

PROCEEDINGS FROM THE CORDOBA SEMINARS SERIES
18 AUGUST 2010, LONDON

**NO ENEMY TO CONQUER:
BUILDING PEACE IN AN AGE OF CONFLICT**

MICHAEL HENDERSON

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The Cordoba Foundation

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Cultures in Dialogue.

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ST. ETHELBURGA'S CENTRE FOR
RECONCILIATION AND PEACE, LONDON

**NO ENEMY TO CONQUER:
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Michael Henderson

INTRODUCTION

IN 1953 a young Muslim gave me a book, *The Sayings of Muhammad*, with a foreword by Mahatma Gandhi written in 1938 which said, 'I am a believer in the truth of all the great religions of the world. There will be no lasting peace on earth unless we learn not merely to tolerate but even to respect other faiths as our own. A reverent study of the sayings of the different teachers of mankind is a step in the direction of such mutual respect.'

This is the spirit that drives me on a journey of celebrating the stories of men and women at their best committed to building bridges between people of different colours, cultures and languages; validating the power of forgiveness and personal reconciliation to inspire us with their courage. In this day and age, such stories are necessary because they serve not only as an ever-present reminder of the need for reconciliation and forgiveness but also to build relationships of trust in combating the increasing attacks on the role of faith in society. People of faith need to be allies in standing up to the secularisation of our societies. In 2006 the United Nations published an initiative entitled *Alliance of Civilizations*¹, a report by a high-level group who contest what they call 'the misguided view that cultures are set on an unavoidable collision course.' They contend that 'politics, not religion' is at the heart of the growing Muslim-West divide. 'The problem is never the faith,' said Kofi Annan, then UN Secretary General, receiving the report, 'it is the faithful, and how they behave towards each other: We should start by reaffirming – and demonstrating – that the problem is not the Qur'an, the Torah or the Bible.'

Ten years after 9/11 we are witnessing demonstrations of the continuing power of hatred and revenge. The challenge before us is to build relationships of trust, especially between the West and the Muslim World. Forgiveness is, in my view, an essential component in that process. Its significance is recognised by all great religions. As the late Dr Zaki Badawi wrote to me, 'In a world torn apart by hatred and the thirst for revenge, the call for forgiveness is timely and urgent. Our Sustainer describes Himself as *al-Ghaffaar*, the Often Forgiving.'

I am also very happy to speak again at the St. Ethelburga's² where my book *No Enemy To Conquer – Forgiveness in an Unforgiving World*³ was launched by an imam, a rabbi and a Christian leader. My father's office was next door at 80 Bishopsgate and my parents were married here when it was a church – I was given my name Michael here. In 1932 I was baptized at the old font here. I am also part Irish, with an

¹ The Alliance of Civilisations report comes on the back of a high-level group of experts formed by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to explore the roots of polarisation between societies and cultures today, and to recommend practical steps of action to address this issue. (<http://www.unaoc.org/>)

² St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace emanated from the ruins of St Ethelburga's Church after its destruction by an IRA bomb in 1993 - <http://stethelburgas.org>

Irish as well as a British passport and I welcome the fact that this building, partly destroyed by the IRA in 1993, has been rebuilt as a centre for reconciliation and peace.

I came back yesterday from another centre for reconciliation and peace at Mountain House, Caux, Switzerland.³ It is where more than sixty years ago I met Bashir Ahmed, the young Muslim who gave me *The Sayings of Muhammad*. In front of the book he wrote, 'In memory of the days in Caux. In this book are the deeds and words of the Prophet. I have come back from Caux and read them in a new light.'

This centre was set up by the Swiss who felt at the end of World War II that as their country had been spared the ravages of war, they should create a safe space where war combatants could find an answer to the hatred and passions that fuelled the previous six years. It was the first international conference after the war where Germans were welcomed as equals, with the first large group welcomed by a French choir singing in German. Historians have recorded the role the centre played in laying the foundations of the new Europe we take for granted. Dr Frank Buchman, the American who was the inspiration behind this initiative, was decorated by the French and German governments for his part in it. He was the founder of the Moral Re-Armament or MRA, which is now known as Initiatives of Change, and continues to run the centre.

In 1952-53 Buchman took a large group of 200 people (myself included), comprising mostly Christians, for eight months to India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, on the invitation of the respective countries' leaders who felt the group may contribute to strengthening their new democracies.⁴ I learned then that Muslims and Hindus and people of other faiths did not object to our Christian faith but to the hypocrisy in Westerners who did not live up to their words. We were able to go with humility to learn lessons together. One Indian paper stated that we had been welcomed because we were calling people back to the practice of their own faith. On that memorable trip Buchman spoke about his vision for the Muslim World, from Indonesia to North Africa, as 'a girder of unity for all civilisation'.

KEY THEMES

In addressing peace-making today, I want to draw on certain themes⁵ that I have defined based on my experiences and that I have illustrated in more detail in *No Enemy to Conquer*. These themes are:

- 1) The question of a *Clash or an Alliance*, which hardly needs asking in today's context. Incidentally The Cordoba Foundation's website states very aptly that 'a clash between the West and the Muslim world is neither inevitable nor necessary.'
- 2) *Reaching out to 'the other'* is crucial since foolish notions of 'the other' are fed by sources of misinformation now infinitely magnified and exaggerated by the Internet
- 3) *Moving beyond victimhood* so that people can overcome burdens that have the potential of destroying them in order to give them a new lease of life.
- 4) *Taking responsibility* is not just for the select few but for everyone, who are required to step forward to take the lead in overcoming divisions.
- 5) *Creating safe spaces* in which dialogue can take place. This is aptly demonstrated in one way by St Ethelburga's 'Tent'.⁶
- 6) *Acknowledging the past* so as to create a better and stable future.

I choose to illustrate these themes through real life stories because my primary source is people of all backgrounds that I have come in contact around the globe.

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³CAUX-Initiatives of Change is an independent officially recognised Swiss foundation, which promotes peace and intercultural dialogue. Its principal task is the management and maintenance of the conference centre in the former Caux-Palace hotel above Montreux - <http://www.caux.iofc.org/>

⁴Described in *Ice in Every Carriage: An Extraordinary Asian Journey 1952-53* (Caux Books 2010)

⁵These steps represent significant milestones in the journey of forgiveness and reconciliation. Each step, in whatever order, contributes to an understanding of the "other".

⁶A sixteen-sided structure in the garden courtyard, constructed in Saudi Arabia with art works donated from Morocco and Turkey. The Tent is designed to create a space where religious dialogue can take place between equals, a space that through its architecture recalls the desert from whence many faiths originate.

The UN report I cited at the outset of my lecture concludes that an honest look at the history of the twentieth century shows that ‘no single group, culture, geographic region, or political orientation has a monopoly on extremism and terrorist acts.’

MY MOTHER

I start with my personal story, because I was first introduced to the idea that apology and forgiveness carry more than personal ramifications through the example set by my mother.

For hundreds of years the Irish side of my family was part of the Protestant minority who ruled over the Catholics. One history describes my great, great grandfather as a founder of modern policing and he was even decorated for his part in helping suppress a Catholic uprising. So in 1922 at the time of Irish independence people like us were very unpopular. My mother could remember gunfights round her home and her school occupied by British troops. My grandfather was given an ultimatum: leave Ireland by end of week or be shot! That is why I am English and incidentally why she wanted us sent for safety to America during World War II.

In fact, seventy years ago this week I was crossing the dangerous waters of the Atlantic. My brother and I spent five years of World War II away from our parents and when we returned, having been separated at those formative years, there were all sorts of divisions between us. Our parents would say, ‘Do this, do that ...’, to which we would respond, ‘We don’t do it that way in America.’ This was a reason for us deciding to go in 1947 as a family to that newly created centre in Caux, Switzerland.

Well, our family found unity at Caux but we found much more, including the motivation and the experience that means that I can speak about reconciliation and forgiveness and peace-making. One day at Caux in 1947 an Irish Catholic senator, Eleanor Butler, a member of the Council of Europe, spoke which brought out the deep bitterness my mother felt but had hardly recognised. Everything in my mother rebelled against Eleanor. Who is this woman talking about unity in Europe and she chucked me out my country? But in the spirit of Caux she felt moved to apologise to Senator Butler for the indifference our family had shown to Catholics over many years. She did so and the two became friends and worked together.

Soon after that visit to Caux, Senator Butler, returning to Ireland, made some honest apologies for her views that divided instead of uniting her to other nations – including parts of her own nation. In every case, she said, unity was born between herself and those from whom she had been separated. She went on to be one of the founders of the Glenree Reconciliation Centre which works for non-violent solutions in Ireland and beyond, and our mother and our family were launched on a work for reconciliation on different continents.

NIGERIA: THE IMAM AND THE PASTOR

As you will know, Northern Nigeria is one of the frontlines of confrontation where thousands of Christians and Muslims have been killed in inter-religious conflicts. Two people who have been reaching out to ‘the other’ were at Caux this summer. I write about them in *No Enemy to Conquer*. They are Muhammad Ashafa and James Wuye from Kaduna. Muhammad is an Imam who was dedicated to the total Islamisation of his country, and James, a pastor who was just as dedicated to its total evangelization. They were bitter enemies determined to kill one another. The pastor had his hand hacked off while defending his church against Muslims and the imam had his spiritual adviser and two of his brothers killed by Christian extremists. They were hardly candidates for peace building in their country or likely to be described, as they are now, by the Archbishop of Canterbury as ‘a model for Christian Muslim relations.’

They met at a conference and it was suggested that the two men might have a part in bringing healing. They were encouraged to talk and each began to question the cost of the violence, finding passages in the Bible and the Qur'an which showed common approaches. They saw their survival as a sign from God and set up an organisation to promote dialogue.

It was one thing for two religious figures to talk. Real friendship, however, was slower to come. It took Pastor James three years to overcome his hatred. When they began travelling together, even sharing a room, he was sometimes tempted to carry a pillow to suffocate the imam when he was sleeping. Each time he wanted to retaliate for his hand. The fact that when his mother was in hospital the imam and his friends visited her helped the pastor to view the imam differently.

It was one thing for two religious figures to talk. Real friendship, however, [is] slower to come

Both men want to stay faithful to their respective religions. In fact they demonstrate that it is important to stay faithful when reaching out to others of a different faith. Today they are joint directors of the Interfaith Mediation Centre in Kaduna. A powerful DVD of their story⁷ is being shown widely and they have recently been deeply involved in helping Kenyans in the aftermath of the electoral violence in Kenya. But it is the very fact that they were both at the heart of the previous inter-religious violence, James told me, that gives them their credibility.

LEBANON: MILITIAS STEP BACK FROM THE BRINK

Another man, with whom I travelled up in the train to Caux this summer, is Assaad Chafari, a Lebanese businessman. He works closely with another Lebanese, Mayor Mohieddine Chehab. They led militia forces on opposite sides in a civil war that left 70,000 people dead. His 'reaching out to "the other"' came by way of putting right something in his own life.

The story of their interaction goes back nearly thirty years to a time when a young Christian lawyer, Ramez Salamé, decided to take stock of his life, putting right what was wrong, and accepting the daily discipline of listening for God's guidance. He returned library books he had intended to keep, and found a new frankness in his family through asking forgiveness from his father for his hatred and from his brother for his jealousy. He did this without any idea that he could be a peace builder in his nation. But as he took these steps he began to get ideas for his country, and, in the midst of the civil war, felt that he was not fighting the right battle. He found that putting things right in his own life unlocked creativity to help others.

'In a moment of prayer,' he said, 'I believed God was telling me that he had a more important role for me to fulfil than to engage in the military fight.' He gave up his gun and courageously began conversations with his Muslim compatriots. As a token of a new approach he sought out the Mufti, the leader of the Muslim Sunni community, to apologise for the way the Christians had conspired to keep the reins of power in their hands, not permitting the Muslims to be fully responsible for the country. He told the Mufti that he wanted to accept the changes in his own life which would help create a new Lebanon. The Mufti rose and shook his hand: 'What you say is one ray of light in the present darkness. Thank you.'

It was then that Ramez began to bring together groups of Lebanese, wherever possible Muslim, Christian and Druze, and it was at such meetings that Assaad began to find a new thinking. Out of these encounters came his decision in February 2000 to apologise through the main Lebanese *Al-Nahar* newspaper for what he did to his Muslim adversaries in the name of Christianity. Charles Sennott, writing in the *Boston Globe*, said that Assaad 'stunned Lebanon with a statement [that was] extraordinary in its simplicity and honesty.'

⁷ *The Imam and the Pastor* (FILT films)

Explaining his action later, Assaad later said he had previously viewed Muslims as traitors because they looked towards the Arab world and he towards the West. 'We were conservative, democratic Christians and we felt superior to Muslims and Palestinians.' As deputy intelligence director of a Christian militia he ruled over the fate of captives. 'I became the policeman, judge and executioner. It was up to me if they were killed, exchanged for others or used to bridge intelligence gaps. If they killed four of us, it was my duty to inflict more harm in our retaliation. I had lost my sense of humanity.'

Assaad says that 'after a week full of mischief I could go to church on Sunday at ease with myself and with God'. However, he had come across this forum for dialogue between Christians and Muslims and recognised the human being in them he had forgotten about through the civil war. 'I discovered that my behaviour was very far from God, that it was no use trying to change the world if I did not start changing my own life and putting God first.'

In his apology to his victims, he asked for forgiveness and promised to try with God's help to do any reparation he could. 'I decided to get rid of my prejudices, jokes and contemptuous attitude against the Muslims.'

I heard him repeat this apology that summer at another peace-building conference in Caux. The following summer Mohieddine Chehab apologised from the same platform for atrocities he had committed as a leader of the Muslim militia in the civil war. When the fighting stopped he started visiting Christian villages. He would get into conversations hoping that the Christians would say negative things about Muslims so that he could justify his past actions. But this rarely happened. 'We were so deluded. I have met such decent people who have feelings, fears, nagging worries like us. I looked at my children. I knew what happened to us, but what about them?'

In Beirut there is a garden of forgiveness. It is a symbol of this growing readiness on the part of Lebanese to take a fresh look at the past. Recently Assaad and Mohieddine were invited by the initiator of the garden, Alexandra Assaily, who has been here at St Ethelburga's, to meet in her Beirut home with New York women who had lost members of their immediate family in the 9/11 attacks. Both men told their remarkable and often horrifying stories. Mohieddine described how in 1983 he was about to kill two US prisoners after a US ship, the *New Jersey*, shelled West Beirut with a terrifying bombardment and saw his mother terrified and shaking. His mother pleaded with him not to do it. He did not, and exchanged them for prisoners instead. An American CEO, one of seven who accompanied the women, went up to him afterwards and said, 'I was stationed aboard one of the US navy ships off the coast. I want to ask your forgiveness - not for my hate, but for my indifference at that time to the suffering of your mother and the people of Beirut.' An American woman in New York who had lost her fireman son, also came up to him in tears, hugged him and told him, 'Now, I am able to really forgive.'

Last month Assaad gave a moving talk at the Caux conference where he described how in moments of silence he had accepted the challenge from God to do anything he could to restore for the evil he had done as a militia leader and to try to save the country from another civil war. His task was to ask for forgiveness and to leave the results to God. He met the parents of some of the 17,000 who had disappeared and was surprised at the friendship with which he was greeted. For the first time the children got to know about the atrocities so that in the future they would not take the same route. There was a need in working for peace to include the combatants and help victims, also to protect sites of war suspected to be communal graves. There was as yet no unified history of the country. He was part of a national project to deal honestly with the legacies of the past.

It has been a long journey for Assaad and for Mohieddine and others to move from hatred and prejudice to a determination to work together to address Lebanon's problems. They give hope to others

that fruitful dialogue is possible. 'The Lebanese people are making peace with themselves,' says Assaad. 'They have been slowly walking back from the brink. That's what I did.'

NORTHERN IRELAND: BEYOND BLOODY SUNDAY

I have mentioned the need to move beyond the victimhood mentality. One man who could have easily stayed as a victim is Richard Moore from Derry, Northern Ireland. As a ten-year-old Richard was struck at close range and blinded by a rubber bullet shot by a British soldier. Only a few months earlier his uncle was killed on Bloody Sunday, leaving behind his eight children and pregnant wife. Yet Richard, growing up, never heard either parent say an angry word about the soldier who shot him or the British Army. 'My parents lived their religious beliefs with quiet dignity and preached them without words.'

*[We] need to
move beyond
the victimhood
mentality*

Richard's journey of the last 37 years is a saga of faith and extraordinary achievement that has flowed from his being shot and from his immediate acceptance of his fate and without bitterness. 'In the circumstances, I readily acknowledge that bitterness was an option, but it was one I chose not to take. I went to sleep and the following morning I awoke and got on with life.' He learned to live without eyes, to lead a folk group, to become a licensed radio operator, to gain a university degree, to go on to found a charity, 'Children in Crossfire', that has helped millions of children and communities throughout the world over the last thirteen years.

All through the years there was a growing feeling of his need to complete the other half of his story, to meet the man who shot him. After a long and eventually fruitful search, and then careful approaches to ensure the soldier did not feel threatened, the contact was made. Richard travelled widely but the 45 minute flight to Scotland to meet Charles was for him 'the longest journey of my life.' The two men talked for almost four hours. 'I was happy in his company. He understands the hurt that I have had endure. Once you humanise a situation like mine it is amazing how all the myths evaporate. I didn't see him any more as a soldier but rather as a grandfather, a father, and a man who had his own difficulties and traumas.'

In 2007 the Dalai Lama visited Richard's home town to honour the work of his charity. He says that he thought of the many material gifts Richard might have presented him 'but the greatest gift he could give was to introduce me to the man who blinded him.' At a public occasion the Tibetan leader introduced Richard and Charles on stage and a standing ovation was given them both. 'Blindness I regard as a gift,' says Richard. 'I have embraced blindness not treated it as an awful affliction. In many ways I have used it to my advantage. I am involved with the children in Africa as a result. My blindness has made me the man that I am. By forgiving the soldier I am not going to get my eyesight back, but forgiveness can change the future, and that's what happened in my case.'

In May this year Richard Moore and the British soldier, Charles Innes, visited the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, his home city in Northern India. They both spoke at an occasion in a local Tibetan school attended by hundreds of children and adults. The two men were seated on either side of His Holiness. The Tibetan leader said that future generations would draw inspiration from Richard's spirit of forgiveness and compassion: 'It is my hope that the spirit of forgiveness you have revealed can be passed from generation to generation.'

Charles spoke of the horror he felt when he realised that he had blinded a child. 'I was appalled and devastated,' he said, and had deeply grieved ever since. But the kindness showed to him by Richard and his family had helped him come to terms with what had happened. Richard, thanking the Dalai Lama for the tributes, said, 'Your sight can be taken away but not your vision.'

ISRAEL: ASKING QUESTIONS

In my lifetime we witnessed problems and relationships we thought were insoluble but one by one they turned on their head: the bitter wars within Europe, the Cold War, the Apartheid regime in South Africa and now Northern Ireland, come to mind. Taking inspiration from these I am confident we can turn a new page in the Middle East and beyond. It is upon us to believe in this hope and work towards realising this aim. All sorts of people are reaching out to the other, refusing to be victims and taking responsibility -- taking responsibility for their own situations and for their own people.

I talked this summer with Merri Minuskin, one of the Jewish people I write about in my book. She often takes initiatives at the risk of her life. On her first visit to Caux she discovered there were Palestinians there and apologised to them for the sorrow and loss of dignity her people inflicted on the Palestinians.

I write about Parents Circle – Families Forum which has brought together over five hundred Israeli and Palestinian families, including combatants who once fought each other. The founders of the two organisations could both have regarded themselves as victims but have decided to turn the tragedies in their lives into a springboard of hope for their people. It has taken courage and also recognition of what the others endured.

Parents Circle was set up by Yitzhak Frankenthal, an Orthodox Jew whose son Arik was kidnapped and killed by Hamas. He has found that working for peace by reaching out to Palestinians has cost him friends. He reflects rather sombrely: 'Arik's killer was born into an appalling occupation, into a moral chaos. Had my son been born in his stead, he may have ended up doing the same. Had I myself been born into the political and ethical chaos that is the Palestinians' daily reality, I would certainly have tried to kill and hurt the occupier; had I not, I would have betrayed my essence as a free man.' Likewise Combatants for Peace was founded by a Palestinian, Bassam Aramin, whose ten-year-old daughter was shot in the head by Israeli border guards. 'It would be so easy to hate,' he says, 'to seek revenge, find my own rifle, and kill three or four soldiers in my daughter's name. That's the way Israelis and Palestinians have run things for a long time. Every dead child is another reason to keep killing.' He spent seven years in an Israeli jail for helping plan an armed attack against Israeli soldiers and says that as he served out his sentence and talked with Israeli guards he learned about Jewish history and the Holocaust. 'On both sides,' he says, 'we have been made instruments of war. On both sides there is pain and grieving, and an endless loss. And the only way to make it stop is to stop it ourselves.'

INDIA: BEYOND REVENGE

I think of two other friends from different backgrounds who feature in the book and are taking responsibility in India.

Juzar Bandukwala is president of the Gujarat People's Union for Civil Liberties. Rather than pursuing an academic life in the United States he decided to plunge into the issue that has been his life's focus for the past 35 years: how to uplift the Muslims of India. His priority became modern education. 'This required that I be as honest as possible with both Muslims and Hindus, which meant, as he says, that the extreme elements found me 'very irritating.' In 2002 he became a victim after the Gohdra train burning incident, with his own house burned down, and he had to flee to the United States. After three months he returned for a police inquiry. He refused to name the policeman who had joined hands with mob and said, 'I pardon them.' He does not want Muslims to answer hate with hate. 'It is a tribute to the Muslims of India that we have not responded with the weapon of terrorism.' In his frequent letters to the papers he returns to the dual mission of helping Hindus face what has happened and changing his own people. He says, 'we must engage in deep introspection and critique our own selves, find out and rectify our own faults.' Some time back, he actually emailed me to say 'Peace and reconciliation are possible

with the magic word “sorry”. The next decades will be crucial for India. If India can contain this passion for revenge, the world would have gained a great deal.’ An article about him in *The Hindu* was headed ‘A sane voice in an insane clime.’

Dr Bandukwala emailed me again earlier in August 2010 to say that he believes in forgiveness for a deeply spiritual reason. In the Qur’an, he wrote, ‘Allah is described as the Forgiving, the Merciful. Allah commands: keep to forgiveness, stay on the right path, and avoid the ignorant.’ Hence, forgiveness, says Bandukwala, is a cornerstone of Islam, but ‘sadly this trait has been completely covered up by the Al Qaeda types,’ he lamented.

Sushobha Barve has a different kind of story of taking responsibility. She is a high caste Hindu who has become known through South Asia for her work helping people of different religions and castes come together. She runs the Delhi-based Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation, which has helped courageously in situations of bloody conflicts in many parts of India and is now involved in Kashmir. In 1984 she was travelling in a train with a friend, when news broke of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s murder by certain Sikhs. Sushobha and a friend were the only ones on the train who had tried to prevent the violence.

Sushobha had been brought up in an orthodox and broadminded Hindu family. She had never been taught to hate any religious, racial, linguistic or caste groups, but only rarely had people of different backgrounds intruded on the family’s life. Whilst at college, she apologised to a Muslim student for her distrust of her and since then her prejudice towards Muslims vanished from her heart. ‘Somewhere along the line I realised that if true understanding was to come between people and communities I must also try to understand history from their viewpoint.’

Sushobha describes the experience in the train as a watershed. ‘It not only shook me physically and emotionally but it made me realise that anyone can become victims of violence in today’s India.’ She decided to accept responsibility for what Hindus had done. She described the process as painful ‘but once accepted I was shown the steps I should take.’ She felt she needed to write letters to Sikhs – some known by her, some not, apologising unconditionally. Prominent Sikh spokesperson and writer, Khushwant Singh, replied in a handwritten note, ‘I was in tears as I read your letter. As long as we have people like you around we will survive as a nation.’

From 1984 onwards, after those traumatic hours in the train, Sushobha’s life and work took on a new urgency. ‘One day,’ she says, ‘I had the thought that I must pray for compassion also for the aggressor. For me, it meant praying for my own people with whose actions I had totally disagreed. It is important for those of us in crisis situations to keep our hearts open to listen to all sides. Unless we listen, we will never know how to help and we will never be used. When we listen we are actually helping people toward finding solutions.’

If true understanding was to come between people and communities I must also try to understand history from their viewpoint
- Sushobha Barve

NORTHERN IRELAND: END OF A JOURNEY?

Finally, let us return to the dramatic progress towards peace in the Northern Ireland. Indeed the peace process has involved many elements: commitment of the governments of Britain, Northern Ireland, and the United States along with the people of the whole island, careful negotiations, economic development, and a war weariness so that there is little desire for a return to violence. But alongside all this, which gives promise of a better future and for a lasting peace, is a proliferation of men and women on all sides, individually or in groups, who are working for true reconciliation -- often very quietly and enduring much suffering. More than ever there is a reaching out to the other, with clergy on both sides

praying for each other and working together.

Acknowledgment is perhaps the biggest element needed in healing the past, as my mother did, in the way that Assaad has spoken out, as Sushobha has, as most powerfully at government level British Prime Minister Cameron has done recently. In June 2010 after the Saville Report on 'Bloody Sunday' was published, Mr Cameron apologised to the people of Derry for the 'unjustified and unjustifiable' actions of British soldiers in the killing of 14 unarmed protestors. The response of the people there was amazing as their family members were absolved of guilt and it was officially recognised that they were unarmed. Richard Moore, who was blinded by a British soldier, emailed me soon afterwards: 'Last Tuesday was an incredible day for our city. I was at the Guildhall with almost everyone else in Derry. I think the families of the dead and injured were so dignified. I didn't think I would ever see something like this in my lifetime. It is a great opportunity now for a real healing process to begin.'

CONCLUSION

Through the anecdotes and stories cited in this paper, it is hoped that we too can as individuals and groups take bold steps to further understanding and dialogue between us, and help heighten our peacemaking potential. Let us reflect on the following:

- 1) **Clash or Alliance?** Despite the temptation to revert to old antagonisms the two Nigerians recognised that though they were portrayed as adversaries they were meant to be allies.
- 2) **Reaching out to 'the other'.** Mutual apologies led the two Lebanese into action together. They recognised that everyone has a role to play in their country's future.
- 3) **Moving beyond victimhood.** The Israeli and the Palestinian, like Richard in Derry, could have remained mired in feeling sorry for themselves and blaming others. Instead the groups they founded have become hubs of hope.
- 4) **Taking responsibility.** Sushobha Barve and Juzar Bandukwala could not leave the task to others. They owed it to their own people to act.
- 5) **Creating a safe space.** Right after the war, the Germans felt welcome at Caux and the ground was carefully prepared for the British soldier to meet Richard, the boy he shot.
- 6) **Acknowledging the past.** Where our mutual pasts, personally or nationally, were faced honestly they became assets that we shared. My mother's apology built a bridge to Senator Butler. A senior Irish Catholic even said to me that after Prime Minister Cameron apologised the Derry people would have happily given him the freedom of the city.

I would hope that the people I have talked about will give us both perspectives and encouragement to act in our own spheres. We may be surprised and gratified by the results.

I started with Mahatma Gandhi so let me end with his grandson, Rajmohan, who heads up the work of Initiatives of Change and of Caux. As much as any Hindu in India he has reached out to the Muslim population and to Pakistan. His experience underlines the importance, as my mother found, as did Ramez in Lebanon, as did my Nigerian friends, of starting with yourself. He credits an experience in the area of apology and forgiveness in his own life as the motivator of much of his work.

In 1951 as a young student, he was in the office of the *Hindustan Times*, of which his father was editor, when a subeditor came in with the news that Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, had been shot. The young Gandhi said to the subeditor, 'I hope what follows is news of his death.' Gandhi writes, 'Liaquat Ali Khan had done me or mine no harm. Our paths had never crossed. But he was Pakistan's prime minister and Pakistan was India's enemy. Moreover, making a heartless remark put a sixteen-year-old in the category of real men, didn't it? And in the category of smart men? But the subeditor did

not smile. Not smiling, he made me feel small. The vanity and ill-will that masqueraded in my heart as manliness stood exposed.'

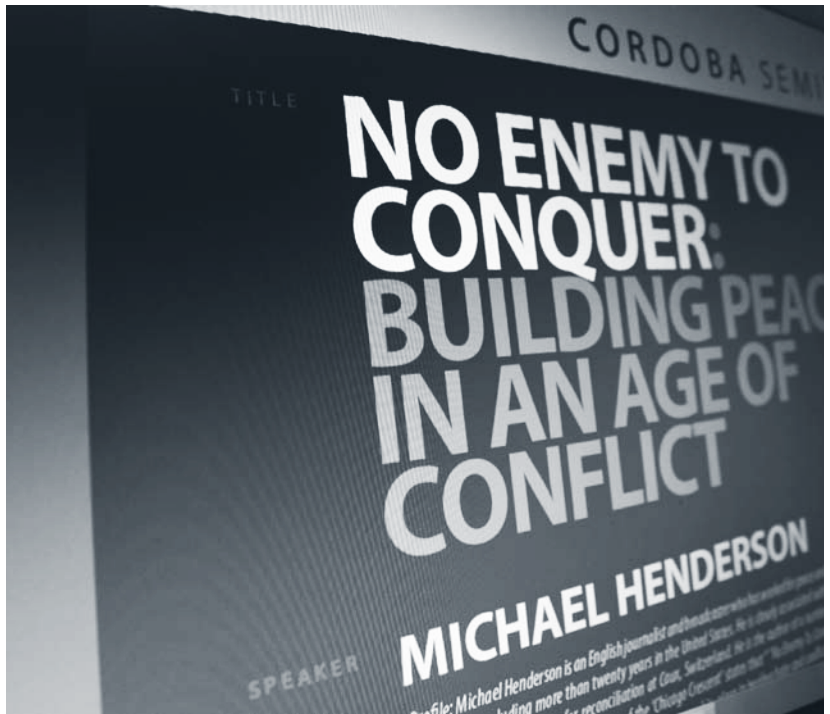
That experience of an exposed pettiness, he says, made him want to make amends and was a factor in his wishing to write *Eight Lives*, portraits of Muslim leaders in the subcontinent. 'The episode and what it disclosed helped create a longing to heal the subcontinent's wounds. I was willing to face my own heart and let it be filled with a desire to build bridges.'

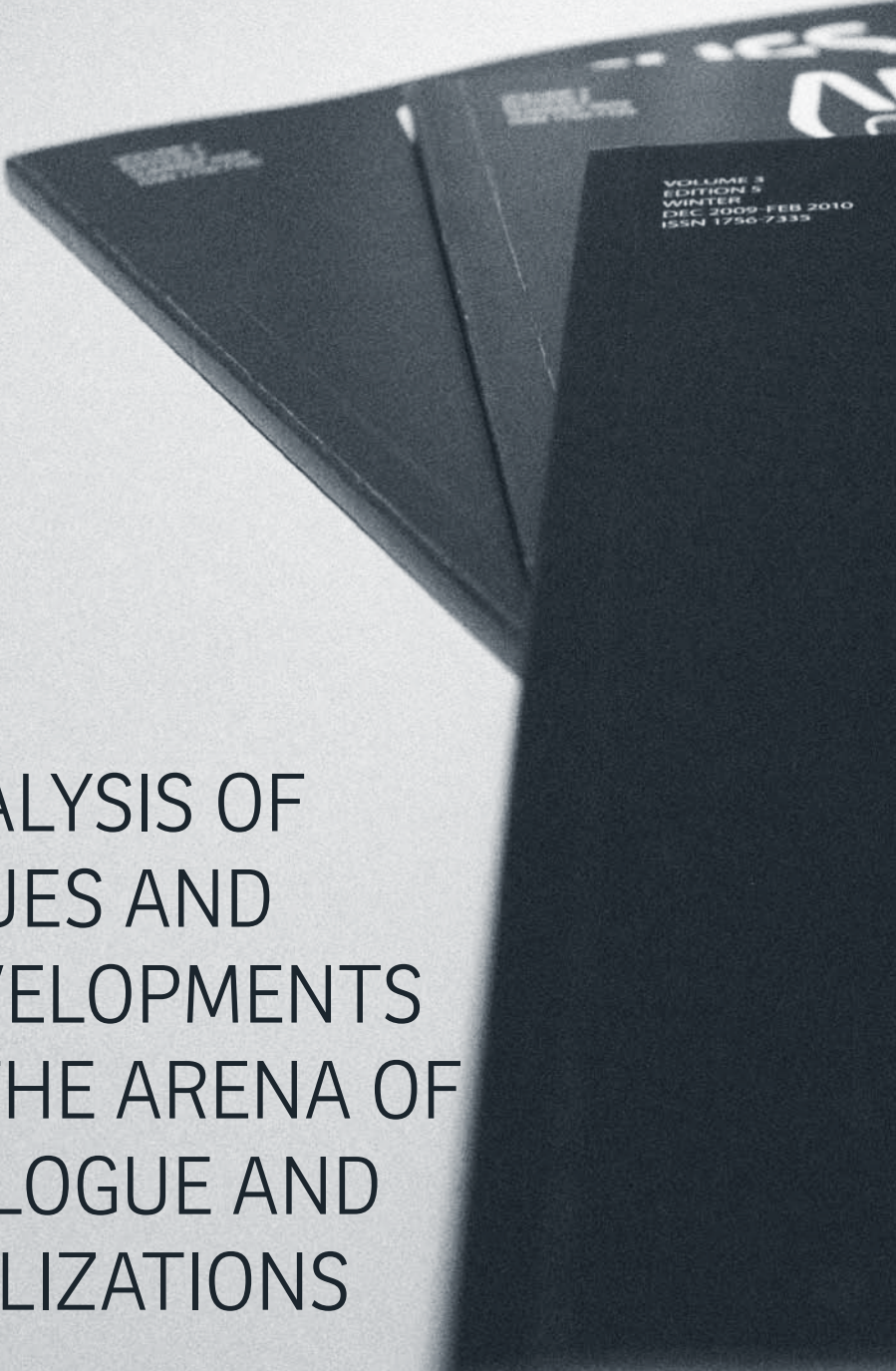
Last month Gandhi was given an honorary doctorate at Liverpool Hope University. Responding to the award, he said that the future of humanity depended on whether or not the Muslim/non-Muslim divide can be bridged. It was a bridge that would have to be built from both sides, and by people of all backgrounds. An essential tool for this bridge will be the ability that his grandfather had – of speaking the truth to your own side. 'Allow me to point out,' he said 'that courageous sounds have lately been heard in Pakistan, where politicians, editorial writers, and grass-root activists are demanding that religious minorities be protected and assured equal rights. I salute their voice.' He was similarly struck, on a visit in April of this year to Israel and Palestine, by Jewish voices demanding justice for Palestine. 'On Easter Day,' he said, 'I had the good fortune to visit the spot where Jesus was born and also the site where, it is believed, Abraham was buried. In each sacred spot I made two silent prayers, one for the liberation of Palestine and the other for the safety of the people of Israel.'

Referring to Britain's involvement in the stories of several nations, including in the Middle East, and including India and Pakistan and equally, Pakistanis and Indians being involved in the stories of today's Britain, he expressed his conviction that people living in Britain, including Britons of Pakistani and Indian origin, have a role in bringing healing and justice to the Middle East and in the India-Pakistan relationship. He concluded, 'On my nuclearised subcontinent, a water crisis looms in the near horizon even as hundreds of millions of the hitherto impoverished look forward to a better life. Will armies,' he asked, 'insist on continuing to face one another at great heights in Siachen in Kashmir where – while guns for the moment are silent - the freeze kills soldiers of both stripes every day? Will the armies continue to do this until the ice and the glaciers melt? Whether on the subcontinent or here or elsewhere, the call for reconciliation,' said Gandhi 'is actually a call for sanity.'

The future of humanity depended on whether or not the Muslim/non-Muslim divide can be bridged. It was a bridge that would have to be built from both sides, and by people of all backgrounds
– Ghandi

*Michaleh Henderson is a seasoned journalist and broadcaster. He has authored a number of books, his most recent include *No Enemy to Conquer: Forgiveness in an Unforgiving World* (Baylor University Press, 2009) and *Ice in Every Carriage: An Extraordinary Asian Journey* (Caux Edition, Switzerland, 2010). Henderson lived in the United States for 22 years, he returned to Britain in 2000. He has been for more than fifty years associated with Initiatives of Change (formerly known as MRA), served on its US board for 20 years and was for 35 years on its British Council. Henderson has received numerous awards, including three George Washington Honor Medals from the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge.





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