



## LIVING JUSTICE AND FORGIVENESS IN AN ORGANIZATION DURING A RELIGIOUS CRISIS

### *A Proposition*

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In this essay, I will integrate aspects of my family history, national history, local environment history, and organizational history with the purpose of creating a backdrop and historical stage for the problem that needs resolution. The essay will be interwoven with true stories. The organization in question is also my high school alma mater, Federal Government College Jos (FGC Jos), which is located in Plateau State, north central Nigeria. In the milieu of a national history, I will paint a family memoir of how I arrived at Jos and eventually became part of the organization, and I will subsequently describe the macrocontext in which my organization was infected by a crisis.

The macrocontext of my organization will be followed by an interpretation of the crisis. I choose to engage history and my macroenvironment because of the need for leaders to develop foresight: *understanding the past, engaging the future, and recognizing blind spots* (Spears and Lawrence 2004, 152). Greenleaf viewed foresight as a central ethic to leadership (Greenleaf 1977, 37). The refusal of a leader to see is an ethical failure (ibid., 39). Foresight is looking at the events of the instant moment with the analytical lens of projections made in the past and projections for the future (ibid.).

After discussing the hermeneutics of the situation, I will conclude the essay by proffering a life-giving response to the problem. During the phase of resolution in my organization, the scenario and propositions for solution will become hypothetical, since my leadership of the organization will be a suppositional leadership. The life-giving response will have immediate response and long-term vision response. Toward the culmination of the essay, I will make use of an intermission-effect to render an appropriate interior vignette that will be sandwiched between the servant-leadership



pattern of school administration and the school allegory. This act of intermitting serves as a respite in this essay, but it is also a convex lens to guide the reader toward the convergence of ideas of restorative justice and servant-leadership. The proximate responses are immediate decisions my school organization will implement, while the long-term responses are more stretched-out propositions in the pipeline.

Furthermore, in addition to shedding light to the problem with restorative justice, I will view this conflict through an analytical and optimistic lens and then, adopting the philosophy of servant-leadership, I will proffer ways in which the crisis can be transformed into a watershed moment in the school. Up front, I think a brief description of the concept of servant-leadership is imperative. With the presentation of the roadmap of this essay, I want to quickly present a broad-stroke portrait of servant-leadership before I knit my historical background.

The servant-leader idea developed through Robert Greenleaf's experience of and discernment regarding business, education, and theology-oriented institutions (Greenleaf 1977, 17). In organizations directed by servant-leaders, the members become healthier, wiser, freer, and more self-governing (ibid. 27, 253). The members become motivated to serve others. The conscious choice of servant-leaders is the desire to serve first followed by an aspiration to lead (ibid., 27). Wheatley believes it is the nature of our existence to desire to serve others (Wheatley 1998, 349). Servants should be leaders, and leaders should be servants. Servant-leaders trust the humanness of those they lead and help followers to understand themselves (ibid., 350). Through intentness in listening, servant-leaders dispose themselves to receive insights to create the right roadmap for an organization (Greenleaf 1977, 30). Provision of direction is a key aspect of servant-leadership (Spears 1998, 23).

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: FAMILY ARRIVAL AT JOS

Leonard was a young handsome chemistry student at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria in 1966. Cecilia was a young beautiful student at the Queen of the Rosary College Onitsha, Nigeria in 1966. They did not know each other. Then the rumbling explosion of the Nigerian Civil War changed the direction of their histories. Before the civil war broke out, there had been pogroms of Igbos in northern Nigeria. This caused many Igbos living in northern and western Nigeria to leave their homes, livelihood, education, and occupations and return to their villages, towns, and cities in southeastern

Nigeria. Leonard left his university education and returned to his home town Nanka, in Anambra State, which was part of Biafra at the time of war, and Cecilia also left her high school education and fled back to Nanka. Biafra was the name for the southeastern part of Nigeria that wanted to secede from Nigeria because of persecution in the north.

The Biafran government wanted Leonard to use his knowledge of chemistry to join in manufacturing explosives and bombs for the Biafran Army. But as a young man Leonard had made up his mind never to use his knowledge of science to destroy human life. He declined since he was essentially a pacifist. Then an attempt was made to conscript Leonard into the Biafran Army, but Leonard managed to escape and instead opted to join the International Red Cross. As the civil war raged on, Leonard met Cecilia, who was working for the International Red Cross as well. They were both Catholic and they also both served in Caritas (a charity-based organization), where they cooked food for the victims. In the midst of war, they fell in love, had their traditional marriage, which was followed by a wedding in a Catholic Church on October 25, 1969. Three months after their marriage, the civil war stopped. After the war, Leonard returned to Ibadan to continue his university education. Since he had not studied chemistry for three years because of the civil war, he switched to botany. After graduation, he received a federal government appointment as a high school biology and science teacher. He was asked to go to Jos, north central Nigeria. At Jos, Plateau State, Leonard and Cecilia raised five children: Leo, Ben, Ngozi, Ugo, and Joe. Their first child, Leo (author of this essay), was born on July 17, 1970, and their last child, Joe, was born on March 10, 1978. Leonard and Cecilia arrived at Jos with Ben and me in 1973.

The military Head of State of Nigeria General Yakubu Gowon had a vision of national unity, peace, and reconciliation after the civil war. One of the means he hoped would attain this was through *pro unitate* (for unity) schools. These schools were called federal government colleges, and they were scattered all over the national landscape. They were meant to be model schools with staff and students of mixed ethnic groupings in Nigeria. It was in one of these schools (Federal Government College Jos) that my parents first served. Hence, I grew up in Jos, Plateau State, and I also attended FGC Jos for high school (Class of 1986). FGC Ilorin (western Nigeria) was another unity school where my parents served.

Jos is not a large city like Lagos, Kano, or Port Harcourt. However, as a serene, friendly, and cosmopolitan city, Jos used to attract residents and



visitors from various parts of Nigeria and beyond. Jos has an elevation of four thousand feet above sea level. The beautiful landscape of rocks, valleys, and plains in the city communicates peace to dwellers. Growing up, I experienced peace in the land of the beautiful people and splendid volcanic rocks of Jos. Three of my closest friends at FGC Jos were Muslims. Tribalism and religious bigotry were not part of the experience of my generation of classmates in Jos. Even the Nigerian civil war that was fought on geographic division rather than religious division was not part of the experience of my classmates. We simply grew up knowing that there was a terrible war at some point in our national history. I will now discuss the background in which my previously serene organization, my alma mater, is engulfed in crisis.

#### THE SOCIORELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE IN WHICH MY ORGANIZATION IS IN TROUBLE

Today, there is an overthrow of peace in Jos. Things have drastically turned around in the landscape of peace. It is now a militarized city, and it is segregated on religious lines. The first major conflict in Jos was in 2001. It was volcanic, because no one could predict it happening in the Nigerian city of peace. Before 2001, Jos had always been an oasis of peace in Nigeria, and therefore its motto is “Home of Peace and Tourism” (Kaigama 2012, 12). In March 2001, the Plateau State began to experience serious armed crisis in some villages, which eventually led to a climax in the capital city of Jos on September 7, 2001 (ibid.). A serene city was transformed into a panic-stricken territory. With this alteration, the “Home of Peace and Tourism” became an empty slogan as peace and tourism started to fade away. The year 2001 was my year of priestly ordination. That year I was assigned to serve in a Jesuit high school and parish in Lagos. After serving in different locations in Nigeria, my parents retired in a personal home in Jos.

When the 2001 crisis erupted, there were reprisals between Christians and Muslims. Some youths from another section of Jos seeking vengeance came to the area where my parents and two of my youngest brothers were living (Rock Haven) and wanted to cause problems. Security was sparse and scattered, raising the level of fear in the community. Nobody wanted to risk their safety and they stayed indoors. My younger brothers (who had never witnessed such turmoil before) tried to create a shield for my parents. Within seconds the advancing youths descended on the home of a Muslim family neighbor and set it ablaze. Fortunately, the family was absent from



their home. My mum, risking her life, courageously ran out of our family compound with a crucifix and begged the youths to desist from their plan.

After my mum pleaded, the youths changed their minds and immediately began fetching water to douse the fire. During this crisis, the only law on the land was reprisals. It was in this chaos that the law of retaliation entered into FGC Jos, my alma mater. FGC Jos is a boarding school and it is also co-ed, so students from different parts of the country lived and studied in it together. Thankfully, no student was hurt during the 2001 crisis. However, there was a suspicion that some Christian students, upon hearing that some churches had been burnt in the cities, also set the mosque in the school ablaze.

A serious rift was created in the school organization. Before delving into the tension created by this rift, I want to add that the Jos crisis has repeated itself like a volcano in other parts of the Plateau State in 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2006 (Kaigama 2012, 12–13). In 2008, there was another violent eruption in Jos. I visited Jos in the Christmas of 2008. The crisis was so serious that some Catholic monks were attacked in an Augustinian monastery in Jos. During the Christmas of 2008, the popular Christmas Mass vigils were suspended in parishes because of the curfew. The Nigerian military were all over the place to enforce peace. I remember the visit of two soldiers to my family home on Christmas day. After we served them Christmas meals, I engaged them in conversation. One was a Christian, and the other was a Muslim. I was impressed to find out the level of integration and unity in the Nigerian Army and wished that was the case in the populace of Jos. It is poignant that a military organization serves as a model of integration in the modern Nigerian society.

Over the years, with each violent crisis, Jos has been experiencing segregation at an exponential rate. Christians and Muslims have been realigning themselves based on geographic territories. It was after the 2008 crisis that my siblings and I had to arrange for my parents to leave Jos. It was the last straw. Though my parents were living in a family property in an area of relative peace, we felt it was needless for them to be living in fear at their age. They now live in Abuja. One of my brothers (Ugo) still lives in Jos. He works for an electric power company. I visited his office after one of the crises, and I was happy to see that he and his office staff, a Muslim engineer, remained close friends in spite of the Jos conflicts and tensions. My brother's wife is a medical doctor, and consequently she has witnessed the influx of victims of the bloody conflicts (Christians and Muslims) to



Jos University Teaching Hospital. With each outbreak of violence, many people are killed, and many residents of Jos are displaced (Orji 2011, 479). Christians and Muslims are both victims and perpetrators in this conflict (Human Rights Watch 2001, A1309). Jos (which I always equated with peace) is so tense and volatile that people sleep with one eye opened. On Fridays, tensions reach their climax, because all preceding crisis originated on Fridays (Muslim day of prayer). The Catholic Archbishop of Jos said, “The other day a man was being chased by bees, and when he was running for cover everybody started running to nowhere and for no reason in particular” (Kaigama 2012, 159). Muslims and Christians in the market ran helter-skelter thinking another crisis had broken out.

This is basically the backdrop that my organization (FGC Jos) is immersed in. During the 2001 crisis, a mosque was burned in the school by some students who wanted to avenge the burning of churches in the city. We assume that the arsonists were Christian students, but there is no evidence since the mosque was secretly set on fire. The student body in FGC Jos remains ethnically mixed as well as religiously mixed, similar in that respect to my time as a student in the same school in the 1980s. The academic and nonacademic staff has a mixed ratio of Christians and Muslims.

There is tension in the school, and in the context of this paper I want to present some hypothetical servant leadership avenues for change. In this hypothetical context, I have the burden of leadership as principal of FGC Jos during the crisis. I need to establish short-term goals and long-term goals to harmoniously resolve this crisis at the school level, yet remain conscious that the school is not insulated or isolated from the socioreligious and political reality of Jos metropolis. The goal ultimately is to achieve forgiveness, peace, and justice. Now that I have highlighted the situation and problem, I will proceed to do some hermeneutics of the problematic situation before offering a life-giving response to the crisis.

#### CRITICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SETBACK

National or ethnic issues (perspective of macroculture), organizational issues, occupational issues (perspective of subculture), and microsystem issues are all linked (Schein 2010, 5). Problems in organizations are sometimes difficult to discuss in isolation from the dynamic of macrocultures. It is in this light that I analyze my organization’s macrocontext in order to deepen my understanding of the challenges and possibilities inside the



organization. The metaphor for micro and macro is a tree within a forest. It is one thing to analyze a tree standing alone; it is another thing to analyze a tree in the bigger picture of the ecosystem in a forest. The things we observe inside organizations are reflections of the “national culture, and the interplay of subcultures because they often reflect the primary occupational cultures of the organization members” (Schein 2010, 55). The new democratic dispensation in Nigeria is a paradox of sorts. Nigerians want democracy, and democracy has created a watershed in the nation’s political history with mounting social violence in some parts of the country (Lewis 2003, 131–32). While some organizations are reaping the dividends of democracy, my organization, a high school, was caught in the middle of a political tension that spilled over into a religious conflict.

As a hypothetical leader of this conflict-affected school located in a hotbed of a larger conflict-affected city, I am taking responsibility to do a critical analysis of the problem by looking into its root cause. As a pedagogical technique, I will engage myself as a hypothetical leader who wants to create a culture of deep listening and profound respect for human life by building bridges of goodwill and collapsing walls of bigotry. A goal of this pedagogic procedure endeavors to model and demonstrate a soulful and cogent resolution to the predicament. Using my imagination, I contemplate the scenario of the school climate and respond to the question of what a servant-leader would do, if he or she were there.

In my organization’s crisis, a problem at the macrolevel infected our school environment. The demographic makeup of FGC Jos is culturally diverse in a similar manner that the city of Jos is culturally diverse. There is no recent demographic data based on religion in Jos (Orji 2011, 475). However, ethnic groups in Jos are categorized between indigenous (original inhabitants) and nonindigenous (settlers). This categorization is in line with the 1979 and 1999 constitution of Nigeria (ibid.). The “indigenous” controls the political governance of Jos. This is not unusual, since in other states of Nigeria, the indigenous in those states also control the political governance.

The settlers in Jos include different ethnic groups such as Hausa, Yoruba, Igbos, Tiv, and Urhobo. These are excluded from politics. However, the Hausa settlers (also known as the Jasawa) in Jos argue that by virtue of their Nigerian citizenship, they ought to participate in politics regardless of where their ancestors have come from (Orji 2011, 475). The Yorubas, Igbos, Tivs, and Urhobos, who have also lived in Jos as long as the Hausas, do not see participation in Jos metropolis politics as their inherent rights



(Orji 2011, 475). While these other settlers (Yorubas, Igbos, Tivs, Urhobos) and “indigenous” of Jos are predominantly Christians, the Hausa settlers are predominantly Muslims. The process of struggling for political inclusion for the Hausas sometimes leads groups to resort to violence (Orji 2011, 475–76). Orji said, “The contest between the ‘indigenous’ communities and the Jasawa over political control of Jos is the underlying issue behind the Jos conflict” (ibid., 476).

Governor Adams Oshiomhole of Edo State (central southern Nigeria) has called for the abolition of the indigene-ship clause (Ejembi 2013). Such a move will give every Nigerian the ability to contest elections wherever he or she may be residing. Oshiomhole, who has lived most of his life in Kaduna State (northern Nigeria) cannot contest election in Kaduna. He had to return to his state of origin. He said, “I had no choice about where I was born, but I chose where to live” (Ejembi 2013). As the Nigerian nation is contemplating constitutional amendment, Oshiomole thinks that the concept of indigene-ship should be completely abolished in Nigeria’s public policy (ibid.).

Orji also identified an economic factor in the Jos conflict (Orji 2011, 476). With the devastation of the private sector in Nigeria and the slow rate of economic growth, many Nigerians quickly turn to the government sector for access to social, economic, and political opportunities (ibid.). Jos is located in north central Nigeria, and northern Nigeria generally has a Hausa-Fulani political hegemony (ibid.). Consequently, it is very easy for Hausa-Fulani people in the north to access government at the highest level. Frustrated that they cannot do this in Jos, deep-seated feelings of political or power deficits build up. This leads one to discern that the Jos crisis is more of a political crisis with religious colorations. Furthermore, omnipresent corruption, unemployment, and poverty also help to fuel the conflicts in Nigeria.

There is, nevertheless, also a religious dimension of the conflict (Orji 2011, 477). The protagonists of the Jos crisis are the Jasawa (predominantly Muslims) and the indigenous (predominantly Christians). The indigenous are made up of Berom, Aftzere, Anaguta, to mention but a few. Educated Christians and Muslims have interpreted the Jos conflict as a case of political manipulation of religion (ibid.). Hence, we can extrapolate that the root cause is political, while the dominant manifestation is religious (ibid.).

The burning of the mosque in my organization (FGC Jos) can be seen as a manifestation of the nonreligious disputes of the city of Jos. Sometimes



simple land disputes between an indigene Christian and a nonindigene Muslim can spillover into a religious crisis. All it takes is for a symbol of faith to be attacked. Thus, some manifestations of the political crises of Jos are attacks on churches and mosques. An attack on a religious symbol further sets off another chain reaction by evoking strong emotions and embroiling members of the affected religious affiliation to seek revenge. Therefore, in the case of Jos, when a church is attacked to spite the Christian indigenes, the Christian settlers also get provoked and join the indigenes to defend their centers of worship. Once reprisal takes place, it leads to a vicious cycle of violence. “Honor of ethnicity” and “honor of religion” are two things that are being defended (Orji 2011, 478).

Besides the religious dimension, there is also a policy dimension to the Jos crisis (Orji 2011, 478). Without a state policy to initiate and implement effective peace-building measures at the local government levels and district levels, it will be difficult to bring the crisis under control. Jos is heavily militarized, and the military presence is only enforcing peace. Despite the military presence, there are still ongoing reprisals and armed conflicts in the rural parts of the Plateau State. Orji, quoting Human Rights Watch, said that the former president (Olusegun Obasanjo) indicted the former governor of the Plateau State (Joshua Dariye) after the May 2004 violence for failing to create a policy of peace:

As of today, there is nothing on ground and no evidence to show that the state Governor has interest, desire, commitment, credibility, and capacity to promote reconciliation, rehabilitation, forgiveness, peace, harmony and stability. If anything, some of his utterances, his lackadaisical attitude and seeming uneven-handedness over the salient and contending issues present him as not just part of the problem, but also as an instigator and a threat to peace. (Orji 2011, 478)

In 2007, a new governor (Jonah Jang) was elected to lead the Plateau State. Besides the political crisis he inherited, he is also challenged with terrorism in the state. The *Boko Haram* (an extremist minority Muslim group) have taken advantage of the Jos crisis to bomb Christian churches during Sunday Masses and Services. Recently, the *Boko Haram* group has generally been causing mayhem in northern Nigeria. With this added dimension, the complexity of the Jos crisis rises to an exponential level. There are extreme fears and mistrust among the people of Jos. There is also a ripple effect-factor in the crisis. When Christian settlers from other states in Nigeria are attacked in Jos or parts of Northern Nigeria, Muslims in the



southern part of Nigeria become targets of reprisals in the predominantly Christian-dominated southern states. In addition, there is a legal dimension to the crisis. There is a northern movement in Nigeria for the expansion of *shari'a* (Islamic system of law). Most of the northern states have adopted the *shari'a* system of law. The first state to do so was Zamfara in 1999. Plateau does not have *shari'a*, and many Christians will gravitate against it.

This macro picture has a bearing on my organization, both in the past (2001) and today. In the light of this tapestry and for the purpose of this essay, I will present a small allegory that envisions me as a hypothetical leader responding to the situation. As this hypothetical leader in FGC Jos, I will articulate my life-giving response to this crisis in the next section of this essay. The anecdotes in my response below will be embellished with fiction not facts. To reiterate, at the time of the Jos crisis, I was in Lagos; but in this essay, I will envisage myself as a leader in FGC Jos saddled with bringing light out of the darkness of this predicament. I will also frame this allegory with a multiple view that seeks to honor all major religions as established to fundamentally respect life. Thus, it is some extremist elements of different world religions that deviate from this fundamental vocation to revere life.

#### CONCLUSION: LIFE-GIVING RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM

##### *Pattern of School Administration*

Servant-leadership is the proposed system of administration in this organization. Greenleaf regarded the institution as servant, where the principal leader is first among equals or *primus inter pares* (Greenleaf 1977, 74). In this model, the leaders remain “first” but they collaborate with competent peers (ibid.). This negates the traditional model of a chief atop a hierarchical pyramid (ibid., 253). The servant-leadership model is “a balanced team of equals under the leadership of a true servant who serves as *primus inter pares*, first among equals” (ibid.). Greenleaf emphasized that in a serving institution all, not most, or almost all, who embrace its philosophy “are lifted up to nobler stature and greater effectiveness than they are likely to achieve on their own or with a less demanding discipline” (ibid., 252).

A servant-leader will prefer to use his or her moral authority instead of positional power or formal authority. Formal authority or positional power does not promote authentic openness and trust, and it should only be used only as a last resort (Covey 2001, 12). On the other hand, a leader that



employs moral authority exerts greater influence in an organization through persuasion, empathy, and trustworthiness (ibid.). The principles of servant-leadership are universally applicable (ibid.,13). Servant-leaders are humble, reverent, teachable, respectful, determined, and caring (ibid., 12). Moral authority is achieved through servant-leadership, and two key pillars of moral authority are sacrifice and humility (ibid., 11). Leaders who practice the principle of sacrifice are able to live with humility and courage, and they are able to apologize and to forgive others (ibid.). Echoes of the servant-leadership model described above will be reflected in the imagined setting and imagined summit below. But before setting up the stage for the school parable, the subsequent wedge will be an intermission in which I will paint a vignette of the power and wisdom of nonviolence and the folly and blindness of hostility.

### *Internal Vignette: An End of Two Villages*

Two thousand years ago, two villages named Masara and Doya existed in peace and harmony, but separated by a large river called River Gwam. At both sides of the river were two beautiful farming communities that enjoyed green vegetation and abundant fish for many decades. One year there was a great famine, and the width of the River Gwam began to narrow and draw the women of both villages closer and closer till their buckets began to hit each other in dissonance as they struggled to fetch the scarce water. The next day, in the commotion of discord by the river, a woman from Doya lost all the water from her bucket. In frustration, she pushed the woman from Masara, who caused the accidental loss of water, into the shallow river. The women from Masara retaliated and overpowered the Doyan woman, slapped her and inflicted many injuries on her. The bruised woman and her own colleagues hurried back to the village to report what had happened to the Chief of Doya and his council of elders.

While the council of elders of Doya was holding a meeting on what action to take regarding the victimized woman, the military youths of Doya, electrified with provocation of what had happened to one of their women, took their military weapons and started advancing to River Gwam to challenge the people of Masara. When the youths of Masara saw the Doyan youths advancing with a war song, the youths of Masara began to say to themselves, "Who the hell do the Doyan youths think they are?" Consequently, the Masara military youths quickly prepared their weapons



and, began marching toward River Gwam with their own war songs. As both military sides drew closer to the narrow river, there was frenzy in the atmosphere. It was going to be a ferocious Mother of all wars. The military youths from Doya apparently had superior might, and they were just calculating for the right minute to start launching their weapons.

The Chief of Doya heard a fierce battle was imminent. He hurriedly left his palace and, ignoring his entourage, he began running toward the river barefooted and without his royal garment. When he got the river, the war songs had reached pitch level and were deafening. The frenzy got to the point of no return to normalcy. Meanwhile, the Chief of Doya ran to the bank of the shallow river and stood between his Doyan youths and the youths of Masara. Then to the astonishment of the both sides, he knelt down and facing his Doyan youths, he gestured with both hands using a vertical oscillatory motion and begged his military youths to drop their weapons of destruction. After a frantic attempt to dissuade them from triggering a war, his youths stopped chanting their war songs and began dropping their weapons one after the other. In reciprocation, the youths of Masara began to do the same till there was complete muteness. The chief now stood and exhorted both warring sides to be farsighted and foresighted. He told them to look across the river and behind them and observe the vistas. When the military youths looked at the horizons, they saw wailing children clinching to their terrified mothers. The Chief of Doya then eloquently and loudly proclaimed to both sides:

If you ignite a battle, you will spill blood on our lands and on our waters. You will die like fools! River Gwam will be polluted! The remaining fish will perish! Our mothers and children from both communities will have no future but a painful and slow-motion death. We must learn to live together in peace in time of plenty and in time of scarcity. Yes, there is famine on our land, but there is such a thing as sharing. Our hands are meant for service of each other and not for combat with each other. Let us stop raising hackles and return to our respective villages...

Before the Chief of Doya could finish his appeal, the youths of both sides had been swiftly transformed by the streaming words of nonviolence that gushed out from chief's mouth. It was as if ice waters of ceasefire had been poured over the warriors. The next day, the women and youths of both villages reconciled and resolved their differences. A water service distribution committee was created. This committee comprised of members of Doya community and Masara community. With sacrifice and the discipline



of adapting to austerity measures, everyone began to discover oases of peace in the growing wildernesses of River Gwam.

Unexpectedly, the heavens opened, and heavy rains began to pour into the river and on the lands. River Gwam banks began to expand and the space between the people of Doya and Masara started widening, but the citizens of the two villages had developed strong bonds of peace and interdependence during their time of learning to share in scarcity. Though the river had expanded, and yams (doya), maize (masara), and fish were now abundant on extensive green banks of the river, the two village communities built a bridge across River Gwam. It was the end of the two villages; it was the beginning of a united community founded on the perpetual pillars of reconciliation, peace, love, and service. Till this day, this community continues to blossom in a fountain of freedom.

### *School Allegory And Imagined Setting*

It is 11:30 p.m. The dusts raised by the Jos crisis are gradually settling because of the presence of military troops and the imposed curfew, but the burnt mosque in FGC Jos is still smoldering. I have already informed the police station, and so there is police presence in the school compound. Students have returned to their hostels. The staff members living in the school compound have returned back to their homes. I called an emergency meeting of the vice principal academic, a Muslim, and vice principal administration, a Christian. Also invited for this meeting at the school's conference room are the Muslim Imam of the school, the Protestant chaplain of the school, and the Catholic chaplain of the school. A few other teaching staff and nonteaching staff (mixture of Christians and Muslims) are present. The chaplains and the Imam each give a short invocation before we commence our meeting. In each prayer there is expression of gratitude to the Almighty Creator that no member of our school community was injured or killed. Everybody at this meeting was shaken by the recent tragic events in Jos, and by the pandemonium and tension in the school compound caused by the burning of a mosque.

As I envision it, as if looking back in time, there was complete silence in the conference room after the prayer. We tried not to break that silence, and everyone tried to listen to his or her inner voice. After some minutes of silence I looked at the Imam. He understood my vulnerability and knew I was deeply hurt and shaken. He spoke, and his voice soothed my aggrieved



emotions. He reiterated his gratitude that no member of our school community was hurt. At this point we still did not know exactly which student or students started the fire. I mustered courage and spoke. I thanked everyone for coming and expressed my sorrow for what had happened. I assured the Muslim Imam and everyone that we take personal responsibility to see the school rebuild a brand new mosque in the near future.

Rather than do too much talking, I wanted to listen more to the emotions and words of my administrative colleagues, Imam, chaplains, and staff. The school's secretary took notes, while everyone took time to give pieces of advice on the way forward. With lessons of leadership from Greenleaf, I wanted everyone to help generate a new and cogent meaning and a superior wisdom (Greenleaf 1977, 225). The more ideas were put forward, the more we were all able to have "a *sense of the unknowable* and *foresee the unforeseeable*" (ibid., 22). At the end of this emergency meeting that went past midnight, these were our resolutions.

### *Resolutions*

- We will all return to our respective homes and have some rest.
- Classes will be cancelled tomorrow, and we will call a school assembly (every staff and student) by 7: 30 a.m.
- During the assembly, the Imam and the Christian chaplains will lead a morning prayer for peace.
- The principal will remind the Christians and Muslims of the love and harmony that we had been enjoying in the school.
- The sacrilege on the mosque will be condemned.
- The principal will announce that the mosque will be rebuilt.
- The school secretary will be on phone most of the day to answer phone calls from parents in different parts of the country in order to let them know that things are under control.
- Since we still do not know who the arsonist is, we will denounce the evil act and ask everyone to examine his or her conscience.
- The principal will ask forgiveness from Muslims and everyone on behalf of the unknown arsonists.
- A brief lecture will be given to the students after lunch on the political roots of the crisis. Everybody will be made to understand that any participant in the crisis is a stooge of ill-meaning politicians (who hardly get hurt during these conflicts).



- There will also be a workshop on the philosophy of nonviolence and the healing power of love and the pathology of hate. Concepts from Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. will be used in the workshop.
- We will reconvene in the near future to deliberate on long term resolutions.

### *The Morning Assembly After The Incident*

We decide to use the restorative justice philosophical approach to repair the harm caused to the school community and especially our Muslim students and staff. The chaplains and Imam are going to lead us through a peace and unity covenant in which we agree to walk hand in hand and avoid any form of segregation in the classrooms, hostels, dining hall, library, labs, and sports fields. We reach an agreement to remain a model of unity and love to the citizens of Jos, and we agree to a commitment to peace. The covenant will open with a candlelighting ceremony to be done by the Imam on behalf of the Muslims, and the Protestant and Catholic chaplains on behalf of the Christians. In restorative justice, rituals help transform an environment into a different ennobling space (Bender and Armour 2007, 261). The candlelighting ceremony helps dispel the darkness of hate and violence. Experiencing a spiritual bond that shows we are connected under something bigger than ourselves inspires us to hold hands together during all invocations of the Chaplains and Imam.

The spiritual dimension of restorative justice becomes a focus in the reading of the Bible and the Quran. Scriptural and Quranic readings remind us of the reverence for life. Bender and Amour defined spirituality as reverence for life (Bender and Amour 2007, 254). Workshops occurring during the day provide opportunities for group dialogues. After creating an atmosphere for reconciliation, as principal, I speak to the entire school population asking forgiveness that this assault on one of the school's religious centers happened during my leadership. This is because of the consciousness that events that happen in organizations cannot be completely insulated from effective or inept organizational leadership. The incident could have been forestalled if there had been greater foresight on my part.

With a heartfelt sorrow for what happened, I begin with, "On behalf of the college, and as principal of this college, I am sorry for this unfortunate incident in one of the worship centers of our school, and I want to



ask the forgiveness of the entire school community, especially my Muslim staff and students for what happened yesterday. It is a sacrilege against our Creator and Heavenly Father who gave life to each us and who wants us to live together.” In this earnest apology, an environment is created in which forgiveness can be asked and granted by others (Spears and Lawrence 2004, 236). True humility and sincere forgiveness-asking can draw others near a leader and evoke in them their desire to be responsible (Ferch 2012, 46). There is going to be a demand for a change of heart and behavior in the persons who actually set the mosque on fire. In addition, I appeal that no one should be witch-hunted and that we enhance our school environment of trust. This environment is meant to prompt the culprits to meet me or the school chaplains. Stressing the capacity for good that God has planted in each of us can commit everyone to tap into that capacity. We humans have a wonderful capacity for good in spite of the evil in the world (Tutu 1997, 253).

### *Long-Term Measures*

We propose that the school administration and staff plan and organize a fundraising luncheon with parents and alumni in the presence of the entire school body. This luncheon is to help rectify the injustice that was done in my organization by the burning of a mosque. Following the luncheon is an efficient reconstruction of the mosque. This renaissance of solidarity ushers a statement for the reign of peace in our school organization. Restorative justice encourages a sense of inclusion as well as recognition of our common humanity (Bender and Armour 2007, 257). As hope is reborn, the luncheon gives our school community that sense of inclusion and recognition of our common dignity as persons regardless of our religious faiths.

The fundraising helps the offenders to learn about the impact of the crime they committed and induce appropriate guilt in them. Muslim and Christian key speakers will be invited and during the luncheon will speak about the principle of harmonious living. At the end of the day, we wish to have created a tighter common bond of human solidarity. The essential message being sent is that if the right hand is affected we would be concerned, and if the left hand is affected we would equally be concerned. The goal is to empower the victims, create healing, offer compassion, and advocate forgiveness on the part of everyone (Bender and Armour 2007, 253).



This crisis will become a *kairos* moment for all of us to turn our lives around toward deeper love, compassion, forgiveness, and union. It can become an occasion for interior conversion and respect for the dignity of the life of every person on earth. With lessons learned from Tutu (1997), we endeavor to avoid the extremes of the Nuremberg trials by not witch-hunting the arsonists. Neither should we sweep the offense under the carpet and offer blanket amnesty to the unknown offenders. Rather, employing the methods of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) of South Africa creates a favorable atmosphere for the perpetrators to repent, come forward to the school authority, and confess their actions. If we surmise that the lives of the culprits are endangered outside the school walls, then their identities become restricted to only a few school officials. The intention is not to humiliate or hurt the arsonists. As happened in South Africa's TRC, the idea is to forgive the offenders and invite them back to the center of community (Ferch and Spears 2011, 46).

Another long-term measure is intensified dialogue of life. Kaigama advocated a dialogue of life in which Christians and Muslims sincerely open up to accept each other and share at deeper levels (Kaigama 2012, 30). This dialogue includes the customary sharing of gifts between Christians and Muslims at Christmas and *Sallah* (ibid., 31). This practice already happening among our Christian and Muslim staff becomes encouraged at a deeper level. As part of dialogue for life, religious tolerance can be embedded in our school curriculum. Narratives of peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims (as exemplified among the Yoruba ethnic group in the western part of Nigeria) are also to be shared from time to time during school assemblies. Social harmony in the school is also to be promoted through the spirit of *Ubuntu*. The spirit of *Ubuntu* is an African cultural belief of collectivity that is indispensable to the creation and acceptance of truth and reconciliation (Androff 2010, 1971). Tutu affirmed that a person with the spirit of *Ubuntu* feels that he or she "belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished" (Tutu 1997, 31).

In the African idiom, a human being is a human being through the lens of the other (Ferch 2012, 102; Tutu 1997, 31). *Ubuntu* spirit is present in servant-leaders and those they lead. Ferch expressed, "The servant-leader not only sees us whole...not diminished, not destroyed...the servant-leader lives in such a way that we become whole, and in so doing, we bring wholeness, or a sense of that which is holy, to the world" (Ferch 2012, 99). It is in this spirit of *Ubuntu* that the school pursues restorative justice. That which



is holy to the world must respect the dignity of the human person created in God's image. Restorative justice is not about punishment but about redress of imbalances, repair of broken relationships, and rehabilitation of the culprits and the wounded (Tutu 1997, 54–55). Films such as *Anne Frank* (2001), *Gandhi* (1982), *Martin Luther King Jr.—I Have a Dream* (2005), and inspirational films on nonviolence philosophy can be shown to the school community during movie weekends in order to train the students, staff, and administrators to eschew any form of bigotry and hatred.

Crisis at family, organizational, and local levels often escalates because no one is listening. Training in deep listening skills will be a key element in a communication workshop for staff and students of the school community. We will also extend this model of deep listening beyond the walls of the school. Listening is one of the characteristics of servant-leadership. Spears, a close disciple of Greenleaf, came up with the following ten tenets as key to the development of servant-leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (Spears 2004, 8–9). As I had mentioned earlier in this paper, foresight is a central ethic of leadership (Greenleaf 1977, 37). Leaders fail ethically if they refuse to foresee time and space horizons (*ibid.*, 39). The “lead” that leaders have is foresight, and if this lead is missing leaders lose their ability to lead an organization (*ibid.*, 40). Leaders with foresight are able to immerse themselves in today's events with lessons of history and projection of the future horizons (*ibid.*). Beyond the communication workshop, there will be leadership-training opportunities for the staffs and students to learn in detail about foresight and the other nine characteristics of servant-leadership.

Crippen, who considers servant-leadership as a paradigm for educational leadership, suggested that the ten characteristics of servant leadership identified by Spears are in hierarchical order (Crippen 2004, 11–12). I will briefly highlight the prospects of each characteristic in the ranking of Spears. The internal action of listening requires commitment to listen to ourselves and to others (*ibid.*, 12). Empathetic understanding of others generates trust from others (Crippen 2004). The potential for healing in servant-leadership can help our staffs and students heal themselves and heal each other. Awareness assists everyone in our school to appreciate issues of ethics and values. The spirit of persuasion engenders moral authority rather than positional power. Through conceptualization, I believe we will be able to dream great dreams for a peaceful coexistence between Christians and



Muslims. With foresight, everyone will be able to visualize consequences of our decisions in the long term (Gunnarsson and Blohm 2011). Stewardship reminds every staff and student that he or she as a member the institution plays a significant role in “caring for the wellbeing of the institution and serving the needs of others in the institution” (Crippen 2004, 14). Any person committed to the growth of people engenders the will to nurture others (ibid.). The last characteristic, building community, can rouse students and staff to create a home and sense of belonging for everyone.

As a hypothetical servant-leader in this organization, I would seek to galvanize some school staff, some alumni, the chaplains and Imam to take it as our deontological responsibility to collectively pay a visit to the governor, senators, and government representatives of the state. In this context, it is important for the state and nation to fully democratize their politics and eschew the negative use of religion in political and legal systems. An important goal is for the state government to take progressive measures to desegregate the city of Jos. The state can then introduce avenues for a dialogue of life between Christians and Muslims in civil service. A revision of the state’s educational curriculum is in order so that topics such as religious tolerance, nonviolence, restorative justice, and forgiveness are embedded in the curriculum. If children begin to learn retributive justice (especially from their parents) the future of Jos will remain buried in a systemic circle of violence. Efforts to forestall this type of future give life to our children. A state government that establishes more industries to curb the unemployment and poverty that fuels conflicts is a government that liberates her people. Finally, in order for Jos to have an environment in which forgiveness can be sought, the establishment of a truth and reconciliation committee can help hold people (Christians and Muslims) accountable for what they have done, with restoration as the foundation rather than retribution. The committee (made up of the respectable Christian and Muslim leaders) is to be modeled after the South African TRC.

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