-storying" by the victims is necessarily so that

offenders can hear afresh about the harm and in this case, the hurt they caused. While I agree

with Zehr, based on trauma literature, the "re-storying" phase may require a psychological

preparation of the victim and a debriefing following the rehearsing of the traumatic events to

minimize the possibilities of getting the victims re-traumatized. Third, empowerment could be

regained in this process where victims in search for answers when ready, meet their offenders.

Fourth, restitution or vindication allows the offender the opportunity to right the wrongs and take

responsibility for the offense. Educated and empowered Airmen in the principles of restorative

justice will be capable of troubleshooting and intervening early at the grassroots level and

prevent the escalation of the problem.

Requirements for offenders

Offender accountability under retributive justice seeks to punish. There is no room for

empathy or understanding the needs of the victim. Imprisonment or loss of employment

embitters the offender and more than likely, the offender does not take responsibility for the

crime. Chances of committing a similar crime if not worse after serving time in jail are very

likely based on recidivism statistics.[7] Zehr is right in stating that restorative justice requires the

offender to take responsibility for the offense from a point of understanding. Four possible

outcomes could bring a sense of justice on both sides, namely: accountability, transformation,

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[7] Recidivism refers to a person's relapse into criminal behavior, often after receiving sanctions or undergoing intervention for a previous crime. The Bureau of Justice Statistics recidivism found out that between 1983 and 1994 there were high rates of recidivism among released prisoners. For example, of the 108,580 prisoners released from prisons in 11 states in 1983, nearly 63 percent were re-arrested within three years, 47 percent were convicted of a new crime, and 41 percent were returned to prison or jail. Among nearly 300,000 prisoners released in 15 states in 1994, 68 percent were re-arrested within three years, 47 percent were convicted of a new crime, and 25 percent were recommitted to prison with a new sentence.
http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/corrections/recidivism/welcome.html (accessed April 10, 2009).

integration and restraint. Johnstone uses the term, "restorative cautioning" to highlight a practice

in the United Kingdom by police where offenders agree to meet with victims and their families.[8]

The meeting is facilitated by a trained restorative justice person. There are six objectives for the

meeting: confronting the offender, hearing the offender's story, giving an opportunity to the

offender to promise and commit to a new lifestyle free of the offense, apologizing, allowing the

victim opportunity to tell the offender his/her story and if possible, encourage victim to consider

forgiveness. Premature forgiveness or rushing through the steps should be avoided otherwise; the

process could be rendered ineffective.

<div align="center">Requirements for the community</div>

In a squadron setting like the 755th LRS, stakeholders acknowledge how they have been

impacted by the gender and racial alleged insults. The community at large could provide the way

forward, embracing a new path towards healing and wholeness. The community provides the

nurture and care for the victims and offenders. The community plays an important role in

building broken relationships and restoring healthy relationships that in time could transform the

shared narratives between the victims and the offenders. Johnstone concurs with Zehr regarding

the importance of balancing the needs of victims and society.[9]

Zehr captures the essence of restorative justice and reiterates that in crime, people and

relationships are violated. These violations create obligations to right the wrongs.[10] For a

restorative justice process to be effective, the needs of victims, offenders and the community

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[8] Gerry Johnstone, *Restorative Justice, Ideas, Values and Debates* (Devon: Willan Publishing, 2002), 114-116.

[9] Johnstone, 3.

[10] Howard Zehr, Doing Justice, Healing Trauma: The Role of Restorative Justice in Peacebuilding, Peace Prints: *South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding*, Vol. 1, No. 1: Spring 2008, http://www.wiscomp.org/pp-v1/Howard_Zehr_Paper.pdf (accessed March 30, 2009).

must be lifted up even as the stakeholders focus on the harms. Secondly, the obligations must be addressed resulting from the harms. Offenders, victims and the surrounding communities have obligations. Third, collaboration will ensure effectiveness of the process; an open sense of inclusion of all stakeholders is critical to the process. Finally, the process must seek to right the wrongs and usher the healing process to build a healthy community. This prescription contains necessarily components that could transform conflicts between individuals, groups and even nations.

From the individual, to family, community, national and international platforms, Petersen views restorative justice as an invitation to dialogue about difficult subjects , for example, racism. He rightly states that racism has been used as a vehicle to label, describe, and discriminate the less privileged "other". The promise of restorative justice in healing racial and gender divides is found in helping the offender, the victim, and the community understand and embrace their roles in a new relationship as Petersen notes; " Restorative justice leads to reconciliation through the reparation of human relations and forgiveness".[11] Repaired human relationships in restorative justice, makes reconciliation possible.
Unless the offender is able to understand the harm done through listening to the victim and looking through her lenses, the outcome in attempting to resolve the hurt is bound to be diminished. Repairing the harm rises above all other forms of responding to racial and gender discrimination. Statistics show that the inability to address harm through restorative justice may explain the increase in cost and numbers of offenders in our backlogged justice system.

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[11] Rodney L. Petersen, Racism, Restorative Justice and Reconciliation, *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol 32, No. 1, January 2004, http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/ehost/pdf?vid=22&hid=109&sid 69e019a4-4025-4b99-9cfd-a28b70f688a7%40sessionmgr109. Rodney L. Petersen is Executive Director of the Boston Theological Institute. He facilitates programs at the BTI and abroad that focus on issues of restorative justice. (accessed March 6, 2009)

Ryan Hollon, a researcher at Northwestern University Institute for Policy Research has worked for many years in Chicago's community justice for youth institute and observes that the creation of right relationships after an offense remains the primary goal of reconciliation and restoration.[12] Forgiveness is not the focus of restorative justice but can be a by-product of it. Restorative justice opens the widow of possibility for forgiveness and human capacity for goodwill to overcome hurtful experiences by admitting failure and taking responsibility for the wrong done.

<center>The Circle Process</center>

Another approach in addressing hurt in attempt to right the wrong is the circle process. Kay Pranis served as the Restorative Justice Planner for the Minnesota Department of Collections for 9 years. She describes the circle process as an ancient practice where families gathered around a fire in a circle, striving to understand one another, building relationships, affirming mutual interests as well as addressing any hurt between people.[13] The circle process promotes deep respect for the other. Utilizing a tool known as the talking piece, participants take time to address the circle one at a time without interruptions. The speaker holds on the talking piece until she is through with talking. There is no seniority around the circle, the ground is leveled. The harm and hurt caused is named and participants are free to express emotions associated with the harm. It's not unusual for parties to express deep silence, hostility, intense fear or open anger. There is safety in the circle and accommodation for all the positive and negative emotions. The circle process offers liberation to all the participants.

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[12] Ryan Hollon. Moving Beyond Boundaries: Restorative Justice and Reconciliation as Complementary Paths in Peacemaking, *Baptist Theological Journal*, http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/ehost/pdf?vid=22&hid=109&sid=69e019a4-4025-4b99-9cfd-a28b70f688a7%40sessionmgr109 (accessed March 6, 2009).

[13] Kay Pranis, *The Little Book of Circle Process* (Intercourse, PA. Good Books, 2005).

Peacemaking circles use structure to create possibilities for freedom: freedom to speak our truth, freedom to drop masks and protections, freedom to be present as a whole human being, freedom to reveal our deepest longings, freedom to acknowledge mistakes and fears, freedom to act in accord with our core values.[14]

Interpersonal and intragroup conflicts can be amicably resolved through the circle process. A determination whether the circle process is appropriate for the conflict is carried out by ensuring that all stakeholders are willing, able and available for the process. Spiritual and psychological preparation is necessary in order to build resiliency and strength to handle positive and negative emotions pouring out of the participants. Clear rules of engagement and deep listening can guarantee equal air time and most important reaching a consensus for a better way forward. The rules of engagement address what was earlier identified as the BATNA (Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement). Participants should agree on what will happen if they hit an impasse and are unable to continue with the circle process. One disadvantage of the circle process is the real possibility of violent confrontation around the circle. Screening who needs to be at the circle and preparing participants well could prevent the derailing of the process.

In 2004, the Federal government spent $92.7 million dollars compensating for substantiated discrimination cases in the work place[15]. The cost of broken relationships, lost productivity, and possibly loss of employment far exceeds the dollar amount paid by the government. Referring back to the 755th LRS unit, the most effective approach to address discrimination demands that actors go to the root of its causes with the intent of healing relationships. For example, understanding the origins of the term racism requires a thorough background understanding by all the actors to understand the nature of its offending

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[14] Pranis,11.

[15] See Appendix 1, 2000 – 2004 data from the *Federal Equal Opportunity Employment Data*, http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/fsp2004/section1c.html (accessed March 11, 2009).

characteristics.[16] Transferring the alleged perpetrators to other departments within the same organization fails to address the immediate fears and concerns of the victims. All the actors in this case have obligations that have implications for the entire Squadron, the Wing and the Air Force at large.

As a visible reminder of the holy, the chaplain has the capacity to employ restorative justice principles bringing healing and wholeness to the individuals and the organization as a whole if engaged at the appropriate time, preferably prior to seeking the UCMJ process. Restorative justice saves relationships, money and most important preserves the essence of being human. Such a non traditional intervention is counter cultural in the military environment where the UCMJ is largely viewed as the only option in resolving offenses. The chaplain corps has a unique opportunity to partner with the legal community in merging restorative justice with the ministry of reconciliation where healing and restoration of hurting victims and offenders could be embraced and adopted as part of a larger vision within the realms of spiritual fitness.

Delivering Justice to vulnerable military personnel

The military culture, tradition and the code of honor is heavily drilled into the psyche of all members from basic training to the highest military academic institutions. Failure to uphold these traditions places a heavy burden of a sense of failure, shame and betrayal. The vulnerable offender may not have the resiliency to withstand the shame and guilt caused by the infraction of

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[16] Theo Tschuy explains "The English word "race" is derived from the Latin *ratio* (reason or understanding), which became part of European scientific language during the 16th century, when it was first used to classify plant and animal species. During the 19th century the term was absorbed into European colonialist ideology and became subverted with the help of social Darwinism, to justify the power and domination of white Europeans over the non-white colonized peoples. This "classification" was not used to establish scientific anthropological categories but simply to "prove" white superiority; and such pseudo-scientific abuse became known as "racism". Theo Tschuy, *Ethnic Conflict and Religion: Challenge to the Churches*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1997.

the warrior ethos and could sometimes lead to a lack of purpose and meaning in life leading to

suicidal ideations. Studies on military suicide patterns show that when a member is under

investigation or some form of legal related problems; they are also highly vulnerable to suicidal

ideations. Published studies covering a span of ten years, 1981 to 1991 showed that in the US Air

Force, 12% of those who committed suicide were in some form of legal troubles including half

those under investigation. This report sheds more light on why suicide becomes one of the

options for service members caught in a web of legal problems:

> Being under investigation for a suspected criminal offense, especially if the crime
> involves moral turpitude, is extremely stressful. This is because the legal outcomes are
> difficult to anticipate, and many suspects expect the worst. Legal problems almost always
> negatively influence one's career as conviction in court is also grounds for administrative
> action by the military. Thus, military members facing serious legal problems must also
> worry about public disgrace and a very real threat to their military careers.[17]

Direct chaplain and the legal partnership and close coordination to provide the best care

for the vulnerable military member under any sort of investigations or pending legal procedures

is absolutely critical. Going back to the principles of restorative justice, the Chaplain-JAG

restorative justice approach could not only deliver a justice that heals but also literally saves life.

Other causes of suicide in the military include extremely strained marital relationships, failed

intimate relationships, infidelity, divorce, combat trauma and other post combat related

problems. The stigma associated with seeking help from mental health specialists deters many

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[17] Charles P. McDowell, Joseph M. Rothberg, and R. Gregory Lande. Homicide and Suicide In the Military. *Military Psychiatry*: Preparing in Peace for War, http://www.bordeninstitute.army.mil /published_volumes/military_psychiatry/MPch6.pdf. Charles is a Senior Investigative Consultant, Headquarters, Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C.20332–6001. Joseph is a Research Mathematician, Department of Military Psychiatry, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Washington, D.C. 20307–5100. Gregory is a Lieutenant Colonel, Medical Corps, U.S. Army; Chief, Outpatient Psychiatry Service, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C. 20307–5001 (accessed April 15, 2009).

from accessing the much needed care. Military leadership will do well to consider a significant change on how justice is delivered to vulnerable military members whether caught in the web of domestic violent relationships, failed friendships, combat trauma and post deployment reunion and reintegration challenges. Emotional crisis of any sort compounded by the challenges and stressors of military life have the capacity to push some to the edge and hence finding new strategies to reframe the meaninglessness of life for the vulnerable military member could be life saver. Restorative Justice is promising and has proved itself as a way of reconstructing hope and healing. Chaplains and their assistants are merchants of hope as clearly articulated in the Joint Publication Regulation:[18]

> The purpose of a religious support team (RST) is to provide for, develop, and strengthen the spiritual and moral well-being of all members of the command. Chaplains, assisted by enlisted support personnel, provide for religious worship, rites, sacraments, ordinances, and ministrations. RSTs thereby assist the joint force commander (JFC) to nurture the living, comfort the wounded, and honor the dead.[19]

Across all branches of service, the chaplain's job doesn't change: "providing for, strengthening, the spiritual and moral well being of all" encompasses a lot of activities all aimed at inspiring the service members to strengthen their moral-ethical framework as they serve one another in a team as well as taking care of the mission. In the United States Army, the Chaplain Corps is charged with the responsibility for providing suicide prevention education.[20] The Army's Composite Risk Management field manual, FM 5-19 recognizes the triad of overall

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[18] Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps The Score: Memory & the Evolving Psychobiology of Post Traumatic Stress* (Boston: Harvard Medical School, 1994)**.**

[19] Joint Publication 1-05, (2004), *Religious Support in Joint Operations*. Office of Religious Affairs, Office of the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (OCJCS/RA), The Pentagon, Washington, DC.

[20] US Army Regulation AR 600–63 gives to the Chaplain Corps and the family life centers the responsibility for suicide prevention education to unit leaders and more recently, also to unit families. The chaplains collaborate with mental health professionals to deliver training.

fitness comprising mental, spiritual and physical fitness, again placing the chaplain's role as a key component at the heart of the soldier's wellness.[21]

In order for the chaplains to effectively bring healing and restoration to the communities they serve, they require unhindered functioning spiritual practices as sources of spiritual sustenance, nurture, renewal and inspiration. Habitual spiritual practices don't just happen; they demand a discipline and a life time of practice. I offer four spiritual practices relevant for the minister of reconciliation.

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[21] FM 5-19 Composite Risk Management, 2006, available at https://rdl.train.army.mil/soldierPortal/atia/adlsc/view/public/23137-1/FM/5-19/chap6.html. The proponent of this manual is Headquarters (HQ), U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. Send comments and recommendations on Department of the Army (DA) Form 2028 directly to Commander, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, ATTN: ATCS-S, Fort Monroe, Virginia 23651-5000 (accessed April 15, 2009).

CHAPTER FIVE

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR THE MINISTER OF RECONCILIATION

In this chapter several key spiritual practices that widen the understanding of spiritual life and practice of a military chaplain as a minister of reconciliation will be discussed. John R.W. Stott was the Rector of All Souls Church, London and served as Chaplain to Her Majesty, the Queen of England. He convincingly argues that ministers of reconciliation must bear two qualities; experienced lived relationship with the divine and humility.[1] A first hand experience of the power and presence of God deeply rooted in spiritual practices becomes part of the chaplain's spiritual and moral authority that cannot be otherwise appropriated. Exaggeration or overstating of one's spiritual experiences limits effectiveness. Stott's challenge is for all to be "transparently sincere" with self first and others. He places high stakes in spiritual preparation and grounding by saying that, "The preparation of the heart is of far greater importance than the preparation of the sermon." Spiritual disciplines and practices provide the most effective means of strength, insight and inspiration in the work of conflict transformation.

The practice of spiritual disciplines in America is countercultural in a society driven by a desire for quick fixes. Accelerated spiritual growth doesn't exist. Genuine spirituality takes dedicated patience and surrendering of the will to God who is able to mold God's creation to become what God wants them to be. God is the porter and human beings are the clay. Repeated rituals and patterns become spiritual habits. Robert Wuthnow, a professor of sociology at Princeton captured the essence of a rich spiritual life when he wrote:

The idea of spiritual practices encourages individuals to take responsibility for their own

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[1] John R.W. Stott, *The Preacher's Potrait*, (Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1961).

spiritual development by spending time working on it, deliberating on its meaning and how best to pursue it, seeking to understand the sacred through reading and from the counsel of others, and seeking to have contact with the sacred through personal reflection and prayer….but they tended to settle into a routine that permitted them to cultivate a deep spirituality rather than being influenced by their moods, circumstances, or exposure to constantly changing ideas. Benedictine David Steindl-Rast expresses this view when he writes, "We must avoid putting too much emphasis on practices, which are a means to an end. The end is practice, our whole lives as practice.[2]

Wuthnow helps articulate the purpose of spiritual practices as a life time goal whose benefits are innumerable. Four spiritual practices are offered for consideration.

Lament

First, a prayer of Lament is a form of spiritual practice that reaches into the depths of one's soul, getting in touch with one's woundedness and the healing power of God . Billman and Migliore assert that in lamenting, one is able to quickly connect with past unjust suffering:

> By prayer of lament we mean that unsettling biblical tradition of prayer that includes expressions of complaint, anger, grief, despair, and protest to God…the primary emphasis of the prayer of lament is not on the grievous sins of those who pray but on their misery, their sense of suffering unjustly, and their feeling of being abandoned by friends and even by God.[3]

Psalms of lament offer an outlet to channel one's emotions, including facing the "dark night of the soul" and being able to express raw unedited emotions before God. The effectiveness of the minister of reconciliation is multiplied when one is able to process self grief and just like in the Hebrew tradition, rage at God for God's absence and seeming disregard for the suffering humanity. I am encouraged to know that lamenting is a legitimate form of communication with

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[2] Robert Wuthnow is a professor at Princeton University. This article is excerpted from his book "*After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s.*" Printed by permission of the University of California Press 1998, http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/ehost/pdf?vid=23&hid=109&sid=69e019a4-4025-4b99-9cfd-a28b70f688a7%40sessionmgr109 (accessed March 9, 2009)

[3] Katherine Billman and Daniel Migliore, *Rachel's Cry: Prayer of Lament and Rebirth of Hope* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007), 6-7.

God that needs to be taught and practiced in our faith communities. The lament Psalms follows a six part movement: address to God, complaint, confession of trust, petition, words of assurance, and vow to praise God. Bernhard Anderson, who was Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, adds that ritual of lament addresses God directly, naming and expressing deep feelings and complaints.[4] However, in the midst of the complaining, one confesses a trust in God followed by a petition of what one wishes God to do. A restating of assurance in God's ability to do what God is being asked to do is comforting. Praise closes the lament with a thunderous expression of praise and affirmation of one's love for God. Military chaplains live and work with populations that have been exposed to tragic suffering and the spiritual practice of lament can provide a healthy avenue to explore vicarious trauma and its associated ailments. In 2000, Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff retired US Navy Chaplain facilitated an interfaith gathering of seminary students from the Balkans.[5] Helmick wrote the report for the American magazine.[6] Using his Jewish in-depth knowledge and wisdom, he lifted up the value of laments as a means of grieving deep hurts. He assisted an interfaith group of seminary students from the Balkans in processing their trauma witnessed during the many years of Serbian aggression. Each participant was asked to compose a lament as a way of getting in touch with the deep hurts of the war and anger that so many innocent lives had been wiped off before their time. Resnicoff believes in the power of remembering and mourning loss as part of the healing

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[4] Bernard W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths* (Kentucky, Westminister John Knox Press, 2000).

[5] Rabbi Arnold E. Resnicoff is a former Special Assistant (Values and Vision) to the Secretary and Chief-of-Staff of the U.S. Air Force, member of the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), and a former Board member for The Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs (CCEIA).

[6] Raymond G. Helmick, Seminarians Make Peace in the Balkans: Theology students carry on a dialogue in a land torn by violence and hatred, 2000, http://www.americanmagazine.org/content/article.cfm? article_id=743 (accessed April 17, 2009).

process. Earlier in the 80s, he assisted in helping establish the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in

Washington.[7] The fact that people on all sides have a place to honor, mourn, and deal with their

grief as they reflect on the lives of the military members who died in Vietnam was a major step

forward in the right direction. Currently the US Army Chaplain Corps offers 40 hours of spiritual

reintegration training to returning members from combat zones described here:

> Spiritual Reintegration and Resiliency Training is a program that is battle-proven and has been able to help Active Duty, Reserve and National Guard personnel grow from and adjust to their normal reaction to being exposed to the trauma of combat. It has been continually refined since its inception in November 2007, and significantly addresses the needs of DOD personnel and civilian trauma survivors from various traumatic disasters. The methodology and supporting concepts reflect the best in adult educational models, behavioral health research and spiritual care literature. It is a "can do" solution focused model designed to train and produce holistic pastoral caregivers who can holographically flow between multiple knowledge domains.[8]

In a recent survey, 14 returning Chaplains and Chaplain Assistants from the war zone

identified the following significant losses mitigating the importance of lament as a spiritual

practice for the caregivers in the military:

1. Death of family members while deployed.

2. Death of soldier's military battle buddy.

3. Death of fellow members of unit or other military friends.

4. Personal loss of limb or eye sight by accident or combat.

5. Non-lethal combat wounds or injuries to soldier but not loss of limb or eye sight.

6. Killing the enemy.

7. Working in a combat Military Occupation Specialty where enemy

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[7] Peter Ephross, Chaplain envisions role for clergy in rebuilding Kosovo, *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (JTA) Daily News Bulletin Vol. 77, No. 113, June 17, 1999, http://www.resnicoff.net/kosovo.html (accessed April 15, 2009).

[8] United State Army Chaplain Family Life Center, *Relationships and Combat Stress 2007* (Fort Benning, Georgia).

contact is most likely.

8. Performing back to back deployments.

9. Redeployment date gets extended while soldier is downrange.

10. Illness of spouse while soldier is deployed.

Six officers and non commissioned officers reported the following losses:

1. Soldier misses children's birthdays and other milestones.

2. Parenting alone 24/7.

3. Death of family members while deployed.

4. Inadequate time to do things as a couple before soldier deploys.

5. Being alone every day.

6. Birth of our child while soldier is deployed.

7. A spouse's lack of control over the soldier's safety.

8. Illness of spouse while soldier is deployed.

9. Performing back to back deployments.

10. Permanent Change of Station to a new community within six months prior to a deployment.

The theme of loss is central to the lives chaplains and chaplain assistants in the military. The spiritual practice of lament provides a tool through which one is able to process loss and trauma. Intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts could be escalated by past trauma exposure or post traumatic stress disorder as a result of combat engagement. A chaplain who has processed her own trauma, acknowledged losses and living a new life in the light of trauma is far much able to help others who come along with similar struggles. Reintegration training following combat deployment could utilize the spiritual practice of lament as a tool to deal with the challenges of Trauma.

Judith Herman defines psychological trauma as, "a feeling of "intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation"[9]. Trauma can also be understood as emotional numbing. The amygdala, the brain's fear center takes over during trauma and disables the cerebral cortex. Treatment might involve helping victims visit and revisit the traumatic memories to lessen their power. The traumatic story is reorganized in packages that can be rehearsed in an organized and systematic way. Writing a lament could serve this function of revisiting the story until one is able to tell it without the symptoms of trauma. Writing and sharing a lament can help capture that internal turmoil making it less vicious on the survivor.

Trauma is also defined as a "wound inflicted on the mind" that if experienced abruptly, unprepared, is not properly consciously processed by brain and hence keeps coming back. In the "re-experiencing", it bears haunting power over the survivor.[10] Rambo shows the connection between the amygdala, hippocampus and how information is processed without context. For example, after surviving a roadside bomb (Integrated Explosive Device (IED) the hippocampus is unable to function, the visual images, smells, smoke, are not processed cognitively and find their way to the limbic system where the body stores them, only for them to be triggered and reappearing later as unwelcome intrusions and flashbacks that one has to learn how to integrate in life. Trauma redefines the sense of self identity.[11] Bessel van der Kolk, in his article, "*The*

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[9] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of violence from domestic abuse to political terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 33.

[10] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Maryland, John Hopkins University Press, 1996).

[11] Shelly Rambo lecture notes, "TT 898 Theology and Trauma Course", 27 January 2009, Boston University School of Theology.

Body Keeps the Score"[12], claims that an effective response to trauma focuses on "affect regulation" where the traumatized survivor is able to understand his internal context, face the emotional turbulence without being knocked out of circulation by keeping the hippocampus working. Rambo refers to the facing of this turbulence as "re-embodying of memories in a meaningful way". Van der Kolk rightly states that "As therapists, we are hope and imagination merchants." This claim becomes a bridge linking trauma with theology. The spiritual practice of lament can participate in the process of generating hope and imagination for trauma survivors where trauma survivors are able to express their anger, grief, and protest to God for unjust suffering and the feeling of God's abandonment at the time of need.

Jurgen Moltmann's claim could help survivors understand that God suffers alongside wiht us even when it doesn't feel like it: "God is unconditional love, because he takes on himself grief at the contradiction. God allows Himself to be forced out. God suffers, God allows himself to be crucified and is crucified and in this consummates his unconditional love that is so full of hope".[13] The understanding that God suffers alongside us in trauma, can be liberating to know that we are never alone in the chaos and darkness of trauma. In conflict transformation, parties need a word of hope and the chaplain as Van der Kolk is a "merchant of hope" strategically located and equipped to meet the challenge of trauma utilizing the spiritual practice of lament among others.

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[12] Bessel van der Kolk, The *Body Keeps The Score: Memory & the Evolving Psychobiology of Post Traumatic Stress*, http://www.cavalcadeproductions.com/bessel-van-der-kolk.html (Boston: Harvard Medical School (accessed April 18, 2009).

[13] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1993).

Observing the Sabbath

The second spiritual practice for the minister of reconciliation is that of observing the Sabbath. Heschel says, "Three acts of God denoted the seventh day: He rested, He blessed and He hallowed the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3).[14] Learning all over again what it means to find perfect rest, which Heschel refers to as an art is a spiritual practice of high value. In order to effectively engage conflict, the minister of reconciliation must be well rested and spiritually grounded and ready to engage chaos and emotionally draining environments. This divine gift of a day of rest that has become the longing of the Jewish community could reframe the center and sense of spiritual grounding for chaplains in turbulent times.

Understanding the sanctity of time in a new way could indeed change this spiritual practice of observing the Sabbath. Rest and self spiritual renewal are probably the most valuable assets for a peacemaker. Finding sacred space and resting in the presence of the Holy prepares one to engage conflict without drowning in it. Rest isn't just ceasing to work but a refreshing restful and freeing moment. Heschel writes, "*Menuha* which we usually render with 'rest' means much more than withdrawal from labor and exertion, more than freedom from toil and strain or activity of any kind. *Menuha* is not a negative concept but something real and intrinsically positive."[15] Living a life enriched by the joy and freshness of the Sabbath ushers in the true shalom in the chaplain that radiates at the table of mediation and conflict transformation.

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[14] Heschel, A.J, *The Sabbath* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975).

[15] Heschel, 22-23.

Observing Sunday as a Day of Worship

Sunday is the first day of the week celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ and on this Lord 's Day, reverence, gratitude and delight without limits dominate among the gathered community, similar themes observed about the Sabbath above. In order for the community of faith to fully immerse itself in the invitation to rest, a willingness to abandon the normal routines for prolonged times of unbound joy and rest. Sandwiched between rest and delight could be dedicated uninterrupted time for family fellowship. The peacemaker requires a frequent source of inspiration and internal spiritual restoration which the Sunday worship provides when observed and practiced. Petersen and O'Flaherty, SJ add that while the peculiarity and exceptionalism of the Lord's Day is evident, it's also directly connected to the rest of the week through the discipline of reading the lectionary.[16]

The true value of observing Sunday as a form of spiritual practice cannot be taught but can only be experienced. A story is told of an American Seminary Professor who was extremely frustrated while visiting Greece. He repeatedly without success asked for help to interpret the icons that he saw. Over and over again he was told that the only he would understand the icon was to sit in front of one until he understood. The icon would do the rest of the work if he was willing to sit and be present in the moment with the icon and let God teach you, a fine challenge

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[16] Rodney L. Petersen and Edward O'Flaherty, *The Sabbath* (Macon: Smyth and Helwys, 2009).

to invest in orthopraxy as much as we do in orthodoxy.[17] In resting, the surplus spiritual energy is aimed at the stewardship of creation and the wellbeing of the community.

Lectio-Divina

The third spiritual practice is lectio divina or sacred reading. Michael Casey's work entitled, "*Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*" adds tremendous richness and understanding of lectio. Casey recommends investing thirty minutes or more each day. The benefit of cultivating a closer walk with God is a priceless incentive. Lectio defined by Casey is a practice of reading, meditation, prayer and contemplation. This reading is conducted not to gain knowledge or detailed data but the goal is to be present, in the moment, open and prepared to encounter God in the written word. The reading is done intentionally slow and with purpose and a deep awareness of God's presence. Living in the military environment can sometimes become a source of great anxiety. Casey rightly identifies impatience and superficiality as the two enemies of lectio divina in our post-modern culture. Peacebuilders must be constantly aware of the potentially destructive nature of living life on the fast lane and exit from it.

Another excellent description of lectio: "Lectio Divina is like reading poetry: We need to slow down, to savor what we read, and to allow the text to trigger memories and associations that reside below the threshold of awareness."[18] The revealed word in due time produces visible results in the life of the believer. The heart and soul of Christian spirituality is deeply rooted in the revealed word of God. The awareness one can be in the presence of God, listening to God's

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[17] Tiden Edwards, *Sabbath Time: Understanding and Practice for Contemporary Christians* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1982), 37.

[18] Casey, M, *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina* (Missouri: Ligouri, 1998), 83.

words of life is humbling and like Moses, a lectio moment, could usher one to the holy ground, engaged in a spiritually transforming listening experience to the Holy One.

Pennington's concurs with the definition of lectio divina built on Casey's definitions, however, he clarified the goal of lectio as to hear in a new and fresh way the truth of God's word. In this instance, God breaks in and illuminates a truth and when that word or phrase is nested in the heart, it provides a new sense of hope and renewal.[19] Receiving and embracing this revelation ushers the gift of peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." (Mathew 5:9). Pennington adds, "A heart torn by the violence of sin and hatred will never create peace." This underlines the critical need for ministers of reconciliation to guard the heart, tend to the un-confessed sin while practicing unconditional acceptance of all people and consistently seeking and making peace. The secret of guarding the heart is revealed by Bondi's story: "A brother asked Abba Sisoes: "I long to guard my heart." The old man said to him, "And how can we guard the heart if our tongue leaves the door of the fortress open?"[20] Short and direct counsel all pastoral care givers need to hear and heed.

The simplicity of lectio divina and the cyclical nature of the steps involved confirm Pennington and Casey's understanding that coming into God's presence, requires listening, and receiving a word, allowing it to form in the heart bringing one to a place of stillness, waiting and inner transformation. Psalm 46:1 is a reminder of what needs to happen in the presence of the Holy One. Four different translations below vividly communicate the message in words whose

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[19] Pennington, M. B, *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures* (The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998).

[20] Roberta Bondi, R, *To Love and to Pray: Conversations on Prayer with the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 27.

meaning cannot be missed highlighting the call to silence: "Be still, and know that I am God" (New International Version). "Be silent! And know that I am God." (New Living Translation). "Stop fighting", he says, "and know that I am God." (The Good News Translation) "Step out of traffic! Take a long, loving look at me, your High God." (The Message).

Roberta Bondi's work captures the struggle with impatience in the following story that could be of great encouragement and inspiration in spiritual practice:

> When a disciple asks for advice with "Give me a word, Abba," we hear the response directed to ourselves in the present as much as it was to the ancient disciple. At first glance many of the sayings seem to be almost in a kind of shorthand, so that they appear to make almost no sense at all. In many cases I suspect the Ammas and Abbas only had to say a few words to their listeners, who would know just what they meant…we see this kind of verbal brevity in a saying attributed to Abba Ammonas, a disciple of Anthony and later a bishop: Abba Ammonas said, "I have spent fourteen years in Scetis asking God night and day to grant me victory over anger." On the surface Ammonas has clearly said that he has a problem with anger, but why should such a saying be remembered?...The chances are that Ammonas had been asked for help by a disciple struggling against his own anger who was probably discouraged by the small amount of progress he was making.[21]

This was Ammonas reply, and its meaning would have been clear to his listeners. They would have understood it as encouragement as they struggled with their own anger or anything else in themselves with which they persistently struggled, for discouragement over the slowness of Christian growth was a major problem for disciples then as it is for us today. So the disciple heard, "If the abba is still struggling after all these years, why should I be discouraged? Ministers of reconciliation must take ownership and responsibility for developing and nurturing the spiritual practices for maximum effectiveness in this work.

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[21] Bondi, 26.

As a military chaplain, I learned from a mentor four years ago that the key to effective ministry among the men and women who wear the uniform of our nation is a chaplain's humility and respect. Many military leaders have missed opportunities to influence their subordinates, peers and superiors after they embrace the deception that rank has its own privileges. By turning down the privileges and truly cultivating a servant's heart, one is able to relate well with the lowest ranking person and the highest ranking as fellow humans. Ministry happens in the trenches of humility, respect and appreciation of the other person as a child of God. Lectio Divina continuously reminds us that it's in humility and deep listening that one is able to hear God's voice. Humility is a requirement, in order for one to listen with an obedient and willing heart to faithfully attend to what God is saying in the Word.

The following prayer from the Christian tradition is attributed to Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val who was the Secretary of State for Pope Saint Pius X (1865-1930), he captures the ultimate deep desire for humility in spiritual practice and all conflict transformation engagements:

Litany of Humility[22]

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, Hear me.
From the desire of being esteemed,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being loved
From the desire of being extolled
From the desire of being honored

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[22] Cardinal Merry del Val, R, Litany of Humility, *Eternal Word Television Network* 2008, http://www.ewtn.com/Devotionals/prayers/humility.html (accessed December 9, 2008).

From the desire of being praised
From the desire of being preferred to others
From the desire of being consulted
From the desire of being approved
From the fear of being humiliated
From the fear of being despised
From the fear of suffering rebukes
From the fear of being calumniated
From the fear of being forgotten
From the fear of being ridiculed
From the fear of being wronged
From the fear of being suspected

That others may be loved more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I
That, in the opinion of the world,
others may increase and I may decrease
That others may be chosen and I set aside
That others may be praised and I unnoticed
That others may be preferred to me in everything
That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should

Humility opens doors of opportunities to love God, neighbor and self. Embracing all

people as God's children first, sets one free from prejudices' regardless of whether others extend

acceptance or rejection. The practice of lectio divina is a practice of humility in itself. Ministers

of reconciliation can heed the words of Prophet Micah to act justly, love mercy, and walk

humbly with God. "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require

of you? To act justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8). The great

commandment is fulfilled in relationships and these can only thrive in an environment where

humility rules. Like every new practice or habit, there are temptations to go back to the "old"

comfortable and familiar ways that don't work. There will always be competing priorities for

time in a multi-tasking military environment. The dangers of laziness and busyness are known too well and spiritual practices of solitude, silence and others must be jealously guarded.

Centering Prayer

Finally the spiritual practice of centering prayer adds value and meaning as a complementary to the ones discussed here. According to Keating, centering prayer, creates "…an increased sensitivity to the divine presence in, through and beyond everything that happens."[23] That's what Gregory the Great of the 6th century referred to as "resting in God." The Benedictine Monks and Nuns were also known for their three step spiritual practice: i). Prayerful reading of biblical texts. ii). Reflection and responding with acts of faith, hope and surrender. iii). Responding led to resting in God. This combination of lectio and centering prayer is a spiritual gem worth discovering and experiencing. This demands more time investment. All ministers of reconciliation should desire to "awaken to the grace of contemplation" through the changing of one's heart by the grace of God.

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[23] Thomas Keating, *Open Mind Open Heart* (New York: Continuum, 2008).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Understanding conflict across intrapersonal, interpersonal, intragroup and intergroup will always be a challenge for every generation to engage constructively to limit its negative effects while maximizing the positive. I defined all the four levels and proceeded to show the cost of destructive conflict in hurting relationships, morale, mission readiness, and high financial losses. The US Air Force Chaplain Corps' vision, "Glorifying God, honoring Airmen, pursuing excellence" aims at instilling a culture of honor among all service members and hence invites a direct engagement and proactive response wherever conflict is found in the corps. The Corp's mission is equally engaging, "As visible reminders of the Holy, the United States Air Force Chaplain Corps provides spiritual care and the opportunity for Air Force members and their families to exercise their constitutional right to freedom of religion." Understanding and engaging conflict is an important aspect of spiritual care that demands spiritual and intellectual preparation.

The role of the Religious Support Team, (chaplain and chaplain assistant), from the squadron level to the major command level includes helping the commander in promoting spiritual and holistic health of the people under their charge. A poignant role for the RST includes identifying the root causes of conflicts at the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels through intentional pastoral engagement while seeking to promote what Bush and Folger refers to as moral growth and transformation, which is another way of understanding conflict. The Chaplain Corps is the only career field serving in the US Air Force today charged with the responsibility for building lives through spiritual care, deep respect and honor for all Airmen

and their family members regardless of whether they are practicing or not practicing religious faith.

From a moral-ethical perspective, RST's promote and model values that exemplify the US Air Force core values of "integrity, service before self, and excellence in all that we do" including a proactive engagement with anything that attempts to threaten or compromise these values, especially conflict. General Michael Ryan, former US Air Force Chief of Staff said it best, "Our Core Values, Integrity first, Service before self and Excellence in all we do, set the common standard for conduct across the Air Force. These values inspire the trust which provides the unbreakable bond that unifies the force. We must practice them ourselves and expect no less from those with whom we serve."[1] That unbreakable bond must be nurtured and protected by promoting respect, communication, ideal management of conflict, and collaborative leadership at all levels across the chain of command. Interpersonal and intergroup conflicts must be embraced as opportunities for growth and camaraderie even when the Uniform Code of Military Justice demands punishment of the offender, the Religious Support Team, activates that support for the victim and the offender.

The full understanding of the "other" through the circle process, appreciative inquiry, ubuntu philosophy offers inspiration to engage conflict from an integrative approach instead of distributive. As a visible reminder of the holy, the Religious Support Team (RST) is called to create value where others are claiming value. Air Force personnel understand the importance of a functioning landing gear and borrowing that metaphor to raise the profile of conflict prevention

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[1] General Michael Ryan, *US Air Force Core Values*, http://www.usafa.af.mil/core-value/ (accessed April 10, 2009).

work demands proactive engagement, deep listening and intentional pastoral engagement with all Airmen across the ranks and chain of command where chaplains and assistants serve. Taking the ministry of reconciliation with the serious and attention it demands, destruction of critical relationships can be prevented just like the routine maintenance and inspection of the landing gear prevents malfunctions and other potential accidents from happening.

The Blue Ocean Strategy business model discussed in chapter three invites business actors to vacate the red oceans flowing with blood as a result of bruising and brutal competition. The freeing business actors are encouraged to create blue oceans where no competition exists and business is thriving. Some have referred to the blue ocean strategy as, "thinking outside the box" or recently in the US Air Force, "Air Force Smart Operations for the 21st century" (AFSO21). I propose a bold pastoral assessment of our current Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). If healing and reconciliation for the victim and the offender is central to the support provided by the Religious Support Team, (RST), a thorough pastoral assessment of how offenders are treated within the context of UCMJ is warranted. Is there a better way to honor Airmen and pursue excellence with holistic healing for all as the optimal outcome? While Alternative Dispute Resolution seems to be functioning within the US Air Force civilian workforce, it may have wider implications for the active duty force if restorative justice is adopted and practiced jointly with the Religious Support Team's involvement. The mission of the US Air Force Alternate Dispute Resolution program intersects most roles currently performed by the RST's:

> The Air Force ADR Program Office in the Office of the General Counsel coordinates and promotes the use of alternative dispute resolution methods (i.e. mediation, facilitation) to resolve disputes rather than using traditional administrative processes or litigation. Our office also works with the Air Force Negotiation Center of Excellence to promote interest-based negotiation and conflict resolution skills Air Force-wide as part of an

integrated conflict management system. We conduct a variety of seminars, conferences, and training events, and our program has won six national awards for excellence.[2]

 While this may be deemed to be outside the scope of the primary purpose for chaplains and assistants in the military, it's important to remember that the UCMJ process is primarily retributive and doesn't right relationships or repair harm. The ministry of reconciliation and restorative justice creates value for the Air Force and Religious Support Teams equipped with optimal people skills have an opportunity to add value to a justice that heals. David Steele's cycles of revenge and reconciliation, (appendix I), capture a segment of what chaplains do in pastoral care ministries. Conflict and its resolution is a familiar territory to chaplains who hold graduate level credentials in the fields of counseling, world religions and ethics and hence make excellent candidates for alternate dispute resolution and negotiations to mediate conflicts at the lowest level possible in the Air Force, goals shared with the Air Force Negotiation Center:

> The Air Force Negotiation Center of Excellence (NCE), with its residence programs housed within Air University (located at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama), is spearheading the development and application of negotiation, collaboration, and problem-solving skills as core competencies throughout the Air Force in a variety of demanding contexts, including warfighting operations.
> The NCE will:
> Apply negotiation and conflict management skills to the solving of real-world problems. Research new thinking in negotiation theory, including in the areas of cross-cultural communication and multi-party negotiation.
> Develop training modules for export to other governmental and non-governmental organizations.[3]

The Blue Ocean Strategy in the ministry context requires optimal spiritual practices at the heart of understanding, responding and healing conflict (see appendix III). As visible reminders

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[2] US Air Force Alternate Dispute Resolution Program, http://www.adr.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=9460 (accessed April 10, 2009).

[3] US Air Force Negotiation Center for Excellence, http://www.adr.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=7440, (accessed April 10, 2009).

of the holy, chaplains and chaplain assistants claim a partnership with the divine and therefore require a rigorous preparation of the heart. At the personal level, a deeper level of spiritual self awareness and humility that goes past religious piety is not an option. The spiritual practices of lament, observing the Sabbath, lectio divina, and centering prayer, are examples of a few life time practices that will equip the RST in order to enter the chaos of conflict as a divine vessel of clay, aware of capabilities and limitations but filled with optimism that parties locked in a conflict have the capacity to get to a better place. As a shepherd-leader infused with conviction and enthusiasm in the power of reconciliation and healing conflict, the chaplain plays a transformative role for the glory God, honoring Airmen and serving all.

Appendix I - Steele's Cycles of Revenge[*]

Aggression

Act of "Justified" Aggresion

Reconciliation

Injury, Pain, Shock, Denial

Negotiations Solutions. Joint Planning

Creating Myths/Heroes & the "Right" Conflict History

Realization of Loss

Mourning Expressing Grief Accepting Loss

Envisioning Restorative or Operational Justice

Desire for Justice/Revenge

Supatory of Grief and Fears

Suppresion of Grief and Fears

Confronting Fears

Anger. "Why me?"

Choice to Forgive

Identifying Needs "Why Them?" Re-humanizing the "other"

Acknowledgment of Wrongdoing. Apology, Truth Telling "Re-writing History"

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[*] For more information please see, Rodney L. Petersen and Raymond G. Helmick, 2001, (eds) *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*. Templeton Foundation Press. David B. Steele, United Institute of Peace utilized this diagram while working in Bosnia and Iraq war zones. He is a theologian and an ordained minister.

Appendix II - The cost of conflict*

The figure below shows the monetary benefits awarded from hearings (in Millions of Dollars) in FY 2000 to FY 2004
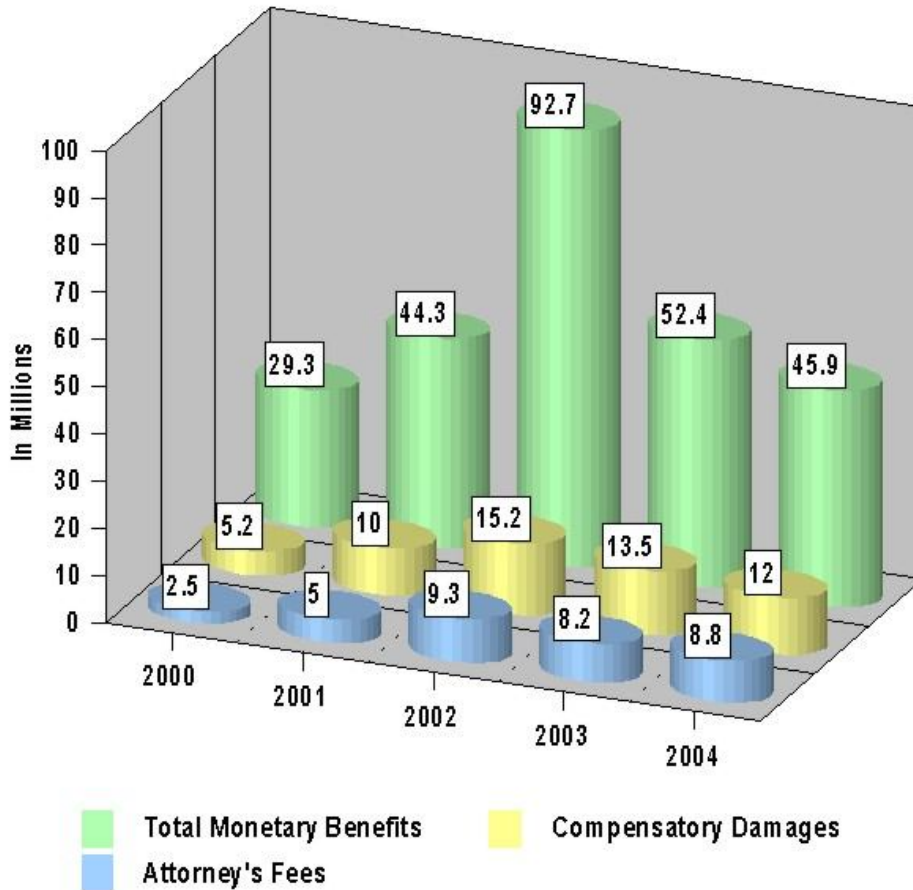

The declining trend of reported cases and the funds spent on them is as a result of increased

awareness education to prevent employment discrimination in the workplace. Proactive

education and training is producing positive results in 2004. However, in 2008, the numbers have

increased again suggesting that the prevention education program needs to be evaluated.

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* Federal Equal Opportunity Employment Data, http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/fsp2004/section1c.html
(accessed March 11, 2009).

Appendix III

Recommended Approach in Engaging Conflict
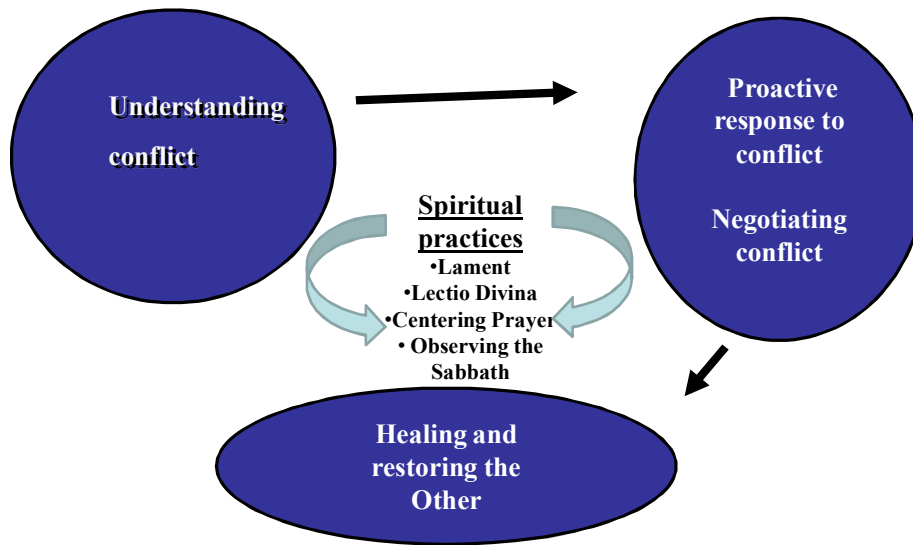
Spiritual practices are the locus of control (the source of inspiration) for understanding and

responding to conflict in order to produce healing and restoration of the other.

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