

Conflict Transformation
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“Conflict transformation is to *envision and respond*
to the *ebb and flow* of social conflict
as *life-giving opportunities*
for creating *constructive change processes*
that *reduce violence*,
increase justice
in *direction interaction and social structures*
and respond to real-life problems
in *human relationships.*”

(Lederach, 2003)

I intentionally place my view of conflict within the language of conflict transformation rather than conflict resolution. The underlying goals are explicitly different: resolution connotes handling conflict quickly without dealing with the source of the problem. Conflict transformation, however, expresses that conflict is a normal part of life and can be an motor for positive change (Lederach, 2003). With a transformative view of conflict, we are working toward peace and justice rather than simply eliminating conflict and violence.

Conflict transformation is more than an academic or political exercise, however. I believe that reconciliation is at the heart of God’s mission. More than anything, God desires to restore us to right relationship to God’s self, eachother, creation and ourselves. The New Testament vision for the church is one of fellowship between alienated people. More foundationally, our image of the God is that of three distinct persons in perfect communion. As a follower of Jesus, I devote myself to a way of life dedicated to the reconciliation that flows out of God’s grace to us. I see my life as a journey toward reconciliation in which the process of conformity to Christ has equal

significance to the end result. Ultimately, I know that God's long-awaited shalom will arrive in its fullness.

In practical terms, I will seek peace in all of my relationships. I oppose all violence: abortion, the death penalty, military action, deprivation and hunger. I want to live responsibly and simply in respect for my global neighbors who suffer under the evil powers of consumerism and environmental destruction perpetuated by an affluent minority. I ask God to use my life and gifts as a prophetic voice to the Church in these matters. I pray for more courage and wisdom to stand in solidarity with people who suffer violence. I want to learn how to love, pray for and forgive my enemies, especially those who have oppressed women. I seek to live in unity with my family, community and church, giving and receiving correction in humility. I hope to grow in my ability to engage conflict as a life-giving process, especially in the Hannah House community.

Works Cited

Lederach, J. P. (2003). *The little book of conflict transformation*. Good Books: Intercourse, PA.