Global Peace Services USA

…an idea whose time has come

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Greetings from John Eriksson, President, GPS USA

This September 2017 issue of the GPS Newsletter includes two powerful contributions by GPS members.

The first article is by Anton Hajjar of Chevy Chase, MD, "When Muslims Sheltered Christian Refugees – My Armenian Grandmother's Lesson." Anton's story is a powerful account of his family's experience in circumstances from which they were protected by so-called enemies. His grandmother's lesson could not be more compelling today, a century after the events he describes. Anton is a labor and employment lawyer living in Chevy Chase, MD. He is active in the American-Arab Antidiscrimination Committee and a member of the Council of the American Law Institute.

The second article is by Fr. Dr. Innocent Rugaragu of Kigali, Rwanda, "Ethical Pragmatism: Leadership for Peace and Reconciliation in Post-Violent Sub-Saharan African Countries," based on Fr. Innocent's PhD dissertation. His doctorate was awarded by George Mason University in May 2017. His dissertation was also the basis for a stimulating presentation made by Fr. Innocent to a GPS audience in June. In addition to his article, you may wish to read the accompanying sidebar for more insights into Fr. Innocent's journey and his vision for his country.

If you are on email but have not yet received our monthly Peace Dispatch, please let us know by sending your email address to globalpeaceservicesusa@gmail.com or by sending a note to P.O. Box 27922 in Washington, DC 20038-7922. Readers tell us they value the Peace Dispatch for its highlights of current books, articles, films, conferences and other events with a focus on the varied dimensions of peacemaking and peacebuilding.

In order to continue and expand our current work, such as the GPS Newsletter, and the Peace Dispatch, we do need greater resources. Please consider making as generous a tax-deductible contribution as you can to GPS. This may be done by mailing a check to the postal address shown above or through our website www.globalpeaceservices.org. Please note that GPS has a new phone number: 301-681-6968.

When Muslims Sheltered Christian Refugees – My Armenian Grandmother's Lesson

My paternal grandmother was born in Aleppo, Syria, of Armenian parents. Her Christian faith was displayed by the cross tattooed on her arm, making it impossible for her to deny her faith. Although they were Christian, she and her family were nonetheless accepted and protected by her Syrian Muslim neighbors a century ago. Without their kindness, I would not be here today and would not have been afforded the opportunity to live the American dream as the grandchild of immigrants. As our president fans the flames of intolerance toward Muslims, Americans need to know that not so long ago outstretched Muslim arms provided shelter for Christian refugees.

The humanitarian crises in Syria, Iraq, and other Muslim-majority countries have created a flood of refugees. We see the stories and pictures almost every day, many from my family's home city of Aleppo. The response of the United States government towards accepting Muslim refugees has devolved from neglect to outright hostility. This was on my mind while my wife and I were on an extended stay in Israel, living in Haifa, following our retirement. On a visit to Jerusalem, we wandered around the Old City and noticed posters in the Armenian Quarter calling for recognition of the genocidal massacres of Armenians in 1915 by the Young Turks in power in the Ottoman government. Armenians the world over, and particularly in Watertown, Massachusetts, the historic center of Armenian culture, commemorate the atrocities annually in April.

My immigrant grandparents, Antoon and Satonig, met in a textile mill in Lawrence, Massachusetts, the city where my father was born. I still have many relatives in that community. My grandfather was a Christian Arab from Aleppo, so it was a sort of mixed marriage (many Armenians live in the Middle East, but their identity is distinctly not Arab and their religion is their own Armenian Apostolic Church). They later moved to New York to work in the garment industry when jobs in the mills dried up during the Depression. I was lucky to have grown up in in the same house in Brooklyn with my grandmother. Even as a young child, I knew something of the atrocities against Armenians and I had made some disparaging remark to her about Muslims. Although Muslim Turks and Kurds committed the massacres, I vividly recall that she corrected me, explaining that Muslim neighbors in Syria accepted Armenians as refugees. She made it clear that it was wrong to generalize about Muslims, as it was about all religious, ethnic and nationality groups.

In the Old City of Jerusalem, we wandered past St. Marcos Syriac church, tucked away in a quiet side street. The Syriac people are also known as Assyrians; both are sometimes called Jacobites, an ancient sect of Christianity. I stopped in the courtyard, where I saw a poster. The same massacres inflicted on the Armenians were also committed against the Assyrian population. Like my Armenian grandmother, many ended up refugees in the eastern Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Per capita, the Assyrians may have lost even more of their population to what they call "Seyfo" ("The Sword" in Aramaic, the language of Jesus, still used by the people). It is a horrible story of which I was until then unaware.

Also posted was this 1917 decree by Al-Husayn Ibn 'Ali, the Sharif of Mecca, that applied as well to my Armenian relatives a hundred years ago. It made a deep impression on me, so I copied it down. It said in part:

> "What is required of you is to protect and take good care of the Jacobite, the Syriac and Armenian community living in your authority and frontiers and among your tribes. Help them in all of their affairs and defend them as you would defend yourselves and your properties and your children and provide everything they might need whether they are settled or moving from place to place because they are the Protected People of the Muslims (Ahl Dimmat al Muslim) – about whom the Prophet Mohammed (may God grant him His blessings and peace) said: 'Whosoever takes from them even a rope, I will be his adversary on the day of Judgment.'"

Christians whose grandparents and great grandparents benefitted from the generosity of Muslims yesterday live today in the Middle East as an integral part of the population. Indeed, there is an Armenian church a few blocks from where we were living in Haifa. History should teach us that acceptance of refugees is a universal value that can be found in all three Abrahamic faiths. As Pope Francis said on February 2, 2017, "Pray with me for all those who are afflicted, especially the poor, refugees, and marginalized, so they may be welcomed and find comfort in our communities."

Like Pope Francis, Jonathan Roos, the Senior Rabbi at Washington, D.C.'s Temple Sinai, recently admonished the entire Washington, D.C., community that accepting refugees is not an option to people of faith but rather a moral imperative, and that "[t]he teaching from Scripture is clear: 'When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall do him no wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself for you were strangers in the land of Egypt' (Leviticus 19:33-34).'"

One does not have to reach back a century to find faithful Muslims living out their faith in acts of kindness, big and small. An example can be found a few months ago when fires struck parts of Haifa, including at the Moriah synagogue (the oldest Conservative shul in Israel). Muslims responded with donations of wood and tree saplings to replace the burned down trees. Moriah Rabbi Dov Hiyon, said, "I had tears in my eyes when I heard what was happening. It was so emotional to hear that Muslims were asking to donate to a Jewish synagogue." At a time when some accused Palestinians of having deliberately set the fires, Haifa's mayor Yona Yahev recounted the good relations among the city's diverse community. He said, "No one dares to point a finger at the local Palestinians here." He noted that Christians, Jews and Muslims offered their homes to evacuees; "That", he said, "is the real story."

The same openness to refugees exhibited by the Muslims who sheltered Armenian and Assyrian Christians in the last century should be shown to Muslim refugees today. We must embrace our shared humanity and resist the temptation to turn neighbors of different faiths into "others" – "them" as opposed to "us." It is critical to recognize that we all have had our turn as the refugee, the outcast, the other. It will be a sad chapter in American history if we do not seek to be a part of the solution alleviating the suffering of the "least among us."

Anton Haijar

Ethical Pragmatism: Leadership for Peace and Reconciliation in Post-Violent Sub-Saharan African Countries

"We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience" – Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

As an African, born in Rwanda and a refugee like millions of others, the phenomenon of leadership evokes both positive and negative thoughts, memory and feelings in me. To some degree, my personal situation may help to explain my interest in the topic of leadership for peace and the predicament in which my mother continent finds herself where many post-colonial top leaders, often called "Great Men," have caused more harm than good in their leadership positions. Like most people, I have asked myself over and over again: "if African countries had good leaders from their foundations, leaders who led toward unity, security, development, justice, peace and reconciliation, how would Africa be different today?"

Following the phenomenon of such bad leadership, in the past fifty years, 90% of African countries have experienced violent conflicts that go hand-in-hand with extreme poverty, massive refugee flows, naked injustices, ignorance, ethnic division and low technological and economic advancement.

George Ayittey (2005:91-92) emphasizes, "As such, the poverty of Africa is not due so much to the "backwardness" of the peasant majority as it is to the intellectual backwardness of the leadership and the elites." Similar outcry is shared by Greg Mills (2011: 174) who believes that "the primary reason why Africa's people are poor is because their leaders make this choice" and Gerwel & Malan (2005: 66-69) who have argued that leadership in Africa is at the center of conflict and conflict resolution whether at the civil or military levels. Even in the context of genocide, which is one of the worst forms of horrendous violence, Madeleine K. Albright and William S. Owen reported that "leadership [is] the indispensable ingredient" for the cause or prevention of the genocide (2008: 1). No wonder globally, James MacGregor Burns (2003:198) has concluded, "only leadership can overcome the abuses of leadership" while John Maxwell goes even an extra mile with his dictum "everything rises and falls on leadership" (2001:211). Therefore, I contend that if leadership is at the heart of violent conflicts, abject poverty and chaos, then leadership has to be at the heart of needed solutions encompassing security, politics, economics, technology, peace and reconciliation.

Such global outcry would make most people agree that the above perception and reality must change faster. Good leadership has to become a foundation or an engine to drive the desired political, economic and social-cultural changes.

While leadership matters at all levels of every society and in all walks of life, political scientist Joseph S. Nye and colleagues observe that top level leadership, given its positive or negative powerful influence on a country's peace, may matter more in post-conflict countries than mid-level leadership which connects the grassroots to the top.

Some Major Findings

My study asked "What kind of leaders do sub-Saharan countries need to bring prosperity, peace and reconciliation to the region?" I wanted to learn how it is possible to develop, nurture and sustain top-level leaders as a force for positive change in sub-Saharan Africa and Africa as a continent.

To answer the above question, based on recommendations by knowledgeable observers, I selected a sample of public, private and civil society sector leaders who were clearly seen and identified as leaders who in their positions, both past and

present, genuinely cared and continue to care about their countries' and the continent's wellbeing, peace included.

An exploration of leadership theories and styles such as: great man, transactional, transformation, situational, contextual, servant, dynamic, shared and ethical to mention a few, provided insights on how leadership at various stages in history shaped followers, their lives and institutions.

As a result of this investigation, I concluded that a hybrid amalgamation of multiple theories was required to develop such leadership. Such desired and shared leadership is what I identified in this research as an "ethical pragmatist" leadership theory. Four major themes emerged as pillars for such leadership. The diagrams below illustrate the four major themes for peace and reconciliation leadership summarized as "Do, Be, Know & Historical Context."

Leadership for Peace and Reconciliation: Be, Know, Do and Historical Context

I adopted the above words "Be-Know–Do" (as coded themes) from the 2006 US Army Leadership Field Manual (FM 6-22, 2006:1) as one of my theoretical frameworks. I added "Historical Background" as an emergent theme to the diagram based on factors that emerged from my interviews of the study participants. The words and the diagram above help demonstrate visually the connection of how leadership for sustainable peace and reconciliation acts as a foundation and how the four pillars matter for a competent good leadership.

A new style of leadership arose from the interviews and the literature reviewed. I coined the name "ethical pragmatist" because the combination of these two elements, "ethics" and "pragmatism," were the driving force behind each interviewee's striving for the inclusive and just vision of peace and reconciliation. From those interviewed, I recognized two distinct approaches these leaders took. One approach came from individuals who presented themselves as being very individually focused, strong, committed, and eschewing corruption and personal greed. These leaders had a clear vision for their country and people and knew how to achieve it. While they did not achieve their vision singlehandedly and had a team of trusted people upon whom they depended, they tended to use a top-down approach to leadership and to be the one to orchestrate the direction in which to lead.

The other approach was found in individuals who tended to have a great sense of self-confidence, the same clear vision of desiring peace and reconciliation and sense of direction as to how to achieve this shared goal, but did not feel a need to be the focal point of control and held the reins of power more loosely. These leaders engaged in building relationships from the bottom up and relied a great deal on their interactions with others to help them lead. They exhibited good interpersonal and communication skills, believed strongly in active listening and empowering others to actively participate in teamwork and decision-making. These differences may be due to the leaders' insertion in a unique historical context and possible personality differences dating back to childhood, a topic that my research did not explore, but which is worth researching in the future.

The World of Fr. Innocent Rugaragu

Fr. Innocent, the author of the adjacent essay based on his PhD dissertation, is Rwandan and a Jesuit priest born and raised in Tanzania. He holds an impressive set of academic credentials:

- B.A. Honors in Philosophy and Humanities (U. Zimbabwe);
- B.A. in Theology (Catholic Univ. of East Africa);
- M.A. in Theology and Social Ethics (U. Santa Clara);
- M.A. in Justice and Peace Studies (U. San Diego), and just last month;
- PhD in Peace and Conflict Resolution at the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University in Fairfax, VA, awarded May 20, 2017.

Deeply affected by the horror of the Rwandan genocide in 1994, Fr. Innocent decided to devote his life to fight for social change, peace, and justice by entering the priesthood to pursue a path calling for, in his words, "understanding, promoting, respecting human life, human dignity and human values rather than objectifying them." Fr. Innocent's subsequent intellectual and spiritual commitments have been to the interrelated subjects of peace, conflict resolution, reconciliation, ethics and leadership in Africa.

Fr. Innocent plans to apply his academic work to action, including community organizing; teaching and research; and spiritual growth. On his return to Rwanda in late August, Fr. Innocent aims to pursue concrete plans that reflect his commitments to:

- Set up a center that will promote peace and reconciliation leadership;
- Teach, research and foster community organizing by the poor and those in need to advocate for the changes needed to improve their life conditions; and
- Continue his Jesuit spiritual and ministerial work in the priesthood.

GPS had the rare privilege of hosting this exceptional human being on June 17, 2017, just over two months before his return to Rwanda to pursue his three-fold plans. The basis of his presentation to us was his George Mason University PhD dissertation, Leadership for Peace and Reconciliation in Post-Violent Sub-Saharan African Countries: Ethical Pragmatism, a theme he will pursue in the new center he plans to establish in Rwanda.

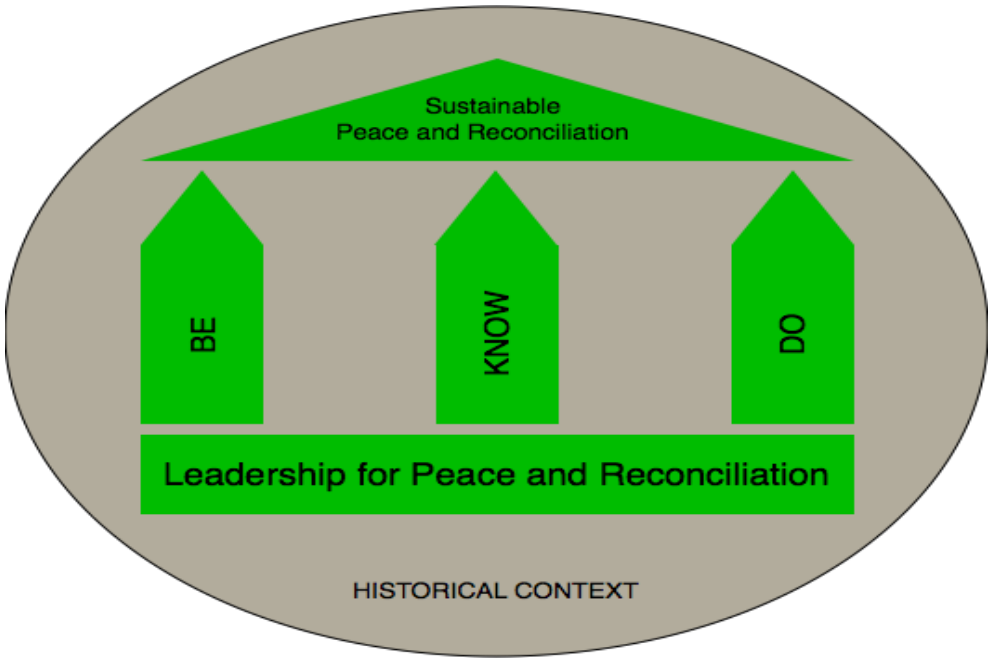
After Fr. Innocent's well-structured and energetic presentation, a lively discussion followed, which emphasized the centrality of leadership in African countries as a factor explaining social and political progress or the lack of it. After taking the audience through a quick review of the leading theories on the nature of leadership, Fr. Innocent went on to explain his contribution to the analysis of leadership – what he terms "ethical pragmatism." He called attention to a unique correlation – namely, that progress was associated with leadership characterized by ethical pragmatism. The discussion focused on two questions: (1) can different approaches to leadership, such as top-down or bottom-up, be practiced so as to be ethical-pragmatic? And (2) have there been actual examples of African ethical pragmatic leaders? Fr. Innocent answered the first question with a definite "yes." Two clear examples of ethical pragmatic leaders were offered: Nelson Mandela, the first President of post-apartheid South Africa; and Julius Nyerere, the first President of independent Tanzania. A posed but not fully explored question was how ethical pragmatic leadership can be sustained.

We wish Fr. Innocent safe-keeping on his long journey to Rwanda and we wish him full realization of his plans. We will certainly stay in touch with him as a full-fledged GPS member, far-flung geographically but close in spirit.

John Eriksson

Source: The first three paragraphs of biographical information are drawn from the files of the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and from "Innocent Rugaragu, S-CAR PhD Student," by Kwaw G. de Graft- Johnson, Publication of the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, May 2013, Vol. 7, No. 2.

Four Themes of Ethical - Pragmatism Leadership for Peace and Reconciliation



This research found one major type of leader for peace and reconciliation: the ethical pragmatist who approaches leadership in either one of two different ways: (a) top-down and a more individualistic approach, or (b) bottom-up with a more communal approach. The study participants demonstrated these two different styles of approaches for creating policies, infrastructures and institutions. Whether they used a top-down or bottom-up approach, for each one of them, the end game and the vision were always the same: peace and reconciliation for their people and their countries. These leaders shared similarities in their particular leadership style that transcended the traditional theories of leadership. They were ethical, committed to positive change, inclusive, though bottom-up tended to be more inclusive, visionary and just. The diagram below shows these two approaches.

As Zaccaro Stephen and his colleagues point out in their (2013:20) article, Attributes of Successful Leaders: A Performance Requirement Approach, published by Oxford University Press, what distinguishes successful from unsuccessful leaders is not simply a bottom-up or top-down approach, but rather that "successful leaders would likely possess combinations of cognitive, social and self-motivational attributes. The complexity and the breadth of these requirements suggest that leaders would need multiple attributes from all these sets to be successful" regardless of either individual or communal approach toward leadership.

Some Main Recommendations

Within the African context, ethically pragmatic leaders such as Nelson Mandela (South Africa); Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, (Tanzania); Joaquim Chissano (Mozambique); Festus Gontebanye Mogae (Botswana); and Pedro Pire (Cape Verde) led their countries in ways that demonstrated inclusive concern for their countries and continent as a whole. The manner in which they led was clearly more viable to achieve peace than the alternative style of leadership demonstrated by leaders such as the former Liberian President Charles Taylor. Taylor represents non-ethical and non-pragmatic leaders who are self-serving and who are not striving for peace. Instead of building a culture of peace, he engaged in corrupt, self-serving activities that brought about the perpetuation of a culture of violence. Taylor is now serving 50 years in prison for war crimes committed during his leadership. Though I mention Charles Taylor, many African countries have their own version of "Charles Taylor." Hence, the current sitting heads of states and other top-level leaders have a prototype to follow. The choice is theirs to make and the consequences are real.

A great deal has been written about leadership, conflict and conflict resolution. Much less has been written about the intersection of leadership and conflict on the one hand and ethics and pragmatism on the other. It's therefore vital to promote and sustain ethical pragmatist leadership so as to build and sustain inclusive political, economic, legal and socio-cultural institutions and top-level leaders that are good for country, regional and global peace and reconciliation.

Change is inevitable and it must happen quickly especially for poor and middle-income countries where many refugees and immigrants continue to stream from the Middle East, Latin America, South Asia and Africa. As President Paul Kagame of Rwanda urged his fellow heads of State (January 2017) in a recent African Union summit "To fail Africa again would therefore be unforgivable."

William James, one of the fathers of pragmatism once said, "There can be no difference anywhere that doesn't make a difference elsewhere." By pragmatism he means, "Practically what works, concrete application," Hence, combining both ethics and pragmatism as a good leadership theory sounds reasonable and prudent.

Principled values and characteristics of a committed ethical pragmatic leader include: a strong moral character, moral courage to do right, integrity, trustworthiness, self-sacrifice, assuming responsibility for oneself and one's decisions, patience, accountability, reliability, empowering others. Other important qualities are ability to solve problems, inclusiveness, emotional intelligence and ability to balance reason and positive emotions such as compassion and empathy. An ethically pragmatic leader needs to possess certain knowledge and skills or be aware that they need to surround themselves with a team that possesses the required knowledge vital for the success of their leadership. The leader must have the ability and courage to act confidently in ways that lead people to succeed in finding resolutions to problems such as absence of peace, lack of prosperity and the need for reconciliation. John Maxwell in his book, The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership (2007:51), explains that a leader is a person who removes the obstacles for others and constantly asks himself or herself this critical question: "Are you making things better...?"

Though some people would argue that agency or authority exercised by a leader is less important than structure or institutions in sustaining peace and prosperity of a nation, I propose that the two are inseparable: leadership and institutions especially in young and fragile nations in a significant number of countries in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and South Asia. While building strong institutions is certainly a solution, as Ralph Waldo Emerson noted, an institution is a lengthened shadow of one man [or woman]. Hence, ethically pragmatic leaders build ethical and pragmatic institutions and vice versa because the effectiveness of an institution often depends on effectiveness of its leadership. Paradoxically, leaders and institutions need each other to thrive. Strong ethical and pragmatic inclusive institutions provide a system of checks and balances to monitor the abuse of power by leaders,

and good leadership strengthens those institutions because they are in the best interests of the whole.

Conclusion

Since the meaning of leadership is to influence, sub-Saharan Africa and other similar regions must have the courage to choose leaders who can lead for sustainable peace, prosperity and reconciliation. Such an ethical-pragmatic understanding of leadership is similar to what John C. Maxwell recommends in his 2014 book, How Successful People Grow: 15 Ways to Get Ahead in Life: The key to becoming an effective leader is making yourself the kind of person that people want to follow and lead them where they want to go. The leader becomes like a tour guide or a pilot who takes people from where they are to where they desire to go in their pursuit of life goals, freedom, happiness, justice, opportunities, security and lasting peace. Such women and men have to be symbols and signs of leaders who help people to live better lives and reach their divine and natural potentials. That is why investing in ethical pragmatic leaders matters, and it pays off in dividends of security, peace, prosperity, national healing and reconciliation in post-violent conflict settings.

In addition, further research ought to be done on how to widely make ethical pragmatist leadership theory a lens through which to imagine better sustainable world solutions. The good news is that such vital leadership can be built across all age groups encompassing young children, youth, and the elderly. Collaborations can be with government, non-governmental organizations such as Global Peace Services or even the private sector.

Therefore, let me dare to hope that innovative and creative ethical-pragmatic leadership will allow not only sub-Saharan Africa to succeed but also the world. Ethical-pragmatic leadership has to be a shared local and global endeavor.

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Fr. Dr. Innocent Rugaragu

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Global Peace Services USA
P.O. Box 27922
Washington, DC 20038-7922

Telephone: 301-681-6968
E-mail: globalpeaceservicesusa@gmail.com

Web site: www.GlobalPeaceServices.org

Global Peace Services USA
P.O. Box 27922
Washington, DC 20038-7922
www.GlobalPeaceServices.org