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InterChange:
Philosophy, Form and Process in a Peacebuilding Organization

Abstract:

Theory about peace and peacebuilding increasingly emphasizes the importance of process. A.J. Muste's well-known dictum, "There is no way to peace; peace is the way", suggests that the way we go about creating peace is inseparable from the outcome, while John-Paul Lederach's description of peace as a "process-structure," borrowing language from new physics, indicates that we need to see peace both as a change process and structures conducive to peace. In this paper, this integrative theory is turned inwards to examine the process-structure of the development of a new international peacebuilding organization called InterChange: International Institute for Community-Based Peacebuilding. InterChange is an emergent organization which was developed in response to the needs of community-based peacebuilders, based on research in conflict areas around the world. From its inception, philosophy, form and function have been integrated into a seamless whole, and this has applied to everything, including: the programme for the founding symposium; the values and organizing principles of the organization; the projects; and the infrastructure.

In June 2005, a 3-day symposium bringing together over 40 peace practitioners from around the world was held at the Transformative Learning Centre of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. This event marked the launch of a new organization, initially called the International Institute for Community-Based Peacebuilding and later given the name of InterChange. In the year since the founding symposium, we have been busy putting the infrastructure in place; holding unexpected meetings in Kenya and Uganda; agreeing on our vision, mission and name; and developing our committees and projects.

While the genesis of InterChange can be seen as the outcome of many years of work, its development has been organic, emergent and often surprising. This is not to say it has always been easy; on the contrary, there have been difficult times, and situations of conflict and difference. Looking back, however, I believe that members of InterChange have dealt with these moments patiently and creatively, and that in each case everyone felt they had been heard, if not necessarily agreed with, and that their views had been acknowledged and respected. Nothing was rejected out of hand and in many cases, the conflicts acted as creative catalysts for the synthesis and convergence of ideas, or laid the ground for the emergence of new directions later.

From the inception of InterChange, there has been an ongoing commitment to integrate philosophy, form and function, and this has applied to everything: the programme for the founding symposium; the values and organizing principles of the organization; the projects; and the infrastructure. We have come to understand that how we are choosing to work together is inextricably connected with what we are trying to achieve, and that these are interconnected elements of an integral process and structure. Our list of founding principles, still in draft form after months of trying to finalize them, reflects this holistic

self-understanding. I can now see that one reason we have found it so difficult to develop these principles is because they are so interconnected that it's impossible to separate out which are to do with values, ways of organizing or the work we do.

This paper represents the reflective aspect of an action-reflection praxis cycle: an opportunity to look back at how the organization developed, its defining values and characteristics, the underlying theoretical base, and possible implications for peacebuilding. The paper begins by describing our experience in some detail as a grounded case study in which we have engaged our own creativity and gained new insights experientially, similarly to the way Diana Francis (2002) uses detailed accounts of her training workshops. After a brief overview of some of the ways process is taken up in current peacebuilding theory, it returns to examine the way values and principles are applied to the processes and way of being of the organization. It ends with reflections on the importance of this topic.

InterChange: A Case Study

The History of InterChange

From October 2001 to March 2002, a group of three individuals- Edith Klein, Rick Wallace and I-- undertook a research project, *Inter-Cultural Community-Based Peacebuilding: A Comparative Pilot Study* (Goodman, Klein and Wallace, 2002). This study examined community-based peacebuilding initiatives in four countries at various stages of (pre- or post) ethnic conflict: Northern Ireland, Israel/Palestine, Slovakia, and Serbia. Our intention was to examine community-based peacebuilding efforts at different stages in the conflict cycle and make comparisons across the different situations.

Edith and I had not met before, but Rick knew us both. With an intuitive sense that we would make a good team, he initiated our *ad hoc* research alliance by bringing the three of us together. All of us had a history of concern for and involvement in situations of violent conflict around the world, with a particular interest in the role of civilians in building peace. We came to define ourselves as "practitioner-researchers", but situated ourselves at different points along the spectrum between these two poles. At the time we came together, Edith, a Resident Fellow at the Munk Centre for International Studies, was close to the research end of the continuum; Rick, then a community mediator, placed himself at the far end representing practitioner, while I was somewhere in the middle, bridging the two worlds. We complemented each other with our different but overlapping skills, experience, and countries or regions of concern, and found that every time we met, we learned from each other. Ultimately we decided to seek funding for an international, comparative research study on community-based peacebuilding because the issue mattered to all of us.

We were successful in getting funding for the project, although the fact that we obtained less money than we'd requested had implications for where we conducted our research. For instance, we were not able to get to the countries in Africa, Asia or South America we were considering. Nevertheless, the different research sites represented a variety of situations, approaches and stages of conflict, and when we came together to pool and compare our results (Goodman, Klein and Wallace, 2002), we found interesting information and many implications for future work.

We were inspired by what we found. In all the situations we examined, we found that despite considerable odds and with little or no support, community-based peacebuilders were doing vitally important though often overlooked and undervalued work to create the conditions for a durable, just peace. We had met, in the words of Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (2000:224-5),

> the unsung heroines and heroes …who, often in the middle of destruction and war and despite repeated discouragement, refuse to bow down to intimidation and violence or to be corrupted by bitterness, hatred and prejudice, but strive their utmost, despite great risk to themselves and often against all the odds, to be peacemakers.

We also found that despite great differences, community-based peacebuilders all over the world had similar needs; needs that were not being filled. In our summary observations across all four areas, we noted, for example, that there is "an overwhelming sense that many project workers feel they are working in isolation, and long to share ideas and experience with their counterparts working in other areas of conflict, and to acquire more knowledge of a theoretical nature" (Goodman, Klein and Wallace, 2002: 67). Likewise, we discovered that virtually every project we observed in this research had problems related to funding, and that there were many problems that appeared to be shared in common. These included: "the need to gear proposals toward the expectations of the donor; lack of long-term funding;… [and] the complexity of funding application procedures" (Goodman, Klein and Wallace, 2002:68). Our informants also expressed their dissatisfaction with the commonly-used evaluation methods, believing these methods had more to do with demands from funding agencies than the intrinsic needs of community-based groups. We discovered broad support for an improved system of project evaluation that could be of greater use in evaluating the effectiveness of the work and in improving pedagogy and practice.

In addition to the general conclusion that there is a desire for broader and deeper communication on the key issues of community-level conflict transformation theory and practice, the report also made a number of recommendations. These include:

- An emphasis on evaluation as a tool to improve practice
- The fostering of dialogue among practitioners in different situations
- Developing closer connections between practitioners, academics, policy makers and donors
- Working for more integration of theory and practice in peacebuilding. This includes developing and promoting research derived from practice, and theory that benefits practitioners

- Establishing an international network of community-based peacebuilders
- The creation and regular maintenance of a database of community-based initiatives
- A survey of training requirements and training modules.

The findings and recommendations of the research suggested we look for ways to raise the visibility and enhance the work of community-based peacebuilders, and our experiences and perceptions after we completed our project reinforced this impulse. At the time we did our research and writing, the Israel/Palestine situation was making headlines due to the resurgence of the second Intifada; Northern Ireland was experiencing renewed sectarian violence and threats to the consociational government established after the Good Friday accords; and Slovakia was facing a pivotal election. Yet the important work we had witnessed and studied—the work of community-based peacebuilders—was invisible in the mainstream media.

As well, we noted the virtual lack of this perspective in many academic institutions and forums. Attending an academic conference on peacebuilding in 2003 to present our findings (Goodman, Klein and Wallace, 2003), we discovered an almost complete absence of emphasis on community-based peacebuilding. However, the conference proved valuable to us for two reasons: it underlined our belief that we were looking at an underserved area, and it also gave us the opportunity to make contact with a few people who were to play a key role in the future development of InterChange.

Reflecting on our research findings and these post-research experiences, we made the decision to create an institute focused on community-based peacebuilding. We visualized it as having two components: (1) an ongoing network, maintained by shared projects and phone and internet communication, and (2) regular symposia- probably biennial- in different parts of the world. The first step was to organize a founding symposium.

The founding symposium

Building on the findings and recommendations of our research and our insights during the period after our study had been concluded, we had a felt understanding of who should be included in the founding symposium and what we wanted it to achieve. We wanted to include opportunities for members of the international grassroots peacebuilding community to share their experiences, theories and practice; to learn from each other and to develop opportunities for ongoing work together. We also strived for a mix of participants, geographically and by interest, and we aimed for a rough balance between local and international participants.

We decided to keep the event small to give participants the maximum opportunity to interact with and learn from one another and to build the foundation for an ongoing network. Our plan was to design an event without concurrent sessions so that everyone could be included in all the activities. This created a tension with another of our aims: to be inclusive. We solved this dilemma by limiting the numbers to 40 people, but holding two sessions open to the public.

Our emphasis was clearly on the type of community-based peacebuilders who had been the informants in the founding research study. We also wanted to include like-minded academics who shared our interest in bridging the gaps between community and university; and between research and practice. We drew on the networks and relationships built on our many years of community-based practice. There was also a snowballing effect, based on participants inviting others who they felt should be involved. At the heart of the developing network was a sense of common purpose; the coming together of people who recognized and resonated with what we were trying to do, the creation of a "community of practice" based on shared values and experiences (Wenger, 1999) or a "Coalition of Concern" (Owen, 2003).

The criteria for belonging to this community were not always obvious. Because we had defined peacebuilding very broadly, our group cut across disciplinary and social movement boundaries. There were also cases where people were doing work that was peacebuilding as we had defined it, but had not named it that way. Inviting them to the symposium and recognizing their work accorded with the mission of InterChange: "*To foster and make visible community-based peacebuilding around the world*". Then there were those whose commitment to the practices, values and principles of community-based peacebuilding, rather than an agreed on content area, brought them into the organization, a prime example being Carolyn Webb, who has played a key role in InterChange. As a graduate student in the Adult Education department of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Carolyn applied for a graduate assistantship working to organize the founding symposium not because she was involved in peacebuilding *per se*, but rather because she was anxious to do something "real", participatory and valuable in academia.

The intuition of the main organizers was for a participatory process that would shape both the symposium and the ongoing organization according to the needs of the participants. Not everyone agreed; there were members of InterChange used to working in a more structured academic environment who were dubious about this course of action. However, the organic, emergent model prevailed, and looking back, I see that what we created-- or more accurately created the conditions for its emergence—was a self-organizing system (Wheatley, 1999; Owen, 2003). We began with a broad outline that incorporated our desire to have an event that linked theory and practice, and that worked toward the development of shared projects and working groups. We added what we had found to date in terms of the interests and experiences of the participants. From this, we crafted a rough outline of the type of session we visualized and a questionnaire, and left the rest to the respondents.

The questionnaire was designed with several aims in mind. We saw the process of responding to the questionnaire as assisting would-be participants to project themselves into the kind of participation we were looking for, both in the symposium and the ongoing network. Our sense was that this self-selection process would work well, but that if need be, the questionnaire could also function to decline applicants who were unsuitable for the kind of gathering we had in mind. We did, in fact, turn away applicants who wanted to be passive observers rather than participants.

The other purpose of the questionnaire was to shape the symposium. In addition to questions about the work applicants were doing, the organizations they were associated with and other information they would like other symposium participants to know about them, there were questions intended to shape the sessions to meet the needs and interests of the participants.

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1. Why does the idea of this Institute excite you?

2. Besides your participation in the case study sessions, working groups, training and interactive activities, is there any other way you would like to contribute to the symposium?

   – Present the work you do during one of the case study sessions
   – Present a theoretical perspective on community-based peacebuilding
   – Lead a Community Arts project
   – Demonstrate a training model
   – Facilitate one of the sessions

   Please explain in greater detail:

3. What are your specific topics of interest?

   – Youth
   – Community gardens and environmental projects
   – Diaspora communities
   – Program evaluation
   – Participatory Research- what about?
   – Developing training materials
   – Other

4. What do you feel you and/or your organization could contribute to the Institute?

5. What do you feel you and/or your organization could gain from the Institute?

From questionnaire sent to prospective participants, 2004-5

Under the heading, "*Your interest in the Institute (symposium and network)*", we asked:

After receiving all the responses, Caroline Webb and I immersed ourselves into the chaos state described by Wheatley (1999), Owen (2003) and me (Goodman, 2003), building on the work of Prigogine, Gleick and others. Equipped with scissors, markers and glue sticks, we spread the completed questionnaires and large sheets of newsprint over a big table, and waited for the patterns to emerge. And they did. As the final programme (http://tlc.oise.utoronto.ca/peacebuilding/symposium.html) demonstrates, there was a

coherent place for everyone's participation, everyone who wanted to be a facilitator played that role, and we discovered that the work of different participants connected in profound but sometimes unexpected ways.

"Whoever comes is the right people."

Harrison Owen's Open Space Technology, a participatory, self-organizing way of organizing meetings based on his experiences in a West African village, introduces four principles, the first of which is: "Whoever comes is the right people" (1992: 68, 70). This principle certainly applied in the formation of InterChange. To begin with, despite having developed no real way to restrict the numbers of participants, and difficulties of certain participants not being able to travel to Canada, we ended up with exactly the number we felt we could comfortably accommodate in the physical space and organizational structure we'd developed. What's more, we had the hoped-for balance between local and international participants.

There were surprises for us as the organizers in terms of who came. Despite not having been able to include the African continent in our original research, we ended up with several participants from Africa. We also had a much greater involvement from East Africa than we'd expected, leading one of the funders to query why we didn't seek more West African participation. While we never intended to have representation from all parts of the world, we might have wanted a greater geographical diversity than we achieved. However, we came to see that to achieve a functional organization, a concentration of people in a given area makes more sense than scattered individuals in many places. By the close of the symposium, we had initiated a centre in Kenya and another in Croatia. As events unfolded later, the Kenya centre will include Rwanda and we are looking to develop another centre in Uganda, even though it is geographically close to Kenya. There also appears to be a good prospect of developing real linkages with community-based peacebuilders in Australia/New Zealand because of a commitment to peacebuilding between aboriginal/non-aboriginal people shared with some of the existing members of InterChange.

In addition to the geographical diversity, there were key individuals whose presence made a big difference. A highlight of the symposium for many, and an impetus to a future direction of our work, was a storytelling session hosted by well-known Toronto storyteller, Dan Yashinsky. Dan was brought in by Amanuel Melles, Director of Organizational Capacity-Building of the United Way, and someone very committed to peacebuilding in diaspora communities in Toronto. Neil Clifford's involvement in InterChange is a story that defies rational explanation. It had always been our intention to begin the symposium with a water ceremony, but we delayed planning it while we dealt with more pressing issues like securing funding and helping participants with their travel plans. Then Lara McLaughlin, one of the volunteers, surprised us by asking if we had found a vessel for the water ceremony. While shopping in a local food cooperative, Lara had struck up a conversation with another customer in the line, and somehow discovered that not only had he made a beautiful crystal vessel specifically for water ceremonies but

that he was experienced in holding such ceremonies! Lara had met Neil Clifford, founder of an organization called H$_2$onour Earth and the Artistic Director of the Flowing Waters Ceremony (http://www.h2onourearth.com). He lent us the vessel for the duration of the symposium, and also made a most significant contribution by conducting both an opening and closing ceremony.

There were also surprises for the participants. One of our members, Victoria Freeman, invited her colleague and friend, Dorothy Christian, who visiting from Vancouver during the symposium. Dorothy, an aboriginal woman, peace activist, and documentary film producer, director and writer, agreed to be part of the opening public panel and also to do a session in the symposium, but warned us not to expect any more participation than that because of other pulls on her time. However, she found herself increasingly drawn in to the events and has subsequently gone on to take a leading role in InterChange.

Visit to Kenya…..

While we were successful in obtaining funding for the inaugural symposium, some came too late to fund the travel of international participants and we were unable to use it. Fortunately, one of our funders allowed us to develop a supplemental proposal and we were able to arrange a follow-up meeting in Kenya. Again, the people who ended up being there were the right people—though this did not follow the original plan!

Carolyn Webb and I had planned to go from the beginning, and we did, but an emergency forced Charles Tauber from the regional centre in Croatia had to cancel his plans at the last minute. In the meantime, I assured Dorothy Christian that when I had suggested, "Come with us to Kenya", I *did* mean it, even though I might have said it in a light-hearted way. She not only agreed to come and found her own funding; she also persuaded her colleague, Cathy Stubington, a puppet theatre artist involved in using community arts for social change, to do the same! The fifth member of the group was Jennifer Ball, a PhD candidate from the University of Guelph. Jennifer had not been able to attend the symposium, but had a long-time interest in the issues, and had taken courses on peacebuilding through the Transformative Learning Centre's Summer Institute. Having grown up in Zambia, she also had a deep commitment to Africa. She managed to secure funding four days before we left.

While we missed Charles, our all-woman group worked extremely well together and everyone added important dimensions. Some particularly valuable elements were the presence of Dorothy as an aboriginal person, Cathy's perspective and experience as an artist, Jennifer's keen observation skills and familiarity with Africa, and Carolyn's superb organizing abilities. Their involvement has continued since the trip: Dorothy and Cathy have ongoing ties and plans for joint projects with some of the people they met, and as will be seen later, Jennifer completely changed her research to return to Africa to interview peacebuilders.

Under the leadership of Felicien Nemeyimana, director of Peacebuilding, Healing and Reconcilaiton Programme (PHARP), members of the regional centre in Kenya organized

four days of intensive meetings to consolidate the work of InterChange and develop the regional centre. We were especially pleased to have two participants from Rwanda: Anastase Rugirangoga and Julienne Kayijuka, who persuaded us that Rwanda should be the site for our next symposium. From the beginning, the meetings were organized in a very participatory way, with prior input into the agenda from InterChange members around the world. In Nairobi, we spent the first half day working out how to plan our time together and decide who would take responsibility for which sessions. Dorothy and Cathy spent much of their time on parallel activities, especially looking at arts-based peacebuilding efforts with youth groups working in the slums of Nairobi.

In general, the meetings were a time to develop our relationships, work out in detail how we will proceed together in the future, and also really learn about our different perspectives and understandings. Diana Francis describes the importance of experiential learning, especially in cross-cultural situations, "in which common themes and values emerge as well as points of difference and tension" (2002: 132). This was our experience, too, and we found that it was often the differences that gave us the greatest insights. Through our long discussions about the vision, mission and name of our organization, for example, we came to understand why it is so important to have participatory processes. The discussion on the vision opened up a whole new understanding of how peace is understood in the context of an African worldview. We went to Kenya with this draft statement, already the product of much discussion both by our local Toronto membership and through input from our membership internationally:

> **Our Vision:** Community-based peacebuilders around the world sharing knowledge and supporting one another to create dynamic, durable peace.

The final statement we agreed on in our Nairobi meetings doesn't look very different. In fact we only changed one word and the revised Vision Statement reads:

> **Our Vision:** Community-based peacebuilders around the world sharing knowledge and supporting one another to *nurture and develop* dynamic, durable peace. (changes in italics)

This seemingly insignificant change belies the long discussion we had and the much greater appreciation we all achieved of how peace is understood. Our African colleagues argued passionately against using the word, "create", because in their understanding, our role is not to bring peace where none exists. Rather, peace is pre-existent and has a reality separate from us. Our role is to encourage it, help it to develop, nurture it, but not create it.

In our discussion, we also changed a single word in the Mission Statement. The draft we went in with was:

> **Our Mission:** To support and make visible community-based peacebuilding around the world,

and at the end of our long deliberations, we substituted "support" with "foster". The reason for this change was less about philosophy than day-to-day operations. Our colleagues told us that in their context, "support" implied financial support!

We also spent a long time discussing the name. When we first formed our organization, it had the descriptive but unwieldy name of International Institute for Community-Based Peacebuilding. Many discussions later, we eventually agreed to drop the word "international" since we felt it was implicit. Not so, our African colleagues told us, and what's more, for them the word was significant in their work. Thus the decision from Nairobi was to go back to the original wording. (Indeed it was to take several more meetings after we returned to Canada to come up with the name InterChange that everyone agreed was descriptive and evocative, and we maintained the long name as the subtitle.)

Something else that the meetings in Nairobi underscored for us was the importance of food in building relationships. A considerable part of the budget for the planning meetings was allocated to bringing in a (wonderful) caterer, and when we were there, we understood why: mealtimes and breaks were the time for informal sharing and learning a great deal about each other's cultures. In fact, the insights led us to propose a project, first in a joking way and then more seriously, illustrative of the "high play" dynamic of people generating ideas together that Harrison Owen describes in The Practice of Peace (2003:67). We are planning a book that combines recipes with stories about food is used for peacebuilding, with contributions being solicited from our members around the world.

"This has never been done before."

After four days of intense meetings with other members of InterChange at the PHARP offices, it was time to take our organization to the local community. We had invited local peacebuilders to learn about what we were doing and see how they might get involved. Understanding the importance of this meeting, we spent considerable time planning it. Felicien, the local host, was to take the lead, and we decided to build in time for people to talk in small groups to discuss the implications of the organization.

Unfortunately—or so it seemed at the time-- Felicien was unable to be at the meeting, leaving the Canadian group to present our report and answer questions of clarification before breaking up into small group sessions. What happened instead was that there was conflict, loud arguments and even accusations of betrayal. People refused to go into the breakout groups and instead continued their vociferous disagreements until---- all of a sudden, everyone was quietly accepting what we had presented, offering ways to support the organization, and most surprisingly to us, making the pronouncement at the head of this section: "This has never been done before".

This meeting was a valuable learning situation for us in so many ways. Perhaps because I have spent many years engaging with African peacebuilders, I saw the conflict and arguments as positive signs that we were being accepted as part of their community rather than being treated politely as strangers. The participants really engaged with the ideas we

presented, forcing us to clarify them in ways we all understood better by the end. When they came to a place of acceptance, with heads nodding in agreement that what we were proposing was something different that they, at least, had never experienced before, we had to go back later and reflect on exactly what InterChange had to offer. *What* has never been done before? On reflection, it seemed that two crucial elements were the idea of an international organization built on personal relationships, and the notion that people should participate as individuals, not as group representatives.

We also learned a great deal about process. The group overturned the agenda we had planned by refusing to break out into small groups. By the time the arguments in the large session had been settled, people felt no further need to engage in the discussion. The meeting was an embodiment of several of the principles of Open Space Technology, not surprising, perhaps, given its African origin. The principles are:

> Whoever comes is the right people.
>
> Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.
>
> Whenever it starts is the right time.
>
> Whenever it is over it is over.
>
> Owen, 1992:70

I have seen the last two principles at work in other situations involving people from non-Western cultures. In our workshops series, "*Peace Begins at Home*", with the Somali community in Toronto, for example, I have also witnessed people arguing and discussing passionately, and then suddenly stopping, having evidently reached consensus, albeit by a process not easily discernible to those from outside the culture. This same dynamic also works in village-level processes in many parts of the world.

…..and going to Uganda

Since we were going to be in Kenya, I decided that it would make sense for me and perhaps Carolyn to also go to Uganda. The Transformative Learning Centre (TLC) has an ongoing connection with adult educator, Paulo Wangoola, and his innovative centre, Mpambo African Multiversity (Wangoola, 2000), and I was anxious to follow up work we had initiated together. In my mind, the Kenya trip was connected to the work of InterChange and the Uganda trip was about separate TLC business. Several things happened to disabuse me of these beliefs. Firstly, all the members of our delegation decided to travel to Uganda, too, creating continuity in our community of practice. Secondly, we connected with several people in Uganda whose work was explicitly community-based peacebuilding. Very significantly for our understanding of what the work of peacebuilding is, we found that the people we met through Mpambo had a very deep and integral sense of peacebuilding as foundational to what they were doing, even if they hadn't necessarily named it that way. Space does not permit a full examination of how issues of Afrocentric knowledge, deep dialogue across worldviews, human rights education, and the reclamation of indigenous languages and knowledges is connected to

peacebuilding, but suffice to say, we left with a sense of much to explore and the seeds for future collaboration. We also made some immediately direct connections with people who wanted to join InterChange, and we have the nexus of a new "hub" for the organization. The other thing that happened that will keep Uganda firmly connected to the work of InterChange is that Jennifer, on returning to Canada after our time together in Africa, radically changed her PhD research topic. Instead of proceeding with her plans to study the interaction of farmers and cottagers in Southwestern Ontario, she decided to return to Uganda to gather the stories of women peacebuilders.

Process in current peace theory

Current peace theory and practice reflects a growing awareness of the importance of process. Some of this, especially much of the work that emphasizes the importance of nonviolence, (e.g. Francis, 2002), builds on earlier writings about peace, especially Gandhi's insistence of the need to integrate means and ends, both for ethical and tactical reasons. A.J. Muste's well-known dictum, "There is no way to peace; peace is the way", encapsulates this concept, and avers that the way we go about creating peace is inseparable from the outcome.

As our notions of peacebuilding continue to expand beyond the United Nations definition in the Agenda for Peace (Boutros-Gali, 1992), especially as community-based peacebuilders take up the practice and develop theory, so, too, does our appreciation of the role of process. As many peace theorists (e.g. Miall et al, 2000; Anderson, 2003; Lederach, 1997, 1999, 2003) have noted, the task of creating a self-sustaining peace, rather than simply preventing a short-term relapse into violence, relies heavily on the cultivation of processes and capacities. Francis (2002:249) goes as far to say that these processes and means are synonymous with peace:

> Doing things constructively- managing relationships, respecting others, building bridges, improving institutions *is* peace. There is no static, ideal outcome that can be arrived at once and for all: only people doing things, working at living together.

In the context of this paper, I can do no more than mention the significance of the concept of the culture of peace as a frame for considering some of the issues under discussion. The UNESCO formulation (Adams, 1995) recognizes the importance of "values, attitudes and modes of behavior" and introduces the concept of a multifaceted programme with appropriate roles for different peace actors, including those in the community level. Elise Boulding's writings on a culture of peace (2002 and others) build on a long trajectory of work on peace praxis and peaceable cultures (e.g. 1988), and a growing body of writing explores other the many aspects of a culture of peace (e.g. the essays in UNESCO, 1996; Goodman, 2002).

Other insights on the role of process in peacebuilding have come from advancements in science. John-Paul Lederach's description of peace as a "process-structure" ((1999)

borrowing language from quantum physics, indicates that we need to see peace both as a change process and structures conducive to peace.

Another important advancement in peace theory, addressed by Abu-Nimer, 2001; Francis, 2002, Lederach, 1997, among others, is the awareness that peace practices borrowed from one cultural context are not neutral; rather they rely on taken-for-granted assumptions and reflect certain cultural norms.

A consideration of how the ways we organize our own organizations, structures and processes reflect our work for peace is explicit in groups like Quakers and many feminist peace groups. This has not been a major topic in the peace studies literature, but it has been a theme in Elise Boulding's work for many years, especially looking at the overlap between peace movements and utopian experimental societies (2000). Birgit Brock-Utne (1985) takes up this theme in relation to feminist peace organizations.

Questions of process and ways of organizing in ways that are peaceful are also coming into peace studies and practice from other contexts. Broodryk (2002) and Malan (1997), for example, looks at how African attitudes and practices of interrelatedness are conducive to peace; Ury (1999) shows how the San (Bushmen) of the Kalahari have complex systems of conflict prevention built into their way of life.

Insights from systems theory, chaos theory and quantum physics have become influential in the field of Organizational Development. While much of the learning has been directed towards the corporate sector (e.g. Senge, 1990), it has applicability for anyone wanting to effect change- or learn what is preventing its emergence. Margaret Wheatley (1999, 2002) is among those who have applied the ideas of self-organizing systems and openness to chaos to work toward improving the human condition. Harrison Owen has come to understand the integrative holistic approach of Open Space Technology (1992) as conducive to peace or even equal to peace. In his new book, *The Practice of Peace* (2003), he describes peace as a process of dynamic interrelationship to produce health and harmony, and the practice of peace as the creating the conditions for this to occur.

Having put forward the story of InterChange and laid out some of the relevant theory, it is time now to look at how this fits together in an integrative way. This is not easy, given that everything is connected and also because what we are examining is a work in progress. I will make use of what we have provisionally called "our principles" as a frame to examine our own case study and put them in the context of these emergent theories.

But first, the tale of two stories.

Two stories

In his Massey lectures, *The Truth About Stories* (2003), Thomas King tells two different creation stories. One is a "native narrative", to use the subtitle of his talk; the other is the bible story from Genesis. The aboriginal story tells of a woman, Charm, falling through a

hole into the water world as she seeks out a tasty plant to eat. The story involves the animals who help her, her twins who have contrary views and different ways of doing things, and a turtle on whose back the world is created. The story is about cooperation and balance, playfulness and trial and error, and a central message that "life is sweet". In contrast, says King, the Genesis story is about an omnipotent God who uses rules and separation to create order. King also adds that there are many versions of the aboriginal story; the details change, sometimes the characters are different. But two things remain constant: the world never leaves the turtle's back and the turtle never swims away. The aboriginal story has much resonance for me. I see InterChange having developed according to much the same pattern, with mistakes made and much cooperation. Like the animals that dived down to search for mud, we, as peacebuilders, do not always achieve our goals and sometimes find our efforts exhausting. I see the different worldviews represented in our organization as being much like the approaches of the dissimilar twins. I'm encouraged that Charm, the twins and the animals succeed in creating a new world, even if the outcome was not evident at the beginning. I also deeply appreciate the factors that remain constant, no matter what, since to me it suggests the bedrock on which we can base our work.

Values, principles and ways of being of InterChange

A year after the inception of InterChange, we assessed our progress, describing one of our main strengths as an organization as having a clear niche that is understandable to others. As our case study reveals, we formed the organization to respond to real needs that were not being met. We find that people recognize the role we are playing and our potential contribution, and also that they appreciate the kind of organization we are and the values and principles we embody.

Coming up with a name for our organization was not easy. For a long time, we used the cumbersome, but descriptive subtitle, and found it difficult to let go of any of the words. Anastase couldn't understand why his suggestion that we rearrange the words and come up with the acronym, ICPI (International Community-Based Peacebuilding Institute) was not met with more enthusiasm! We wanted a name that was short and symbolic, and would work across cultures. We liked InterChange, the name we finally chose, because it is evocative and emphasizes interaction, interrelationship and potential. In the light of the discussion in this paper, I also recognize that with its noun/verb ambiguities and fluidity, it is a process/structure name, well suited to what we are trying to do and be.

In a comprehensive sense, w are working to develop a culture of peace in our organization, bringing together attitudes, values and praxis in an integral way. We are committed to working for peace by peaceful means, as Galtung puts it (1996), and we are experimenting with the organizational forms Boulding describes as the "seedbed of peace cultures" (2000:56). Our intention is not to be a model for others or prescribe what they should do; rather we want to develop our own creativity and discover what works for us. A village elder in Mozambique described this concept like this: "[t]he culture of peace is a tree with its roots deep in our land (Adams, 1995:16).

Concurring with Boulding that "a peace culture is a culture that promotes peaceable diversity" (2000: 1), we seek to foster this within our own organization and in the larger culture, through the work we do. In our story of the development of InterChange, the emergent, serendipitous aspects are very evident, the openness to the underlying wisdom of self-organizing systems that I see as part of the "unofficial story" of the culture of peace (Goodman, 2002:188).

Along with our visions and mission, we have developed a list of what we have named as "principles we follow". Writing this paper, I have become more aware of why it has been so difficult to complete this list, which is still in draft form. Some of these "principles" deal with the work we want to do; others are really values; some talk about our internal processes. And they all deal with an organization that has a holistic self-understanding. The following is a partial list of the principles, those that deal with our process and the way we work, that I will use to help organize the discussion.

Principles we follow:
(a partial list, still in draft form)

1. Support community-level involvement in peacebuilding and base InterChange activities and agendas on community needs.
2. Use circle-based, participatory, non-hierarchical models for communication, research, and other activities.
3. Engage, value and protect local and Indigenous knowledges, recognizing the many diverse forms of knowledge, that all knowledges are located in and created through particular cultures, and that difference is a source of strength.
4. Base global partnerships on equality and mutuality, recognizing issues of power in all human interactions.
5. Value theory and practice equally and see them as complementary and mutually reinforcing aspects of peacebuilding.
6. Value the contribution of women to peacebuilding research and practice, and encourage research into gender issues and women's peacebuilding roles.
7. Work holistically, engaging heart, mind and spirit, for true peace.
8. Encourage friendship as a basis for peace.
9. Create institutional structures that reflect these principles.

The numbers below refer to the principles in the chart.

(1) While this is in some ways self-evident since our organization grew out of the expressed needs of community-based peacebuilders, we have seen this principle at work

in a number of ways. The choice of Rwanda as the site for the next symposium is a reflection of the needs of the peacebuilders we met from that country. We in Toronto are starting to look at ways we can respond to the community needs here, and are framing issues of peacebuilding in terms of reducing urban violence and the promotion of community harmony. Our visit to Africa gave us a much deeper sense of the interaction of people in diaspora communities with their countries of origin, and what diaspora means in different contexts.

(2) One of our key principles is to use circle-based processes. We used this as the organizing principle of our founding symposium, with much support from our members. In fact, one of the few criticisms of the symposium was that we didn't always respect circle principles. While our larger InterChange community obviously cannot use the literal form of the circle, we do embody it in our processes as much as we can, for example by employing participatory decision-making using the internet.

Pranis, Stuart and Wedge's book, *Peacemaking Circles* (2003), talks about the inner and outer frames of circles. In their formulation, the inner frame consists of values and principles, while the outer has to do with practices, processes, roles and responsibilities. I agree with the need to integrate the inner and outer, but I would like to use the concept differently, using the outer frame to discuss our work and mission and the inner to talk about our internal organization, with values and principles cutting across both. The inner and outer frames of the circle are connected, since we are a part of the larger society and do our work there. Speaking of this integration, Elise Boulding discusses "organizational forms that channel….[human] caring into specific strategies of peacebuilding…[and] contribute to the peace culture of the larger social fabric, enriching the attitude-value-behaviour complexes of peaceableness." (2000:84). One way we can do that is by becoming "norm entrepreneurs", as Finnemore and Sikkink put it (1998: 895), helping new norms to emerge and then to reach critical mass, enhanced by networks. A good example of this principle at work is a statement drafted by members of a group called Voice of Somali Women for Peace, Reconciliation and Political Rights, that has been supported and discussed by InterChange members in many parts of the world.

(3) While things are beginning to change, the prevailing worldview is a Western one which has become distorted (see Goodman, 2003, Sutherland, 2005). Not only does this dominate over other worldviews—which is very evident in countries like Kenya and Uganda where Christianity and Eurocentric education models hold sway—it also doesn't work well to create the capacitates and values conducive to peace. As Wheatley explains:

> Western cultural views of how best to organize and lead (now the methods most used in the world) are contrary to what life teaches. Leaders use control and imposition rather than participative, self-organizing processes. They react to uncertainty and chaos by tightening already feeble controls, rather than engaging people's best capacities to learn and adapt. In doing so, they only create more chaos. Leaders incite primitive emotions of fear, scarcity, and self-interest to get people to do their work, rather than the more noble human traits of cooperation, caring, and generosity. (website: www.margaretwheatley.com)

In InterChange, we value and make use of other ways of knowing and acting. The circle processes are explicitly rooted in aboriginal worldviews, but African cultures and Quakers and Anabaptists draw on similar values and practices. We are very fortunate at the diversity we have in our organization; coupled with the willingness to respect and deeply engage with each others views, it is a source of great strength. We are also discovering that everyone does not understand peace in the same way, as the discussion in Kenya around the vision statement made visible. My article, "A Four Worlds Approach to Transformative Learning" (2005) also describes the importance of these different—and more holistic—perspectives.

(4) As an international organization, a key aspect of InterChange is the relationships across difference. We see our role not as trying to reach consensus, but rather conducting a respectful dialogue across difference so that we can learn from each other. The medicine wheel teachings of balance and harmony are appropriate here; the four symbolic races are all part of the human family and the circle helps us to reflect ourselves and one another (Bopp et al, 1984).

Clearly a key aspect of our peacebuilding work is to transform relationships of dominance to those of mutuality and equality, and this needs to be reflected in the inner frame of our circle as well. At our founding symposium, we had three pairs (all women!) modeling the personal dynamic of dialogue that was also part of their peacebuilding mission. One pair was Dorothy Christian and Victoria Freeman, who described how intrinsically their work of aboriginal/non-aboriginal relationships is reflected in their richly rewarding but often challenging personal friendship.

In Uganda, we initiated the idea of a "deep dialogue", a holistic exploration across worldviews. We visualize this as a way of developing trust and mutuality, preparing the ground for effective collaboration. Our intention is also to be reflexive about the process, and to problematize commonly used dialogue models, in much the way Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) has questioned the cultural assumptions and power relations of mainstream research and Ursula Franklin (1990) of technology.

Many of the models and practices used in conflict resolution around the world are imported from the West, mainly North America. In our initial research, some of the informants raised the issue that some of these practices may not be culturally relevant, in addition to not addressing imbalances of power. Several of our members are using or exploring methods rooted in the culture, for example, Robin Edoh uses Afrocentric methods in his work with the Africanadian Peace Mission, and Elias Jabbour uses a traditional method called *sulha* in his peacebuilding work in Israel. One of our proposed international collaborative research projects is on traditional approaches to peacebuilding.

While there is widespread recognition of the need to do "peace by peaceful means", I believe that more attention needs to be paid to developing internal structures that deal with issues of power and difference *within* organizations especially when dealing across cultural differences and power imbalances. This is also something InterChange needs to explore.

(5) One of the rationales for launching InterChange was the need to bridge gaps between theory and practice; academia and community. We see the need for these connections as so vital for our work that we agreed that all regional centres must be affiliated with a university. We were very pleased to make such connections in Kenya and Uganda. Perhaps ironically, it is difficult to get support for this kind of work in Canadian universities. We have already broken down some stereotypes, and the real work will begin as we do projects together. We had a meeting recently to discuss the projects of InterChange, including education, research and the food/peace book, and we were interested to see how interconnected all the projects are, with the potential of expanding the roles of educator, researcher and practitioner.

(6) There is strong support for InterChange to focus on the role of women in peacebuilding research and practice. At least two of our members, Shukria Dini and Jennifer Ball, are making it the topic of their PhD research. This issue is also important in looking at process in women's peacebuilding. Brock-Utne (1985) suggests that women peacebuilders tend to have a stronger integration of ends and means. Susan MacPhee (1990) gives an account of a women's international peace conference held at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax in 1985 that had to change its plans as it went along. The organizers (including me) had decided not to include the typical conference resolutions, but some women from the global South were relying on them, with alternative radio stations poised to broadcast them. The women had to use their negotiation skills to redesign the conference to be responsive to the needs of all the participants. Similarly, Anna Snyder (2003) describes in her book and in a dialogue with me (Goodman and Snyder, 2003) that as women peace activists builders engaged in peace praxis to deal with conflict within their own international organizations, this strengthened their self-image as peacebuilders. I have already mentioned how three pairs of women at the InterChange symposium used their personal relationships as a microcosm for their larger work, suggesting the feminist dictum, "The Personal is the Political", is at work in peacebuilding. Julienne, working with rural women in Rwanda, intimated this idea too.

(7) The idea of working holistically is part of our inner and outer frames in InterChange. The work of Mpambo, which we had not initially classified as peace work, epitomizes this holistic notion of peace. Similarly, many of the aboriginal peacebuilders describe their work integrally, as a way of life, rather than a strategy, technique or even role.

On the inner level of organization of InterChange, we include food as an essential part of all our meetings and it has now become part of our research/education work through the food/peace book. We certainly engage heart, mind and spirit; the symposium, in particular, was a deeply moving experience which had many of us in tears. The inclusion of rituals like the water ceremony does a great deal to include a spiritual dimension, and the ongoing development of rituals that cross borders will continue to be important. The group who traveled to Africa presented sage to the spiritual leader, who incorporated it into his ceremony.

I would say that our approach to building peace is an approach to life at its fullest. In a nutshell, we embrace the view of peace as synonymous with becoming as fully human as possible, an idea put forward by people from a range of backgrounds and perspectives. These include Wheatley (2002: 58); Vanier (1998); Goodman (2002, 2005) and Bopp et al (1984).

(8) Encouraging friendship as a basis for peacebuilding may not sound like a principle, but we have come to see that one of the strongest defining characteristics of InterChange is that we are a human-scale organizations with a key focus on building relationships between people. We have already defined that as something essential we want to maintain, and that we feel we will need to exert some effort to stay small. Dorothy highlighted this principle at the close of our symposium. Saying if we lost the relationships, we would lose everything.

Challenges that lie ahead

We would like to achieve charitable status and secure ongoing funding for our work since this will be very important in sustaining our work and giving it legitimacy. It will likely be challenging to maintain our organic, emergent process, especially as requirements of accountability and hierarchical structures are thrust on us. I believe we need to do two things, again reflecting the inner/outer frames. The inner frame is to maintain what works for us. The outer is to work for recognition and legitimation for the emergent forms and traditional practices. We need to share these ideas with others, including through this paper, recognizing that the choices people make in design, structure and organization are not neutral but reflect a certain worldview and accord with particular interests. In my view, we need to go beyond having our ideas tolerated as harmless but inefficient and naïve; we must reclaim the ground and create life-enhancing peace-conducive organizations

And to end: a new story…

Thomas King (2003) said that if we want to change the world, we need to change the stories. For a long time we have accepted as our default story the idea that peace is difficult and rare, and that we can only achieve it if we go against our human nature. People have come to believe that the best way to do things is through control, hierarchy and bureaucracy.

I do not believe this story. As I write in *Transformative Learning and Cultures of Peace*, "I have come to see the culture of peace as our natural way of being and living" (Goodman, 2002:196). We need to start believing a new story: that peace is possible, that living according to life-enhancing, co-creative, joyful ways—and -extending this to all people everywhere-- is the best way to nurture and foster the peace we all dream about. InterChange is one attempt to live and tell this story.

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